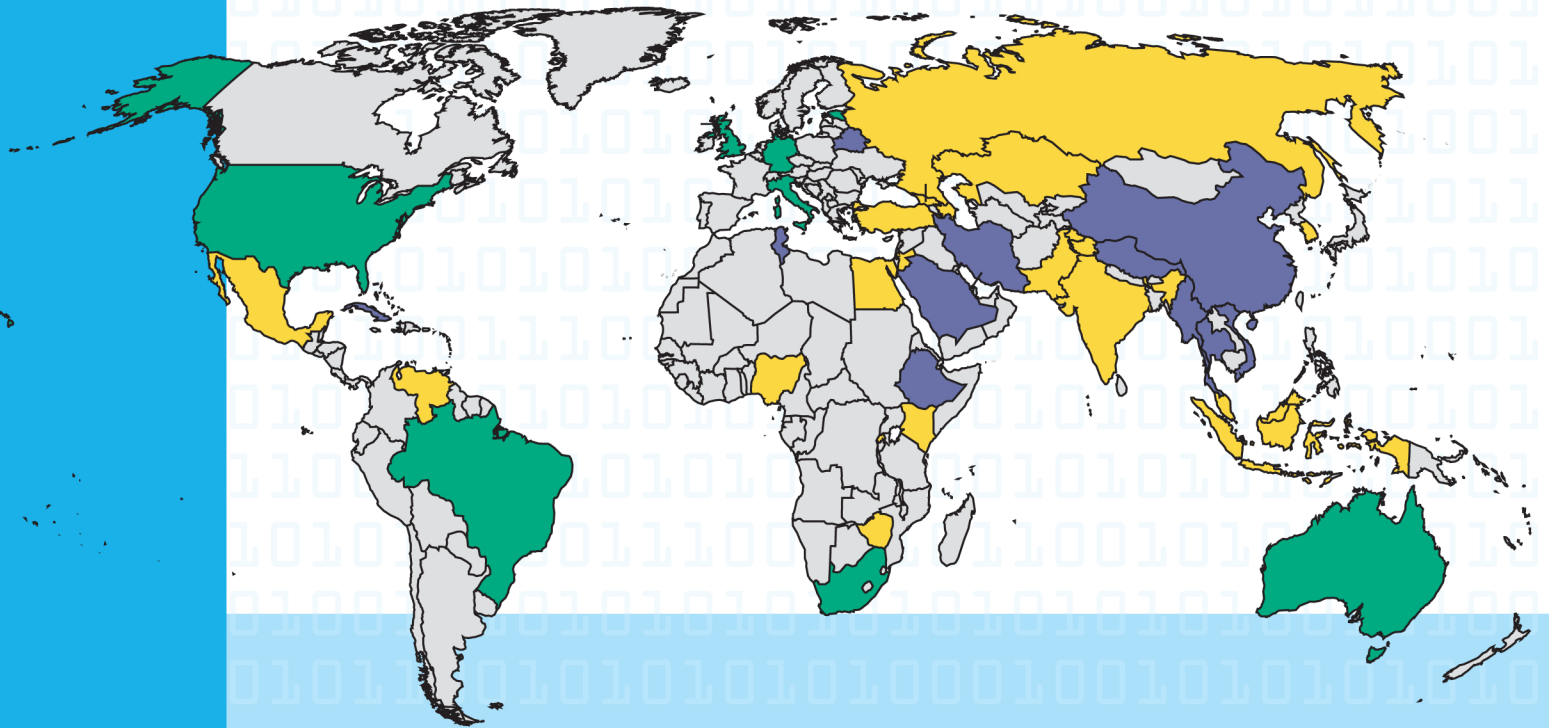




FREEDOM ON THE NET 2011

A GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF INTERNET
AND DIGITAL MEDIA



SUMMARY OF FINDINGS

For full report, visit: www.freedomhouse.org/freedomonthenet2011

UNDEF



The United Nations
Democracy Fund

FREEDOM ON THE NET 2011: GLOBAL SCORES

Freedom on the Net aims to measure each country's level of internet and new media freedom. Each country receives a numerical score from 0 (the most free) to 100 (the least free), which serves as the basis for an internet freedom status designation of Free (0-30 points), Partly Free (31-60 points), or Not Free (61-100).

Ratings are determined through an examination of three broad categories: obstacles to access, limits on content, and violation of user rights.

- ❖ **Obstacles to Access:** assesses infrastructural and economic barriers to access; governmental efforts to block specific applications or technologies; and legal, regulatory and ownership control over internet and mobile phone access providers.
- ❖ **Limits on Content:** examines filtering and blocking of websites; other forms of censorship and self-censorship; manipulation of content; the diversity of online news media; and usage of digital media for social and political activism.
- ❖ **Violations of User Rights:** measures legal protections and restrictions on online activity; surveillance; privacy; and repercussions for online activity, such as legal prosecution, imprisonment, physical attacks, or other forms of harassment.

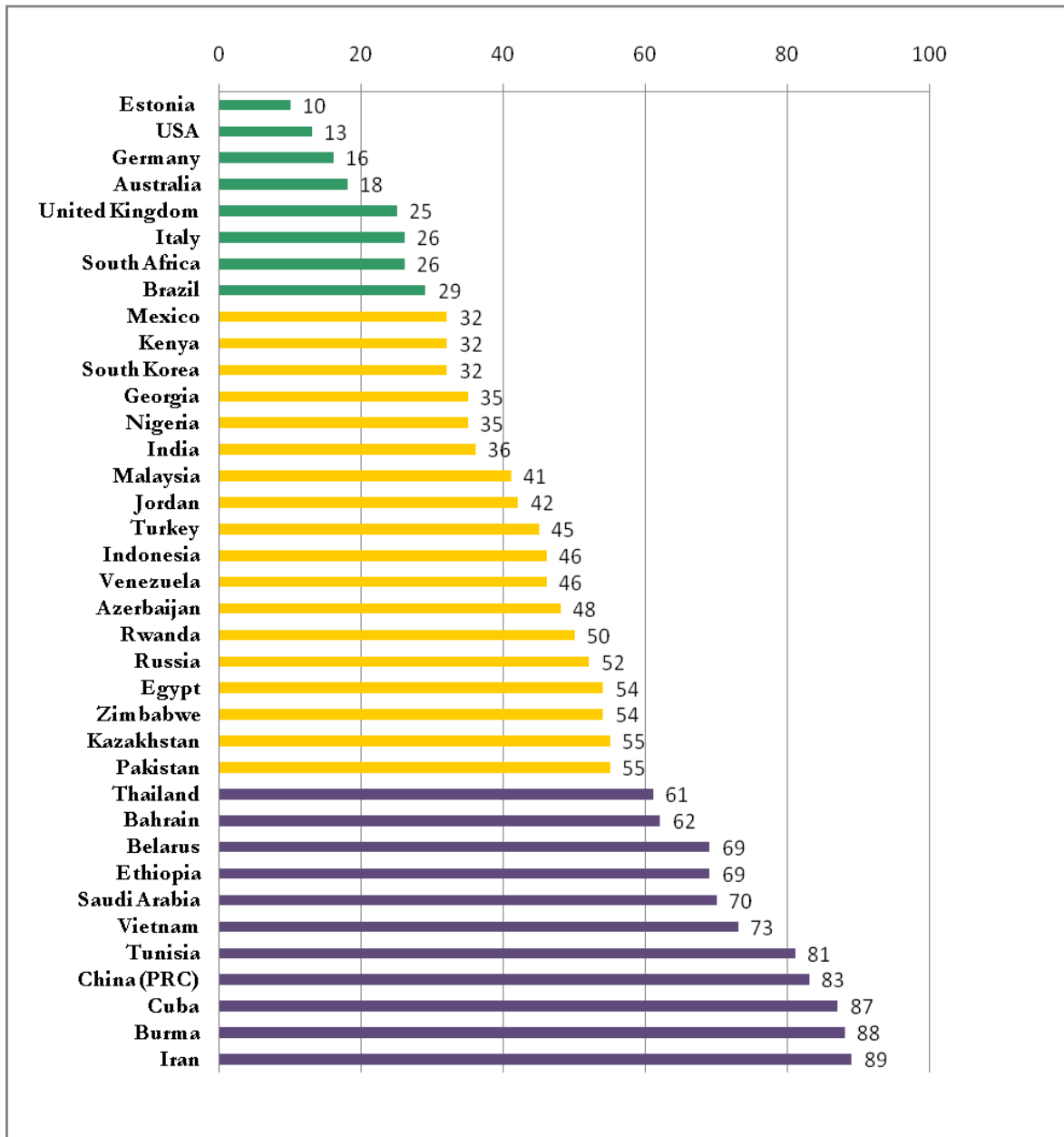
COUNTRY	FREEDOM ON THE NET STATUS	FREEDOM ON THE NET TOTAL 0-100 Points	A SUBTOTAL: OBSTACLES TO ACCESS 0-25 Points	B SUBTOTAL: LIMITS ON CONTENT 0-35 Points	C SUBTOTAL: VIOLATIONS OF USER RIGHTS 0-40 Points
Estonia	Free	10	2	2	6
USA	Free	13	4	2	7
Germany	Free	16	4	5	7
Australia	Free	18	3	6	9
UK	Free	25	1	8	16
Italy	Free	26	6	8	12
South Africa	Free	26	7	9	10

