Committee: Human Rights Council

Issue: Promoting global access to the Internet

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Position: Deputy President

INTRODUCTION

"The Internet is more than just a network of machines, it is the key driver of social and economic progress in our time.'' [1] These words were said by Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder of one of the most used social media websites; Facebook. According to Mark Zuckerberg access to the internet is critical for combating global problems. Nowadays, we cannot imagine life without the internet. But what is it that makes the internet so important?

The internet enables many from across the globe to set up businesses or find jobs. It also contains many social networking websites, through which the youth, as well as adults, stay in contact with each other. People send emails via the internet and make online purchases through multiple web platforms. In addition, multiple modern schools use the internet in their teaching programs.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Freedom of Speech

As stated by Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; *'Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.'*[2]

1 http://www.techtimes.com/articles/88794/20150926/zuckerberg-tells-un-universal-internet-access-will-promote-human-rights.htm
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5http://www.businessinsider.com/mckinsey-report-internet-economy-2011-5?IR=T
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10 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Summit_on_the_Information_Society

Gross Domestic Product (GDP)

Gross Domestic Product is 'the total value of goods and services produced by a country in a year'. [3]

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

The General Assembly proclaims the Universal Declaration of Human Rights as *'a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society,… , shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.'*[2] Even though many member states have made efforts to ensure such rights, the success of said efforts has only been partial.

Internet

The internet is defined as a large system of connected computers around the world that enables people to share information and communicate with each other. [3]

Right to Broadband

The right to internet access is also known as the right to broadband. Access to the internet must be available for all in order to maintain and enjoy human rights such as freedom of speech. It has been deemed a fundamental human right by the United Nations.

Special Rapporteur

A Special Rapporteur is a sovereign expert, chosen by the Human Rights Council to provide its members with an overview of a specific situation (both country specific, as well as broader issues).

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

"Give a man a fish feed him for a day, teach him how to fish and feed him for a lifetime - but give a man the Internet, and he can teach himself how to fish, and anything

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else he wants to know. "[4] This famous saying is absolutely correct; it shows the opportunities that are given to a man when accessibility to the internet is guaranteed. Adding to its merits as an educational tool, access to the internet also allows people to develop an opinion, which is important since Freedom of Speech is also a human right. Those with access can be informed, learn, participate and empathize on topics of both major and minor importance. The information available in the internet allows for people to gather a plethora of information on different topics, allowing for sophisticated debates and considerations.

Since the internet is still developing and improving in quality, it is inevitable that new technologies will continue to emerge. Nowadays, the mobile network connects most people and has increased from 200 million users in 2008 to 2.2 billion users in 2013. Nonetheless, it is important at the same time to bridge the gap between those connected and those not; this gap causes differences in income, knowledge, health care etc; Via the internet, doctors all over the world can come into contact with each other and worlds' best doctors are able to diagnose diseases from thousand miles away.

Increasing GDP

Apart from the individual advantages, access to the internet also offers countries economic benefits. Especially LEDC's, research has shown a growth of the GDP caused by an increase in internet use. In fact, 21% of GDP growth over the past five years is imputed to the internet. Internet has for example positively affected the productivity of firms, and enabled the world of online shopping. Several institutions have benefitted of the internet by increasing the publicity of their brand, their revenue streams and reach.

