

Research Report Human Rights Council

Forum: Human Rights Council

Issue: The question of establishing a Human Right for access to the internet

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Introduction

Internet is the term used to define a global system of interconnected computer networks that use the standard protocol suite to link several billion devices worldwide. It is basically a world-wide computer network that can be accessed via a computer, mobile telephone, PDA, games machine, digital TV, etc. The Internet access service can be provided through a fixed (wired) or mobile network: analogue dial-up modem via standard telephone line, ISDN (Integrated Services Digital Network), DSL (Digital Subscriber Line) or ADSL, Cable modem, High speed leased lines, Fiber, Powerline, Satellite broadband network, WiMAX, Fixed CDMA, Mobile broadband network (3G, e.g. UMTS) via a handset or card, Integrated SIM card in a computer, or USB modem.

We live in the 21st century that is characterized by the rapid technological growth, something that is proven by the fact that 40% of the world population has internet connection, a percentage which has remarkably grown and is still growing over the four years. In 1995 only 1% of the world population used to have internet connection.

Figure: Internet users in the world

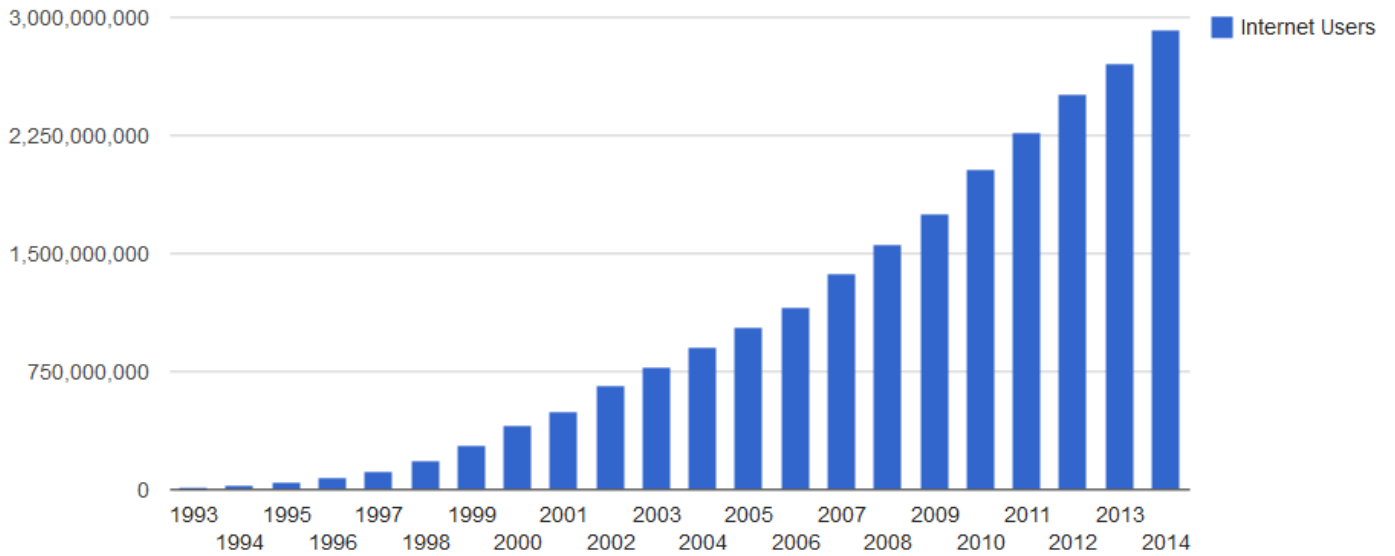
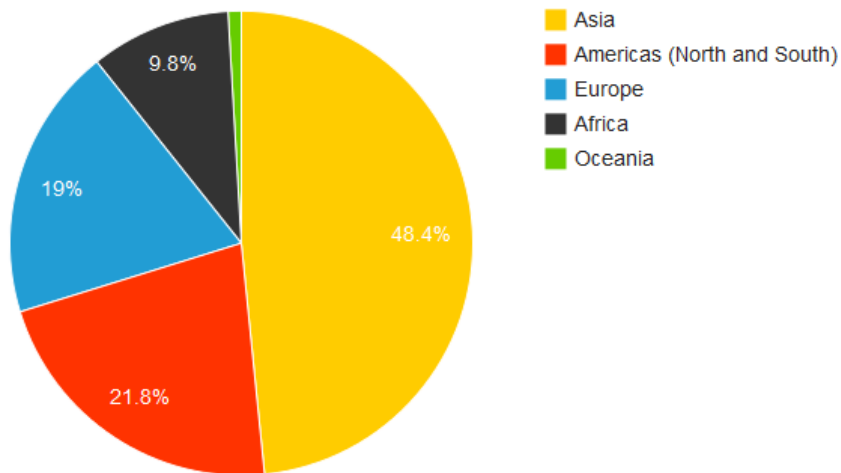


