

Lantern (software)

Lantern is a free and open source^[4] [internet censorship circumvention](#) tool that operates in some of the most extreme censorship environments, such as China, Iran, and Russia.^[5] It was used by millions of Iranians during the [Mahsa Amini protests](#) in Iran in 2022 and again during the surge in censorship in Russia following the [Russian invasion of Ukraine](#). Lantern uses a wide variety of protocols and techniques that obfuscate network traffic and/or co-mingle traffic with protocols censors are reluctant to block, often hiding in protocols such as TLS.^[6] It also uses [domain fronting](#).^[7] It is not an anonymity tool like [Tor](#).^[1]

Lantern was developed and is maintained by Brave New Software Project,^[8] a 501c3 nonprofit organization. Brave New Software was founded in 2010 and "is dedicated to keeping the internet open and decentralized through user-focused open tools that solve practical problems in how the internet works for people."

Early versions of Lantern allowed users in countries having free internet access to share their internet connection with those who are in countries where the network is partly blocked.^[9] Network connections will be dispersed between multiple computers running Lantern so it will not put undue stress on a single connection or computer.^[10] Newer versions of Lantern again use this technique via browser-based proxies and Lantern's Unbounded^[11] software.

Lantern's CEO and lead developer is [Adam Fisk](#), the former lead engineer of [LimeWire](#).^[12]

History

In early versions, Lantern's framework required the use of [Google Talk](#) for users to invite other trusted users from their Google Talk contacts.^[10] Lantern has won awards from the US Department of State to support internet freedom. This has raised some concerns about the privacy of users, though Fisk has said the State Department is "incredibly hands off" and never dictates how they should write Lantern, or how they should talk about it.^{[1][10]}

In early December 2013, Lantern had a surge of Chinese users and grew from 200 users to 10,000 users in just two weeks.^[13] Soon after that, the network was almost blocked by the Chinese government.^[14] Another surge occurred after the [2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine](#) when internet freedoms in Russia were severely curtailed.^[15]

The software received US\$2.2 million (HK\$17.1 million) in seed funding from the US State Department.^[16]

Lantern is hosted on a wide variety and continually changing set of data centers around the world. It has used Digital Ocean at times, which was briefly reported as blocked in Iran during the civil unrest on January 2, 2018.^[17] Users are not required to connect by invite since version 2.0 was released in 2015.


Privacy policy

Per Lantern's privacy policy document^[18] on their website


- Lantern servers do not and will never log:
- Linking Lantern account to real identity (such as purchase information)
 - Connection logs (time stamps of connection of IP addresses from client to Lantern server)
 - Browsing history
 - Traffic destination or metadata
 - DNS queries^[19]

Lantern collects as little information about their customers as possible in order to run their service:


Our guiding principle toward data collection is to collect only the minimal data required to operate a world-class service at scale. We



LANTERN




Go Pro!
Unlock faster speeds, ad-free experience, and unlimited data! >



VPN Status


Connected


Server Location ⓘ


 Frankfurt

Split Tunneling

On >


VPN ●

 NEW
Discover


Account

Lantern 7.7.1 on Android screenshot

Original author	Adam Fisk ^[1]
Stable release	7.8.1 ^[2] / 29 February 2024
Repository	github.com /getlantern (https://github.com/getlantern)
Written in	Go
Operating system	Linux, OS X, Windows, Android

designed our systems to not have sensitive data about our customers; even when compelled, we cannot provide data that we do not possess.

Type	Internet censorship circumvention
License	Apache License 2.0 ^[3]
Website	lantern.io (https://lantern.io)

Related events

At the beginning of 2019, it was reported that the Guangdong police had imposed penalties on the basis of the "Interim Provisions on the Administration of the International Network of Computer Information Network of the People's Republic of China" for a Lantern user to "create and use illegal channels for international networking." The fine is a thousand [Yuan](#). The document of the punishment was publicized on the "Guangdong Public Security Law Enforcement Information Disclosure Platform".^[20]

In March of 2022 it was reported that Russian users were employing Lantern to bypass censorship measures put in place by the Russian government.^[5]

See also

- [Hola \(VPN\)](#) - P2P VPN
- [Psiphon](#)
- [Haystack \(software\)](#)
- [Outline VPN](#)
- [Tor \(network\)](#)

Notes

References

- Guthrie Weissman, Cale (October 22, 2013). "Here's an anti-Internet censorship program for activists by activists" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20210604123855/https://pando.com/2013/10/22/heres-an-anti-internet-censorship-program-for-activists-by-activists/>) . *Pando*. Archived from the original (<http://pando.com/2013/10/22/heres-an-anti-internet-censorship-program-for-activists-by-activists/>) on 4 Jun 2021. Retrieved 13 March 2014.

