

The outlook was grim. The Senate had just slam-dunked the First Amendment by passing the Exon Amendment, which aimed to turn the Internet into nothing more stimulating than *Mister Rogers' Neighborhood*. It looked bleak for cyberspace. Enter the Lone Ranger and Tonto: Representatives Chris Cox (R-California) and Ron Wyden (D-Oregon). This conservative/liberal team brandished a bill dubbed the "Exon Killer," effectively prohibiting the government from placing any restrictions on online content.

Hands off the Net

"It's definitely a full 'hands off' approach," says Cox (a.k.a. Lone Ranger). "Getting government involved with the Internet would be a tremendous drag on innovation."

The bill has the backing of another surprising white hat: Speaker Newt Gingrich (R-Georgia). The "less government" tack, implicit in the Cox/Wyden bill, is popular with the House GOP posse. After all, it rode into Congress on a mandate of creating "less government." Now it has a chance to ride into cyberspace proclaiming the same thing. — Brock N. Meeks



► up 35 percent over a half-year period, with another 70 percent increase expected in the next six months (more info at <http://www.umich.edu/~sgupta/hermes/>).

⊘ Polls about Polls Should Frighten the Pols: According to a survey conducted by the Verity

Group, the Republic should just disband and get it over with. The study found that 57 percent of consumers would rather use

interactive TV to vote directly on legislative issues than trust their Congressional reps. ⊘ Real Dumb: Maybe AI needs a new image. A recent issue of *Business Week* points out that more than

70 percent of the Fortune 500 use artificial-intelligence technology such as database marketing, agent software, or voice recognition, but the moniker "AI" carries such a stigma that no one

will admit to using or selling AI software. ⊘ Strictly Business: Remember the euphoria about how no one can control the Net and how authoritarian countries will crumble under the Net's

information-wants-to-be-free mentality? Well China, for one, isn't taking this



The Australian cyberfeminist group VNS Matrix celebrates "all the chicks with attitude who are getting their hands dirty with digital technology."

VNS Matrix's game, *All New Gen*, features a heroine on a quest to sabotage the databanks of Big Daddy Mainframe. In the process, she must combat such adversaries as Circuit Boy ("a dangerous technobimbo") while restoring levels of life-giving "slime" by bonding with "DNA sluts."

Despite the dyke aesthetic of *All New Gen* with its shaven-head-

Cyber dykes R Us

ed cyberwomen, VNS Matrix is neither wholly lesbian nor anti-male: "We do like men," they insist. "Some of us even have sex with them." For more information, e-mail: jules@sysx.apana.org.au. — Jane Szita