WORLD WIDE WEB FOUNDATION

WEBINDEX

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Contact: press@webfoundation.org

The Web in 2014: Less Free, More Unequal, Warns World Wide Web Foundation in Annual Web Index

- *Web Inventor Sir Tim Berners-Lee calls for the Internet to be recognised as a human right and protected from commercial and political interference*
- *Scandinavian countries again recognised as best at putting the Web to work, with Denmark, Finland and Norway topping the Index*

11 December, 2014. The World Wide Web Foundation has released the 2014-15 edition of the Web Index, the world's first measure of the World Wide Web's contribution to social, economic and political progress across 86 countries.

The 2014-15 report reveals that:

- **Web users are at increasing risk of indiscriminate government surveillance.** Laws preventing bulk mass surveillance are weak or non-existent in over 84% of countries, up from 63% in 2013.
- **Online censorship is on the rise.** Moderate or extensive Web censorship seen in 38% of countries over past year. (2013 = 32%)
- **Online organising leads to offline change.** Despite a sharp deterioration in the overall environment for press freedom in nearly every country studied, the Web and social media are making a major contribution to sparking citizen action in three in five of the countries studied. Meanwhile, in over 60% of countries, women are using the Web to claim and exercise their rights to a moderate or extensive degree.
- **True net neutrality remains a rarity.** A world-first assessment of net neutrality across countries found only around a quarter of nations effectively enforce clear rules against commercial or political discrimination in the management of Internet traffic.
- **Online Gender Based Violence is not being tackled effectively.** In 74% of Web Index countries, including many high-income nations, law enforcement agencies and the courts are failing to take appropriate actions in situations where Web-enabled ICTs are used to commit acts of gender-based violence.
- **Almost 60% of the world's people cannot get online, whilst half of all Web users live in countries that severely restrict their rights online.** 4.3 billion people have no access to the Web at all, whilst at least 1.8 billion more face severe violations of their rights to privacy and freedom of expression when they go online. An additional

225 million live in countries where ability to pay may limit the content and services they can access.*

Reflecting on the findings, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, inventor of the Web and founder of the World Wide Web Foundation said:

"It's time to recognise the Internet as a basic human right. That means guaranteeing affordable access for all, ensuring Internet packets are delivered without commercial or political discrimination, and protecting the privacy and freedom of Web users regardless of where they live."

The Index calculation has been significantly revamped over the past year, making year on year country comparisons impossible. However, as in past years, Scandinavian nations once again topped the report's country tables. States that have high levels of wealth, low levels of inequality, and strong protection for civil liberties — such as top-ranked Denmark, Finland and Norway — are gaining the most social and economic benefit from the Web.

Snapshot of Web Index 2014-15 Rankings

High Income Countries	Middle Income Countries	Low Income Countries
1. Denmark	1. Hungary	1. Kenya
2. Finland	2. Argentina	2. Bangladesh
3. Norway	3. Costa Rica	3. Uganda

"The richer and better educated people are, the more benefit they are gaining from the digital revolution. This trend can and must be reversed," said Anne Jellema, CEO of the World Wide Web Foundation, and the lead author of the report. *"Extreme disparities between rich and poor have been rightly identified as the defining challenge of our age, and we need to use technology to fight inequality, not increase it."*

"In an increasingly unequal world, the Web can be a great leveller — but only if we hardwire the rights to privacy, freedom of expression, affordable access and net neutrality into the rules of the game," concluded Berners-Lee.

The Web Index 2014-15 report is available at www.thewebindex.org, along with a series of visualisations and all accompanying data.

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Notes to Editors

1) *(1.5 billion total internet users live in countries which score below 3/10 for either surveillance or censorship or both. 340m live in countries scoring below 3/10 for net neutrality, but not included in the first group)*

2) The global launch of the 2014-15 Web Index takes place on 11 December 2014. A press conference will take place at 11.00 GMT in London at which Sir Tim Berners-Lee will make a statement on this year's Web Index and answer questions.

3) **About the Web Index**

Website: www.thewebindex.org | www.webfoundation.org **Facebook:** http://www.facebook.com/webfoundation **Twitter:** https://twitter.com/webfoundation
Launch hashtag: #WebIndex.
Web Index video: http://vimeo.com/113395858

Designed and produced by the World Wide Web Foundation, the Web Index is the world's first measure of the World Wide Web's contribution to social, economic and political progress in countries across the world. The Index combines existing secondary data with primary expert assessment surveys. Scores are given in the areas of access; freedom and openness; relevant content; and social, economic and political empowerment. Five new countries – Haiti, Mozambique, Myanmar, Ukraine and Sierra Leone – are included in this year's report.

The Web Index 2014 is made possible through funding by UK Aid from the UK government, NAVER and the Swedish International Development Cooperation.

2013 rankings:

Developed Countries		Emerging Market Countries		Developing Countries	
Country	Rank	Country	Rank	Country	Rank
Sweden	1	Mexico	30	Philippines	38
Norway	2	Colombia	32	Indonesia	48
United Kingdom	3	Brazil	33	Kenya	53
United States	4	Costa Rica	34	Morocco	54
New Zealand	5	South Africa	35	Ghana	55

4) About the World Wide Web Foundation

Established by the inventor of the Web, Sir Tim Berners-Lee, the World Wide Web Foundation seeks to establish the open Web as a global public good and a basic right, creating a world where everyone, everywhere can use the Web to communicate, collaborate and innovate freely. Represented by more than a dozen nationalities working from hubs in London, Washington DC and Cape Town, the World Wide Web Foundation operates at the confluence of technology and human rights, targeting three key areas: Access, Voice and Participation.