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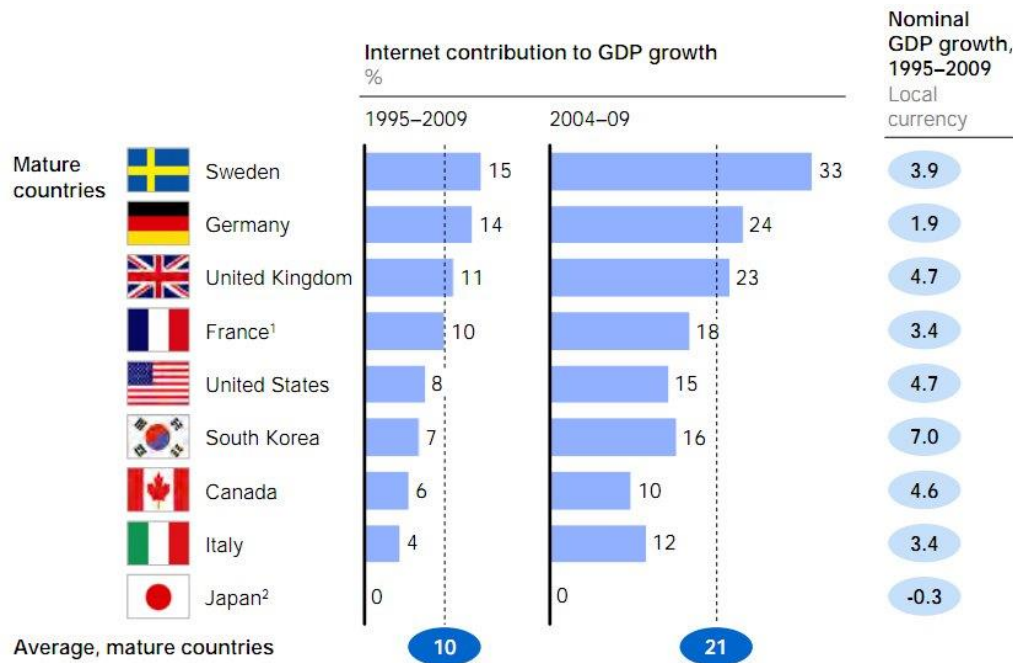2 http://www.un.org/en/universal-declaration-human-rights/ 3http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/internet

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			Internet contribution to GDP growth %		Nominal GDP growth, 1995–2009 Local currency
			1995–2009	2004–09	
Mature countries	🇸🇪	Sweden	15	33	3.9
	🇩🇪	Germany	14	24	1.9
	🇬🇧	United Kingdom	11	23	4.7
	🇫🇷	France[1]	10	18	3.4
	🇺🇸	United States	8	15	4.7
	🇰🇷	South Korea	7	16	7.0
	🇨🇦	Canada	6	10	4.6
	🇮🇹	Italy	4	12	3.4
	🇯🇵	Japan[2]	0	0	-0.3
Average, mature countries			10	21	

GDP growth[5]

Censorship and internet filtering

In some countries, governments control the internet via censorship, as a population which is not properly informed is easier to control and suppress. However, this infringes on the right to freedom of speech. Via the internet people are able to form an opinion, to learn, to express themselves, and discuss with each other, something which evidently is sub-optimal for demagogues.

The "OpenNet" Initiative was set up through a cooperation between the Citizen Lab at the University of Toronto's Munk school of global affairs, Harvard University's Berkman Centre for Internet & Society, and the SecDev Group in Ottawa. Through this cooperation, research on internet filtering is conducted for different countries. They base their results on 4 categories, which are the following:

1. Political filtering
2. Social filtering
3. Conflict and security
4. Internet tools

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Then, they rank countries from pervasive to no evidence of filtering. Recent data has found Iran pervasive in three categories and substantial on one category. Following Iran is China. [6]
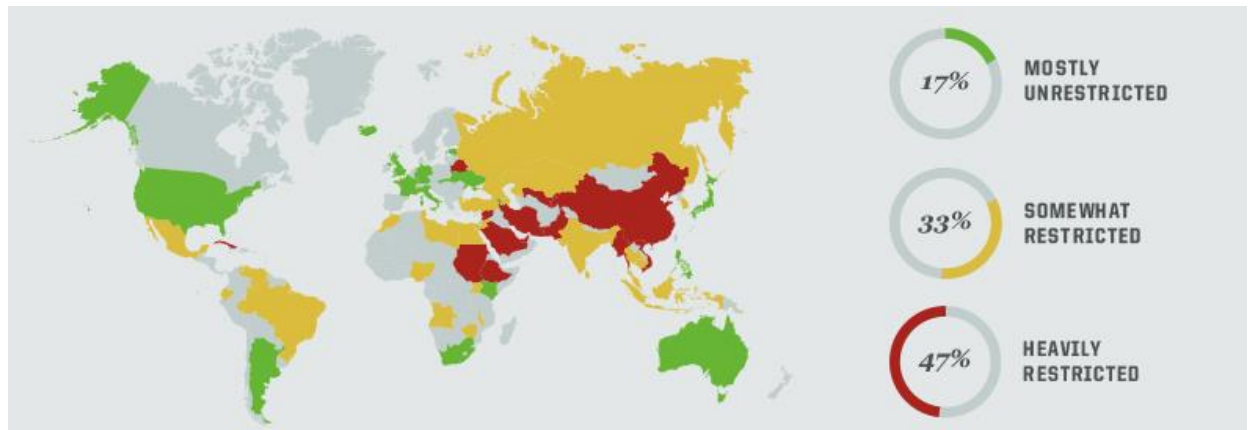

