The Russian Conflict and its Impact on the Global Web

Alexandra Dirksen

Technical University of Braunschweig

a.dirksen@tu-braunschweig.de





Recap: Communication on the Internet

(biggest global Infrastructure?)

Recap: Communication on the Internet



Recap: HTTP



Recap: HTTP



Recap: HTTPS(ecurity)

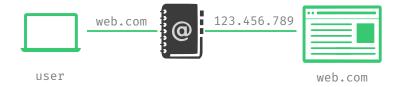


Recap: HTTPS(ecurity)

1 encrypted connection user web.com Trust

¹HTTPS page loads in Chome: 96% avg. [11]

Recap: Domain Name System



Recap: Domain Name System

2



 $^{^{2}}$ Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers

February 2022: Russia invades Ukraine



Sanctions for Russia's Invasion





- company, we have been working to help our Ukrainian customers and partners. We want to share some of what GoDaddy has been doing to help those in need.
- . For our Ukrainian customers we want to support them during this time and we want to make sure they stay up and running. So, for our Ukrainian customers, we're renewing, at no cost to them, any products or services that are set to expire in the next 60 days. Customers can also contact us at any time, and if they need something specific, we'll help them as best we can.
- . For Ukrainians in addition to the renewals, we're donating \$500,000 to humanitarian relief in Ukraine. We're also matching donations made by
- . For our Ukrainian contract workers we want them to focus on their family. We're partnering with our contractors' companies to help them pay their workers through the next 60 days. We are staying in contact with them to let them know we are thinking of them and providing any help where we can.

What's happened in Ukraine is horrible. We do not condone the unwarranted

aggression from the Russian Government. We are: Removing the Russian version of our website

No longer supporting new registrations of .ru and .ru.com Removing all .ru domain names from our domain name aftermarket Removing the Russian Ruble



Russia's Response: RTCA

KEŸFACTOR

Russia Creates Its Own Certificate Authority (CA) to Issue TLS Certificates

March 15,2022



Home > Blog > SSL/TLS Certificates > Russia Creates Its Own Certificate Authority (CA) to Issue TLS Certificates

In response to President Vladimir Putin's invasion of Ukraine, many western governments have imposed sanctions that have prohibited companies from conducting business with Russia.

Among these companies are public third-party certificate authorities (CA) who issue digital certificates for websites to validate a website domain to enable greater trust in online communications and transactions.

INDUSTRY REPORTS

Gartner: Hype Cycle for Digital
Identity, 2022

What happened then?

▶ Western governments adjusted sanction [9]

DEPARTMENT OF THE TREASURY

Office of Foreign Assets Control

31 CFR Part 587

Publication of Russian Harmful Foreign Activities Sanctions Regulations Web General Licenses 25A, 33, 34, and 35

 $\begin{tabular}{ll} \textbf{AGENCY:} Office of Foreign Assets \\ Control, Treasury. \end{tabular}$

ACTION: Publication of Web General Licenses.

SUMMARY: The Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) is publishing four general licenses (GLs) issued pursuant to the Russian Harmful Foreign Activities Sanctions Regulations: GL 25A, GL 33, GL 34, and GL 35, each of which was previously issued on OFAC's website. Harmful Föreign Activities Sanctions Regulations, 31 CFR part 587. GL 25A does not contain an expiration date. GL 33 expires at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time, June 7, 2022. GL 34 expires at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time, July 7, 2022. GL 35 expires at 12:01 a.m. eastern daylight time, August 20, 2022. The texts of GLs 25A, 33, 34, and 35 are provided below.

OFFICE OF FOREIGN ASSETS CONTROL

Russian Harmful Foreign Activities Sanctions Regulations 31 CFR Part 587

GENERAL LICENSE NO. 25A

Authorizing Transactions Related to Telecommunications and Certain Internet-Based Communications

(a) Except as provided in paragraph (c) of this general license, all transactions ordinarily incident and necessary to the receipt or transmission through account for or on behalf of any entity subject to Directive 2 under Executive Order (E.O.) 14024. Prohibitions Related to Correspondent or Payable-Through Accounts and Processing of Transactions Involving Certain Foreign Financial Institutions;

- (2) Any debit to an account on the books of a U.S. financial institution of the Central Bank of the Russian Federation, the National Wealth Fund of the Russian Federation, or the Ministry of Finance of the Russian Federation;
- (3) Any transactions prohibited by E.O. 14066 or E.O. 14068; or
- (4) Any transactions involving Joint Stock Company Channel One Russia, Joint Stock Company NTV Broadcasting Company, or Television Station Russia-1, unless separately authorized.
- (d) Effective May 8, 2022, General License No. 25, dated April 7, 2022, is

- ► Western governments adjusted sanction
- ► ICANN maintains neutrality [6]



- ► Western governments adjusted sanction
- ► ICANN maintains neutrality [6]









RU market share: 4%, 54.61%, 16.76% [3]

