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Internet Censorship in Russia

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ABSTRACT: The topic of this paper is Internet censorship in Russia with the aim of determining censorship on websites, or the success of connecting to them in general, using and analyzing data from online censorship measurement portals (OONI and Censored Planet). The first half of this paper will start by defining censorship and Internet censorship, but the focus of the paper was on top-down censorship, government-level censorship that infringes upon one of the fundamental human rights: the right to freedom of expression, access, and the dissemination of information and ideas. The importance of human rights is also highlighted by IFLA through the Glasgow Declaration and Internet Manifesto. Other than libraries, there are many organizations that have stood up against Internet censorship. This paper presents the work of three organizations, which are Access Now, Freedom House, and RSF. In addition, there are also various technical methods to bypass Internet censorship (VPN and Proxies) which enable users to access censored content. However, the Russian government, as far back as 2019, began implementing laws to install equipment for identifying these tools and overall content filtering. They continued to act in the same manner in the following years, especially in 2022 when they launched an attack on Ukraine. They continued the same steps in 2023 and because of that, using the data from OONI and Censored Planet platforms, in this paper the data about measurements for Russia in the period from January 1st to June 30th, 2023, was analyzed. The test which was used was web connectivity test in case of OONI and DNS, HTTPS and HTTP test in case of Censored Planet with the purpose of determining the success rate of linking to websites in Russia for that period, especially looking at websites which belong to specific categories that are tools for anonymization and circumvention, communication tools, human rights issues, social networking and news media.

KEYWORDS: Internet censorship; human rights; website blocking; circumventing Internet censorship; censorship in Russia

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INTRODUCTION

Censorship is a term that appears as early as 433 BC, and comes from the Latin word *censor*. This is the name for an activity that included inventorying property and evaluating the morals of citizens. Since censorship is a moral judgment of published content by a governing body, in the Croatian encyclopedia censorship is defined as the control and prohibition of the flow of information, cultural and artistic content in any format based on the judgment of the welfare of the community and society. The term governing body means the state, religious, corporate, political party and other bodies. (Croatian encyclopedia, 2021). Furthermore, Stipčević speaks of censorship as “a system of measures taken by the authorities or those who represent that authority, to prevent the public expression of ideas and opinions that the authorities consider to be contrary to their interests, i.e. those moral and social norms that apply in a certain environment and time [...]” (Stipčević, 1992). Depending on the time of its implementation, there is preventive censorship that is carried out before publication or performance of the content, and censorship that occurs before publication or performance is also self-censorship that the author carries out on himself, and there is suspensive censorship, which is censorship after publication or performance (Croatian encyclopedia, 2021).

Panić, on the other hand, divides censorship according to the subject, which is the body that carries it out. According to that, there is top-down censorship, which is carried out by institutionalized social bodies such as the state, state bodies, and civil servants, and bottom-up censorship, which refers to individuals, groups, associations, or interested parties that can be censors due to their position in society (Panić, 2018). The emergence, development, and greater use of technology in various aspects of human life have led to the emergence of a new form of censorship, the Internet censorship. Phenomenon that extends through several scientific fields, including social sciences, and has an impact on the overall structure of the Internet, protocols, and people’s behavior (Aceto & Pescapé, 2015); therefore, it can be defined as the control and prohibition of access, publication, or viewing certain content on the web. As Panić explained, depending on the censor, we distinguish between censorship from

above, the control and banning of content at the request of the state or organization, and censorship from below, censorship by non-institutional individuals or groups of people. Vojinović also writes about censorship from above and defines it as exerting pressure on Internet service providers by the government by making demands on which content will be published and which will be blocked. In other words, Internet service providers implement Internet censorship by blocking certain content on a page or pages in their entirety, filtering, and controlling the flow of information at the request of the government (Vojinović, 2023).

The focus of this paper will be censorship from above, censorship at the government level, whose implementation violates one of the fundamental human rights, the right to freedom of expression, access, and dissemination of information and ideas, which is clearly defined in the “Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.” The rights clearly defined by the convention, serving as the primary argument, laid the foundation for the suppression and fight against censorship, and in response to the implementation of censorship, numerous communication systems were developed and various organizations started their work. Libraries, which in the past were often used to enforce censorship and shape the opinions of society, especially during totalitarian regimes, also found their role in this fight (Stipčević, 1992).

Authors surveyed literature (both in English and Croatian) dealing with this topic in available print and online sources. We used the following keywords to search the database and Internet: censorship, intellectual freedom. We aimed to identify all relevant literature which could add to our understanding of previous contributions and scholarly work on this topic.

