

CDT's Big Night

by [Leslie Harris](#) [1]

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CDT last night gathered friends and colleagues throughout the technology and policy communities for a [Gala dinner](#) [2] here in Washington. We were honored to have Senate Judiciary Chairman Patrick Leahy (D-Vt.) and Microsoft Chairman Bill Gates give keynotes to mark the occasion. Full text of Gates' speech is [here](#) [3]. Other good news accounts of the event are [here](#) [4] and [here](#) [5]. For more than a decade, CDT has borne witness to one of the most phenomenal periods of technological advancement in human history. Even more exciting, we've had the opportunity to play a modest but important role in shaping the political and regulatory climate that has fostered that development. Starting with our successful Supreme Court challenge of the Communications Decency Act in 1996, all the way up to our recent efforts to root out the sources and financial motivations behind spyware, CDT has made it its business to ensure that the Internet's fundamentally democratic nature remain intact. As Leahy and Gates mentioned last night, we still have a great deal of work ahead of us. Sadly, the Internet's global success has not slowed efforts by governments at all levels to limit its functionality by exerting greater control over content. If anything those efforts have increased as the Internet occupies an increasingly central role in all aspects of public and private life. Similarly, as more and more users go online -- to do everything from sending e-mail to conducting major financial transactions -- the number and sophistication of scams intended to bilk those users continues to mount. These are at least as grave a threat to the Internet's openness and accessibility as are poorly conceived legal and regulatory efforts. The good news is that there are many, many people committed to preserving the Internet's unique openness. This was never clearer to us than it was last night as hundreds of our friends and colleagues turned out in support of our ongoing mission. We thank them all as we look forward to the next 12 years.

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