Global Policy Weekly – August 21, 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]*

SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE

Researchers at the computer security firm Kaspersky Lab identified a "watering hole" cyber attack [3] targeting the Dalai Lama's Chinese-language website. Researchers warn that users entering the site may be infected with malicious software that allows attackers to take control of their computers and collect personal information. Researcher Kurt Baumgartner reports that the site has been regularly targeted [4] by the same attackers since 2011. Evidence indicates that the same group has also targeted Chinese human rights websites.

The Institute for Reporters' Freedom and Safety (IRFS) reported that the government of Azerbaijan has attacked the IRFS website [5] leading up to the October election. The opposition news site Azadliq has also allegedly been targeted. According to IRFS, the two sites experienced distributed denial of service (DDoS) attacks during the same week. Azadliq urged the Ministry of National Security to investigate the attacks, but received no response from the government.

Brazilian Communications Minister Paolo Bernardo announced that Brazil favors a system of decentralized communications networks [6] that do not rely on United States infrastructure. Bernardo raised concerns that US companies handle a large proportion of Internet traffic, saying, "Internet governance must be multilateral and multisectoral with a broader participation." The statement followed a meeting between Foreign Minister Antonio Patriota of Brazil and US Secretary of State John Kerry in which the Brazilian minister warned that US surveillance programs could breed distrust.

The government of Thailand is seeking to monitor communications transmitted using the messaging application Line. According to Global Voices Advocacy, the Technology Crime Suppression Division (TCSD) reported that monitoring is necessary to "safeguard order, security, and morality." [7] Government officials are currently in negotiations with the company over monitoring practices. The Thai Netizen Network released a statement in opposition to government efforts, saying that under the Thai constitution, state agencies must respect individual's rights, including the right to free speech.

FREE EXPRESSION

Officials in the United Arab Emirates are attempting to silence the website [8] of Arab-American newspaper al-Watan. The liberal secular media outlet, which is based in the United States, is already banned in the UAE. Now the Telecom Regulatory Authority has asked a German company that hosts watan.com to shut down the site. Authorities claim that the site is run by the "Global Muslim Brotherhood Union," but the owner of the site says that the government opposes the site because it reports on human rights violations.

The University of Palermo's Centro de Estudios en Libertad de Expresión y Acceso a la Información released a new paper [9]examining the issue of holding Internet intermediaries, such as infrastructure providers and platforms, legally responsible for content generated or shared by users. The issue of intermediary liability is a growing concern throughout Latin America. The paper provides

a theoretical foundation and context for stakeholders involved in the discussion, examining implications for governments, companies, and the rights of users.

ACCESS

A group of technology companies announced a new initiative called internet.org [10] that seeks to extend affordable Internet access worldwide. According to a press release [11], the founding members of the project, Facebook, Ericsson, MediaTek, Nokia, Opera, Qualcomm, and Samsung, plan to “develop joint projects, share knowledge, and mobilize industry and governments to bring the world online.” The group won’t focus on broadband access and deployment issues, but instead on cutting costs of mobile connectivity, reducing the amount of data needed to use applications, and supporting new business models that purport to expand Internet access. Skeptics suggest that the group's motivations may be primarily commercial [12] (a play for new markets) and note the lack of participation by other leading Internet companies and public interest organizations already working on access in the developing world.

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