COUNTRY	<i>FREEDOM ON THE NET STATUS</i>	<i>FREEDOM ON THE NET TOTAL 0-100 Points</i>	<i>A SUBTOTAL: OBSTACLES TO ACCESS 0-25 Points</i>	<i>B SUBTOTAL: LIMITS ON CONTENT 0-35 Points</i>	<i>C SUBTOTAL: VIOLATIONS OF USER RIGHTS 0-40 Points</i>
Brazil	Free	29	7	7	15
Kenya	Partly Free	32	12	9	11
Mexico	Partly Free	32	12	10	10
South Korea	Partly Free	32	3	12	17
Georgia	Partly Free	35	12	10	13
Nigeria	Partly Free	35	13	10	12
India	Partly Free	36	12	8	16
Malaysia	Partly Free	41	9	11	21
Jordan	Partly Free	42	12	11	19
Turkey	Partly Free	45	12	16	17
Indonesia	Partly Free	46	14	13	19
Venezuela	Partly Free	46	15	13	18
Azerbaijan	Partly Free	48	15	15	18
Rwanda	Partly Free	50	14	19	17
Russia	Partly Free	52	12	17	23
Egypt	Partly Free	54	12	14	28
Zimbabwe	Partly Free	54	16	15	23
Kazakhstan	Partly Free	55	16	22	17
Pakistan	Partly Free	55	16	17	22

COUNTRY	<i>FREEDOM ON THE NET STATUS</i>	<i>FREEDOM ON THE NET TOTAL 0-100 Points</i>	<i>A SUBTOTAL: OBSTACLES TO ACCESS 0-25 Points</i>	<i>B SUBTOTAL: LIMITS ON CONTENT 0-35 Points</i>	<i>C SUBTOTAL: VIOLATIONS OF USER RIGHTS 0-40 Points</i>
Thailand	Not Free	61	12	23	26
Bahrain	Not Free	62	11	22	29
Belarus	Not Free	69	19	23	27
Ethiopia	Not Free	69	21	26	22
Saudi Arabia	Not Free	70	14	27	29
Vietnam	Not Free	73	16	25	32
Tunisia	Not Free	81	21	28	32
China	Not Free	83	19	28	36
Cuba	Not Free	87	24	30	33
Burma	Not Free	88	23	29	36
Iran	Not Free	89	21	29	39

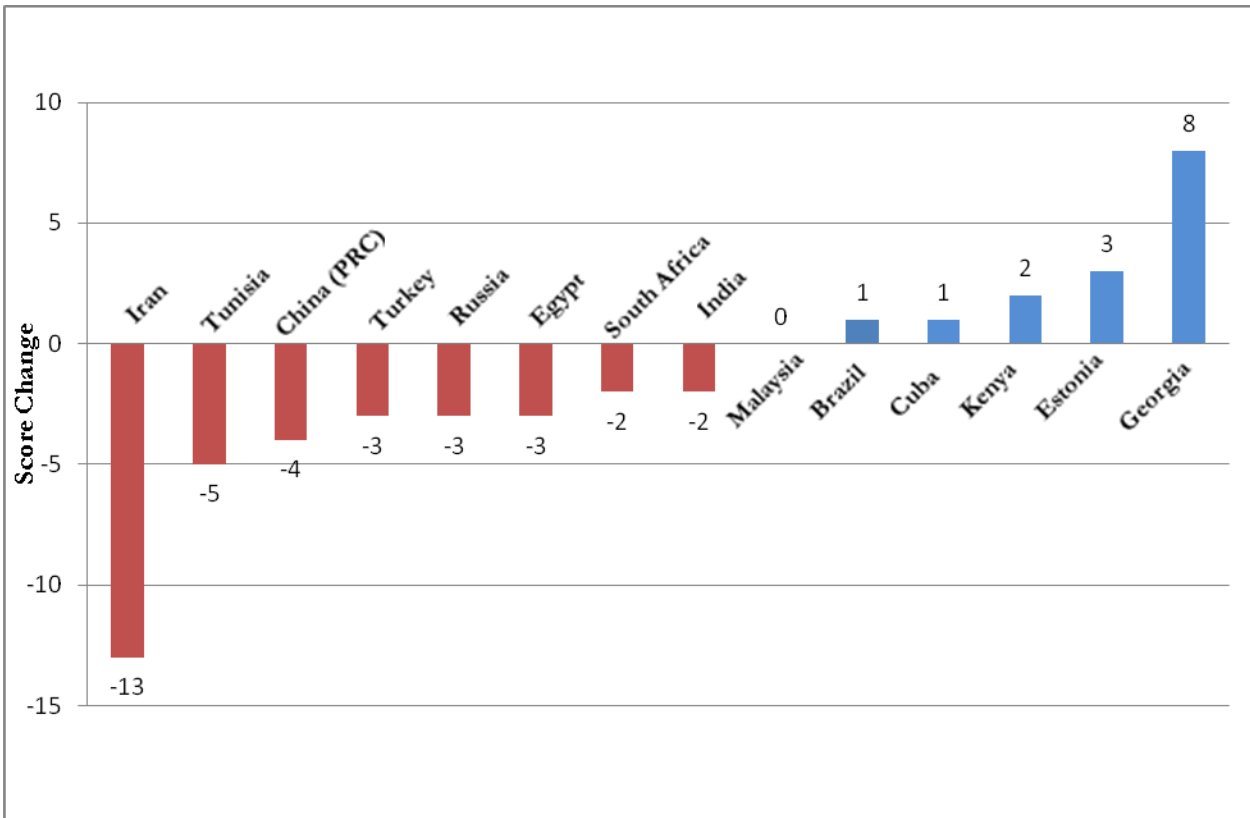
FREEDOM ON THE NET 2011: GLOBAL GRAPHS

37-COUNTRY SCORE COMPARISON (0 Best, 100 Worst)



* A green-colored bar represents a status of “Free,” a yellow-colored one, the status of “Partly Free,” and a purple-colored one, the status of “Not Free” on the *Freedom of the Net* Index.

