



All that is necessary for evil to triumph is for good men to do nothing: Edmund Burke

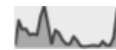
Monday, January 31, 2011

The Internet Kill Switch – One Of The Favorite New Tools Of Tyrannical Governments All Over The Globe



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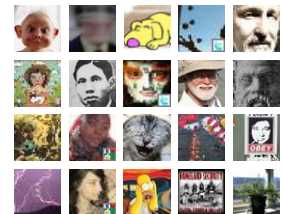
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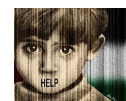
This past week was a perfect example of how the "Internet kill switch" is rapidly becoming one of the favorite new tools of tyrannical governments all over the globe. Once upon a time, the Internet was a bastion of liberty and freedom, but now nation after nation is cracking down on it. In fact, legislation has been introduced once again in Congress that would give the president of the United States an "Internet kill switch" that he would be able to use in the event of war or emergency.

Of course there would be a whole lot of wiggle room in determining what actually constitutes a true "emergency". The members of Congress that are pushing this "Internet kill switch" bill want the U.S. to become more like China in this regard. In China, the Internet is highly controlled, highly regulated and highly censored. In fact, China has shut down the Internet in entire regions when they have felt it necessary. So what Egypt did in shutting down the Internet this past week is not unprecedented - but it was quite shocking.

Organizers of the protests in Egypt had been using the #Jan25 hashtag on Twitter and had been communicating with each other via Facebook, and so the Mubarak regime thought that they could significantly derail the protest movement by shutting down the Internet.

It has been widely reported that approximately 88 percent of the Internet in Egypt was shut down at one point. Jim Cowie, the chief technology officer of an Internet monitoring firm known as Renesys, [described on his blog](#) just how complete and total this Internet shutdown in Egypt

About Me



Saladin

Conservative, n: A statesman who is enamored of existing evils, as distinguished from the Liberal who wishes to replace them with others. Ambrose Bierce The Devil's Dictionary.

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actually was....

"Every Egyptian provider, every business, bank, Internet cafe, website, school, embassy, and government office that relied on the big four Egyptian ISPs for their Internet connectivity is now cut off from the rest of the world."

So how was this all done? How could such a large section of the Internet be taken offline so rapidly? Well, [a recent article on MSNBC](#) described how it works....

According to David Clark, an MIT computer scientist whose research focuses on Internet architecture and development, a government's ability to control the Internet depends on its control of Internet Service Providers (ISPs), the private sector companies that grant Internet access to customers. "ISPs have direct control of the Internet, so what happens in any country depends on the control that the state has over those ISPs," Clark told Life's Little Mysteries in an e-mail. "Some countries regulate the ISPs much more heavily. China has in the past 'turned off' the Internet in various regions."

Whenever the subject of Internet censorship comes up, China always seems to be involved in the conversation. China has more Internet users than anyone else in the world, but they also have the tightest controls.

The Chinese government is absolutely obsessed with "maintaining order" and it has shown that it will go to extreme lengths to quell dissent.

For example, the government of China cut off the entire Xinjiang region from the Internet for nearly a year after civil unrest erupted there in 2009.

The Chinese government is so sensitive to political dissent that they even began censoring the word "Egypt" on a number of micro-blogging websites this past week.

[A recent article posted on Raw Story](#) explained what happened....

On the sina.com and sohu.com sites, the Chinese equivalents of Twitter, which is censored in China, a query with the word "Egypt" returned the response: "According to the laws in force, the results of your search cannot be given."

Isn't that bizarre?

Nothing like that would ever happen in the United States, right?

Well, don't be so sure.

Last year, U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman [made the following statement](#) to CNN's Candy Crowley....

"Right now China, the government, can disconnect parts of its Internet in case of war and we need to have that here too."

That statement should chill you to your bones.

U.S. Senator Joe Lieberman wants Chinese-style Internet censorship to come to the United States.

In fact, as mentioned above, legislation that would give the president of the United States an "Internet kill switch" has been introduced in the Senate once again, and in fact it has already been approved by a Senate panel.

