

Columbia Chronicle Web Policy

Our policy is that we do not remove articles, or portions of articles, from our online archives, nor do we remove authors' names from said articles once they've been published online. Articles may be corrected or amended if we determine that we have published material that is libelous or inaccurate, with a note detailing the date and time of the correction—but articles and author names will not be removed.

This affects all works currently online at www.columbiachronicle.com. Reasons are as follows:

Current Web-caching technology used by search engines like Google, Yahoo! and the Internet Wayback Machine archives our published online materials basically the same day the work is posted. This means that removing a name from an article (or removing the article entirely) after it's published on the Internet is a futile gesture. The information is already out there and will still turn up in searches. Removing a name or an article from our online archives might diminish the results that are returned in a search, but (especially as time goes by) it won't remove all traces of the existence of that information on the Internet.

Furthermore, even if it were possible to remove all traces of an online article, the information would still exist in physical copy. The Columbia Chronicle is first and foremost a print publication, published weekly throughout the academic year. Issues are published in bound volumes at the end of each semester, and extra copies of each issue are archived for internal use, and are available to anyone interested in purchasing said copies at the end of the year. Additionally, the Columbia College Chicago library keeps physical archives of each issue of the Columbia Chronicle.

Additionally, there are ethical issues involving the removal of already published material from the public sphere. In February 2001, students protested an advertisement included in the UC-Berkeley's Daily Californian, claiming that they found the ad to be racist in content. Editors removed remaining copies of the newspaper from the racks that day and published a formal apology the following day. The ad's author objected to this action, stating issues of free speech regarding the editors' actions. He argued that once an issue (and any information inside of it) has been published, attempting to remove it from the public sphere could be termed censorship.

While the articles in our archives are not equivalent to ads, the same principles of free speech are applied. If the author, subjects or readers no longer give support to statements made in any published materials, the Columbia Chronicle upholds the right to preserve the work as-is.

In the past we have received requests to remove information from our Web site and handled such situations on a case-by-case basis. We decided to formulate a policy to ensure consistency and fairness for any such issues in the future.

In a nutshell, the basis for our policy is based on both technology and ethics. It would be futile to remove archived online material in hopes of "erasing" it from Internet search engines, and therefore editors at the Columbia Chronicle will only attempt this act when published materials is deemed libelous or inaccurate. Also, because removing existent content could be termed censorship in some instances, it

would be unethical for us to remove or alter data in our online archives.

It is our sincere hope that the above explanation will help our readers and writers understand the reasoning behind our current online policy. If there's anything we can clarify or further explain, please don't hesitate to contact us at (312) 344-8999 or chronicle@colum.edu.