In the research part of the work, the results of the research on Internet censorship in Russia are presented, where, on a daily basis, content is controlled and blocked by the state authorities, especially after the attack on Ukraine in 2022. Just one month after the attack, the Russian government announced a series of laws related to the prohibition of disseminating,

according to them, unreliable information about the Russian armed forces and other state bodies (Li & Whitworth, 2023).

The research was conducted using measurement data from OONI and Censored Planet. An analysis of the degree of censorship carried out on the websites of organizations that advocate freedom of expression and fight against internet censorship was carried out.

INTERNET CENSORSHIP

The use of the Internet expanded significantly in the 1990s of the last century all over the world and brought significant changes in the way of production, dissemination, and use of information. The Internet is recognized as an effective tool for promoting freedom of expression and the free transfer of information, not only by civil society but also by other parties such as scientists and fighters for fundamental human freedoms. However, the authorities recognized the danger that the Internet can bring when shaping society and attitudes and values, so a new form of censorship soon developed: Internet censorship. Fletcher is talking about exactly how, in order to implement this type of censorship, the authorities had to develop different tools to stop the production and flow of information and its dissemination among the population because, unlike traditional censorship, it was no longer enough to simply arrest and attack members of the media. Therefore, internet censorship can be defined as a method of preventing the free flow of information and the use of services in the web environment (Fletcher, 2023).

As the Internet is still considered a relatively new medium, there are no clearly defined rights regarding restrictions in the virtual environment, so the authorities can more easily circumvent those rights specified in the “Convention for the Protection of Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms.” The Convention states that every individual, regardless of age, gender, race, or religion, has the freedom to express his own opinion and receive and spread information and ideas without interference from the public authorities (National newspapers, 1999). Nevertheless, some form of Internet censorship is implemented in almost all countries of the

world, and this is evidenced by the latest report on democracy published by the V-Dem Institute, which shows that in the last ten years, freedom of expression has worsened in 35 countries, censorship by state authorities in 47 countries, and state repression against civil society organizations in 37 countries (V-Dem Institute, 2023). It is important to highlight Burnett's reflections on the government's relationship to freedom of access to information. He says that the authorities should strive to ensure that "although it is not always possible to guarantee free and open access to information, citizens have the right to know when their access is obstructed, limited, or changed, so that they can make timely decisions about access to information." (Burnett & Feamster, 2013).

AWARENESS, FIGHT AGAINST INTERNET CENSORSHIP AND WAYS OF CIRCUMVENTION

Libraries are public institutions recognized as a place where the "educational, cultural, and informational needs of all citizens" are nurtured (National Newspapers, 2000) and are thus directly related to the fight for freedom of expression and access to information. Horvat believes that in order for a person to speak freely, he must be knowledgeable about the topic he is talking about, and for that, he needs information. A large number of them are located in institutions specially organized by society with the task of collecting, processing, and making information available, namely public libraries" (Horvat, 2021). Within the framework of the umbrella library association IFLA, there is an Advisory Committee for Freedom of Access to Information and Freedom of Expression (FAIFE), which describes its mission as "at the heart of IFLA's efforts to promote intellectual freedom and achieve its vital mission of supporting libraries in their roles as gateways to knowledge and ideas." (IFLA, n.d.). One of the prominent documents by which IFLA defines the role of the library is the "Glasgow Declaration on Libraries, Information Services, and Intellectual Freedom," by which IFLA declares the right of access and the right to express fundamental human rights and asserts that the library's basic task is commitment to intellectual freedom and the preservation of democratic values and civil rights, regardless of restrictions, opposing all

forms of censorship (IFLA/FAIFE, 2002). It is also important to mention IFLA's Manifesto on the Internet, which talks about freedom of access to information, expression of one's own opinions, and the role of the library in publishing these freedoms in the virtual world. In addition to libraries, various organizations and associations recognized the importance of freedom of expression and other human rights, and the online environment provided them with space for global awareness of the importance of these freedoms, the daily promotion of freedom of speech, and the fight against all types of censorship, especially that of the Internet. In this way, the original idea of the Internet as an environment for the global and free production and dissemination of information is maintained.

