

Bulletin Winter 2006

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Top Story

Controversial Cartoons Lead to Worldwide Concern For Speech, Press Freedom, and Religious Values

In January 2006, a wave of protests spread through Muslim countries all over the world, some of them violent. [Continue reading](#)

Freedom of Speech

Church Group's Protests Spawn Legislation Limiting Demonstrations

On March 16, 2006, U.S. Senators Evan Bayh (D-Ind.) and Saxby Chambliss (R-Ga.), introduced S.2452 in the United States Congress, a bill that would restrict demonstrations at national cemeteries and military funerals. [Continue reading](#)

Historian David Irving Found Guilty Under Austria's Holocaust Denial Law

British historian David Irving was sentenced on Feb. 20, 2006 to three years in an Austrian jail after pleading guilty to violating domestic laws against denying the existence of the Holocaust. [Continue reading](#)

Government Restrictions on Information

Governor Prevails in Suit Filed by *Baltimore Sun*

A Feb. 16, 2006 ruling by federal judge Paul Niemeyer of the Fourth Circuit U.S. Court of Appeals has upheld a lower court's ruling that Maryland governor Robert L. Ehrlich did not violate *The Baltimore Sun's* First Amendment rights when he sent a November 2004 memo to state public information officers ordering them not to speak to David Nitlin, *The Sun's* State House Bureau Chief, or Michael Olesker, a *Sun* columnist. [Continue reading](#)

Reclassification Policies Revised at National Archives

Less than two weeks after *The New York Times* disclosed the existence of a controversial program aimed at reclassifying documents previously open to the public, National Archivist Allen Weinstein announced a "moratorium" on further reclassifications until an audit could be completed to determine which documents needed to be classified. [Continue reading](#)

Wiretap Updates

Administration's Domestic Spying Program Raises Constitutional Questions

"Months after the Sept. 11 attacks, President Bush secretly authorized the National Security Agency to eavesdrop on Americans and others inside the United States to search for evidence of terrorist activity without the court-approved warrants ordinarily required for domestic spying, according to government officials." [Continue reading](#)

***New York Times* Held Story About Domestic Spying Program Over a Year**

The New York Times waited for a year to publish an article that finally ran Dec. 16, 2005 which revealed President Bush's authorization of warrantless domestic eavesdropping by the National Security Agency (NSA). Continue reading

Freedom of Information Act News

Transcripts of Guantanamo Tribunals Released

The Associated Press has prevailed in a Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) lawsuit against the Department of Defense (DoD), seeking transcripts from the *ad hoc* military tribunals of Guantanamo Bay detainees that began in August 2004. Continue reading

New Justice Alito Addresses the Importance of the First Amendment At Confirmation Hearings

United States Supreme Court Justice Samuel A. Alito, Jr. highlighted the importance of First Amendment rights during his confirmation hearing, but deflected more specific inquiries about his view on the amendment, leaving open the question of how he would vote as the newest member of the high court. Continue reading

Internet Updates

Yahoo, Microsoft, Google, and Cisco Systems Criticized For Complying with Chinese Restrictions

For many Americans, the phrase "Tiananmen Square" brings to mind the June 1989 suppression of student protesters by the Chinese government in Beijing, China. Continue reading

Privacy News

Federal Appeals Court Finds McDermott in Violation of Wiretap Law

A 2 to 1 ruling by a federal appeals court panel in Washington, D.C., has found that Representative Jim McDermott (D-Wash.) violated the federal wiretap law, 18 U.S.C. §2511 *et seq.*, when he disclosed a tape recording of a phone conversation involving U.S. House Majority Leader John A. Boehner (R-Ohio) and other members of the Republican Party leadership in 1996 that he had reason to know was illegally obtained. Continue reading

Free Speech Rights Trump Religious Beliefs in Photography Case

Erno Nussenzweig, an Orthodox Hasidic Jew, has lost a lawsuit claiming that a picture taken of him by photographer Philip-Lorca DiCorcia and later included as part of an art exhibition and accompanying book was an unauthorized use of his likeness as well as a violation of his religious beliefs. Continue reading

Defamation News

Survey finds that Simpsons are Better Known than the First Amendment

A survey conducted by the McCormick Tribune Freedom Museum in January 2006 found that while 72 percent of Americans asked could name one of the rights protected by the First

Amendment, only 28 percent could name two or more, just 8 percent could name three or more, and two percent could name four or more. Continue reading

Appeal in Canadian Libel-Tourism Case Denied

On Feb. 16, 2006, the Supreme Court of Canada denied an appeal by libel plaintiff Cheickh Bangoura, letting stand an Ontario Appeal Court decision holding that the court did not have jurisdiction to hear the case. Continue reading

Media Ethics News

Events at Sago Mine Lead to Confusion for Officials, Media

On January 2, 2006, twelve miners were killed after an explosion in the Sago coal mine in Tallmansville, W.Va. Family and friends of the miners had waited a day and a half for news of their loved ones, who had been forced to retreat deep into the mine and wait for rescue. Continue reading

Baltimore Sun Columnist Fired for Plagiarism

After 27 years of writing columns for *The Baltimore Sun*, Michael Olesker resigned on Jan. 4, 2006, following allegations that he had plagiarized work from other publications. Continue reading

Author of *A Million Little Pieces* Criticized for Embellishments

James Frey's admission in early 2006 that his best-selling memoir *A Million Little Pieces* is filled with exaggerations and embellishments sparked a wave of lawsuits from disgruntled readers and raised ethical concerns throughout the publishing industry. Continue reading

Village Voice Reporter Fabricates Events in Cover Story

Senior associate editor Nick Sylvester has been suspended from his position at *The Village Voice* for fabricating events in a cover story that appeared during the first week of March 2006. Continue reading

Silha Center Events

Kathleen Hall Jamieson Addresses Problems in Campaign Advertising

In the contemporary rhetoric of U.S. politics, Kathleen Hall Jamieson fears that our elected leaders have begun to treat facts and truth as malleable objects, she told the audience at a March 7, 2006 forum on "Truth Telling in Campaign Ads." Continue reading

Panel Discusses "The End of Journalism? Why News Still Matters"

On Feb. 20, 2006, panelists and speakers gathered at Coffman Memorial Union Theater on the East Bank of the University of Minnesota's Twin Cities campus to discuss "The End of Journalism? Why News Still Matters." Continue reading

Silha Forum Focuses on Privacy in E-Mail, Internet Use

Many of the students attending the Silha Forum on March 28, 2006 indicated by a show of hands that they do not give much thought to how much of their personal information might be accessible to others when sending e-mails or surfing the Internet. Continue reading