Figure: Internet users by Region



Source: *Internet Live Stats* (elaboration of data by *International Telecommunication Union (ITU)* and *United Nations Population Division*)

In 2014, nearly 75% (2.1 billion) of all internet users in the world (2.8 billion) live in the top 20 internet using countries. The remaining 25% (0.7 billion) is distributed among the other 178 countries, each representing less than 1% of total users. China, the country with most users (642 million in 2014), represents nearly 22% of total, and has more users than the next three countries combined (United States, India, and Japan). Among the top 20 countries, India is the one with the lowest penetration: 19% and the highest yearly growth rate. At the opposite end of the range, United States, Germany, France, U.K., and Canada have the highest penetration: over 80% of population in these countries has an internet connection.

| Top 10 uses of the Internet:

- 1) Communication
- 2) Research
- 3) Education
- 4) Financial Transactions
- 5) Real-time updates (news, media)
- 6) Leisure (Entertainment)
- 7) Online booking
- 8) Job Search
- 9) Blogging
- 10) Shopping

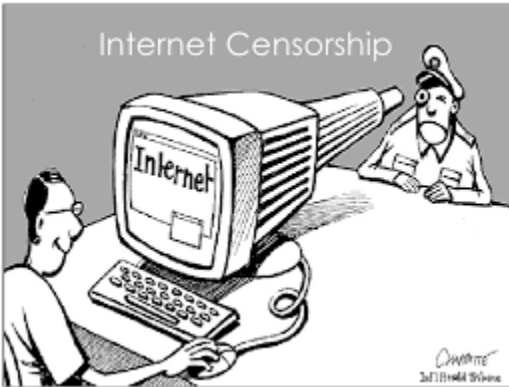
Basic Problem

According to international law, one of the definitions of freedom of speech is the right to privacy in the context of the Internet and information technology, which is recognized as a fundamental human right for all human beings. The Internet today has evolved into this multifunctional network through which information, consumption and thus expression of one's opinion is meant to be presented with equity and liberty. The thriving world of the social networks has contributed to the creation of a globalized interlinked community in which innovative ideas, criticisms, and discussions have broaden the understanding of different cultures and at the same time have merged global borders. In this way we can argue that information freedom has been enhanced to a degree. The internet is in fact the new global force, with its users having access to unlimited information.

However, it is vital to mention the fact that there are some countries which implement censorship and filtering, limiting or in some cases restricting the right of freedom of speech through the