Such organization is Access Now, a non-profit organization founded in 2009 that deals with human rights issues in the digital environment through a series of activities. In 2011, the organization held the first meeting of RightCon, which is the leading summit on human rights in the digital age. Its goal is to create an environment in which all layers of civil society will participate in building a digital environment that respects and advocates for human rights. The organization operates through innovative campaigns and digital engagements and provides education and assistance through its digital safety helpline (Access Now, 2023). One of her prominent campaigns is #KeeoItOn: Fighting Internet Shutdowns Around the World. This campaign was a collaboration between Access Now and the KeepItOn coalition, and 187 intentional internet disruptions, or "internet shutdowns," were counted in 35 countries. Among these countries was Russia, which cut off Internet access at least 22 times during the attack on Ukraine (Rosson et al., 2023). Another example would be, the Freedom House, organization founded in 1941, and since then it has dedicated its activities to the support and defense of democracy with a vision of a free world, which it achieves by reporting on threats to freedom by publishing detailed research in over 200 countries and territories, supporting advocates of democracy and fighters for human rights even in the most politically restrictive, in part by building relationships with researchers and local activists who promote the free flow of information and ideas (Freedom House, n.d). Every year, Freedom House, in cooperation

with the aforementioned researchers, conducts research and analysis of Internet freedom under the title “Freedom on the Internet.” More than 70 researchers from various organizations, academic communities, and journalism covering an area of 65 countries were included in the research itself, and they have an elaborate methodology of 21 questions related to privacy, freedom of expression, and access to the Internet that relate to their area and the country from which they are coming (Shahbaz et al. 2020). According to the comprehensive results of the survey “Freedom on the Internet” from 2023, Russia was declared “unfree”. As one more organization with the goal of overcoming censorship and will to fight for human rights, there is Reporters Without Borders (hereinafter referred to as RSF). The organization was founded in Montpellier in 1985 by four journalists to oppose censorship, promote and advocate freedom of expression and the flow of information. In 1995, it received the status of an international non-profit and non-governmental organization guided by democratic principles. Accordingly, they respect the barriers and fight for the human rights of free and free access to information, as it is a right that leads to understanding, the formation of opinions, the acquisition of knowledge and the creation of a functional and just society. The mission of the organization is advocacy for freedom, pluralism and independence of journalism, and is based on respect, non-discrimination, joint work and communication. RSF reports daily on the state of media freedom and all forms of censorship, supports many actions to unblock censored websites, freedom of thought and expression worldwide (RSF, 2016). The organization’s official website allows monitoring of the countries most affected by censorship and reports daily to the world about cases of censorship around the world. The very name of the organization, “Reporters without Borders,” speaks of the way they operate and truly remain consistent, reporting without borders in new, interesting, and alternative ways. Thus, in 2018, music streaming platforms were recognized as a way of restoring the truth in countries affected by Internet censorship. Music streaming platforms, such as Spotify, Apple Music, and Deezer, are free and available in almost every part of the world, even in countries with the most internet censorship. The organization enabled five journalists to become copywriters. Articles that were censored were turned into songs

in English and their mother tongue, performed by local and international musicians. In this way, their word became known around the world but also returned to their countries through a playlist of songs called “The Uncensored Playlist.” This started a global discussion about censorship but also achieved much greater visibility of these articles both in the world and in the area of their creation (MediaMonks, 2020). In 2020, the computer game Minecraft was recognized as another way to circumvent censorship by launching “The Uncensored Library,” a library within the game. On March 12, when “World Day Against Cyber Security” was held, this library started its activities within the game “Minecraft.” The creators of this map, that is, the world within the game, gave a safe place to numerous authors from different countries, including Iran, Russia, Saudi Arabia, and other countries (Reporters Without Borders, 2020). All content collected inside the library is completely free and available within a game. The library consists of the main dome, where the countries are ranked according to the degree of censorship, but there are also special departments for individual countries, such as the Department of Russia, where articles on which Internet censorship was carried out by the Russian government are available for free access. The authors whose articles are on the “shelves” of this library are Yuri Izotov, who writes about the Russian government’s pressure on the Internet; Alexander Skobov and Vitaly Portnikov, who criticize politicians; and Ilya Milshtein and Alexander Podrabinek. This library is not limited by physical space, and in that way, it becomes an excellent tool for avoiding Internet censorship.

Other than music platforms and computer games there are other technical ways of circumventing Internet censorship. It has already been mentioned that the Internet was originally conceived as a communication system for the dissemination and exchange of information between people without any restrictions anywhere in the world (Leiner et al. 2003). The governing bodies recognized such a globally connected virtual world as a threat to their political, religious, or similar beliefs, which resulted in numerous cases of Internet censorship. Winter describes the problem of Internet censorship as the intention of a client, or a person, to access and retrieve certain information that is blocked and located outside the

censored network. The censor, whether it is a state, an organization, or a third party, controls part of the network path between the client and the information or content they want to access. Thus, the censor selectively blocks the traffic of network content, or, in other words, prevents the free flow of information (Winter, 2014). However, thanks to great computer literacy, various tools have been developed today that can be used to avoid censorship, with the use of which individuals can still access content that has been censored. The most commonly used tools are virtual private networks (VPNs) and various proxies.