SCORE CHANGES *FREEDOM ON THE NET* 2009 vs. 2011



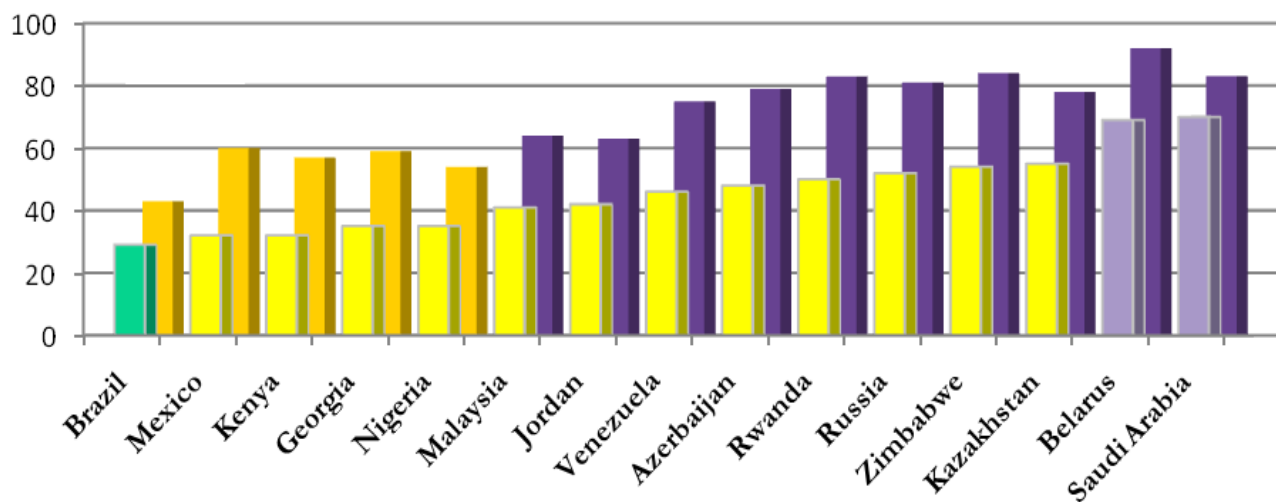
COUNTRY	FOTN 2009	FOTN 2011	TRAJECTORY
Brazil	30	29	↑
China	79	83	↓
Cuba	88	87	↑
Egypt	51	54	↓
Estonia	13	10	↑
Georgia	43	35	↑
India	34	36	↓
Iran	76	89	↓

COUNTRY	FOTN 2009	FOTN 2011	TRAJECTORY
Kenya	34	32	↑
Malaysia	41	41	No change
Russia	49	52	↓
South Africa	22	26	↓
Tunisia	76	81	↓
Turkey	42	45	↓
United Kingdom	23	25	↓

COUNTRIES AT RISK: INTERNET FREEDOM VS. PRESS FREEDOM

Among the 37 countries covered in this study, one notable contingent of states were those where the internet remains a relatively unobstructed domain of free expression when compared to a more repressive or dangerous environment for traditional media. This difference is evident from the comparison between a country's score on Freedom House's *Freedom on the Net 2011* assessment and its score on the *Freedom of the Press 2010* study.

The figure below is a graphical representation of this phenomenon, focusing on the 15 countries in this edition where the gap between their performance on the two surveys is 10 points or greater. This difference reflects the potential pressures in both the short and long term on the space for online expression. Among the 15 are several of the states identified as "countries at risk:" Jordan, Russia, Venezuela, and Zimbabwe.

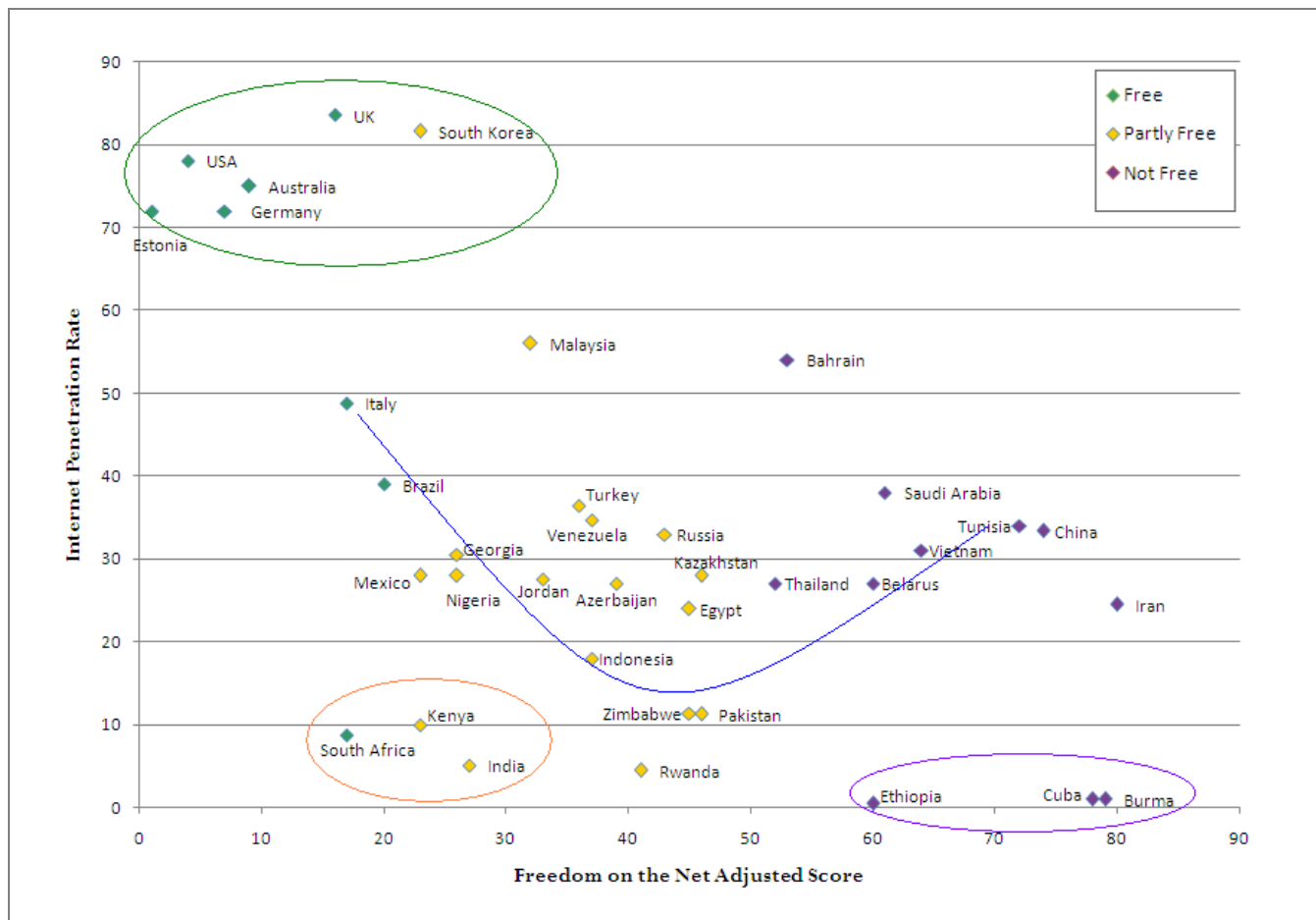


* The front-row bar reflects a country's *Freedom on the Net 2011* score; the back-row bar reflects the country's score on Freedom House's *Freedom of the Press 2010* index, which primarily assesses television, radio, print media. A green-colored bar represents a status of "Free," a yellow-colored bar represents a status of "Partly Free," while a purple one, the status of "Not Free."

