

Ore. senator, others cited by digital-rights group

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(AP) -- An Oregon senator who was behind a 1996 federal law that has made content-sharing services such as YouTube and Facebook possible is among three recipients of Pioneer Awards from a leading digital-rights group.

Sen. Ron Wyden, D-Ore., was co-author of a law that protects online service providers from [legal liability](#) for content produced by their users. That means [Google](#) can let users freely post video on [YouTube](#), and Facebook can let users write [status updates](#) and share links without worry they would be sued for defamation and other issues. In such cases, any liability would rest with the user who posted the item.

In announcing the award, the [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#) also credits Wyden with recent efforts to block legislation deemed harmful to free speech and with proposing legislation to define when and how government and private parties can access location information in cellphones and other electronic devices.

Other recipients of the award were:

- Ian Goldberg, a University of Waterloo professor credited with exposing design weaknesses in encryption systems used to protect cellphone conversations and Wi-Fi traffic, resulting in improvements to the systems.
- Nawaat.org, a blog operated by four Tunisians and credited with

spreading information on social and political unrest there.

"These Pioneer Award winners are all working to make sure that technology protects freedom instead of curtailing it," EFF Executive Director Shari Steele said.

The EFF will give the awards at a Nov. 15 ceremony in San Francisco. The award does not carry a cash prize.

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