

Global Policy Weekly - March 18, 2013

by [Emily Barabas](#) [1]
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CDT's Global Policy Weekly highlights the latest Internet policy developments and proposals from around the world, compiled by CDT's [Global Internet Freedom Project](#) [2].

FREE EXPRESSION

Iran has begun [blocking](#) [3] citizen's access to virtual private network (VPN) services. It is estimated that 30% of Iranian Internet users utilize VPN services to circumvent filtering systems in the country. The National Center for Cyberspace has begun providing its own state-controlled VPN software on the condition that users promise not to visit banned sites. Critics [warn](#) [4] that the state-sponsored VPN will make it easier for the government to track user activity.

The Global Network Initiative (GNI) is [collaborating](#) [5] with eight major telecommunications companies to initiate an Industry Dialogue around advancing free expression and privacy rights in the Information and Communications Technology sector. The companies will use the platform to share information, tools, and best practices. Participants include Alcatel-Lucent, France Telecom-Orange, Millicom, Nokia Siemens Networks, Telefonica, Telenor, TeliaSonera, and Vodafone. CDT [commends](#) [6] companies for joining the Industry Dialogue and looks forward to supporting the project as it moves forward.

SECURITY AND SURVEILLANCE

Reporters Without Borders [released](#) [7] its 2013 report "The Enemies of the Internet," which focuses on government surveillance practices around the world. The report examines five countries with particularly egregious surveillance practices: Bahrain, China, Iran, Syria, and Vietnam. It also discusses five corporations that it considers "digital era mercenaries" whose products have likely facilitated government surveillance. The report warns that increasingly sophisticated technology is becoming a growing threat to the rights and safety of citizens and journalists.

Researchers have found evidence of [command-and-control](#) [8] servers for a surveillance product called FinSpy operating in 25 countries. Researchers at the University of Toronto and UC Berkeley discovered that the FinSpy backdoor is reporting back to servers in a number of countries that lack robust human rights protection. In one case, the research shows a FinSpy server running on an IP address associated with the ministry of communications in Turkmenistan. Additionally, the authors report that in Ethiopia the spyware has been hidden in emails targeted at political dissidents.

French telecommunications regulator ARCEP is [requiring](#) [9] Skype to register as an "electronic communications operator." The agency indicated that failure to comply is considered a criminal offense. Registered operators are required meet certain obligations, such as routing emergency calls and facilitating wiretaps for law enforcement. Skype [told](#) [10] Ars Technica that it does not consider itself a "electronic communications operator," but will continue to discuss the issue with French regulators.

INTERNET NEUTRALITY

France's National Digital Council has issued [an advisory report](#) [11] calling for a law that would require ISPs to give the same priority to all Internet traffic. The report also raises the possibility of [extending](#) [12] some neutrality obligations to search engines and social networks. Only three countries in the world currently have net neutrality laws: The Netherlands, Slovenia, and Chile.

Critics [point](#) [13] [out](#) [13] that the National Digital Council's recommendation is vague and lacks provisions for enforcement.

INTERNET GOVERNANCE

UNESCO released [Final Recommendations](#) [14] following the February WSIS+10 review session in Paris. The meeting began the process of preparing for the 10-year review of World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS), which will be held in 2015. Final Recommendations from the event call for supporting growth in Internet access, education, human rights, and multistakeholder approaches to Internet governance, among other priorities. CDT [applauds](#) [15] UNESCO's effort to hold a transparent, accessible event that drew participation from a wide range of stakeholders.

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- [10] http://arstechnica.com/tech-policy/2013/03/france-says-skype-could-face-prosecution-for-failure-to-register-as-a-telecom/?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+arstechnica%2Findex+%28Ars+Technica+-+All+content%29&utm_content=Google+Reader
- [11] <http://www.cnnumerique.fr/wp-content/uploads/2013/03/130311-rapport-net-neutralite-VFINALE.pdf>
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