INTERNET FREEDOM VS. INTERNET PENETRATION

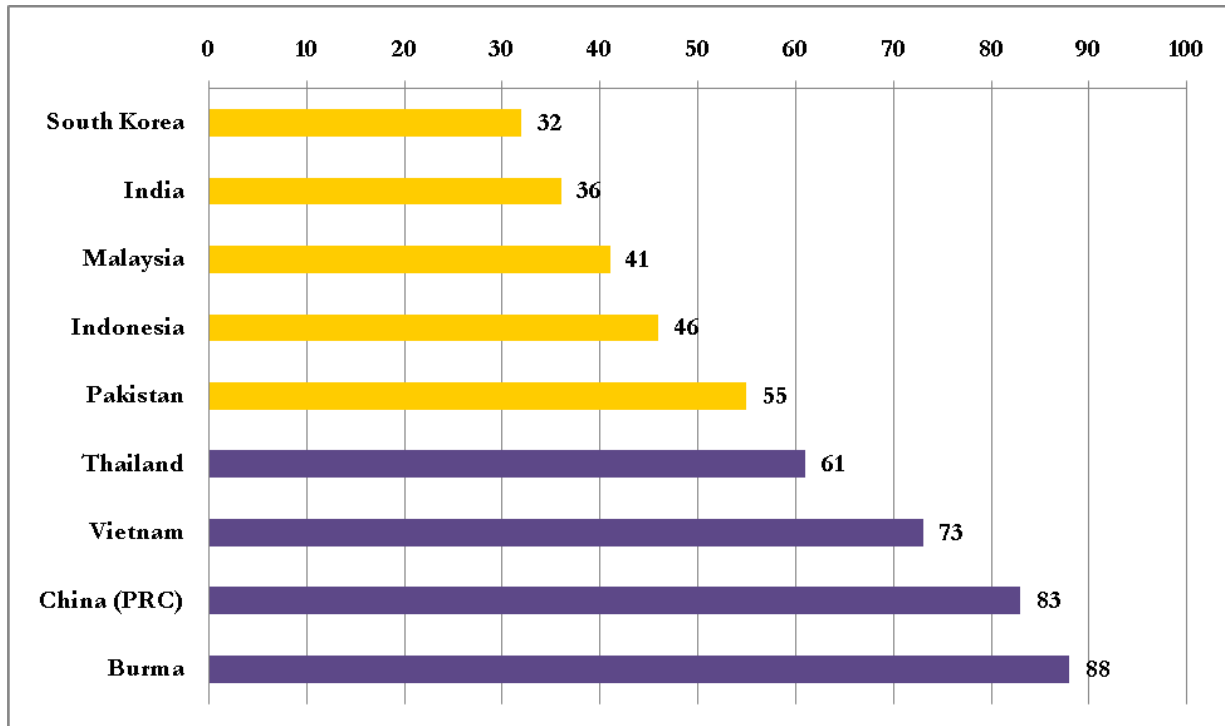
The figure below depicts the relationship between internet penetration rates and the level of digital media freedom as assessed by the *Freedom on the Net 2011* study. Each point is plotted to reflect its level of internet penetration as noted in the report, as well as its performance in the survey. To minimize possible overlap among variables, the scores have been adjusted to exclude performance on the first two questions of the *Freedom on the Net* methodology, which assess the degree of internet access in a given society.

The resulting graph points to several typologies: A cluster of economically developed democratic states with high penetration rates and relatively high levels of internet freedom (**green circle**); A cluster of lower income democratic states, with relatively lower penetration rates but limited restrictions on other aspects of internet freedom (**orange circle**); A cluster of lower income authoritarian states, with almost no internet access, as well as heavy restrictions on other aspects of internet freedom (**purple circle**); A number of states with middling levels of internet penetration and a range of performance on internet freedom. Of note is a potential trajectory for the Partly Free countries in the middle, which may move towards greater repression (the high-tech, Not Free countries on the right) or better protection of free expression (the mid-penetration, Free countries on the left) as penetration rates increase (**blue V pattern**).