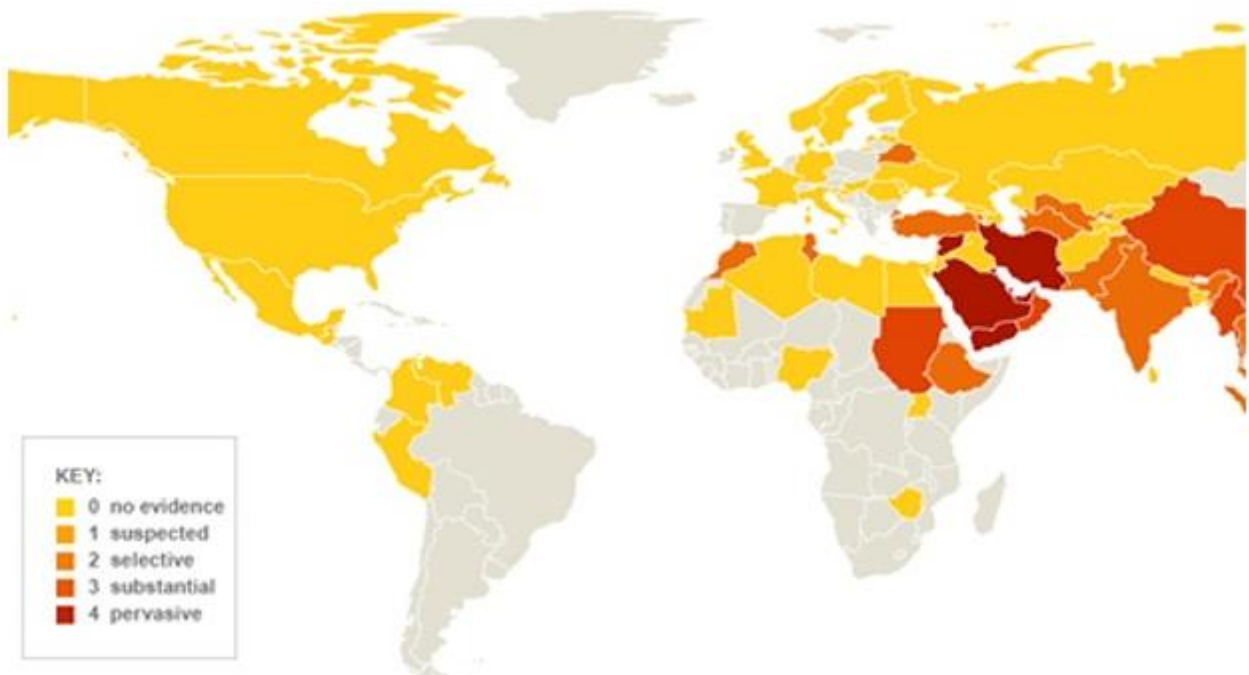
internet. Particularly they prevent information from reaching their civilians unchanged and objective.



According to the OpenNet Initiative, filtering can be categorized in terms of political issues, internet tools, social matters and finally conflict/security, with the first two being criticized for the adverse effects they inflict on human rights and with the latter being deemed necessary in some cases. Political censorship involves views and information in opposition to those of the current government or related to human rights, freedom of expression, minority rights, and religious movements. Furthermore, internet tool

filtering has to do with e-mail, Internet hosting, search, translation, and Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP) services, as well as censorship circumvention methods. Also, social censoring provides the means of controlling stands and data perceived as offensive or as socially sensitive, often related to sexuality, gambling, or illegal drugs and alcohol.

Internet censorship and key countries



Top 10 countries that exercise extensive filtering and censorship over access to the internet include the following:

- 1) Eritrea-----> Only media from the public sector are allowed to post news and any attempt to publicize anything that opposes the ruling party is dealt with prison sentences and exile
- 2) North Korea ----->All websites are under government control. About 4% of the population has Internet and all 12 news agencies derive from the Korean Central News Agency which is exclusively politically oriented.
- 3) Saudi Arabia-----> Laws allow the interference of the state in the websites available to public and the government removes anything that contradicts their religion, self-interest, national security and prevent international interests from being heard. YouTube is also filtered. Around 400,000 sites have been blocked, including any that discuss political, social or religious topics incompatible with the Islamic beliefs of the monarchy.
- 4) Ethiopia-----> The elections of May 2015 have caused control over the Internet to escalate since any independent reports from international journalists were prevented from being publicized. Journalists were arrested. This control over telecommunications is easy to be done in Ethiopia since there is one Internet provider which is a monopoly.
- 5) Azerbaijan-----> Media is owned by the public sector and international broadcasts are banned, while social media are completely prohibited.
- 6) Vietnam-----> The Communist Party requires Yahoo, Google and Microsoft to disclose information on all users. It blocks websites critical of the government, as well as those that promote democracy, human rights and religious freedom.
- 7) Iran-----> Bloggers must register at the Ministry of Art and Culture. Those that express opposition to the mullahs who run the country are harassed and jailed.
- 8) China-----> It has the most strict censorship program globally. The government filters searches, blocks sites and removes content that goes politically against them, rerouting search terms on Taiwan independence or the Tiananmen Square massacre to items favorable to the Communist Party.
- 9) Myanmar-----> The Printers and Publishers Registration Law forbids the exposure of news regarding insults to their religion, ethnic unity and rule of law.
- 10) Cuba-----> The Internet is available only at government controlled "access points." Activity online is monitored through IP blocking, keyword filtering and browsing history checking. Only pro-government users may upload content.

