

JNC press release 2017-04-12

The World Wide Web at a Crossroad

The Internet and the World Wide Web (WWW) of websites and links are great tools for making information and knowledge widely available.

However, there is now an increasing risk of much of the WWW coming under the control of a small number of powerful corporations who would gain ever more power over the cultural and economic life of humanity, the Just Net Coalition (JNC) warns.

At the heart of this threat is a technical specification called “Encrypted Media Extensions” (EME) which has been developed at the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) and which is now close to getting published as an official Recommendation of W3C. The purpose of EME is to allow the implementation of Digital Rights Management / Digital Restrictions Management (DRM) systems through which publishers want to control what end users can do with their content. The W3C's support of DRM will lead to a new form of digital colonialism, as W3C's EME has installed a “black box” of code to enforce dangerous U.S. laws like the DMCA on over a billion browsers globally, without user consent or respect for local laws.

Unlike all other specifications of the WWW, this undermines fundamental principles of social justice and fundamental principles of IT security. The Just Net Coalition has therefore sent an open letter urging W3C, and in particular the inventor of the WWW, Tom Berners-Lee (who has veto rights at W3C), to reject EME.

JNC website: <http://justnetcoalition.org/>

Open letter: http://justnetcoalition.org/2017/W3C_EME_objection.pdf

Contact: Norbert Bollow, JNC co-convenor, nb@bollow.ch, +41 44 972 20 72