

# School massacre killers were heavy Internet users

Once again, the Internet is a major story in a major story about violence. The tragic massacre at Columbine High School in Littleton, Colo., has sent millions flocking to online chat rooms, prayer sessions and portal news sites.

Like traditional media, the Internet has buzzed with information and anguish over the tragic news of the shootings.

But what has become most disturbing is how big a role the Net played in the lives of the two gunmen, Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold. Both frequented many of the hate Web sites and played violent online games, according to friends.

Harris created Web sites that espoused violence, contained instructions on how to build shrapnel-loaded pipe bombs and reportedly wrote: "I live in Denver and I would love to kill almost all of its residents. You all better hide in your houses because I'm coming for everyone and I will shoot to kill and I will kill everything."

The father of a student at Columbine High School turned that and 14 other pages of Harris' web writings over to police last fall. On an America Online Web site Harris created, he told teenagers visitors how to make pipe bombs, cautioning them to put newspapers down on the carpet when working with gunpowder, saying: "...if you have a big black stain on yer carpet, mom and dad might ask some questions."

Police and school officials wouldn't comment on the Web pages, which were common knowledge among Columbine students, according to numerous news accounts. AOL removed the Web site immediately after the shootings and turned the data over to the FBI.

Even a couple months before, researchers at the Simon Wiesenthal Center had stumbled across the so-called "Trenchcoat Mafia" Web site. Rabbi Marvin Hier, founder of the Los Angeles-based center that keeps track of hate crimes, said he didn't report it to police at the time because

"there was no indication that this was a dangerous site from people planning something."

The truth of the matter is, as bad as Harris' site may have been, there are many more that are much worse.

Hier is calling on Internet companies to voluntarily screen out sites that promote hatred, violence or teach how to make weapons.

I went on line the other night, about 10 minutes before I was to host a radio show on WXYT to talk about the tragedy. Just out of curiosity, I typed in a simple search on the word pipe bomb. By airtime, I had exact recipes on how to make three different types of explosive devices.

That same day a reporter for the Reuters newswire went on the Net to see how easy it would be to buy weapons. After just a few minutes on line, with virtually no knowledge of firearms, the reporter was able to arrange to buy a powerful .357 handgun, no questions asked.

There will be much more written and reported about the killers and the Net. And there will be more incidents to come.

But the shootings underscore once again the critical need for parents to take responsibility and start monitoring the Internet habits of their children. And with that, the online community must also begin to vigorously police itself.

Meanwhile, for the latest news and background on the tragedy, as well as resources for parents on understanding the youth culture from the suspects came from, check the following sites:

<http://www.insidedenver.com/> (Rocky Mountain News newspaper)

<http://www.denverpost.com> (Denver Post newspaper)

<http://columbine.jeffco.k12.co.us> (Columbine High School)

<http://jeffco.k12.co.us> (School District)

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<http://www.jeffcosheriff.com/> (Sheriff's Department)

<http://www.kusa.com> (Local News channel)

<http://www.awedishhospital.com/> (One of the local hospitals)

The Mining Co's "Parenting of Adolescents" Web site (<http://parentingteens.miningco.com/>) offers an extensive collection of links and resources about the problem of teen violence.

And "Plugged In," Focus on the Family's online guide (<http://www.family.org/pplac/celp/>) for parents seeking to understand the youth culture.

**PC MIKE SEMINARS**

Space is almost gone for the next PC Mike Seminar, "Internet 101" now set from 10 a.m. to noon, Saturday, May 8, at Lawrence Technological University, 21000 W. 10 Mile, Southfield.

The popular session will provide a broad and practical overview of how the Internet and e-mail can help personal and business users. It will include information on navigating and searching the World Wide Web, how to set up a Web site for personal and business use, how to filter out porn and unwanted e-mail and what to look for in a computer system and Internet Service Provider.

I'll also pass out my new PC Mike Tech Tips card... free to all attendees. Doors open 9:30 a.m., but you must reserve a spot in advance. Call the 24-hour PC Mike reservation line at (248) 423-2721. Admission is \$5 per person.

And we've just added a second seminar for next month, this one dealing with the Y2K problem. It will be held Saturday, May 22, at the MSU Management Center in Troy. Again, call (248) 423-2721 to reserve a space.