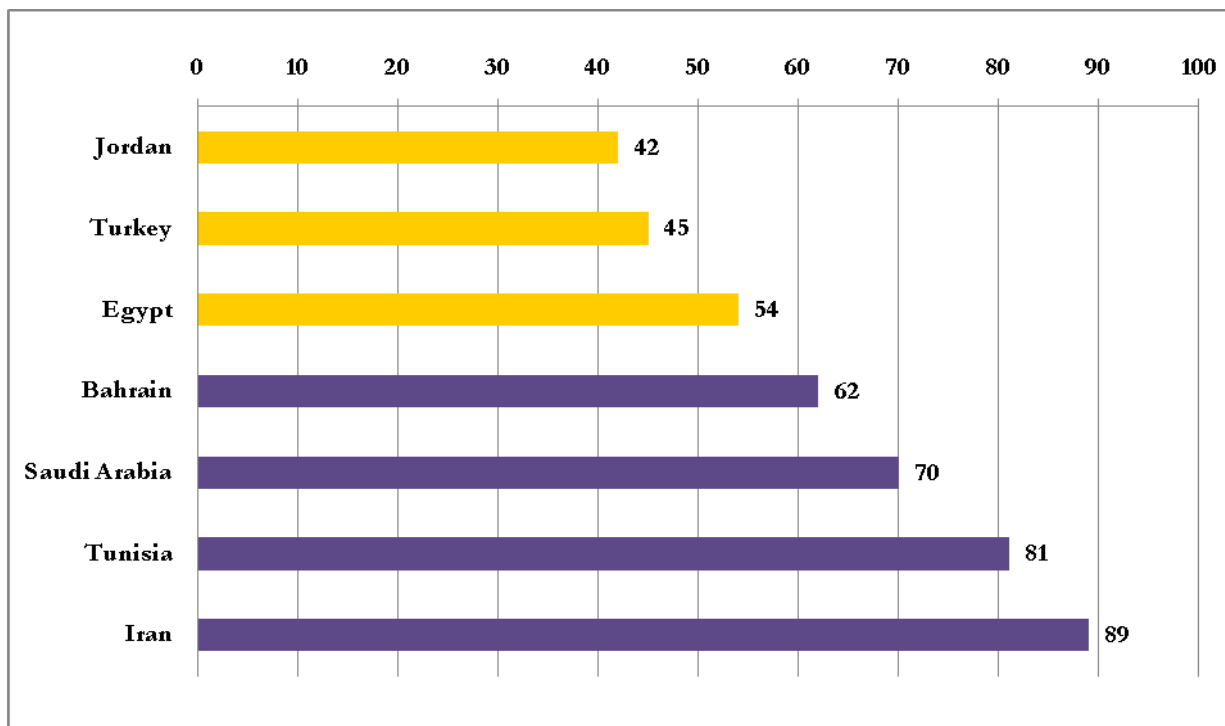


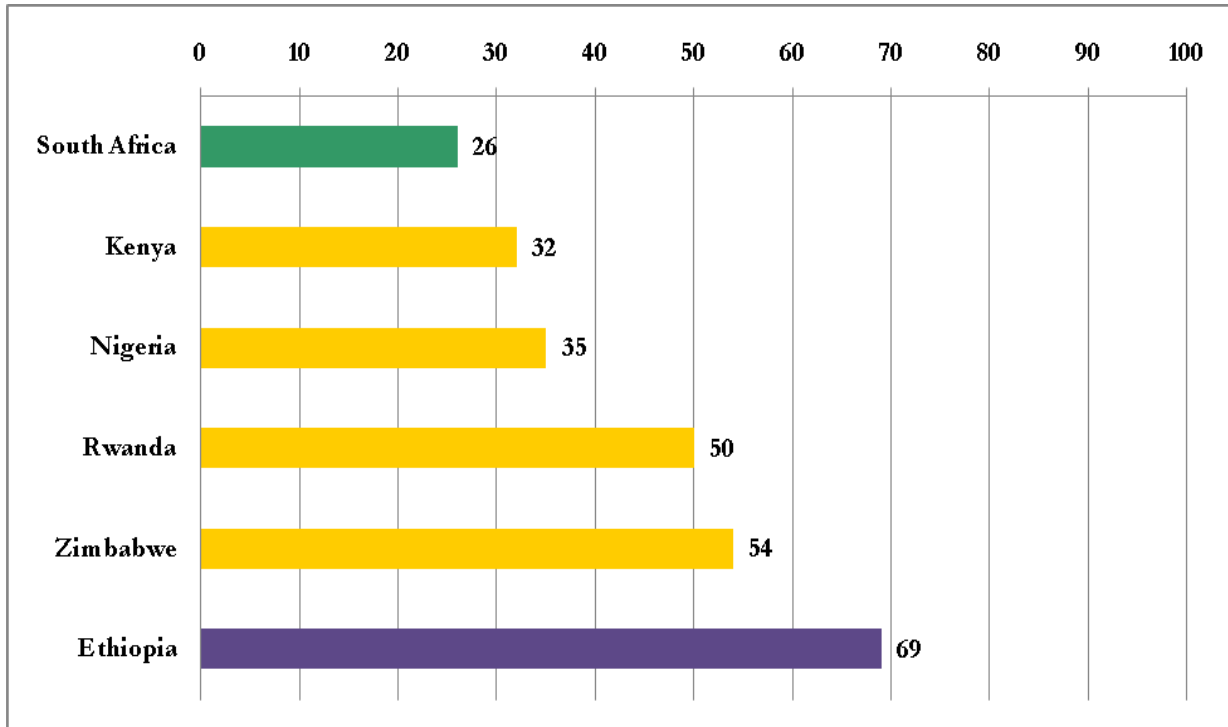
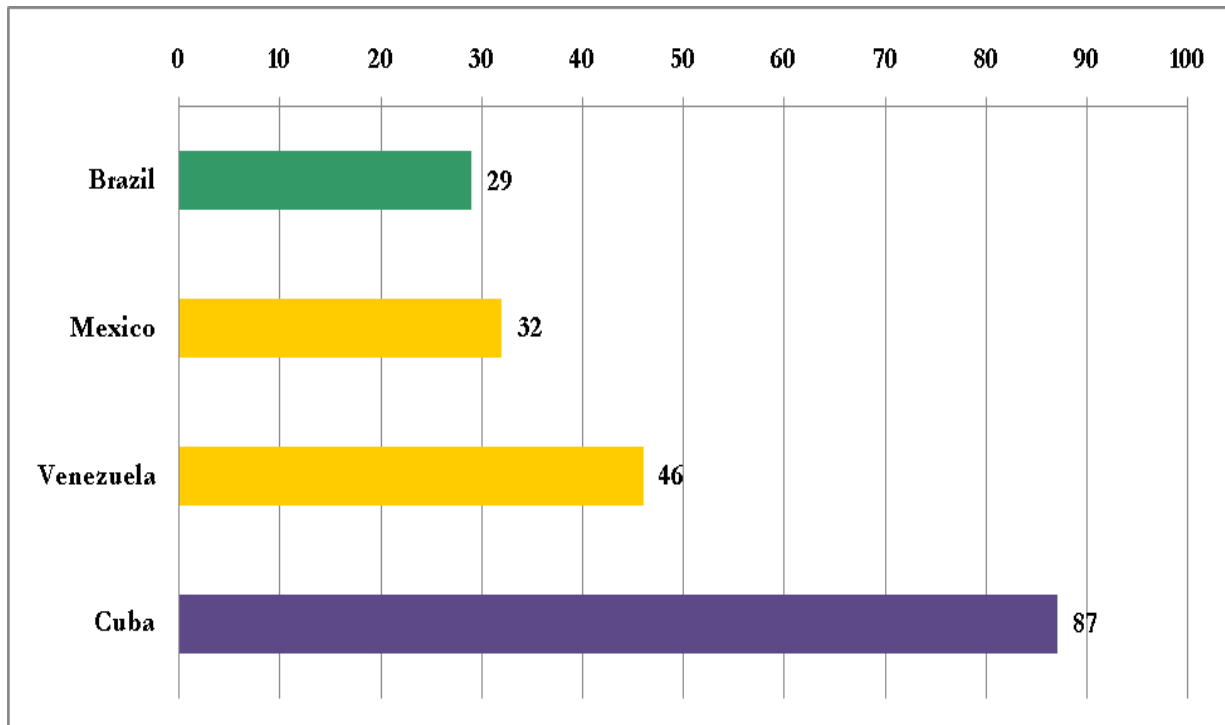
REGIONAL GRAPHS