Definition List

- 1) **Internet Host**: It is a computer connected directly to the Internet; normally an Internet Service Provider's (ISP) computer is a host.
- 2) **ARPANET**: was the network that became the basis for the Internet. Based on a concept first published in 1967, **ARPANET** was developed under the direction of the U.S. Advanced Research Projects Agency (ARPA)
- 3) **www**: The World Wide Web (**www**, W3) is an information system of interlinked hypertext documents and other digital resources that are accessed via the Internet. It is also known as Web
- 4) **Censorship**: Internet censorship is the control or suppression of what can be accessed, published, or viewed on the Internet. It may be carried out by governments or by private organizations at the behest of government, regulators, or on their own initiative.

Historical Background

The ancestor of the Internet that we know today is the so called “Victorian Internet”, the telegraph, which was first found in the 1840s. Communication was established through a vast network of interconnected wires that were covering huge distances and signals which were sent through those wires. The telegraph was especially used by the government of the United States during the American Civil War in 1861-1865. This “Victorian Internet” sent messages in Morse code which was comprised of dots and dashes or long and shorts signals.

The first reference to the idea of having many different computers linked together in a large network was first introduced by J.C.R. Licklider of MIT in August 1962, who was the head of computer research program at DARPA (Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency) that was launched October of the same year.

Successors of Licklider which include Ivan Sutherland, Bob Taylor, and MIT researcher Lawrence G. Roberts, were convinced to further explore the idea of what is today known as the internet. Roberts in particular suggested that communication of computers would be feasible by the use of packaging instead of circuits, something which revolutionized the way that scientists pictured networking. After grasping this idea, scientists were challenged into finding a way of making the computers to talk together, something was experimented with when Roberts connected the TX-2 computer in Mass to the Q-32 in California with a low speed dial-up telephone line creating the first wide-area computer network.

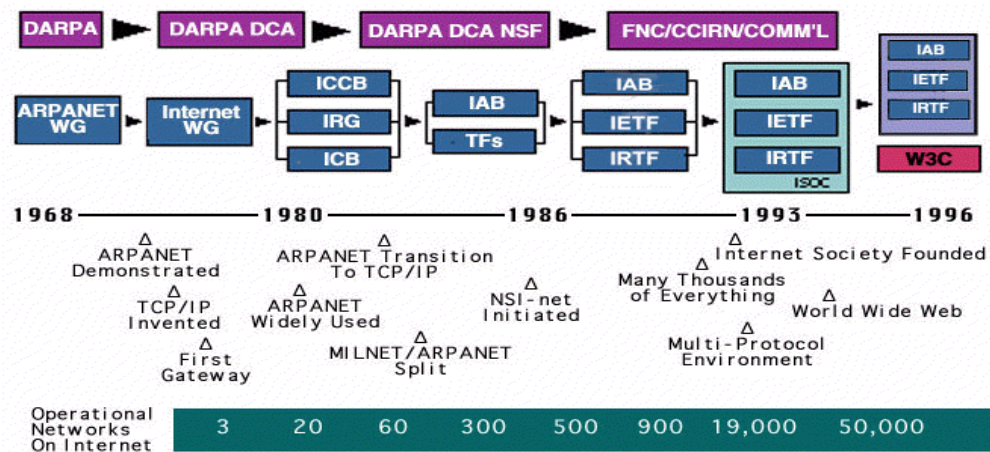
In late 1966 Roberts along with had fully put together the idea of the Internet and developed plans for the ARPANET (Advanced Research Projects Agency Network), the overall structure and

the specifications of which were finalized in August 1968. They then fashioned one of the key components the packet switches called Interface Message Processors (IMP's).

In 1969 the first five nodes were added to the project by the following universities: UCLA, Stanford, UC Santa Barbara, University of Utah and BBN. Later that year a computer of Stanford Research Institute (SRI) was connected to the ARPANET and the first host-host message was sent from Kleinrock's laboratory to SRI. By the end of the year four more computers were connected to the host one and after this more computers were periodically added to the ARPANET, something which led to the formation and completion of initial ARPANET Host-to-Host protocol, called the Network Control Protocol (NCP), enabling the programmers to develop the first computer applications.

