INTERNET IN IRAN

March 2019

The internet is accessed primarily via phones

Iranians have 3X as many active mobile-broadband subscriptions as they do fixed (wired)-broadband subscriptions

Internet speed

Iran's internet speed compared to its regional neighbors:

- **Fixed broadband speed**
  - Iran ranked 109 out of 133 countries

- **Mobile speed**
  - Iran ranked 57 out of 124 countries

Why is SPEED important?
Allows journalists, activists and others to share large multimedia files with graphics, audio, video, etc.

Source: ITU
Iran ranked SECOND WORST IN WORLD in internet censorship in 2018

Source: Freedom House

Freedom on the Net 2018 rankings (most free: 0; least free: 100)

Internet Censorship

Prosecutions for online content
Iranians are PROSECUTED for online content unlawfully obtained by intelligence and security agencies. For example:

SOHEIL ARABI
Posting content challenging religious dogma
SENTENCE: 7.5 years in prison

SINA DEGHGHAN
Posting content challenging religious dogma
SENTENCE: Death

SAEED MALEKPOUR
Developing open source software for uploading photos
SENTENCE: Life in prison

HENGAMEH SHAHIDI
Writing commentary critical of the state
SENTENCE: 12 years, 9 months in prison
The state’s ICT infrastructure: State internet provider companies, State servers, State tools and services (e.g. servers, SSLs, email providers).

Cyber attacks: Phishing, Malware, Message tapping, DDoS, Fake applications.

State online surveillance & cyberattacks: How does the state access and monitor personal accounts?

What is censored?

Millions of websites blocked:
- News media
- Human rights issues
- Culture
- Political criticism
- Pornography
- LGBT
- Alcohol & drugs
- Gambling
- Hosting & blogging platforms
- Search engines
- Economics
- Politics
- Criticism
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Content filtered by key word or phrases.

Access to circumvention tools blocked:
- Major social media platforms
- Encrypted messaging apps
- e.g. Telegram, Signal, CryptoKat

Blocked domains in Iran (2014-2017) by OONI.
Who controls internet policy in Iran?

Who controls internet policy in Iran?

SUPREME LEADER
ALI KHAMENEI

SUPREME COUNCIL OF CYBERSPACE
Top internet policy body

WORKING GROUP TO DETERMINE INSTANCES OF CRIMINAL CONTENT
Main filtering body

JUDICIARY
Can shut sites/order blocks

CYBER POLICE (FATA)
Can block content/make arrests

INFLUENCES policies
TARGETS sites & users for censorship/surveillance
HACKS private accounts
INTIMIDATES users
COLLUDES with judiciary to investigate, arrest & prosecute

Other sources of power

ISLAMIC REVOLUTIONARY GUARDS CORP (IRGC)

Who controls internet policy in Iran?

Rouhani’s record on internet freedom

Positive

Improved and expanded ICT infrastructure
Faster internet (removed limits on speeds over 128kbps)
Expanded mobile phone use (opened licensing for 3G and 4G services)
Unblocked WhatsApp

Negative

Strengthening censorship and surveillance via the NIN
Millions of websites blocked
Twitter, Facebook and YouTube stay blocked
Blocked Telegram May 2018
Circumvention tools blocked
Encrypted apps blocked
Silent on state-sponsored cyberattacks
Violates net neutrality (Higher prices for international internet traffic)
Increased influence of intelligence organizations in ICT Ministry

The Center for Human Rights in Iran is an independent, nonpartisan, nonprofit organization dedicated to the protection and promotion of human rights in Iran.

For more information about any of these issues visit www.iranhumanrights.org