

# Global Policy Weekly - March 26, 2013

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*CDT's Global Policy Weekly highlights the latest Internet policy developments and proposals from around the world, compiled by CDT's [Global Internet Freedom Project](#). [2]*

## FREE EXPRESSION

According Russia's Federal Service for Supervision in Telecommunications, Information Technology and Mass Communications, Twitter [agreed](#) [3] to block access to accounts or posts blacklisted by the Russian government. The agency reported that Twitter has already removed five items in the month of March. According to the agency, "Two of the materials, according to experts' conclusions, [were restricted] for assisting the distribution of narcotics, and three others — for promoting suicidal thoughts." The [blacklist law](#) [4] took effect in October 2012 and restricts access to a range of content deemed harmful by the government. According to the report, Twitter is only blocking restricted content for Russian users, in accordance with its localization policy announced [last year](#) [5].

The three main political parties in the UK have [agreed](#) [6] to a new regulatory regime for the press that will be established by royal charter. The new watchdog is being established to protect citizens from press intrusion in the wake of recent phone hacking scandals. The royal charter will cover "news publishers," which includes newspapers, magazines, and websites containing news-related material. Critics [warn](#) [7] that the Royal Charter uses vague language in defining covered media sources, which may have a chilling effect on free speech.

## SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE

Microsoft [released](#) [8] its first Transparency Report outlining law enforcement requests for user data in 2012. According to the report, Microsoft and Skype received 75,378 law enforcement requests last year. The company disclosed no information in 18% of requests, non-content information in approximately 79.8% of requests, and customer content in 2.2% of requests. As a member of the [Global Network Initiative](#) [9], Microsoft has committed to supporting human rights and providing ongoing transparency reports for its products and services.

Saudi Arabia may [ban internet messenger services](#) [10] like Skype, Viber, and WhatsApp unless operators allow the government to censor the services. These providers typically allow users to communicate over an encrypted connection. According to a source at the Communications and Information Technology Commission, the government has demanded means of access and control and given operators one week to meet agency requirements or risk having their services blocked entirely.

## INTERMEDIARY LIABILITY

Human rights organization Article 19 [submitted](#) [11] third-party intervention submissions in *Jezior v Poland*, an intermediary liability case under consideration by the European Court of Human Rights. The case hinges on whether Mr. Jezior is liable for allegedly defamatory comments that a third party posted on his blog, which Mr. Jezior later removed. CDT strongly supports protections for intermediaries and [warns](#) [12] that holding service providers liable for third-party content will have negative impacts on free speech, privacy, and innovation.

## PRIVACY

The European Parliament's legal affairs committee (JURI) [voted to adopt its Opinion](#) [13] on data protection reform. The JURI opinion broadly supports the main elements of the Commission's data protection reform, including the need to keep a broad definition of "personal data," the need for 'explicit consent' to process data, and the need to streamline processes for companies working in multiple EU countries. Civil society advocates [report](#) [14] that the adopted language offers significant improvements over opinions passed by other committees, but still leaves room for improvement. The vote sets up a vote by the lead committee, the Civil Liberties, Justice and Home Affairs Committee (LIBE), later this spring. You can read CDT's initial analysis of the reforms [here](#) [15].

## INTERNET GOVERNANCE

Fadi Chehadé, the President of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN), [announced](#) [16] that he is adding six new ICANN representatives in Africa. Chehadé made the statement while attending a multi-stakeholder Internet Governance event in Ethiopia organized by the African Union, Internet Society-Africa, AFRINIC and the African Internet Governance Forum. Chehadé's speech included a strong endorsement of proactive inclusion: "ICANN used to say if you want to participate in Internet governance come to ICANN. We've changed that, now ICANN is coming to the stakeholders. We're not waiting for you to come. We're coming to you."

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### Links:

[1] <https://cdt.org/personnel/emily-barabas>

[2] <http://www.cdt.org/issue/global-internet-freedom>

[3] <http://www.themoscowtimes.com/news/article/twitter-agrees-to-block-access-to-blacklisted-content-in-russia/476978.html>

[4] <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/technology-20096274>

[5] <https://www.cdt.org/blogs/cynthia-wong/271tweet-heard-round-world>

[6] [https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/142808/18\\_March\\_2013\\_v6\\_Draft\\_Royal\\_Charter.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/142808/18_March_2013_v6_Draft_Royal_Charter.pdf)

[7] <http://www.indexoncensorship.org/2013/03/index-on-censorship-responds-to-party-leaders-comments-in-debate-on-royal-charter/>

[8] <http://www.microsoft.com/about/corporatecitizenship/en-us/reporting/transparency/>

[9] <http://www.globalnetworkinitiative.org/>

[10] <http://economictimes.indiatimes.com/tech/internet/saudi-threatens-to-ban-whatsapp-viber-and-skype-sources/articleshow/19195047.cms>

[11] [http://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/3670/en/article-19-to-european-court:-bloggers-should-not-be-liable-for-user-generated-content?utm\\_source=ARTICLE+19+Mailing+List&utm\\_campaign=0e2cb0f89b-Free\\_Expression\\_21\\_March&utm\\_medium=email](http://www.article19.org/resources.php/resource/3670/en/article-19-to-european-court:-bloggers-should-not-be-liable-for-user-generated-content?utm_source=ARTICLE+19+Mailing+List&utm_campaign=0e2cb0f89b-Free_Expression_21_March&utm_medium=email)

[12] <https://www.cdt.org/toolkit/intermediary-liability>

[13] [http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release\\_MEMO-13-233\\_de.htm](http://europa.eu/rapid/press-release_MEMO-13-233_de.htm)

[14] [http://www.edri.org/juri\\_eudatap](http://www.edri.org/juri_eudatap)

[15]

<https://www.cdt.org/report/cdt-analysis-european-commissions-proposed-data-protection-regulation>

[16] <http://www.itnewsafrika.com/2013/03/internet-corporation-president-africa-will-not-wait/>