

In this time, these days, the censors' desire is to close our eyes, shut our mouths and close our ears, too. In many countries, the Internet community is fighting to hold on to its freedom of speech inside the Internet, against attempts at censorship or pushes for restrictive legislation by the state, political groups or other kind of organizations. The Internet as a medium supports all kind of contents. The final objective of these censorship attempts is to try to block or control the content. However, the focus of their actions is the medium. In this paper, we first establish a relationship between the kinds of government models in different countries around the world and the current situation regarding Internet censorship. As a basic characteristic, we will establish differences between democratic and totalitarian states. In the first case, the constitution must ensure the rights of the citizens, especially the freedom of expression. In the second case, the government defines the rules and decides what content may be shown or published. Our second goal is to draw a profile of Latin American countries, their government model and the current state of censorship initiatives. The situation we encounter is far from perfect. Even in democratic nations, we can find initiatives trying to control or censor the Internet, from the states themselves, political groups or opinion groups. For example, we have to remember the failed Computer Decency Act in the United States. In Chile, there is now in the Congress a bill attempting to regulate the contents of the Internet. This bill has been crafted by the Science and Technology Committee of the Chamber of Deputies of the Chilean Congress. We will analyze in detail this initiative, its form, its objectives and especially the legal and technical contradictions contained in it. In particular, the bill makes no attempt to distinguish between the author of a particular piece of information, the hosting provider, the ISP or other parties involved in the diffusion of the material considered offensive. It does not distinguish between material originated in Chile or abroad, and it even makes it illegal to publish on the Internet some materials that are completely legal in all other types of media. We view the contribution of this paper as being the compilation of a global map of the state of censorship of the Internet, from the point of view of regulations enacted or proposed to regulate content, using the Chilean proposed bill as a case study. By nature, this map is a changing one; and we plan to use this as a starting point for a new Web site that will be a resource center for people studying and fighting Internet censorship around the world.