The legislation has bipartisan support, and it is being pushed this time by Maine Senator Susan Collins, who is a ranking member on the Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs Committee.

This bill, S.3480, is entitled "[The Protecting Cyberspace As A National Asset Act of 2010](#)". It would create a brand new government agency (as if we needed more of those) known as the National Center for Cybersecurity and Communications.

This new agency would be given extraordinary power over the Internet - including the power to completely shut down the Internet for 30 days.

Collins insists that this new law is necessary because it would enable us to protect the Internet against "cyber threats" before they could cause serious damage.

While that may sound good on paper, the reality is that giving the government an "Internet kill switch" would create opportunities for tremendous government abuse.

[Wired recently ran an article](#) that detailed some of these concerns....

*A congressional [white paper](#) (.pdf) on the measure said the proposal prohibits the government from targeting websites for censorship "based solely on activities protected by the First Amendment of the United States Constitution."
Oddly, that's [exactly the same language in the Patriot Act](#) used to test whether the government can wiretap or investigate a person based on their political beliefs or*



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statements.

Of course we all know how that turned out.

It has been revealed time after time after time that the U.S. government has been investigating large numbers of people based on their political beliefs.

The Internet is a great way for people to express and share their political thoughts and ideas, but it is also providing a way for governments around the world to watch and track dissenters.

For example, major news websites in China now require users to register their true identities before they are able to leave any comments. This enables the government to be able to identify (and potentially deal with) anyone that does not express the "right" views.

In the same manner, the Obama administration is now proposing the introduction of a "universal Internet ID" for Americans. The program is being touted as "voluntary", but how long do you think it would be before a whole host of government agencies started to use these universal Internet IDs to watch, monitor, track and control the Internet activities of tens of millions of Americans?

The following is a video news report from CBS News about these new universal Internet IDs....



So where does all of this Internet censorship end?

Well, the truth is that it is only going to get tighter and tighter as the years go by.

Eventually you will probably need a government-issued license to put up websites such as this one, and in fact someday you will probably need a government-issued license before you can even log on to the Internet.

So enjoy this era of relatively unlimited Internet freedom while you can, because it is rapidly coming to an end. Tyrannical governments all over the globe are realizing that in order to maintain "control" they must place a much tighter grip on the flow of information on the Internet.

If you live in the United States or another nation where there is still at least a limited amount of liberty and freedom, it is going to be important to let your representatives know that you do not want Internet censorship and you certainly do not want any sort of an Internet kill switch. Liberties and freedoms are incredibly precious, and once they are taken away they are very difficult to get back.

Posted by Saladin at 12:59 PM

3 comments:

Greg Bacon said...

In the past, tyrants sent in their troops to smash printing presses and that didn't work, so let's hope killing the Internet doesn't either.

After that 2008 vote on the "No Banker Left Behind Act," during which I called my Rep BOTH times and urged her to vote no, I asked the lady answering the phone at both her local and DC office how the feedback about the TARP money was going.

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Both times, at both locations, they said they were getting deluged with phone calls; emails; faxes and written letters urging Jo Anne Emerson to vote NO and both times she voted YES.

So I stopped emailing and calling.

Unless you show up with 10,000 dollars, in cash inside a brown paper bag, they don't have time to listen to us peons.

January 31, 2011 1:51 PM

Saladin said...

When the enemy has access to a money printing press all the protest in the world is useless. We need a better idea.

January 31, 2011 4:01 PM


 **davol said...**

There is a bill before Congress right now to implement an Internet kill-switch just like in Egypt. Perhaps Americans can protest that if illegal wars don't seem worth stopping. Or we can protest an Un-Constitutional healthcare reform that solves the problem by rewarding insurance companies who are the problem, or an unemployment problem being solved by rewarding companies for hiring oversees, or a forecloser crisis ending in a repackaged securities scandal, or maybe the straw to break the American protest back might be austerity changes to Social Security the government will soon shove down our throats and tell US we like it just like they've been telling us we know we'll never see it so we should just give up. I know I'm mad and I'm not gonna take it anymore.



February 1, 2011 11:05 AM

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