

Introduction

We are not endorsing these laws or the views they imply, merely reporting them.

Source: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/technology/news/6408927/Internet-rules-and-laws-the-top-10-from-Godwin-to-Poe.html>

1. Godwin's Law

The most famous of all the internet laws, formed by Mike Godwin in 1990. As originally stated, it said: "As a Usenet discussion grows longer, the probability of a comparison involving Nazis or Hitler approaches 1." It has now been expanded to include all web discussions.

It is closely related to the logical fallacy "reductio ad Hitlerum", which says "Hitler (or the Nazis) liked X, so X is bad", frequently used to denigrate vegetarians and atheists.

2. Poe's Law

Not to be confused with the law of poetry enshrined by Edgar Allan Poe, the internet Poe's Law states: "Without a winking smiley or other blatant display of humour, it is impossible to create a parody of fundamentalism that someone won't mistake for the real thing."

It was originally formulated by Nathan Poe in 2005 during a debate on christianforums.com about evolution, and referred to creationism rather than all fundamentalism, but has since been expanded.

Inverse Poe's Law, stating that non-fundamentalists will often mistake sincere expressions of fundamentalist beliefs for parody

3. Rule 34

States: "If it exists, there is porn of it." See also Rule 35: "If no such porn exists, it will be made." Generally held to refer to fictional characters and cartoons, although some formulations insist there are "no exceptions" even for abstract ideas like non-Euclidean geometry, or puzzlement.

The spread of fanfic, slash fiction and hentai around the internet, as well as the rise of furies, are making this law more and more accurate every day.

The other 33 rules change frequently, except one and two, which are "Do not talk about /b/" and "Do NOT talk about /b/", respectively, referring to a message board on the 4chan.org website.

4. Skitt's Law

Expressed as "any post correcting an error in another post will contain at least one error itself" or "the likelihood of an error in a post is directly proportional to the embarrassment it will cause the poster." It is an online version of the proofreading truism Muphry's Law, also known as **Hartman's Law of Prescriptivist Retaliation**: "any article or statement about correct grammar, punctuation, or spelling is bound to contain at least one error".

5. Scopie's Law

States: "In any discussion involving science or medicine, citing Whale.to as a credible source loses the argument immediately, and gets you laughed out of the room." First formulated by Rich Scopie on the badscience.net forum.

This law makes little sense without a background knowledge of Whale.to, a conspiracy theory site which includes such items as the complete text of the anti-Semitic hoax Protocols of the Elders of Zion, as well as claims that Aids is caused by vaccination programmes, and that Auschwitz never happened.

6. Dant's Law (aka Parker's Law)

States: "If you have to insist that you've won an internet argument, you've probably lost badly." Named after a user on the role-playing gamers' forum RPG.net.

7. Pommer's Law

Proposed by Rob Pommer on rationalwiki.com in 2007, this states: "A person's mind can be changed by reading information on the internet. The nature of this change will be from having no opinion to having a wrong opinion."

8. DeMyer's Laws

Named for Ken DeMyer, a moderator on Conservapedia.com. **There are four: the Zeroth, First, Second and Third Laws.**

The Second Law states: "Anyone who posts an argument on the internet which is largely quotations can be very safely ignored, and is deemed to have lost the argument before it has begun."

The Zeroth, First and Third Laws cannot be very generally applied and will be glossed over here.



9. Cohen's Law

Proposed by Brian Cohen in 2007, states that: "Whoever resorts to the argument that 'whoever resorts to the argument that... ..has automatically lost the debate' has automatically lost the debate."
Has also been stated in the much longer version, "Whoever resorts to the argument that 'whoever resorts to the argument that... 'whoever resorts to the argument that... 'whoever resorts to the argument that... 'whoever resorts to the argument that ... 'whoever resorts to the argument that... ..has automatically lost the debate' ...has automatically lost the debate' ...has automatically lost the debate' ...has automatically lost the debate' ...has automatically lost the debate' ...has automatically lost the debate' has automatically lost the debate."

10. The Law of Exclamation

First recorded in an article by Lori Robertson at FactCheck.org in 2008, this states: "The more exclamation points used in an email (or other posting), the more likely it is a complete lie. This is also true for excessive capital letters."

It is reminiscent of the claim in Terry Pratchett's Discworld novels that the more exclamation marks someone uses in writing, the more likely they are to be mentally unbalanced.



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Page 2 of 2.

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