

Government and the Internet

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The internet has become a communication tool that our society widely depends on for entertainment, office work, domestic jobs, and, most importantly, educational research. For example, the internet is critical to the U.S. economy; the Hudson Institute analysis found that the information, communication, and technology sector accounted for almost 10% of the total economic growth of the U.S. between 2002 and 2007. This means that the sector was responsible for \$340 billion out of a \$4.6 trillion increase in gross output at that time. On March 14, 2014, Congress announced that it had plans to end the oversight role over ICANN, the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers, and facilitate the transition to a private sector monitoring system under which ICANN would operate. This move would pose a threat to internet security, stability, and openness (Paul Rosenzweig, Schaefer, & Gattuso, 2014).

Federal government regulation of the internet will derail the freedom of citizens. The First Amendment of the Constitution expounds on the free speech and freedom of press rights that the American people cherish. Regulating online content would be a direct violation of the amendment. Furthermore, an open internet encourages entrepreneurial activity, where business people can promote different niches suitable to customers. This will not only help citizens but will also boost the economy. Regulating the internet will curtail this aspect and leave people with limited options to be creative and innovative. If the internet is regulated, it means limiting access to educational materials and therefore erasing the educational value of the internet. As much as there are a lot of dangers lurking, the vast knowledge that can be gained surpasses them (Croston, 2012).

The move can spark flames of civil unrest, just like what happened in Egypt when the government disabled the internet during a period of political unrest. This should serve as an

example, as it will cut people's ability to communicate with the outside world. In addition, if the government regulates the internet, it will use a lot of funds that would otherwise be channeled to other sectors of the economy. Take manpower surveillance, for example; the number of filters and the amount of sifting that will have to be created through an infinite amount of information flowing through the net is absurd. This will require a lot of money to establish and maintain (Croston, 2012).

On the other hand, regulation of the internet by the government will have a lot of benefits, not only for the federal government but also for its citizens. Internet crimes such as copyright theft, cyberterrorism, drug smuggling, defamation, credit card fraud, viruses, and other malware should be deterred from affecting citizens. The use of harmful content on the internet, such as pornography and the solicitation of children, has brought about child abuse, and this justifies the reasons for internet regulation. In short, society is entitled to protection, and this can be done through the enforcement of criminal law in relation to online activities, therefore enforcing internet regulation (Darlington, 2010).

In conclusion, the points discussed above make it clear that the federal government should cease censoring what people can send or receive through the net. This is because the internet has created important opportunities to share information, facilitating an exchange of ideas and knowledge. It has also acted as a pathway for pro-democracy groups and journalists who can hold governments accountable for their actions at all times. In addition, the misuse of the internet by some individuals who commit cybercrimes should not be the sole reason for regulating the entire medium. Laws already in place are enough to bring stability and safety into society, and the internet should not be used as a scapegoat for rules dealing with social tension.

1. Croston, K. (2012, December 14). *10 Reasons the Government Should Not Regulate the Internet*. Retrieved November 18, 2016, from Ideas, Inventions and Innovations: <https://goo.gl/awHRlh>
2. Darlington, R. (2010, February 25). *Should the Internet Be Regulated?* Retrieved November 18, 2016, from Roger Darlington's World: <https://goo.gl/ubKuMb>
3. Paul Rosenzweig, Schaefer, B. D., & Gattuso, J. L. (2014, September 14). *Should Governments Control the Internet?* Retrieved from Commentary on Regulation, Internet, and Technology: <https://goo.gl/Kx6Gdm>