Figure 2 freedom on internet worldwide[7]

After investigation and research, they put the data on their website in order to gain more public knowledge. However, they do not contact bodies or organizations which are against this censorship. Of course, such organizations are able to use the data from their website, but they do not work together to solve this issue.

Arab Spring

The Arab spring is also known as the Autumn of Nations and refers to the series of riots against dictatorships in Arabian countries in 2011. *Ash-sha`b yurid isqat an-nizam* ("the people want to bring down the regime") was a frequently used slogan of the protestors. During the Arab Spring in 2011, there was a complete loss of access to the internet in Egypt and in Libya due to censorship.

This goes to show the importance of the internet when it comes to discussions and bringing about political progress; in fact, the internet's usefulness in the field was such, that some of the less democratic government officials elected that it would further destabilize the situation.

As it promotes free dialogue and debate, and everyone is entitled to an opinion, it posed a threat for the government which was already losing its grip on the people. Hence, it decided it was safer to simply restrict access to it. Yet, this being the last straw, protests

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broke out on a larger scale after the restriction, with the actions coordinated through the deep web.

Remote Areas

In several parts of the world, people are not only disconnected from the internet but also from our modern society. In cities, broadband penetration is considerably higher than in rural areas. For example, in some African states, citizens living in villages in rural areas have considerably less access to the internet. This is primarily due to the lack of adequate infrastructure which hinders the access to electricity and thus the internet. They live autarkical. Therefore, in such situations it is necessary to understand the role that adequate infrastructure has on access to the internet.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANISATIONS INVOLVED

China

China is one of the countries where the internet is strictly censored by the government. For example, content concerning Dalai Lama, the Tiananmen Square protesters, and Falun Gong is censored. Social media networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter are also blocked. This censorship is commonly known as the 'Great Firewall of China'. When 'Tibetan independence' is typed in, it is most likely a blank page will show up saying 'this page cannot be shown'. This is similar to 'democracy movements' of 'persecution'. China claims that is in order to censor the internet, according to their rules within the Chinese borders. The authorities cover their censorship by speaking of anti-pornography and anti-rumor campaigns, as well as anti-terrorism and separatism.

Cuba

Due to its internet censorship, Cuba has been listed by the Reporters without Borders (RWB) as an "Internet Enemy" ever since the creation of the list. Furthermore, Cuba has also not been categorized by the OpenNet Iniative, due to the lack of sufficient information. Internet censorship is so extensive that the internet in Cuba is considered to be one of the most tightly controlled in the world. Until 2008, it was not allowed to owe a computer or DVD player. Only a quarter of the population has access to the internet, whereof 5% has an internet connection at home. Sites with criticism against the state are

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blocked, such as blogs of antigovernment activists. YouTube is not accessible, however Facebook and Twitter are.

Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK)

The Democratic People's Republic of Korea (DPRK) is definitely one of the most censored countries in the world particularly referring to the internet. In the DPRK access to the internet is only granted via special authorization, which is predominantly granted to members of the government. Consequently, most of the citizens are only allowed to use the domestic network called Kwangmyong. Like Google, Kwangmyong has a search engine, email, news coverage and a browser. Via Kwangmyong, citizens are not aware of things happening in the world, except for the news readable on Kwangmyong (which is heavily censored by the government).

India

In 2012, India was added to the list of 'countries under surveillance' by Reporters without Borders. This was caused by the Indian authorities, which have stepped up surveillance and pressure on internet providers after the Mumbai bombings in 2008. Censorship is done by federal and state governments and is undermining the human rights. In August 2015, the government has blocked 857 websites, which were considerable pornographic and therefore blocked in order to protect the 'social decency'.

