

## Global Policy Weekly - April 24, 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.*

### FREE EXPRESSION

In a report to the Japanese National Police Agency (NPA), a panel of technology experts [recommended](#) [2] that Internet service providers voluntarily block users who “abuse” the Tor network. Tor allows users to browse the Internet without exposing identifying data. The Japanese government has been struggling to track a hacker named “Demon Killer” who posts threatening messages through hijacked computers using Tor. While criminals use Tor to disguise their identity, dissidents and activists also use the tool to circumvent censorship in places where the Internet use is restricted by the government.

The newly formed Chinese State Administration of Press Publication, Radio, Film and Television has [released](#) [3] a “Notice on Strengthening Control of Media Personnel’s Online Activities,” outlining new restrictions on journalists’ use of social media. The notice forbids Chinese media from using foreign content “without authorization.” It also sets record-keeping requirements for media-run accounts on the Weibo social media network, a site that journalists have used to circumvent restrictions on traditional press. [Reporters Without Borders](#) [4], [Committee to Protect Journalists](#) [5], and other free speech advocates quickly denounced the new mandates.

The British House of Commons [voted](#) [6] on libel reform amendments that were proposed by the House of Lords. The House of Commons voted to remove a provision that would allow corporations to sue individuals for libel only if they could demonstrate financial harm. Free speech advocates [expressed](#) [7] disappointment in the vote, but remained hopeful that the discussion would continue. Liberal Democrat Lord Lester has said he will reintroduce the amendment when legislation returns to the House of Lords.

### SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE

Hackers with the “Syrian Electronic Army” are claiming [responsibility](#) [8] for cyberattacks against National Public Radio, including websites The Two-Way and NPR.org, as well as some of NPR's Twitter accounts. The group reportedly supports Syrian President Bashar Assad's regime and appears to be acting in retaliation of NPR's news coverage in Syria. Syrian Electronic Army members posted several messages about the attack on SEA's Twitter account, including one that said "you can ask @deborahamos" why the hacks took place. Amos received a Peabody Award for her reporting on the impact of war on the Syrian people.

German data protection regulators [issued](#) [9] Google a fine of \$190,000 for collecting user WiFi data from its Street View mapping project vehicles. According to Hamburg's data protection supervisor, investigators in the case could only legally charge a maximum fine of 150,000 euros, or approximately \$195,000. Proposed revisions to the EU data protection laws would significantly increase penalties, allowing regulators to issue fines of up to 2% of a company's annual sales.

### INTERNET NEUTRALITY

The European Consumer Organisation (BEUC) and European Digital Rights (EDRi) organized [a coalition letter](#) [10] urging the European Commission to support protections for Internet neutrality. More than 80 organizations joined BEUC and EDRi in signing on to the joint statement. According to EDRi's Joe McNamee [<http://www.edri.org/node/3281>], "The Internet's unique value is openness. The experimentation by certain European access providers with blocking, filtering and throttling of

services creates borders in an online world whose key value is the absence of borders. This reckless experimentation will continue unless the European Commission puts a stop to it."

## TELECOMMUNICATIONS

Chinese telecommunications equipment maker ZTE Corp [reported](#) [11] that it has "basically stopped" doing business in Iran, although the company will continue to support products it has already sold. ZTE is facing a criminal investigation in the United States after reportedly selling surveillance systems to Iran's largest telecommunications firm. The technology can facilitate the monitoring of both phone and Internet communications. ZTE told Reuters that the company is being unfairly targeted and that many of its competitors are still selling similar systems in Iran.

A bill to reform Mexico's telecommunications and television industries was [approved](#) [12] by the Senate with some changes. The proposed legislation would increase market competition and foreign investment, giving regulators new power to break up companies that dominate the market. The Senate version of the bill grants corporations the ability to appeal the regulator's decisions, including fines and mandates to sell off assets. The bill will now return to lower house, where it is expected to pass before the end of the month.

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