Mike Wendland reports about computers and the Internet for NBC-television stations coast-to-coast. His radio show is heard every weekend on TalkRadio 2720 WXYT. You can reach Mike through his Web site at [www.pcsmike.com](http://www.pcsmike.com)

# Lawmakers uncertain about plan to allow boundary crossing for athletics

**By TIM RICHARD**  
STAFF WRITER  
[richard@bce.com](mailto:richard@bce.com)

House Republicans are giving the Engler administration a hard time on its efforts to let non-public school students take part in public school sports and clubs.

Lawmakers also are casting a wary eye at the governor's idea of letting school districts cross boundaries to set up competing "satellite" schools in other districts.

It's widely believed the House will strip out the section allowing non-public students to take part in public school sports. Administrators fear that athletes with low grades won't be "home" schooled, graded easily by their parents and become eligible for sports. "The day we adopt this, every high school dropout would become eligible for athletics," warned freshman Rep. Mike Pumphrey, R-Fremont.

"I'm bothered by the satellite school idea," said Rep. Patricia (Pan) Godchaux, R-Birmingham, as the House Appropriations subcommittee on school aid took up the bill April 21. "We've tried to get school districts to collaborate. This will create an adversarial relationship between them."

Rep. Tom Kelly, D-Wayne, agreed, recalling the bitter fight when Romulus School District set up a "charter" school within Detroit's boundaries. "There was animosity and acrimony. There were problems with recruitment and sports," he said.

"No one's pounding on my door, begging for satellite schools," said Rep. Terry Geiger, R-Lake Orion, chair of the full House Appropriations Committee.

Replied Robbie Jameson of Engler's budget office: "The governor has had districts complaining they can't compete like charter schools do. This is a way to provide choice for parents. It's another step in the choice-competition continuum."

Another Engler idea is to stretch out pupil counts over the year so that state aid could be cut to districts with high dropout and absenteeism rates.

Brian Whiston, who represents Oakland Intermediate School District in Lansing's lobbies, explained how it works. Historically, school aid was based on attendance on the fourth Friday in September. Then the state went to a blended count: 50 percent weight to February, 50 percent to September.

This helped districts losing population but hurt suburban growth districts. So last year, Sen. Bill Bost, R-Milford, and then-Rep. Barbara Dobb, R-Union Lake, got it changed to 40 percent weight for February, 60 percent September.

Engler is proposing 20 percent weight for February and 10 percent weight for each of the eight months from September through May. "The funding would more closely follow the child," said budget spokesperson Jameson.

"This is going to add a lot of administrative cost," predicted Godchaux. "You're telling us it's

revenue-neutral." She noted that Proposal A, which made every district dependent on state aid, requires all 29 Oakland K-12 districts to submit reports. Prior to Proposal A, however, just three of 29 needed to report.

"It took 15 or 16 people added to the payroll to audit the reports," Godchaux said. (Proposal A cut property taxes and substituted a 2 percent rate increase in the sales tax to fund public schools.)

Pumford agreed with Godchaux's criticism. "For five years, I was a school audience officer. It's not a popular job. That's the reason I ran for the Legislature," he said to loud laughter.

Engler's plan would require nine separate head counts and 10 "supplemental" count days for each of those, Pumford said. "How many more staff will have to be added at the Department of Education?"

"Not many," Jameson replied. "Reports come in electronically."

Engler's effort is taking a strange legislative path. Usually, policy bills are separately drafted and sent to the House Education Committee, as in the case of the Detroit takeover.

This time, Engler has put his policy proposals into a budget bill — the K-12 supplemental bill. It provides \$87.8 million more for K-12 schools in fiscal 1999 (current year) and \$120.1 million more for fiscal 2000 (beginning Oct. 1). That's why it's in the Appropriations Committee process.

# Students from page B4

think that would have been a positive thing."

Walch cautioned that "you don't know what's going on with the family." And Common Ground Sanctuary CEO Tony Rothschild, who also is a school board member in Lake Orion, said: "It's everybody's fear that

it'll happen again."

A panel of Eccentric journalists tackled the more general topic of the newspaper business. In filling out an evaluation form, Miranda Kucera from Rochester High said her favorite part of the seminar was when Eccentric Managing Editor Phil Sherman

said: "Censorship is never the answer."

"I think it's good when teens can get together and discuss things like this," said Kara Kosowski, from Academy of the Sacred Heart's Guellette Gazette. "If word gets out, in general, it's a good thing."

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<b>Pontiac</b> Tuesday, April 27 11 a.m. at Pontiac Public Library 60 East Pike	<b>South Lyon</b> Friday, April 30 2 p.m. at Big Boy 22421 Pontiac Trail

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