

- [Home](#)
- [Aletho News — Recently Featured Content](#)
- [Aletho News – Exclusives](#)
- [Aletho News Archives](#)

## [Australia censorship debate censored on Communications minister’s website](#)

**It’s all kind of ironic when you think about it**

[By John Ozimek • The Register • 25th February 2010](#)

If you’re planning to censor free speech on the internet, what better approach to take than to, er, censor debate about how you’re planning to censor free speech on the internet? Brilliant.

That, according to one sharp-eyed *Register* reader, is the game being played by Australian Communications Minister Stephen Conroy, whose ministerial website is currently set up so as not to show searches on embarrassing terms such as “ISP filtering”.

An increasingly common feature of interactive websites is the “search cloud”: this is a listing out of search terms on a site, often with the added feature that the most frequently appearing terms are picked out by size or weight of type.

The [Minister’s official site](#) is no exception, and visitors wishing to know what other visitors are searching on just have to take a look at the search cloud at bottom right of the landing page. Well that’s all they need to do unless they wish to find out about “ISP Filtering”, an issue that has been the [cause of some controversy](#) in Australia over the past couple of years.

Nip below the page surface and you will find a clever bit of code that sets a counter to record the frequency of any given term, ranks the most frequently occurring terms – and then sets the size of that term within the cloud according to its rank (highest ranked is largest, lower ranked are smaller).

So far so good, unless the search term happens to be “ISP Filtering”. Because the other clever thing that the code does is to exclude that particular term from the search cloud. Sorted. Or not.

In recent weeks, protests against the minister’s censor-tastic activities have reached new heights, with a [DDoS attack](#) directed both at the Australian Parliamentary website and at the site of the Communications Ministry. This action was characterised by Conroy as irresponsible – presumably on the basis that in a democracy, government attitudes should be changed by debate and there is no need for direct action.

By contrast, evidence that the debate is being skewed in this way will undoubtedly add weight to those who claim that the government is not interested in discussing issues – and the only way to make them sit up and listen is through direct action.

Meanwhile, appearing before the [Environment, Communications and the Arts Legislation Committee](#) earlier this month, representatives of the Australian Communications and Media Authority ([ACMA](#)), revealed that they would not be pursuing an investigation of how Wikileaks got its hands on ACMA’s list of banned URLs.

While they intend to tighten up processes, in the hope that such a thing will not happen again, they also acknowledged that the Federal Police “considered the prospects of success under their guidelines not sufficiently strong enough to push on with the prosecution”.

In addition, there were other more pressing “operational priorities”. ®

Possibly related posts: (automatically generated)

- [Enemies Of Free Speech Call For Internet Licensing](#)
- [France considers Internet censorship](#)
- [Protect Internet-Freedom – Stop ACTA Now](#)
- [sigh almost at holidays.....](#)

[February 28, 2010](#) - Posted by [aletho](#) | [Civil Liberties](#), [Deception](#), [Full Spectrum Dominance](#) | | [3 Comments](#)

### 3 Comments »

1. [...] is currently set up so as not to show searches on embarrassing terms such as “ISP filtering”. Address Possibly related posts: (automatically generated)Is the Shiv-Sena Bullying Google?Champions of free [...]

 Pingback by [Google censors free speech « EarthBlog News©](#) | *February 28, 2010* | [Reply](#)

2. They hate “our freedom”.....

 Comment by [Boris](#) | *February 28, 2010* | [Reply](#)

3. The central purpose of government is the looting of the governed.  
Nothing that hinders this is to be allowed.

 Comment by [Bill Jones](#) | *February 28, 2010* | [Reply](#)

## Leave a comment

Name (required)

E-mail(required - will not be published)

Website

Submit Comment

- Notify me of follow-up comments via email.
- Notify me of new posts via email.

[« Previous](#) | [Next »](#)

**Aletho News – Exclusives**