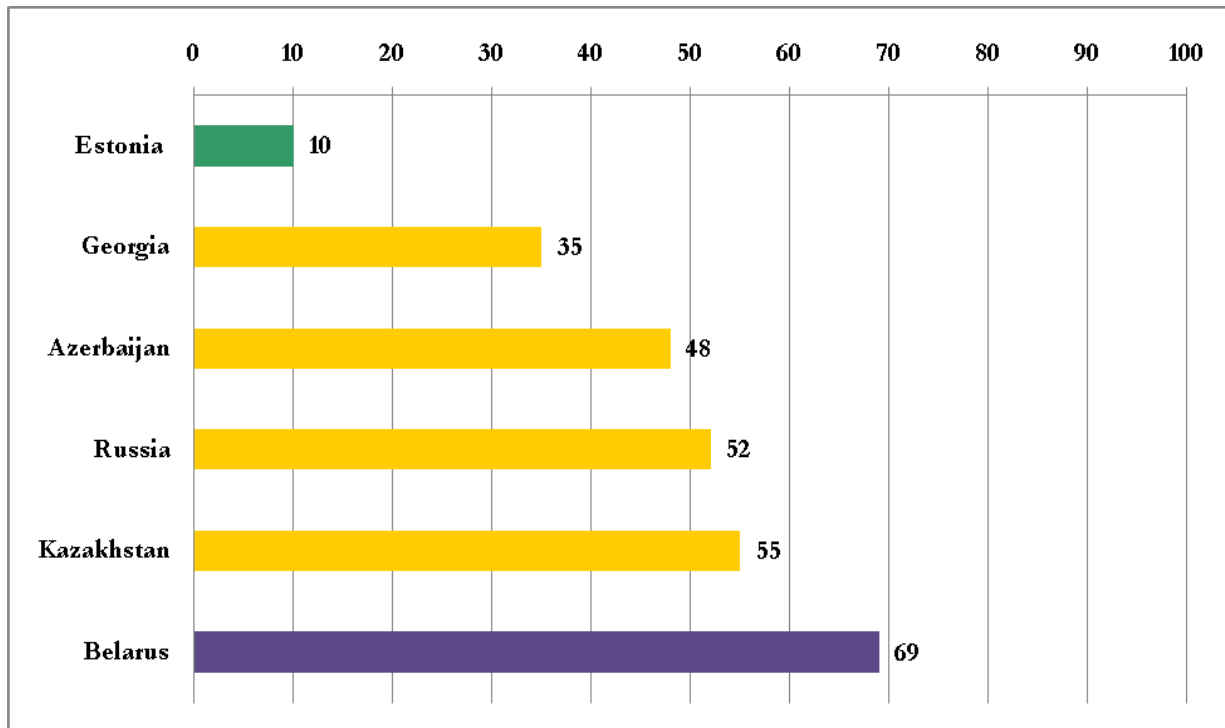
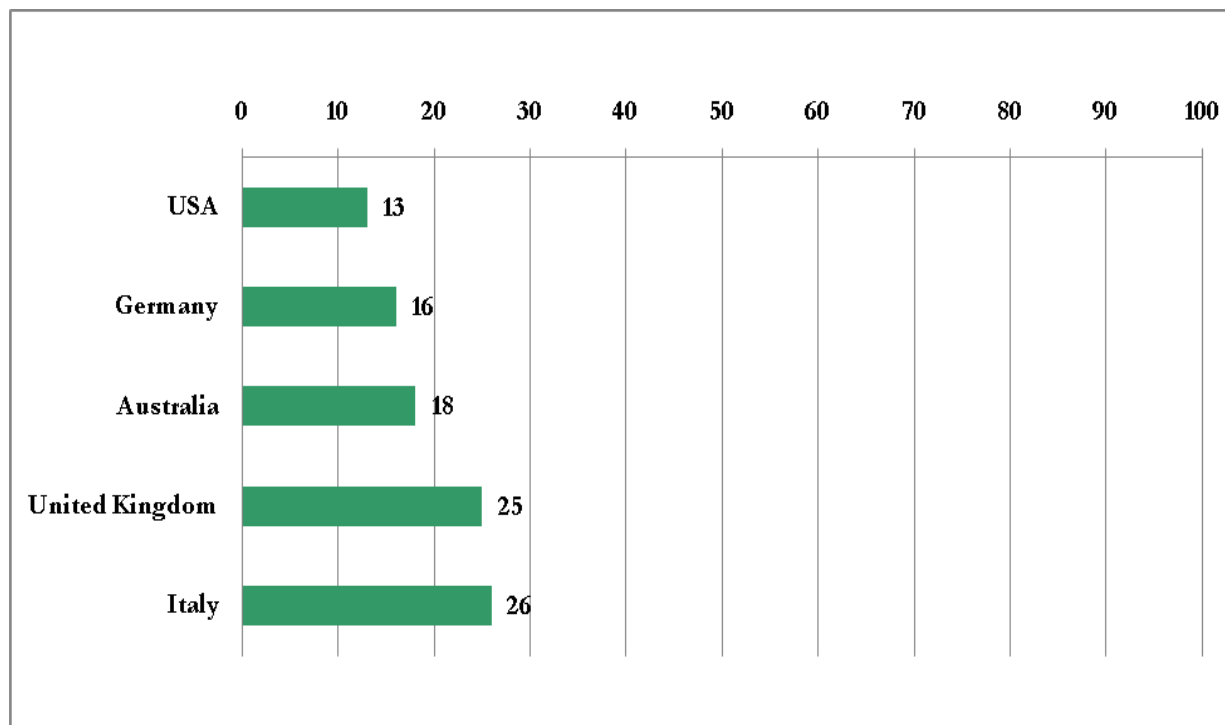
ASIA (0 best, 100 worst)



MIDDLE EAST & NORTH AFRICA (0 best, 100 worst)

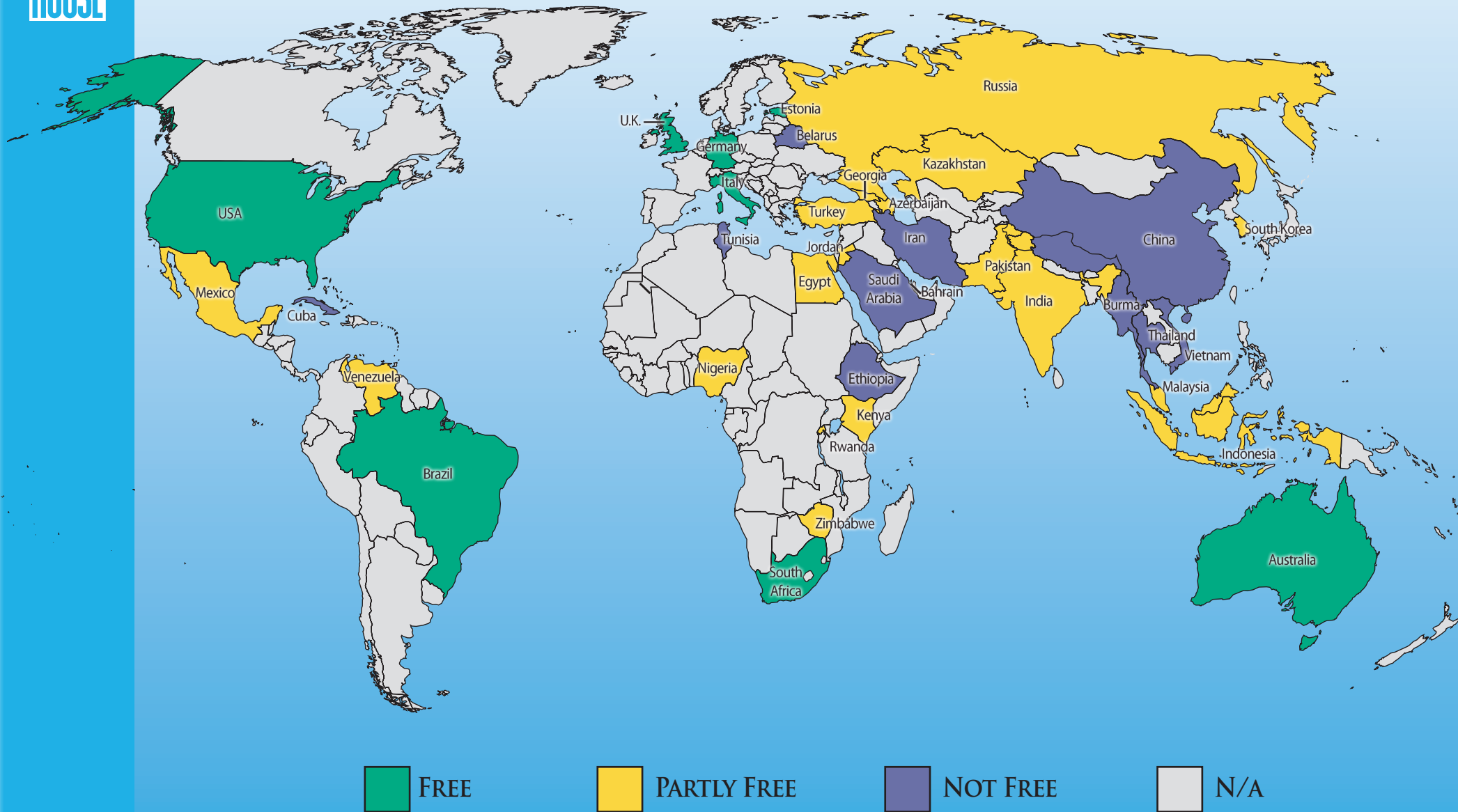


SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA (0 best, 100 worst)**LATIN AMERICA (0 best, 100 worst)**

FORMER SOVIET UNION (0 best, 100 worst)**WESTERN EUROPE & OTHERS (0 best, 100 worst)**

FREEDOM ON THE NET 2011

A GLOBAL ASSESSMENT OF INTERNET AND DIGITAL MEDIA



SCORE CHANGES AND EXPLANATIONS

Among the 37 countries covered in *Freedom on the Net 2011* are all 15 states that were assessed in the 2009 edition of the report. The following are explanations for score improvements and declines in this set of countries. For additional information, see individual Country Reports.

