Privacy and Censorship

The Internet has opened new horizons for many freedoms and rights but at the same time has also notably increased governments' and corporations' censorship power. Internet censorship is the control or suppression of the control of the information and ideas circulated on the internet. Lack of privacy online and the rise of surveillance make censorship easier by tracking everything you click on.

Reasons to censor

There are many reasons to censor, the internet contains loads of information and much of this information can be offensive to people, governments or corporations. The most common reasons to censor are related to ideological, social, moral, and religious issues. No matter what the censors' reasons are, the purpose is the same: block access to information.

Surveillance and censorship: methods of control on the internet

Plenty of the world's most censored countries have a strong internet infrastructure with many active online communities and great technological developments that allow them to track their citizens/users and perform censorship.

There are many ways to restrict internet access and content, ranging from the most known techniques such as filtering, technical blocking, search results removal, internet shutdowns, to the most advanced and new forms of repression like induced self-censorship, extra fees for social media, or internet slowdowns.

Many of these actions can be carried out through surveillance mechanisms. Once they track you they can block specific content or they can suppress your own content online, either through robots, algorithms or persons acting like moderators.

Why is privacy important?

Privacy protections make selective censorship harder because censors (governments or corporations) no longer know the details of what you are doing, what sites you visit or what searches you do, so they can't track you.

What can I do?

Keep your online activity as private as possible, protect your web browsing, and use web extensions to enhance your privacy. Ask your librarian for more information on protecting your privacy and fighting censorship online.

Recommended tools to start protecting your privacy and avoid censorship.:

Tor Browser - https://www.torproject.org/download/
Tor Browser circumvents censorship and protects privacy by isolating each website you visit so third-party trackers and ads can't follow you, it also prevents someone watching your connection from knowing what websites you visit.

VPN
A good way to avoid censorship on the internet is by using a Virtual Private Network, a VPN allows you to create a secure connection to another network over the Internet. With a VPN you can access region-restricted websites without compromising your identity. With several access points located around the world in different countries, anyone can find at least one server to connect to, even from most restricted networks.

DuckDuckGo (DDG) https://duckduckgo.com/
DDG is a search engine that enhances your privacy. Unlike other search engines such as Google, Bing, or Yahoo, DDG doesn't store your search history and its extension prevents you from being tracked elsewhere. It is also available as a mobile app.

Privacy Badger https://www.eff.org/es/node/99095
Privacy Badger is a browser add-on that stops advertisers and other third-party trackers from secretly tracking you.

Signal
https://signal.org/es/
Signal is one of the most secure and private way to communicate. Is a free and open source messaging app. Secure Signal messages are encrypted using the Signal Protocol that allows you to make secure private conversations.

For more information

libraryfreedom.org