International Telecommunication Union (ITU)

ITU is the United Nations specialized agency for information and communication technologies – ICTs. [8] The union aims to connect all people from across the globe through telecommunications. The ITU was founded in 1865, when twenty European States signed a treaty to overcome bottlenecks and barriers which occurred by sending telegraphs.

Iran

After 2005, internet censorship in Iran started increasing. Sites such as YouTube, Facebook, Twitter and Google Plus are blocked. According to Reporters without Borders,

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Iran's government plans to reduce the speed of international Internet as well as increasing the cost of subscribing, in order to increase the use of the national internet, something which is of questionable ethical standing; the purpose behind such a course of action is most puzzling.

Saudi Arabia

The government of Saudi Arabia has blocked more than 400.000 websites, which discussed any religious, social, or political topics and did not get along with Islamic beliefs or monarchy. Reporters without Borders have put Saudi Arabia as number 164 on the list of 180 countries, ranked on freedom of the press.

The notion that this action is an active violation of article 19 is one often stated, yet no formal action aiming to solve the issue has been undertaken thus far. To this day all individuals who are caught "providing the web with content that harms the public order or moral values" are liable to face up to 5 years imprisonment. It should be noted that out of all the banned websites, while more often than not they are pornographic or extremist in nature, a small fraction revolves around scientific ideas.

In general, all websites that explicitly object the Islamist Dogma, or go against its values (e.g. pornographic content harms its moral values) are likely to be blocked.

Syria

Currently, Syria is facing great instability due to conflict between ISIL, the Free Syrian Army, and the Government of Assad. Misinformation due to such conflicts has lead to censorship, leaving many people civilians disoriented. Additionally, it is important to note that Syria has been placed on the list "Enemies of the internet" by the RWB in 2009 and as an Enemy of the Internet by RWB in 2013, due to their surveillance of news providers.

United Nations Broadband Commission for Sustainable Development

The commission was set up by UNESCO and ITU in 2010. It aims to boost the importance of internet on international policy agenda and increase its availability in order to achieve the development targets. In 2011 they have set 4 goals, which include the following:

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1. Making broadband policy universal
2. Making broadband affordable
3. Connecting homes to broadband
4. Getting people online

Additionally, in 2013 they added a fifth clause, which reads: The commission [9]
Achieving gender equality in access to broadband.

United States of America (USA)

Even as the biggest economy of the world (apart from the EU), in 2014 the USA was considered as an "Enemy of the Internet" by the Reporters without Borders. The report of the RWB noted that the surveillance activities heavily undermined the work of journalists and other news reporters criticizing the state. Thus it can be understood why this pre-written censorship does not promote and rather hinders global internet access and freedom of expression. It should also be stated that as of recently it was discovered that the National Security Agency (NSA) of the USA has been monitoring its citizens, placing them in watch lists should their actions be deemed as suspicious. The extent of time for which this has been taking place is yet undetermined, but it is speculated that it begun after the 9/11 terrorist attacks.

Looking at what has just been stated, it might seem logical to think the USA is not that friendly to accessible uncensored internet. However, we must not forget the effort the USA has put in to getting everybody online by spending great amounts of money on development projects. For example, the USA and United States Agency for International Development (USAID) combined invested $76 million improving human rights online since 2008. At least $23 million was used to invest into the following programs: antic-censorship technology, secure communications technology, digital safety training.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

1950s	First electronic computers are being developed; ARPAnet was the

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	precursor of the internet network we use now.
10-12 December, 2003	World Summit on Information Society (WSIS) first phase in Geneva. 175 countries agreed on a Declaration of Principles, through which they aimed to make the internet society accessible for all. Thereby they came up with the issue of funding and the question of governance. The last question remained unanswered and therefore they called upon the Working Group on Internet Governance (WGIG).
16 to 18 November, 2005	The Second Phase of the WSIS takes place in Tunis, where the discussion and debate continue further.
January 2011	UN Special Rapporteur on the Promotion and Protection of the Right to Freedom of Opinion and Expression. It provides information on the following topics: Freedom of Expression, Privacy and Anonymity on the internet. Those rapporteurs are part of the Special Procedures of the Human Rights Council (HRC). These Special Procedures are conducted in the presence of experienced investigators, which try and advise on certain (country-specific) themes. They cover civil, cultural, economic, political, and social human rights. They write reports[1] during their visits to countries, in order to provide the Human Rights Council with an accurate overview of the situation.
June 3, 2011	Access to the internet is officially declared a human right after ruling of the HRC