- ► Western governments adjusted sanction
- ► ICANN maintains neutrality [6]
- ▶ No browser accepts RTCA (but Yandex)
- ► RTCA's impact is negligible [5]

Assessing the Impact of Conflict on Russian Domain Infrastructure

IMC '22, October 25-27, 2022, Nice, France

Pre-Conflict			Pre-Sanctions			Post-Sanctions		
Issuer Org.	# Certs	(%)	Issuer Org.	# Certs	(%)	Issuer Org.	# Certs	(%)
Let's Encrypt	6,586k	91.58%	Let's Encrypt	3,285k	98.06%	Let's Encrypt	5,458k	99.23%
DigiCert	244k	3.40%	GlobalSign	25k	0.76%	GlobalSign	28k	0.52%
cPanel	153k	2.13%	cPanel	11k	0.34%	Google	13k	0.24%
Other CAs	207k	2.89%	Other CAs	28k	0.84%	Other CAs	422	0.01%

Table 1: Issuing activity of Certificate Authorities in the three time periods in 2022.

Domestic Services: Pros

▶ protecting users from sanctions

- ▶ protecting users from sanctions
- ► reducing a country's dependency

- ▶ protecting users from sanctions
- ► reducing a country's dependency
- ▶ most internet services are US-based

- ▶ protecting users from sanctions
- ► reducing a country's dependency
- ▶ most internet services are US-based
- ► HTTPS interception common practice

- ▶ politically motivated misuse
 - interception of private communication
 - forging of content
 - availability

Domestic Services: Cons

- ▶ politically motivated misuse
 - interception of private communication
 - forging of content
 - availability
- ▶ documented cases



NEWS UPDATE BY BILL BUDINGTON AND EVA GALPERIN DECEMBER 10, 2015

In an unusually direct attack on online privacy and free speech, the ruling regime of Kazabistan appears to have mandated the Carabistan appears to have mandated the control of the contr

Proposed New Internet Law in Mauritius Raises Serious Human Rights

DONATE

Concerns

BY JILLIAN C. YORK AND DAVID GREENE APRIL 30, 2021

As debate continues in the U.S. and Europe over how to regulate social media, a number of countries—such as India and Turkey—have imposed stringent rules that threaten free speech, while others, such as Indonesia, are considering them. Now, a new proposal to amend Mauritius' Information and Communications Technologies Act (ICTA)

A Syrian Man-In-The-Middle Attack against

Facebook DEEPLINKS BLOG

TECHNICAL ANALYSIS BY PETER ECKERSLEY MAY 5, 2011

Yesterday we learned of reports that the Syrian Telecom Ministry had launched a man-in-the-middle attack against the HTTPS version of the Facebook site. The attack is ongoing and has been seen by users of multiple Syrian ISPs. We cannot confirm the identity of the percetrators.

The attack is not extremely sophisticated: the certificate is invalid in user's browsers, and

EFF TURNS 30! LEARN MORE. Iranian Man-in-the-

Middle Attack Against Google Demonstrates Dangerous Weakness of Certificate Authorities

DEEPLINKS BLOG

What's worse than finding a worm in your apple? Finding half a worm.

What's worse than discovering that someone has launched a man-in-the-middle attack against Iranian Google users, silently intercepting everything from small to search

Domestic Services: Cons

- ▶ politically motivated misuse
 - interception of private communication
 - forging of content
 - availability
- ▶ documented cases
- ► HTTPS interception fragile [15]

The Sorry State of TLS Security in Enterprise Interception Appliances

LOUIS WAKED, MOHAMMAD MANNAN, and AMR YOUSSEF, Concordia Institute for Information Systems Engineering, Concordia University, Montreal, Canada

Network traffic inspection, including TLS traffic, in enterprise environments is widely practiced. Reasons for doing so are primarily related to improving enterprise security (e.g., phishing and malicious traffic detection) and meeting legal requirements (e.g., preventing unauthorized data leakage and copyright violations). To analyze TLS-encrypted data, network appliances implement a Man-in-the-Middle (MITM) TLS proxy by acting as the intended web server to a requesting client (e.g., a browser) and acting as the client to the actual/outside web server. As such, the TLS proxy must implement both a TLS client and a server and handle a large amount of traffic, preferably in real-time. However, as protocol and implementation layer vulnerabilities in TLS-HTTPS are quite frequent, these proxies must be at least as secure as a modern, up-to-date web browser and a properly configured web server (e.g., an Ar-rating in SSLlabs.com). As opposed to client-end TLS proxies (e.g., as in several anti-virus products), the proxies in network appliances may serve hundreds to thousands of clients, and any vulnerability in their TLS implementations can significantly downgrade enterprise security.