2. "Release 7.8.1" (<https://github.com/getlantern/lantern/releases/tag/7.8.1>) . 29 February 2024. Retrieved 22 March 2024.
3. "LICENSE" (<https://github.com/getlantern/lantern/blob/valencia/LICENSE>) . GitHub. 27 August 2015. Retrieved 27 August 2015.
4. "Lantern" (<https://github.com/getlantern>) . *github.com*. Retrieved 24 Aug 2020.
5. "Meet the Secretive US Company Building an 'Unbreakable' Internet Inside Russia" (<https://www.vice.com/en/article/russian-internet-lantern/>) . 24 March 2022.
6. "TLS Masq" (<https://github.com/getlantern/tlsmasq>) . *github.com*. Retrieved 9 December 2024.
7. Fifield D, Lan C, Hynes R, Wegmann P, Paxson V (2015-05-15). "Blocking-resistant communication through domain fronting" (<https://www.bamsoftware.com/papers/fronting/>) . *Proceedings on Privacy Enhancing Technologies*. 2015 (2). Proceedings on Privacy Enhancing Technologies 2015: 46–64. doi:10.1515/popets-2015-0009 (<https://doi.org/10.1515%2Fpopets-2015-0009>) . S2CID 5626265 (<https://api.semanticscholar.org/CorpusID:5626265>) .
8. "Brave New Software" (<https://www.bravenewsoftware.org/>) . *www.bravenewsoftware.org*.
9. "Anti-firewall tool Lantern infiltrated by Chinese censors" (<https://www.scmp.com/news/china-insider/article/1378201/anti-firewall-tool-lantern-infiltrated-chinese-censors>) . South China Morning Post. 11 December 2013. Retrieved 13 March 2014.
10. McKenzie, Jessica (October 22, 2013). "Could State Department Funded Lantern Be Bigger, Better Tor?" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20140326213652/http://techpresident.com/news/wegov/24444/state-department-funded-lantern-next-bigger-better-tor>) . Archived from the original (<https://techpresident.com/news/wegov/24444/state-department-funded-lantern-next-bigger-better-tor>) on 26 March 2014. Retrieved 13 March 2014.
11. "Unbounded" (<https://unbounded.lantern.io>) . *unbounded.lantern.io*.
12. "NEXT GENERATION ANTI-CENSORSHIP TOOLS - PANELIST BIOS" (<https://web.archive.org/web/20130429132346/http://tech.state.gov/profiles/blogs/6282015:BlogPost:40819>) . techATstate. March 6, 2013. Archived from the original (<https://tech.state.gov/profiles/blogs/6282015:BlogPost:40819>) on 29 April 2013. Retrieved 13 March 2014.
13. "Lantern Program Allows Chinese to Dodge Firewall - China Digital Times (CDT)" (<http://chinadigitaltimes.net/2013/12/lantern-program-allows-chinese-dodge-firewall/>) . *China Digital Times*. China Digital Times. December 5, 2013. Retrieved 13 March 2014.

14. "China blocks censorship circumvention software Lantern after a surge of Chinese users" (<http://www.techinasia.com/china-blocks-anti-censorship-tool-lantern/>) . TECH IN ASIA. December 11, 2013. Retrieved 13 March 2014.
15. "Meet the Secretive US Company Building an 'Unbreakable' Internet Inside Russia" (<https://www.vice.com/en/article/russian-internet-lantern/>) . Vice. March 24, 2022. Retrieved 25 March 2022.
16. "US-funded Lantern program allows Chinese to dodge Great Firewall and view banned websites" (<https://www.scmp.com/news/china-insider/article/1372661/use-lantern-software-means-view-banned-websites-grows-china>) . South China Morning Post. 4 December 2013. Retrieved 13 January 2016.
17. "January 3, 2018 Episode Transcript" (<http://www.cbc.ca/radio/thecurrent/the-current-for-january-3-2018-1.4470118/january-3-2018-episode-transcript-1.4472036#segment1>) . *The Current*. CBC. Retrieved 4 January 2018.
18. "Lantern | Open Internet For All" (<https://lantern.io/privacy>) . *lantern.io*.
19. "Lantern | Open Internet For All" (<https://lantern.io/privacy>) . *lantern.io*. Retrieved 2023-02-10.
20. "韶雄公(网)行罚决字 [2019]1号" (<http://www.gdgafz.alldayfilm.com/bookDetail.html?type=1&id=1134323>) [Shaoxiong Public (Internet) Administrative Penalty Decision No. 1 [2019]]. 广东公安执法信息公开平台 (in Chinese (China)). 2018-12-28. Archived (<https://archive.today/20190105094907/http://www.gdgafz.alldayfilm.com/bookDetail.html?type=1&id=1134323>) from the original on 2019-01-05. Retrieved 2019-01-05.

External links

- [Official website \(<https://lantern.io/>\)](https://lantern.io/) 