

Chapter 1

Online Filtering Policies Around the World

ABSTRACT

In this chapter, the authors begin by providing definitions about the basic terms in use and then proceed with an introduction to the global phenomenon of internet regulation. Furthermore, the development of online censorship is being presented, and the need for internet regulation is being discussed, along with the role that internet users can actually play. Additionally, the chapter provides a brief history of internet regulation systems (IRSs) around the world, and the authors examine the technical aspects of accessing the internet today and in previous years. Moreover, the reasons that initiate internet regulation policies are being reviewed. Next, the authors present and compare two contradictory kinds of IRSs: open vs. silent IRSs. Last, the authors explain how existing IRSs can be used as a guide in an effort to design and present a blueprint for a fair IRS.

INTRODUCTION

In this chapter, the authors begin by providing definitions about the basic terms in use and then proceed with an introduction to the global phenomenon of Internet regulation. In the next section, the development of online censorship is being presented, while in later the need for Internet regulation is discussed, along with the role that Internet users can actually play.

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This chapter provides a brief history of Internet Regulation Systems (IRSs) around the world, while in the next section the authors examine the technical aspects of accessing the Internet today and in previous years. Moreover, the reasons that initiate Internet regulation policies are being reviewed.

For the first time, the authors present and compare two contradictory kinds of IRSs: Open vs Silent IRSs. The authors further focus on the UK's paradigm (as the first massive IRS that was implemented in a Western democracy), they examine and compare transparent and non-transparent systems they present opinions around the world about why silent IRSs are dangerous for the freedom of speech and how the UK's IRS might become an example for similar systems in the rest of the Western democracies.

Last, the authors explain how existing IRSs can be used as a guide in an effort to design and present a blueprint for a Fair IRS.

Basic Definitions

Former IT (Information Technology) familiarity is essential for fully understanding this book as there are many specialised terms in use throughout the whole dissertation. In this section, the authors present basic terms for the non-technically literate reader in order for the latter to be able to seek further assistance as needed.

- **Censorship:** Censorship is defined as “The suppression or prohibition of any parts of books, films, news, and so on that are considered obscene, politically unacceptable, or a threat to security” (Oxford Living Dictionaries, 2017). In other words, it is the suppression of speech, public communication, or other information that may be considered objectionable, harmful, sensitive, politically incorrect or inconvenient as determined by governments, media outlets, authorities or other groups or institutions. (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2017). **Internet or online censorship** is the control or suppression of what can be accessed, published, or viewed on the Internet enacted by regulators, or on their own initiative (Schmidt & Cohen, 2014).
- **Domain Name Server (DNS):** The Domain Name System (DNS) is a hierarchical decentralised naming system for computers, services, or any resource connected to the Internet or a private network. It associates various information with domain names assigned to each of the participating entities.

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