

June 9, 2003

He Honorable Jeb Bush  
PL 105, Florida State Capitol  
400 South Monroe Street  
Tallahassee, FL 32399

Dear Governor Bush;

USACM is the U.S. Public Policy Committee of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). Our charter is to provide non-partisan, technology-based input to policymakers on issues of U.S. public policy.

We have become aware of a number of states pursuing initiatives to pass new laws that provide additional legal protections for certain communication services, including the digital transmission of music, video and similar media. USACM is concerned that overly broad measures might impact much of the use of computers and the Internet beyond the acts of infringement being targeted.

As your state considers measures to restrict computing technology and devices that conceal the origin or destination of electronic messages and communications, please keep in mind that many similar forms of computing technology are necessary to provide good security and to conduct research. For instance, Network Address Translation (NAT) "firewall" devices and encrypted virtual private networks (VPN) are common computer security measures that hide or mask identifying information from potential attackers. Restricting the use of NAT, VPN and similar technologies could inadvertently threaten the overall security of electronic commerce transactions and the privacy of electronic messages.

It is the USACM's policy to encourage policy-makers to eschew laws that restrict technology instead of penalizing infringing behavior. Technology almost always has more than a single use, and restricting something because of potential misuse will often have a negative effect on commerce, research, public safety, and law enforcement.

Please do not hesitate to contact the ACM Office of Public Policy Office at (202) 478-6312 if we can provide input on any computing-related issues.

Sincerely,

Barbara Simons, Ph.D.  
Eugene H. Spafford, Ph.D.  
Co-Chairs  
U.S. ACM Public Policy Committee  
Association for Computing Machinery

About USACM:

USACM is the U.S. Public Policy Committee of the Association for Computing Machinery (ACM). ACM is the leading nonprofit membership organization of computer scientists and information technology professionals dedicated to advancing the art, science, engineering and application of information technology. Since 1947, ACM has been a pioneering force in fostering the open interchange of information and promoting both technical and ethical excellence in computing. Over 70,000 computer scientists and information technology professionals from around the world are members of ACM.