CENSORSHIP OF THE INTERNET IN RUSSIA

By installing anti-threat equipment and the Sovereign Internet Act, the Federal Service for the Supervision of Communications, Information Technology, and Mass Media already in 2019 provided the Russian government with greater opportunities to restrict access and block websites in Russia. By law, operators are required to install additional equipment and tools for filtering and controlling their subscribers' internet, and the same tools are used to censor and limit access to websites. Internet censorship took off in March 2022, just one month after Russia's attack on Ukraine. When the Russian government announced a series of new laws aimed at banning and disseminating what it considers inappropriate and unreliable information about the Russian armed forces and other government bodies and expressed it as "invasion," they considered it an opposition to the national interest and could result in a prison sentence of up to 15 years (Li & Whitworth, 2023). Such criminal provisions are used to suppress critical discussions on the Internet (Freedom House, n.d.); however, this did not prevent certain media companies from publishing "unreliable" content, but they were blocked or temporarily banned for that reason. They do not remove the same content, which is clearly seen from the research conducted jointly by Roskomsvoboda (a Russian non-governmental organization that fights for a free Internet and the application of human rights in the digital environment) and the OONI initiative. The results of the research showed that in the same year, the Russian authorities blocked access to social networks, Russian and foreign media, websites that provide access to tools

for bypassing censorship (such as VPNs), and numerous others that deal with human rights issues and reporting on Russian operations, especially in Ukraine (Roskomsvoboda & OONI, 2023). Active blocking will continue in 2023. The journalistic blogging platform Medium was blocked due to the unsuccessful removal of content about Russian operations in Ukraine, and the “WE” website suffered a similar fate, which, if it does not remove “inappropriate” content, will be permanently banned and added to the list of banned websites (Roskomsvoboda, 2023). These are just some of the examples of numerous blocked websites, i.e., those that have experienced Internet censorship, and the previously mentioned OONI and Censored Planet are platforms that enable the measurement of blocked websites, so they will be presented in the following text as they were used to implement the research part of this work, determining the percentage of Internet censorship by checking connectivity which includes measurements of successful and failed cases of connecting to various websites.

OONI AND CENSORED PLANET

OONI stands for “Open Observatory of Network Interference,” which is a global initiative that aims to directly measure internet censorship around the world. It was created in 2012 as part of the “Tor Project,” but today it operates independently with the mission of promoting an open and free Internet and raising awareness about Internet censorship. Internet censorship measurements are carried out through free software, the OONI Probe application, which allows the measurement of the blocking of websites, messaging applications, and Internet censorship bypass tools. Measurements, or data obtained from these measurements, are simultaneously published on OONI Explorer and the API. Together, in cooperation with various partners, such as “Access Now,” they make Internet censorship visible. Publicly and freely available relevant data enable human rights fighters, activists, and journalists to conduct research on documented cases of censorship in any country (OONI, n.d.). In 2022, OONI participated in numerous events and projects related to Internet censorship and the promotion of human rights to expression, and numerous research projects were created using precisely the data that was

collected and published using OONI tools. They continuously work on improving their tools, cooperate with numerous organizations, and report daily on cases of censorship on all their platforms. This is precisely why it was chosen as a data source for blocked websites in Russia. The difference between the OONI platform and Censored Planet is that OONI depends on participants within countries to help them collect measurements, while Censored Planet does not depend on volunteers and uses IT infrastructure to collect measurements. Censored Planet was founded in 2018 and is a platform for measuring censorship and collecting measurements in more than 200 countries. The data on this platform played a key role in identifying and monitoring important Internet censorship events, i.e., the blocking of websites and access to website content. In 2019, it was also used in a study of internet censorship in Kazakhstan, and its data was also used to study Russia's decentralization mechanism for censorship as well as the suppression attack they carried out on Twitter (Censored Planet, n.d.).

RESEARCH: THE DEGREE OF SUCCESSFUL LINKING TO WEB CONTENT ON RUSSIAN SITES

The purpose of this research is to show the success of linking to the contents of websites in the territory of Russia in the period from July 1 to December 31, 2023. The goal is to determine the degree of Internet censorship in the period from July 1 to December 31, 2023, by analyzing the data collected and generated using the tools of the OONI and Censored Planet platforms. In order to authentically compare the results from these two platforms for measuring Internet censorship, the research was limited to six categories of websites: anonymization and circumvention tools, communication tools, hosting and blogging platforms, human rights issues, media news, and social networking. All six categories belong to the area of the exchange of ideas and opinions, so it is important to determine the success of their activities.