Russia's long-term plans

Russia's long-term plans

Russia's long-term plans

```
Yarovaya Law (2016) [8] = domestic legitimacy for:
```

▶ information flow control [17]

Russia's long-term plans

- ▶ information flow control [17]
- ▶ banning apps [13]

Russia's long-term plans

- ▶ information flow control [17]
- ▶ banning apps [13]
- ▶ fines on VPN providers [10]

Russia's long-term plans

- ▶ information flow control [17]
- ▶ banning apps [13]
- ▶ fines on VPN providers [10]
- ▶ re-route traffic [16]

Russia's long-term plans

Yarovaya Law (2016) [8] = domestic legitimacy for:

- ▶ information flow control [17]
- ▶ banning apps [13]
- ▶ fines on VPN providers [10]
- ▶ re-route traffic [16]

"...the Russian direction of travel is just another step in the increasing breaking-up of the internet" (Alan Woodward, 2019)

Russia-only Problem?

Russia-only Problem?

China has long mastered digital surveillance



Russia-only problem?

China has long mastered digital surveillance



Russia-only problem?

Iran follows suit



Digital Infra = Domestic Concern?

RTCA comply with tech requirements!

Digital Infra = Domestic Concern?

RTCA comply with tech requirements!

Human Rights Charta, §19:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers [7].

Digital Infra = Domestic Concern?

RTCA comply with tech requirements!

Human Rights Charta, §19:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers [7].

UN Human Rights Council:

...condemns internet access disruption as a human rights violation [14].

Does a global playground require global discussions & common rules?

► regulation vs.censorship

- ► regulation vs.censorship
- ► neutrality vs.intervening

- ► regulation vs.censorship
- ▶ neutrality vs.intervening
- ▶ digital sovereignty vs.human rights

- ► regulation vs.censorship
- ▶ neutrality vs.intervening
- ▶ digital sovereignty vs.human rights
- ▶ internet vs.global net(?)

- ► regulation vs.censorship
- ▶ neutrality vs.intervening
- ▶ digital sovereignty vs.human rights
- ▶ internet vs.global net(?)
- ▶ proprietary services vs.public good

- ► regulation vs.censorship
- ▶ neutrality vs.intervening
- ▶ digital sovereignty vs.human rights
- ▶ internet vs.global net(?)
- ▶ proprietary services vs.public good





A Declaration of the Independence of Cyberspace

by John Perry Barlow February 8, 1996
Governments of the Industrial World, you weary giants of flesh and steel,
I come from Cyberspace, the new home of Mind. On behalf of the future, I
ask you of the past to leave us alone. You are not welcome among us. You
have no sovereignty where we gather.

We have no elected government, nor are we likely to have one, so I address you with no greater authority than that with which liberty itself always speaks. I declare the global social space we are building to be naturally independent of the tyrannies you seek to impose on us. You have no moral right to rule us nor do you possess any methods of enforcement we have true reason to fear.

A friendly reminder. [4]

Additional references:

- 1 EU restrictive measures against Russia over Ukraine
 - https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/policies/sanctions/restrictive-measures-against-russia-over-ukraine/, April 2022.
- https://ofac.treasury.gov/sanctions-programs-and-country-information/ukraine-russia-related-sanctions, April 2022.
- [3] Browser market share russian federation.
- https://gs.statcounter.com/browser-market-share/all
- J. P. Barlow.
- A deciaration of the independence of cyberspace.
- M. Jonker, G. Akiwate, A. Affinito, A. Botta, G. M. Voelker, and S. Savage.
- [6] G. Marby.
 - Icanns responce to urkaine's request
 - https://www.icann.org/en/system/files/correspondence/marby-to-fedorov-02mar22-en.pdf, mar 2022 letter to Mykhailo Fedorov, Deputy Prime Minister of Ukraine.
- [7] U. Nations.
 - Universal declaration of human rig

 - Russia's big brother law enters into force.
- O. of Assets Control.
 Authorizing transactions related to telecommunications and certain internet-based communications
- [10] T. G. of Russia.
 Federal law no. 155-fz
- -----
- [11] G. T. Report.
 - https://transparencyreport.google.com/https/overview_2024
- Why russia needs a sovereign runet.
- Jul 2019.
 - P. Sauer.

 Russia bans facebook and instagram under 'extremism' las
- The Guardian, March 2022.
- [14] J. Vincent. Un condemns internet access disruption as a human rights violation.
- Intl. I. Wahad M. Mannan and A. Vanand
 - The sorry state of tls security in enterprise interception appliances.
- [16] D. Xue, B. Mixon-Baca, A. Ablove, B. Kujath, J. R. Crandall, and R. Ensa
- In Proceedings of the 22nd ACM Internet Measurement Conference, pages 179-194, 2022.
- [17] D. Xue, R. Ramesh, L. Evdokimov, A. Viktorov, A. Jain, E. Wustrow, S. Basso, and R. Ensafi. Throttling twitter: an emerging censorship technique in russia.

- **y** az4lem
- a.dirksen@tu-braunschweig.de
- me.adirksen.eu