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33rd KZGN News Talking Points Editorial
By: Tom Wiknich

The topic of today’s editorial is: Can we trust information on the Internet?

But first, let’s cover the comments we received on the KZGN News discussion group on Facebook.

For those that don’t know, there are local discussion groups. The difference is that ours has strict guidelines as to content of posts. Here at KZGN, we believe that positions and thoughts can be adequately expressed without profanity or personal attacks. One of the groups say they won’t allow personal attacks, but when the person that gets attacked personally by someone that the site administrator thinks will boost harsh participation, he lets it continue. The administrator, himself, uses profanity to his comments. We feel profanity is not necessary to an intelligent discussion.

Some comments we received about this issue: Ethan said it very well in his following comment, “I would like to thank the proprietors of this forum (the KZGN News forum) for maintaining a sense of decorum and real ‘civility.’ While there hasn't been a tremendous amount of participation as of yet, the debate has remained well mannered. Even when the exchanges have gotten somewhat tense, the participants have refrained from being profane and belittling. This is why I have chosen not to engage in some other local FB forums. One of the other discussion boards likes to pretend to adhere to a doctrine of ‘civil’ deliberation concerning topical events. Unfortunately there is a tremendous gap between the advertised rules and some of the actual posts. This is abundantly clear whenever that forum's chief host unleashes a round of vulgar and obscene language upon an issue, idea, or political persuasion that he is against. It is hypocritical for someone to lecture others about the need to stay ‘civil’ in the midst of disagreement, while that same person laces their discourse with crude and abusive expression.”

John wrote, “Thank you for hosting this KZGN forum. It is a great community service!”

Now on to today’s editorial: Can we trust information on the Internet? I think most of us now know that we cannot trust everything we read on the Internet. What is troubling is even though almost everyone knows what they read may not be truthful, the reactive comments about the comments are discussed as truthful. It has been studied that often times, people will say something from a computer keyboard, that they would never have the guts to say person to person. For example, someone says something happened. Then everyone jumps into the discussion under the assumption it is truthful. What if it wasn’t truthful? Also, we all know every person brings their own perspective to a topic. We all know that for every topic, there is at least one other side of the story. Sometimes the truth is somewhere in between. That sometimes people put stuff out with only one purpose in mind: to try and hurt someone. Like someone expresses something that happened is bad.

Well, maybe there were reasons for what happened that can’t be stated on an open forum.

What if there were laws, or lawyers, restricting one person from defending himself from improper charges? Then everyone reading the one-sided statement believes the statement, because the other side did not respond. And who’s to say the other side even saw the statement in the first place to respond? People have a tendency to think, that everyone lives on the Internet. Well, news flash, many people do not live on the Internet. I think that all too often we let ourselves get caught up in internet discussions that are not truthful. We need to be careful in assuming what is being said is truthful. Before you jump onto a band wagon, research the topic. Make sure you know what you are talking about. And there is no need to get personal. State the facts.

In conclusion, I would close by saying, just because it’s on the Internet, doesn’t mean that it is truthful. Be cautious at accepting what you read as factual. Often times it is not true, or it’s distorted in content. If someone puts charges of negative content towards someone, consider that the charges might not be true.

I’m Tom Wiknich, and that’s what I think. If you have any comments about this editorial, or would like to discuss or recommend a topic, I’d like to hear from you. Please email them to info@kzgn.net.