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The University of Dublin

SCHOOL OF COMPUTER SCIENCE AND STATISTICS

# **COMPARING INTERNET CENSORSHIP BETWEEN IRELAND & IRAQ**

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B.A.I. COMPUTER ENGINEERING

## Declaration

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# Abstract

A short summary of the problem investigated, the approach taken and the key findings. This should not be more than around 400 words.

The must be on a separate page.

what's the title for our title abstract one page five paragraphs area and digital twin project research questions two paragraphs how to solve them paragraph to implement and evaluate main findings one paragraphs expanding the abstract

introduction literature review design implementation evaluation conclusion

# Acknowledgements

Thanks Mum!

You should acknowledge any help that you have received (for example from technical staff), or input provided by, for example, a company.

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# 1 | Introduction

## 1.1 Internet Censorship and Privacy

The primary aim of this work is to identify and compare internet censorship methods between Ireland and Iraq.

### 1.1.1 Privacy

User Privacy across the internet is directly tied to censorship efforts from different regimes. Censorship often involves the state or corporate monitoring of internet users, and governments that impose censorship frequently justify it using security concerns while often violating privacy rights in the process. In countries where censorship is highly enforced, using anonymity tools to circumvent censorship can protect the right to free expression and access to information. For instance, the *Human Rights Watch* advises people in China to make use of the Tor Browser to avoid abuses by the state (1).

Based on a meta-analysis of studies related to internet privacy concerns, privacy literacy, and the adoption of privacy-protective measures, it was found that there is no strong correlation between national privacy laws and protective behaviors (2). This suggests that individuals do not rely on legal protections in their country, and more often take privacy into their own hands. It was also found that culture did not impact the use of privacy-protective behaviors in different countries.

While it may be easy to think censorship is only prevalent in non-western countries,

such as China or Russia, it can also happen in democratic states. Weak privacy protections can lead to surveillance capitalism, where companies act as de facto censors by shaping information flows based on user data (3). For example, during the COVID-19 pandemic in the United States, it was recently revealed that Meta (formerly Facebook) was asked to censor certain information regarding COVID-19 (4). The United States Government and Meta actively engaged in the censorship of the people's right to free speech and expression, as humor and satire was also removed from the platform.

### **1.1.2 Background**

This section will talk about internet censorship across the world and give a brief intro into the differences by general region

### **1.1.3 Global Censorship**

## **1.2 Project Goals**

The aim of this project is to ...



## 2 | State of the Art

### 2.1 Censorship Mechanisms & Circumvention Techniques

### 2.2 Ireland

#### 2.2.1 Censorship in the Past

According to a report from the United States Department of State in 2011, it was found that there were no government restrictions on access to the internet or that the government actively monitored email or internet chatrooms (5).

The Irish government engages in censoring or blocking the distribution of pirated copyrighted material. In 2009, the Irish Telecom Company, EIRCOM, blocked its customers from accessing the website *The Pirate Bay*. The Pirate Bay is a Swedish website which provides links to copyrighted material. The website was hit with a lawsuit from major record labels and many ISPs around the world agreed to block access to the website as part of the settlement. However, not all Irish ISPs complied. The cable TV operator UPC announced that it would not comply (6).

In alignment with international agreements, the Irish Government blocks access to websites that contain illegal content, such as Child Sexual Abuse Material (CSAM). The government has setup a hotline that allows citizens to anonymously report websites that they suspect contain illegal content, called [hotline.ie](http://hotline.ie) (7).

In contrast to other EU countries, Ireland does not have a broad

government-mandated filtering system. They instead have the power through the Irish courts to mandate Irish ISPs to block certain websites. In addition, Irish ISPs may voluntarily enforce content filtering and website blocking in alignment with Irish content law.

Up until 2014, Ireland and other EU countries followed data retention laws, which required ISPs to store metadata for law enforcement purposes. In 2014, the European Court of Justice struck down the directive, which led to a change in this law in Ireland (8). After this change, Ireland enacted the *Communications (Retention of Data)(Amendment) Act 2022* (9). This legislation allows for the general and indiscriminate retention of communications traffic and location data on the grounds of national security, where approved by a judge.

### **2.2.2 Current Censorship**

## **2.3 Iraq**

## **2.4 Tools**

### **The Tor Browsers**

#### **2.4.1 VPNs**

## **3 | Methodology**

### **3.1 Introduction**

### **3.2 The OONI Probe**

#### **3.2.1 Background of OONI**

The Open Observatory of Network Interference (OONI) project was started in 2012 as a non-profit open-source software project aimed at identifying and documenting internet censorship around the world (10). The OONI organization openly publishes measurements and provides a public archive on network interference from across the world.

#### **3.2.2 Data-Collection**

### **3.3 Challenges & Limitations**

## 4 | Results and Discussion

## 5 | Security Privacy

## 6 | Conclusions

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# A1 | Appendix

You may use appendices to include relevant background information, such as calibration certificates, derivations of key equations or presentation of a particular data reduction method. You should not use the appendices to dump large amounts of additional results or data which are not properly discussed. If these results are really relevant, then they should appear in the main body of the report.

## A1.1 Appendix numbering

Appendices are numbered sequentially, A1, A2, A3... The sections, figures and tables within appendices are numbered in the same way as in the main text. For example, the first figure in Appendix A1 would be Figure A1.1. Equations continue the numbering from the main text.