BRAZIL

Freedom on the Net 2009: 30 (Free)
Freedom on the Net 2011: 29 (Free)
Trajectory: Slight improvement

For a country with large social and economic disparities, Brazil has made significant gains in expanding internet access and mobile-phone usage. In recent years, access to the internet further improved, and the total number of users was the fourth largest in the world by 2009. Civic

participation through internet media has correspondingly increased and restrictions on political campaigning via social-networking websites imposed ahead of the 2008 elections were removed for the run-up to the 2010 polls. Unlike in previous years, there were no instances of blocks on advanced web applications such as YouTube or the social-networking platform Orkut. These positive developments were slightly offset, however, by several legal and judicial actions that threatened free online expression, including cases of individual bloggers facing unreasonable defamation lawsuits, sometimes for very high amounts. Also noted was the impact of cyberattacks, as several prominent intelligence sources confirmed that a series of attacks in January 2005, September 2007, and November 2009 were responsible for blackouts.

CHINA

Freedom on the Net 2009: 79 (Not Free)
Freedom on the Net 2011: 83 (Not Free)
Trajectory: Notable decline

Although China is home to the world's largest population of internet users—numbering 446 million by the end of 2010—the country's internet environment remains one of the world's most restrictive, characterized by a sophisticated, multilayered control apparatus. In 2009 and

2010, this system was further enhanced, institutionalized, and decentralized. Blocks on international applications like Facebook and the Twitter became permanent, while censorship requirements on domestic alternatives were enhanced. The authorities also imposed a months-long shutdown of internet access in the western region of Xinjiang. By the end of 2010, the Chinese internet increasingly resembled an intranet. Many average users, isolated from international social media platforms and primarily exposed to a manipulated online information landscape, had limited knowledge of key events related to their own country, even when these make headlines around the world, a dynamic evident with the 2010 awarding of the Nobel Peace Prize to Chinese dissident Liu Xiaobo. In addition, the space for anonymous communication shrank and at least 70 people were in jail for internet-related reasons as of mid-2010, though the actual number of detainees is likely much higher. Tibetans, Uighurs, and Falun Gong practitioners are subject to especially harsh punishments for online activities, and two Uighurs were sentenced to life imprisonment. More than in previous years, China emerged as a key global source of cyberattacks, with targets ranging from groups reporting on Chinese human rights abuses to international financial, defense, and technology companies. The above restrictions were offset somewhat by the internet's continued growth as a primary source of news, a forum for discussion, and a mobilization channel

for many Chinese. Netizens successfully used it to challenge official misconduct, protest censorship, organize strikes, and obtain justice for ordinary citizens, while tech-savvy users employed circumvention tools to access banned sites, such as Twitter.

CUBA

Freedom on the Net 2009: 88 (Not Free)
Freedom on the Net 2011: 87 (Not Free)
Trajectory: Slight improvement

Cuba remains one of the world's most repressive environments for the internet and other information and communication technologies (ICTs). There is almost no access to internet applications other than e-mail, and surveillance is extensive, with special software employed

to monitor and control many of the island's public internet-access points. Nevertheless, in recent years there has been a slight loosening of restrictions on the sale of computers, and important growth of mobile-phone infrastructure was evident in 2009. In addition, despite the threat of detention and travel restrictions, a community of bloggers has consolidated their work, creatively using online and offline means to express opinions and spread information about conditions in the country. Cuba still has the lowest mobile-phone penetration rate in Latin America, however, and most users continue to face extremely slow connections, making the use of multimedia applications nearly impossible.

EGYPT

Freedom on the Net 2009: 51 (Partly Free)
Freedom on the Net 2011: 54 (Partly Free)
Trajectory: Notable decline

While the Egyptian government has aggressively and successfully sought to expand access to the internet as an engine of economic growth, its security forces also intensified attempts to curtail the use of new technologies for disseminating and receiving sensitive

political information in 2009 and 2010. They typically employ such "low-tech" methods as intimidation, legal harassment, detentions, and real-world surveillance of online dissidents. However, in response to increased internet-based activism, particularly in advance of the November 2010 parliamentary elections, the authorities began to engage in greater censorship of online communications. Several individuals who called for political change and democratic reform saw their websites shut down and two popular Facebook groups used for organizing protests were temporarily removed. With Emergency Law provisions in place, Egypt's legal environment remained harsh and several bloggers were detained during the coverage period, with one nearly tried before a military tribunal. In 2010, Egypt also saw the first court case in which a judge found a cybercafe owner liable for defamatory information posted online by a visitor to his shop.

ESTONIA

Freedom on the Net 2009: 13 (Free)
Freedom on the Net 2011: 10 (Free)
Trajectory: Notable improvement

Estonia ranks among the most wired and technologically advanced countries in the world. In 2009, over 91 percent of citizens filed their taxes online and Estonian identity cards were used to facilitate electronic voting during municipal and European Parliament elections. Restrictions

on internet content and communications are among the lightest in the world. Nevertheless, in January 2010, a new law on online gambling came into force, requiring all domestic and foreign gambling sites to

obtain a special license or face access restrictions. The most serious threat to internet freedom in Estonia emerged in late April and early May 2007, when a campaign of cyberattacks targeted various Estonian institutions and infrastructures. Given the absence of such a large-scale attack in 2009-2010, and the subsequent restrictions it posed for access to important information, Estonia's score showed improvement during the coverage period. In addition, the experience led to increased awareness of the dangers of cyberattacks and a greater policy focus on improving technical competencies to make the internet more secure.

GEORGIA

Freedom on the Net 2009: 43 (Partly Free)

Freedom on the Net 2011: 35 (Partly Free)

Trajectory: Significant improvement

Use of the internet and related technologies has grown rapidly in Georgia in recent years, with internet penetration surpassing the 30 percent mark in 2009, partly the result of lower prices. There were no reports of government censorship during the coverage

period and users were able to freely visit any website around the world, including advanced web applications. This was in contrast to the period in August 2008, during a brief military conflict with Russia, when the government blocked access to all Russian addresses (those using the .ru country code), including the popular blogging service LiveJournal. The filtering was eased within days and did not resurface. This change contributed to Georgia's score improvement, along with the absence of large-scale cyberattacks by Russian hackers that also featured in the 2008 conflict. Some restrictions on internet freedom did occur in 2009 and 2010, however. In November 2009, two young students were detained after allegedly insulting the widely respected head of the Georgian Orthodox Church in videos posted on YouTube. In addition, some online media outlets reported instances of advertisers deciding to withdraw ads after the outlet published news articles overly critical of the government.

INDIA

Freedom on the Net 2009: 34 (Partly Free)

Freedom on the Net 2011: 36 (Partly Free)

Trajectory: Slight decline

Although India's internet penetration rate of less than 10 percent is low by global standards, access has expanded rapidly in urban areas, generating tens of millions of new users in recent years. In the past, instances of the central government seeking to control

communication technologies were relatively rare. However, following the November 2008 terrorist attacks in Mumbai and with an expanding Maoist insurgency, the need, desire, and ability of the Indian government to control the communications sector have grown. In 2008, Parliament passed amendments to the Information Technology Act (ITA), which came into effect in 2009 and have expanded the government's monitoring capabilities. Pressure has also increased on private intermediaries to remove certain information. Though most requests have targeted comments that might incite communal violence, some observers have raised concerns of certain removals being unnecessary. The fairness of bidding processes surrounding the allocation of ICT resources also came into question in 2010 with the exposure of a major corruption scandal involving the licensing of second-generation (2G) mobile-phone services.

