

## **Why is There Junk and Crime on the Internet?**

The easy answer is that the internet has become so big that it's now simply a reflection of human nature and civilization. Let's look at an analogy. If a well-meaning artist chooses to capture what he feels when he looks at a tuff cone crater with botanical wonders, his painting will represent a blend of his technical skills and his talent at reproducing what he perceives. Assuming he does not use any toxic pigments or that he is not repainting on top of a stolen canvas, there won't be anything immoral about his work.

But when many people have similar ideas and choose to make a living out of painting, we get into a whole other sphere. Such artists will compete with each other and have to look for patrons. If their work is unappreciated, they have to find another vocation, and they either relegate the passion to a hobby or, to continue painting seriously, they moonlight and take time away from their loved ones and their paying job.

Meanwhile wealthy tastes influence the choice of subjects and style, and suddenly status is associated with owning esteemed paintings. The value of a small minority of works soars out of sensible proportions. Thieves get interested in art, and talented forgers succumb to their temptations. Museums try to preserve prized art for future generations, attempting to protect works from the ravages of oxygen and moisture, while others try to persuade curators into buying unworthy material.

Profit-seeking corporations, whose decision-makers may never feel what the isolated painter experienced, use art to promote their products. For others it is merely another item to peddle. And then there are deviants who merely use paintings as another medium to spread their perversions.

Most of what applies to paintings applies to the internet. When the internet was small, it was an efficient way for professionals to communicate. As it got bigger, some saw it as a vast and inexpensive library and envisioned it as a democratic means of communication for unheard voices.

Now that the internet is far bigger than the business of art, it is still all of those things, but it's also been infiltrated by merchants, pornographers, and abusers. Select projects have turned to gold mines, and in the same way that most of us cannot distinguish between wavelengths ranging from inspired art to a fake, we have a hard time deciding which available information is worth reading or posting. But those who control mass media have ensured that the messages getting the most exposure on electronic devices are those that received their seal of approval.