The Open Net Initiative's (ONI) global Internet censorship data provides ratings on the breadth and depth of Internet censorship in 74 countries. ONI's mission is to identify Internet filtering and surveillance and to promote and inform wider public dialogues about such practices. ONI uses a simple technical methodology to verify Internet censorship, comparing filtering for two lists of websites in both the country being tested and in Canada, which is used as control. For more detail on the methodology, please see the last page of this snapshot. Countries are scored for their level of filtering across four content categories: Political, Social, Internet Tools, and Conflict and Security.

Of the 74 countries covered by ONI, 43 received at least $2 million U.S. dollars in USAID funding in fiscal year 2010. These countries will be the focus of this report.

Internet Filtering

Latin America and the Caribbean has the lowest average regional percentage of countries engaging in Internet filtering. Of the five countries graded, three countries, Colombia, Mexico, and Venezuela engage in any kind of filtering; Colombia and Venezuela engage in selective filtering of social related content while Mexico filters content related to conflict and security. Internet regulation in the region focuses on similar concerns as in North America and Europe—i.e., combating the spread of child pornography and restricting child access to age-inappropriate material. In addition, many countries in Latin America are attempting to shore up intellectual property rights (IPR) protections by drafting and updating laws and ratifying international agreements such as the WIPO Copyright Treaty.

Percentage of Countries with Filtering

Legend: ◆ Africa ■ Asia ▲ E&E ✳ LAC ● Middle East
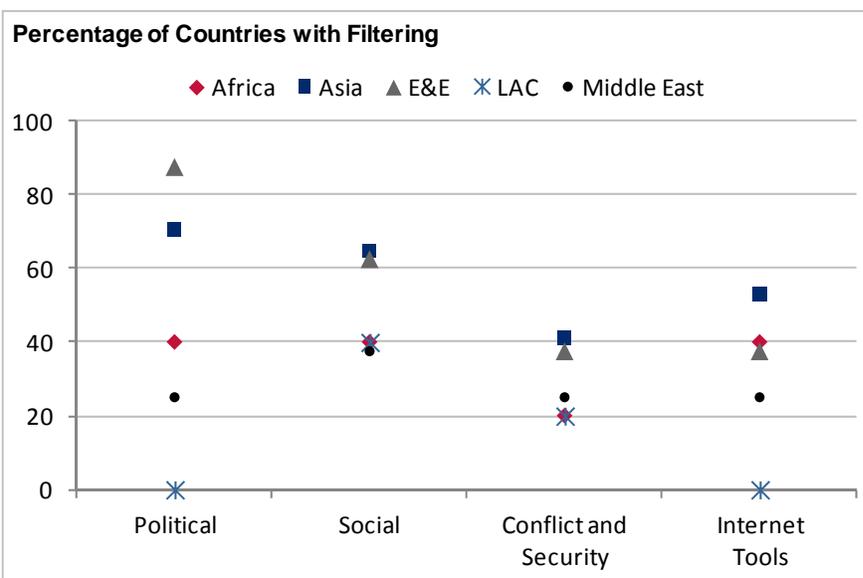
Of the five African countries that received USAID assistance, only Ethiopia shows evidence of filtering across all four categories. In response to its critics' use of online media, the Government of Ethiopia has implemented a filtering regime blocking access to blogs and news organizations as well as dissident political and human rights groups. Sudan is the only other country in the region with a record of filtering the Internet, doing so across the political, social and Internet tools categories.

In Asia, filtering of political content is pervasive in China, Burma, Vietnam, Turkmenistan, and Uzbekistan. Burma, China, and Vietnam maintain the most pervasive regimes of Internet filtering in the region, primarily targeting

independent media, politically related content, and human rights. Countries such as Thailand, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, India, Pakistan, and Tajikistan also show evidence of selective filtering of politically related content.

In Europe and Eurasia, seven of eight countries covered in the region engage in some form of Internet filtering with Armenia and Belarus filtering the Internet across all four categories. The most prevalent form of filtering is of political content with six out of eight countries engaging in selective filtering of political content and Armenia engaging in substantial filtering of political content. Uzbekistan follows a similar filtering regime to that of China. In Belarus, Kyrgyzstan and Russia, pro-government forces have reportedly used denial of service as a tactic to silence the opposition and independent media during elections. Armenia and Belarus have used legal and technical means to obtain control of domain space or limit access to the Internet.

In the Middle East, the most prevalent form of filtering among USAID assisted countries is of social content and is enforced in Yemen, West Bank/Gaza, and Morocco. Many countries in the region regulate traditional journalism as well as online writers through restrictive press laws and the penal code. Yemen is the only country in the region with evidence of censorship across all four categories while Morocco engages in selective filtering of social, Internet tools and conflict and security related content. Jordan is the only other country, aside from Yemen that engages in filtering of politically related content.