UN INVOLVEMENT: RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

- Resolution 56/183 passed by the General Assembly on January 31, 2002. With this resolution, the General Assembly has welcomed the organization of the WSIS in Geneva.

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[1] Such as report can be found in the bibliography of this study guide

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- Resolution UNEP/GCSS.XII/INF/3 H66/184 passed on February 20, 2012.

  With accepting this resolution, the General Assembly encourages the United Nations to continue promoting access to information and communication technologies.

- Resolution A/HRC/20/L.13 passed on June 29, 2012.

  This resolution is about the promotion, protection and enjoyment of human rights on the Internet.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

In order to promote global access to the internet, the United Nations has held multiple summits to discuss this issue. It is important to approach this issue with those summits and agreements in mind. Albeit the issue remaining unresolved to this day, it is not correct to consider any previous attempts at solving it as insufficient. It should be noted that the information technology we have at our disposal has improved by leaps and bounds since that first summit (2003). Internet networks are downloading and sending data faster, and are more competent to work with much larger volumes of data.

Several countries have introduced laws in which they reaffirmed the importance of access to the internet. However, the issue does not lie there, but in the 27 nations around the world, where the constitution allows for the government to intervene with telecommunication networks.

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During the second phase of the WSIS, the Association for Progressive Communications (APC) came up with the following action areas:

- *'The establishment of an Internet Governance Forum;*

- *The transformation of Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) into a global body with full authority over Domain Name System (DNS) management, and an appropriate form of accountability to its stakeholders in government, private sector, and civil society;*

- *The initiation of a multi-stakeholder convention on internet governance and universal human rights that will codify the basic rights applicable to the internet, which will be legally binding in international law with particular emphasis on clauses in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights directly relevant to the internet, such as the rights to freedom of expression, association, and privacy.*

- *Ensuring internet access is universal and affordable. APC argued: "The internet is a global public space that should be open and accessible to all on a non-discriminatory basis. The internet, therefore, must be seen as a global public infrastructure. In this regard we recognize the internet to be a global public good related to the concept of the common heritage of humanity and access to it is in the public interest, and must be provided as a global public commitment to equality".*

- *Measures to promote capacity building in "developing" countries with regard to increasing "developing" country participation in global public policy forums on internet governance.'*[10]

The funding was mainly covered by Japan and Spain.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Firstly, growth of the use of the internet should be considered. According to a McKinsey report there are five key factors to internet growth. For example, countries with the sufficient infrastructure can support mobile network coverage and mobile internet adoption. Secondly, we have to shrink device and data plan prices where possible. For example, when mobile phones where introduced to the market, those who could afford the

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packages were few. However, through years of development, mobile phones have become more and more affordable. This should continue in order to make mobile phones affordable for everyone. Moreover, a growing middle class, and an internet which offers constantly more utility actively urge the population to use it.

Second, we should suggest to introduce a law similar for every member state, which does not allow the shutdown of internet access by the government. This law should accord with our human rights and should replace the already existing law of legal shutdown of networks by government, especially after seeing how often certain states have decided to limit access in an attempt at reducing the support of opposing political parties and ideologies. Member states such as Estonia and France should take the lead in this creation since they are examples of countries which have an existing law which stresses the importance of access to internet.

Finally, the importance of related organizations should be considered. Organizations such as the ITU or the UN Broadband commission have made multiple successful efforts to make internet more accessible. Supporting the afro-mentioned (as well as similar) organizations is advisable. In the case that the creation of a new organization is proposed two aspects of the issue should be focused on in order to solve the issue. Firstly, the censorship/ban of the internet by governments, and secondly the physical accessibility to the internet. Developed countries should be willing to support developing countries on the second aspect, since their broadband penetration rate is in general higher.

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