



Representative Christopher Smith
Chairman, Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, and Human Rights
Committee on Foreign Affairs
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Smith:

Yahoo! is pleased to offer our support to the most recent (March, 2012) draft of the Global Online Freedom Act. We are grateful for your tireless efforts in working with us, human rights groups, academics and others to craft a reasoned, meaningful effort that will push all online companies to responsible engagement in countries around the world. In particular, the safe harbor in the bill for companies that join efforts like the Global Network Initiative (GNI) will go a long way to encouraging a wider group of companies to join us in efforts to develop responsible industry practices. Yahoo! is a co-founding member of GNI (www.globalnetworkinitiative.org), and has recently participated in the first ever third-party assessment of company implementation of GNI's principles, which GNI will feature in its annual report in April of 2012.

Issues of online freedom, privacy and responsibility are not easy. This past year has shown us the incredible power of the Internet to foster freedom, democracy and openness across the globe. And the Arab Spring was just one example of citizens using online tools to communicate with each other, learn, and organize. But with that great potential comes significant risks that cannot be ignored – risks, for instance, that governments will seek to turn the incredible positive power of the Internet against those same citizens. Internet companies have seen these risks firsthand, and Yahoo! has worked hard to minimize risks to our users as we enter new markets or make decisions about our business operations.

Yahoo! cares deeply about these issues, and has spent the last five years building a robust program to integrate human rights decision-making into our business operations. In addition to our work on the GNI, Yahoo!'s Business & Human Rights Program (BHRP) implements its mission through a number of core initiatives, including:

- Developing an accountability framework, designed to assess Yahoo!'s performance in meeting Yahoo!'s overall goals and operational steps relating to human rights issues;
- Developing guiding principles and operational guidelines, as well as employee training, which translate Yahoo!'s support for freedom of expression and user privacy into practical steps to be followed by employees;
- Conducting Human Rights Impact Assessments, which examine the human rights landscape in prospective markets, evaluate challenges to free expression and privacy that might result from



the proposed offering of services, and offer strategic approaches to protect the rights of Yahoo!'s users;

- Fostering internal and external stakeholder engagement with users, employees, civil society groups, government and shareholders to address the complex issues at the intersection of human rights and ICT;
- Creating a website and an e-mail alias to inform internal and external stakeholders about Yahoo!'s human rights initiatives and to elicit their feedback (<http://humanrights.yahoo.com/> and bhrp@yahoo-inc.com);
- Launching and hosting the Yahoo! Business & Human Rights Summit (<http://ycorpblog.com/2009/05/07/a-summit-for-human-rights>), a stakeholder shared-learning forum about technology and free expression. (<http://www.yhumanrightsblog.com/blog/our-initiatives/business-human-rights-summit/>);
- Joining the Clinton Global Initiative and developing a commitment aligned with promoting and supporting free expression;
- Launching the Change Your World series in Cairo, an event created to shine the light on extraordinary women who are creating positive change in the world and identify areas where companies can use their technology and platforms to amplify women's voices. Yahoo! will host a Change Your World event in Washington DC on May 18, 2012, as well as an event in Brazil in November of 2012.

Our sincere hope is that other companies join us in these efforts, as we have found that good business and responsible behavior are not mutually exclusive at all. Indeed, we believe that dialogue between companies and civil society organizations can help us better understand how to do our jobs the right way – for us, and for our users.

We very much look forward to continuing to work with you on this important effort, and we again thank you for the thoughtful and balanced approach in this legislation.

Sincerely,



David Hantman
Deputy General Counsel & Vice President, Global Public Policy
Yahoo! Inc.