In October 1972, a large, successful demonstration of the ARPANET at the International Computer Communication Conference (ICCC) was organized, in which the very first public presentation of what grew as one of the most important tools our generation, the internet. During the same year, the first email utility program to exist was introduced, allowing someone to read, file, forward, and respond to messages.

Future improvements as well as modifications enabled the world to experience the complexity and the vast capabilities of the internet we know today.



Timeline of events

- 1973- TCP/IP development begins
- 1974- Vint Cerf and Robert Kahn publish “A Protocol for Packet Network Interconnection”
- 1983- Paul Mockapetris invents Domain Name System
- 1986- First meeting of the Internet Engineering Force
- 1989- Tim Berners-Lee creates World Wide Web
- 1991- World Wide Web opens to public
- 1992- First Interop test and Conference, Réseaux IP Européens Network Coordination Centre (RIPE NCC) begins operations and the number of internet hosts exceeds 1 million
- 1993- National Centre for Supercomputing Applications releases Mosaic Web Browser
- 1994- World Wide Web Consortium was founded
- 1995- Amazon.com opens for business and eBay was launched as “AuctionWeb”
- 1996- Google was launched as “BackRub” and email surpasses portal mail
- 1997- American Registry for Internet Numbers was incorporated
- 1998- Tan Tin Wee founds Multilingual Internet Domain Name System, Mozilla project was created, and ICANN and the US government enter into a Memorandum of Understanding
- 2001- Number of Internet hosts exceeds one hundred million
- 2002- Latin American and Caribbean Network Information Centre was established
- 2003- Skype was released
- 2005- First video uploaded to YouTube
- 2006- Twitter was launched and Facebook was made available to public
- 2007- Number of internet hosts exceeds five hundred million
- 2008- Internet Assigned Numbers Authority adds IPv6 address records to six root servers
- 2009- ICANN approves the creation of Internationalized Domain Names for Country Code top level

(Based on the timeline of www.internetsociety.org)

Progress made by Human Rights Council

In 2012, UN Human Rights Council (HRC) had adopted the first resolution regarding rights on the Internet, establishing the promotion of one’s access to the Internet as well as the development of online media in all countries. Later, in 2014 during the 26th session of the UN HRC a new resolution was adapted, under the temporary name A/HRC/26/L.24. It is the first to state “that the same rights that people have offline must also be protected online, in particular

freedom of expression, which is applicable regardless of frontiers and through any media of one's choice." The resolution also calls on all states to address security concerns on the internet with respect to their international human rights obligations, through "national democratic, transparent institutions," and to adopt national internet-related public policies with the "objective of universal access and enjoyment of human rights at its core," though "transparent and multi-stakeholder processes." The foundation of the rights promoted is based on the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights, supported by the HRC in 2011.

How to prepare as a delegate

Personally I would recommend that each of you should research anything that has to do with your country's politics, geography, history and culture, economics, defense, international relations and issues/conflicts (as stated by the delegate booklet). Useful information can be extracted from your countries' official websites and other reliable websites like BBC, CNN etc. Then your aim is to find as much information as possible regarding the rights of people regarding access to the internet and freedom of speech in your country and the conditions, as well as to check in which treaties/resolutions on the Human Rights Council of the UN has your country signed, so that you can produce your position papers in which I stress that some suggestions against the problem should be mentioned. It is important to remember that Wikipedia is not recommended as a reliable source since it is open to manipulation, but if used I urge you to cross-reference the information obtained.

Useful Links

<http://www.ip-watch.org/2014/07/14/un-human-rights-council-adopts-resolutions-on-internet-corporate-responsibility/> (article on resolution of 2014)

http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf
http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf (UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights)

<http://www.internetsociety.org/> (you can find statistics about internet usages, history of the internet and general information)

<http://www.hrw.org/> (human rights watch of UN---> you can search by country)

<https://opennet.net/about-oni> (reports about filtering)

<http://www.un.org>

<http://bbc.com>

<http://edition.cnn.com/>

www.ohchr.org (HCR of UN)

For any questions email hrc@munoh.de