



Internet Freedom

Who We Are

The State Department's Internet Freedom and Business & Human Rights (IFBHR) Section within the Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor leads U.S. government policy and engagement to protect human rights online.

Our guiding principle is the idea that the same rights people have offline must also be protected online, in particular the freedoms of expression, peaceful assembly and association. Over 3.3 billion people use the Internet on a daily basis, accounting for trillions of dollars in annual global economic activity. Technology companies, including Internet service providers and social media companies, play an important role in making Internet freedom a reality.

What We Do

Working with other U.S. government agencies, like-minded governments, civil society, and multi-stakeholder partners, we strive to maintain a global network that is open, interoperable, reliable, and secure.

Examples of Engagement

Bilateral: We raise concerns about restrictions on the Internet bilaterally with governments.

Multilateral: We collaborate with like-minded governments to advance Internet freedom, including in multilateral fora such as the UN Human Rights Council, the G-7, and the G-20.

Freedom Online Coalition (FOC): We lead

U.S. engagement in the Freedom Online Coalition, a group of like-minded governments collaborating to advance human rights online. Examples of FOC work include: building cross-regional support for Internet freedom language in key international documents and joint statements on issues of concern.

Multi-stakeholder: We work with interagency partners and civil society stakeholders to advance Internet freedom at the annual Internet Governance Forum, a multi-stakeholder venue for addressing global Internet governance.

We convene meetings and events on the margins of human rights- and cyber-related conferences to bring together stakeholders to address topical Internet freedom issues.

Programming: Since 2007, the U.S. government has provided over \$125 million to support Internet freedom. Our Office of Global Programs oversees programming that empowers civil society online through support for innovative technologies, digital safety, policy advocacy, and research programs.

Building awareness in the U.S. Government: We build tools and conduct training to help our State Department and interagency colleagues become more effective envoys on Internet freedom issues.

OUR APPROACH

PROMOTE & PROTECT

Fostering implementation of international human rights law and developing commitments in the global Internet freedom space with key stakeholders

CONVENE & FACILITATE

Creating a space for emerging and critical issues to be debated among relevant stakeholder groups

DEVELOP & IMPLEMENT

Establishing tools, training and guidance for U.S. government officials to be more effective envoys on Internet freedom

Contact the IFBHR team:
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