

Looking Into National Security Legislative Production: The Internet Blackout Discussion in the US and the Isolation Policy in Russia

SplinterCon. Fragmentation and Freedom: The New Digital Divide



Agenda

Concepts

- National Interest
- Internet Blackout
- Internet Isolation

Context Cases:

- Internet Blackout Discussion in the U.S.
- Isolation Policy in Russia

National Interest in the Cases Under Study



Conclusions

Clarifying Concepts: Internet Blackout

Report Internet Society (ISOC) 2017:

“An Internet shutdown can be defined as an “intentional disruption of Internet or electronic communications, rendering them inaccessible or effectively unusable, for a specific population or within a location often to exert control over the flow of information”

In practice, Internet shutdowns usually fall under two main categories:

1. *A total shutdown* or blackout where all services on the Internet are blocked off, targeting mobile Internet access and/or fixed lines, such that users in a country or region are not able to access the Internet. 
2. *A partial shutdown*, where content blocking techniques are applied to restrict access to websites or applications, very often to block people from communicating or sharing information amongst them. 

Some Definitions

Concept

**Internet Shutdown –
a.k.a.
“Internet Kill Switch”
or
“Internet Blackout”**

From a cybersecurity point of view	A control mechanism to protect the critical infrastructure when a nation-state faces a cyber attack (Murray, 2012)
From a political point of view	The government's authority (or the President's authority) to disconnect public, commercial and private wireless networks (including both cell phones and the internet itself) when a nation-state faces a national security threat (Liebelson, 2013)
From a technical point of view	The attempt to interrupt all Internet and cellular communication network activity in and out of territory of a nation-state, when a national security threat exists (Johnson, 2011)

Isolation Policy

Policy that enable a government to employ centralized control over the Internet infrastructure

It is portrayed as a tool of resilience against foreign powers

The successful consolidation of an Internet isolation policy can allow facilitate regimes to consolidate their power

The purpose of the isolation policy is to to maintain control over a political narrative

The information flow is contained from foreign exchange

Thank you!