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## **‘Safe spaces’ – Electronic media, the internet, and the representation of disability**

Citation: Hodkinson, Alan (2014). ‘Safe spaces’ – Electronic media, the internet, and the representation of disability. IARTEM e-Journal 6 (1) 1 – 20

### **Abstract**

This paper details the findings from a research into educational ‘safe spaces’. In this research, the electronic media emplaced within four English schools’ intranet sites were examined to evidence the image of disability and impairment constructed in this ‘safe space’. The research, through the employment of proto text analysis, revealed that the image of disability and impairment within schools’ electronic media represented an unbalanced and negative image of disability that was grounded in the ideology of child deficit. Based upon these findings it is argued that ‘safe space’ in relation to these intranet sites was more a metaphor of dominance and power than one located within the principles of equality and social justice. The paper argues that as educators we must move beyond safe spaces as a shallow paradigm of meaning and ask when creating such places - what does space mean, how do the electronic media employed in such spaces create meaning and what might specific safe spaces do?

**Key words:** Disability, Internet, Intranet, Social Justice, Representations