Internet Level of Transparency

ONI scores 25 countries on their level of transparency with respect to their Internet filtering practices. Of these countries, only two: Indonesia and Sudan are ranked as having high transparency. In Indonesia concerns about offensive online content have prompted the government to develop and promote mechanisms to ensure that web content is adequately regulated while making efforts to ensure that regulations abide by existing laws and are transparent. For example, databases of blacklisted Web sites are available to the public. However, filtering is unsystematic and inconsistent. Sudan is considered relatively transparent in its filtering compared to other countries in the region and provides an appellate process for challenging the blocking of a site. Censors in Sudan mainly target online pornography, which the government openly acknowledges. Many anonymizer and proxy web sites

Country Rankings

Country	Political Score	Social Score	Conflict and Security Score	Internet Tools Score
Countries with High Transparency				
Indonesia	2	3	0	2
Sudan	2	3	0	3
Countries with Low Transparency				
China (P.R.C.)	4	3	4	3
Turkmenistan	4	2	2	2
Uzbekistan	4	2	2	2
Ethiopia	3	2	2	2
Vietnam	4	2	2	3
Kazakhstan	2	2	0	0
Kyrgyzstan	2	2	0	0
Tajikistan	2	0	0	0
Azerbaijan	2	2	0	0
Belarus	2	2	2	2
Georgia	2	0	2	0
Moldova	2	0	0	0
Russia	2	2	0	0
Armenia	3	2	2	2
Morocco	0	2	2	2
West Bank/Gaza	0	3	0	0

are blocked as well as some sites related to provocative attire, dating, and gay and lesbian interests.

Countries with low transparency include China, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, and Belarus. In China, a study showed little consistency in censorship methods, the amount of content censored, and the provider's transparency in deleting the content. Users attempting to access a blocked site will simply receive a timeout error, which does not indicate whether the site has been blocked. There are no publicly available resources regarding blacklisted sites and users have no recourse to get a blocked site restored.

How does ONI Study Internet Filtration?

Two lists of websites are checked in each of the countries tested: a global list (constant for each country) and a local list (different for each country). The global list includes internationally relevant and popular websites, some of which have content that could be perceived as provocative or objectionable. The local lists are designed individually for each country by regional experts. In countries where Internet censorship has been reported, the local lists also include many of the sites that are allegedly blocked. The lists are then tested in both the country suspected of filtering and in Canada, which is used as a control since it has no filtering regime.

Where appropriate, the tests are run from different locations to capture the differences in blocking behavior across ISPs and across multiple days and weeks to control for normal connectivity problems.

Score Definitions

Political Score (0–4, 0 = no filtering to 4 = pervasive filtering)	The Political Score is based on the observed level of filtering on Web sites that express views in opposition to those of the current government. Content more broadly related to human rights, freedom of expression, minority rights, and religious movements is also considered here.
Social Score (0–4, 0 = no filtering to 4 = pervasive filtering)	The Social Score is based on the observed level of filtering of material related to sexuality, gambling, and illegal drugs and alcohol, as well as other topics that may be socially sensitive or perceived as offensive.
Conflict and Security Score (0–4, 0 = no filtering to 4 = pervasive filtering)	The Conflict and Security Score is based on the observed level of filtering on content related to armed conflicts, border disputes, separatist movements, and militant groups.
Internet Tools Score (0–4, 0 = no filtering to 4 = pervasive filtering)	The Internet Tools Score is based on the observed level of filtering of web sites that provide e-mail, Internet hosting, search, translation, Voice-over Internet Protocol (VoIP) telephone service, and circumvention methods.
Transparency Score (1–3, low to high transparency)	The transparency score given to each country is a qualitative measure based on the level at which the country openly engages in filtering. In cases where filtering takes place without open acknowledgment, or where the practice of filtering is actively disguised to appear as network errors, the transparency score is low. The existence or lack thereof of provisions to appeal or report instances of inappropriate blocking are accounted for in this measure.
Consistency Score (1–3, low to high consistency)	The consistency score measures the variation in filtering within a country across different ISPs—in some cases the availability of specific Web pages differs significantly depending on the ISP one uses to connect to the Internet.

Additional Information

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To access the complete ONI Internet Censorship dataset, please visit the Economic and Social Database (ESDB) at http://esdb.eads.usaidallnet.gov/. The ESDB website also offers related datasets such as the International Telecommunications Union ICT Indicators Database.