IRAN

Freedom on the Net 2009: 76 (Not Free)
Freedom on the Net 2011: 89 (Not Free)
Trajectory: Significant decline

Iran showed the greatest decline among the countries surveyed, placing it as the worst performer in this edition. Since the protests that followed disputed presidential elections in June 2009, the Iranian authorities have waged an active campaign against internet freedom,

employing extensive and sophisticated methods of control that go well beyond simple content filtering, though this too has become more severe since the election. Tactics employed include deliberately slowing internet speeds at critical times to make basic online activities difficult and ordering blogging service providers inside Iran to remove “offensive” posts. The regime has also sought to counter critical content and online organizing efforts by extending state propaganda into the digital sphere: over 400 news websites are either directly or indirectly supported by the state. Since June 2009, an increasing number of bloggers have been threatened, arrested, tortured, and kept in solitary confinement, and at least one blogger died in custody. Over 50 bloggers and online activists have been arrested, and a dozen remained in detention at the end of 2010. The Iranian authorities have taken a range of measures to monitor online communications, and a number of protesters who were put on trial after the election were indicted for their activities on Facebook and Balatarin, a Persian site that allows users to share links and news. A group calling itself the Iranian Cyber Army, later found to be associated with the Iranian authorities, also managed to hack a number of opposition and news sites with a mix of technical methods and forgery.

KENYA

Freedom on the Net 2009: 34 (Partly Free)
Freedom on the Net 2011: 32 (Partly Free)
Trajectory: Slight improvement

Although a lack of infrastructure and high costs still hamper connectivity for many Kenyans, the installation of two undersea cables in 2009 dramatically improved bandwidth to 13 times the speed from the previous year. Since 2008, there have been no confirmed

incidents of government filtering or interference with online communication, despite earlier fears that the authorities might seek to impose greater controls after the internet was used as a channel for spreading hate speech during election-related violence. In January 2009, the government passed a controversial Communications Amendment Act, ignoring warnings from civil society that it could hinder free expression.

MALAYSIA

Freedom on the Net 2009: 41 (Partly Free)
Freedom on the Net 2011: 41 (Partly Free)
Trajectory: No change

By 2009, over 55 percent of the total population in Malaysia accessed the internet. In the watershed general elections of March 2008, the ruling National Front (BN) coalition lost its two-thirds parliamentary majority for the first time since 1969. The use of the internet for

political mobilization and news dissemination was widely seen as contributing to the opposition’s electoral gains. In both the run-up to and aftermath of the elections, many observers sensed that the government and ruling coalition had recognized the potential political impact of the internet and had therefore grown more determined to control it. Throughout 2009 and 2010, a number of bloggers faced legal harassment,

intimidation, fines, and brief periods of detention, though none were imprisoned. Many of these cases involve individuals who had been critical of Malaysian royalty, while others were detained over satirical content. The government also made a more concerted effort to influence public opinion by establishing its own presence online and several online news outlets and opposition-related websites faced cyberattacks. However, more systemic forms of censorship, such as technical filtering, were not implemented.

RUSSIA

Freedom on the Net 2009: 49 (Partly Free)

Freedom on the Net 2011: 52 (Partly Free)

Trajectory: Notable decline

With the tightening of traditional media controls since 2000, the internet has become Russia's last relatively uncensored platform for public debate. However, even as access conditions have improved, internet freedom has corroded. In the last two years, the country's first

high-profile cases of technical blocking were reported, while tactics for proactively manipulating conversations in the online sphere were refined. Regional blocking, whereby a website is blocked in some areas but remains available elsewhere in the country, was particularly evident. In one example of the phenomenon, a regional network provider in December 2010 temporarily blocked users from accessing an environmentalist website, allegedly because the site initiated a petition to dismiss a local mayor. Russian bloggers also faced increasing intimidation: at least 25 cases of blogger harassment by the authorities occurred in 2009 and 2010, including 11 arrests. In addition, several newspaper websites experienced cyberattacks, typically in connection with articles that could seriously influence offline events. At least 16 blogs suffered hacking attacks during the coverage period.

SOUTH AFRICA

Freedom on the Net 2009: 24 (Free)

Freedom on the Net 2011: 26 (Free)

Trajectory: Slight decline

Digital media freedom continues to be respected in South Africa. Access to the internet has improved, with more people having an option to access the internet from their mobile telephones than from computers, though the majority of the population is unable to benefit from

internet access. While internet content remains largely free of government censorship, a recent amendment to the Films and Publications Act of 1996 has raised fears that controversial content could be restricted. The amendment, which was passed into law in 2009, requires that every print and online publication that is not a recognized newspaper be submitted for classification to the government-controlled Film and Publications Board if it includes depictions of sexual or disrespectful content. Other areas of concern include lack of parliamentary oversight in relation to interception orders and lack of transparency surrounding take-down notices, though there were no known instances of such requests targeting politically relevant content.

TUNISIA

Freedom on the Net 2009: 76 (Not Free)

Freedom on the Net 2011: 81 (Not Free)

Trajectory: Notable decline

Since the government tightly controls traditional media, the internet has emerged as a comparatively open forum for airing political and social opinions. As internet penetration grew, reaching 34 percent of the population by 2009, the regime of former President Ben Ali

responded by creating a multilayered censorship apparatus that was among the world's most sophisticated. Despite an already robust system in place, in 2009 and especially in 2010, censorship expanded and became increasingly arbitrary. Several human rights activists and online journalists were arbitrarily detained, monitored and harassed, while websites were subject to targeted technical attacks, sometimes causing deletion of large amounts of content. Conditions further deteriorated after an unemployed fruit vendor set himself on fire in later December 2010 to protest joblessness, sparking country-wide protests, along with calls for political reform and greater employment opportunities. Social media sites such as Twitter, YouTube, and Facebook, as well as various blogs, played an important role in providing independent information and analysis, spreading the protesters' demands, and showing videos of demonstrations across the country. This, in turn, resulted in the government's increased efforts to dismantle networks of online activists, hack into their social networking and blogging accounts, conduct extensive online surveillance, and disable activists' online profiles and blogs.

TURKEY

Freedom on the Net 2009: 42 (Partly Free)
Freedom on the Net 2011: 45 (Partly Free)
Trajectory: Notable decline

Internet and mobile-telephone use in Turkey has grown significantly in recent years, surpassing one third of the population in 2009, though access remains a challenge in some parts of the country. Since 2001, the government has taken considerable legal steps to limit

access to certain information, including some political content. According to various estimates, there were over 5,000 blocked websites as of July 2010, an increase from 2008, spurring street demonstrations against internet censorship. In addition, certain applications, particularly file-sharing sites like YouTube, Last.fm, and Metacafe, as well as some Google-related services, have been repeatedly blocked. The YouTube block was eventually lifted in November 2010, but only after disputed videos were removed or made unavailable within the country. Despite a restrictive legal environment, the Turkish blogosphere is vibrant and diverse. Bloggers have critiqued even sensitive government policies and sought to raise public awareness about censorship and surveillance practices, yielding at least one parliamentary inquiry into the latter.

UNITED KINGDOM

Freedom on the Net 2009: 23 (Free)
Freedom on the Net 2011: 25 (Free)
Trajectory: Slight decline

The United Kingdom has high levels of internet penetration, and online free expression is generally respected. However, both the government and private parties have presented challenges to free speech in connection with antiterrorism efforts, public order, and

intellectual property. The biggest recent controversy was the adoption of the Digital Economy Act in April 2010. The law allows for the blocking of websites and the cutting off of user accounts based on claims of intellectual-property rights violations. Free expression advocates also complain that procedures for blocking and removing content related to pornography and terrorism are not transparent, clear, or supported by an adequate appeals process. In efforts to combat terrorism, the government has taken measures against users who post or download information perceived as a security threat, including one case of a man convicted for using Twitter to express dismay at the closing of a local airport and writing that he would blow up the airport if it did not reopen within a week. The newly elected coalition government has promised to review and repeal a number of laws that negatively affect online rights, including expansively interpreted libel laws.