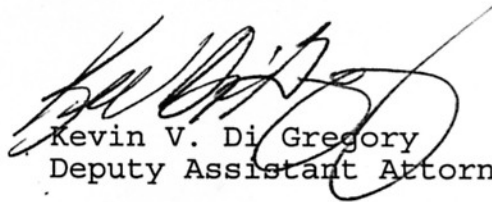


threaten or harass another person." 47 U.S.C. § 223(a); see *ApolloMedia Corp. v. Reno*, 19 F.Supp. 2d 1081 (N.D. Cal. 1998), *aff'd*, 119 S.Ct. 1450 (1999). If Dr. Hartmann believes he is a victim of a crime, he should contact state law enforcement authorities or the Federal Bureau of Investigation office in his area.

In his letter, Dr. Hartmann also expressed concern that his Internet service provider did not respond to his complaints about the postings to his satisfaction. The First Amendment and legislation generally protect Internet service providers that merely serve as intermediaries for the libelous or slanderous messages of others. 47 U.S.C. § 230(c)(2); see *Zeran v. America Online, Inc.*, 129 F.3d 327, 330-31 (4th Cir.1997), *cert. denied*, 118 S.Ct. 2341, 141 L.Ed.2d 712 (1998). Dr. Hartmann may, however, wish to consult an attorney to determine if he has any civil remedies available in this regard as well.

We hope this information is helpful. Please let me know if the Department of Justice can be of further assistance to you or your staff.

Sincerely,



Kevin V. Di Gregory  
Deputy Assistant Attorney General