Research questions:

1. What percentage of Internet censorship was carried out over websites that fall into the categories of anonymization and

circumvention tools, communication tools, hosting and blogging platforms, human rights issues, media news, and social networking? What kind of results does the OONI MAT tool show, and what kind of results does the Censored Planet Dashboard show?

2. What is the percentage of Internet censorship over the percentage of successful connections?
3. Are there any deviations in measurements comparing OONI and Censored Planet data on censored websites with regard to all selected categories of websites and selected categories of websites?

Description of the research:

To perform the analysis of the first set of data, OONI Explorer and MAT, Measurement Aggregation Toolkit, were used. MAT allows data aggregation and graph creation by selecting different elements such as country, ASN (i.e., servers), time range, data display (by month, week, or day), columns (day of measurement, page category), and rows (domain, ASN, website category), test, domain, and category to which the website belongs (human rights, government, terrorism, etc.).

For the analysis of the second set of data, the Censored Planet Dashboard was used, which also aggregates data according to independently selected elements (country, network, subnet, website category, domain, and time range). Namely, with this tool, the data is displayed on two graphs: the timeline of the outcome and the outcome according to the network servers, and for the purposes of this work, the data of the “timeline of the outcome” graph will be analyzed.

The first part of the research was the analysis of data from six categories in the period from July 1 to December 30, the second half of the year 2023. In order to get an overview of the data on the OONI platform, the following elements were used:

- Country: Russia

- Time range: 1-7-2023 to 31-12-2023
- View data by: month
- Test name: web connectivity test
- Website category (anonymization and circumvention tools, communication tools, hosting and blogging platforms, human rights issues, news media and social networking)

In order to get an overview of the data on the Censored Planet platform, the following elements were used:

- Country: Russia
- Time range: 1-7-2023 to 31-12-2023
- Test: DNS Analysis, HTTPS Analysis, and HTTP Analysis
- Website category: (anonymization and circumvention tools, communication tools, hosting and blogging platforms, human rights issues, news media and social networking)

The OONI web connectivity test was used, which as a result gives the total number of measurements and data on confirmed censorship, anomalies (possible censorship or not confirmed), and successful connections to content on the website. For Censored Planet, all three tests (DNS analysis, HTTPS analysis, and HTTP analysis) were used and also returned data on the success or failure of connecting to the websites or content of the website.

FINDINGS

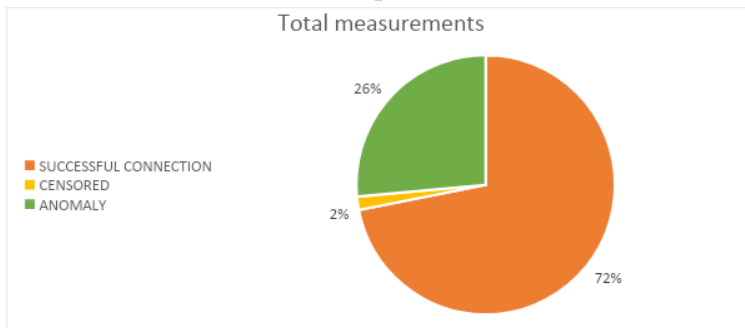
The first set of data from the OONI platform, using the web connectivity test for the period from July 1 to December 31, 2024, has a total of 10.672.302 measurements. Of all total measurements, 174.602 were cases of confirmed internet censorship, according to the data obtained using the MAT data aggregation tool, which accounts for 2% of the total

measurements. Furthermore, 2823611 of them indicated the occurrence of an anomaly, so 26% of the total measurements show that it was probably a question of blocking access to websites or content on websites, or some other form of censorship, such as messing with DNS or something similar. Measurements that showed a successful connection to web pages make up 72% of the total measurements. The data is visible in table 1 and on the graphic display 2.

1 Table showing data by month and total measurements for the period from July 1 to December 31, 2023 (OONI platform)

	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	Total measurements per category
SUCCESSFUL CONNECTION	1065355	1543132	1536737	1509379	1043447	976039	7674089
CENSORED	27904	36941	32935	29148	22848	24826	174602
ANOMALY	426273	546793	513850	519459	452728	364508	2823611
Total measurements per month	1519532	2126866	2083522	2057986	1519023	1365373	
Total measurements in general							10672302

2 Total measurements for the period from July 1 to December 31, 2023 (OONI platform)



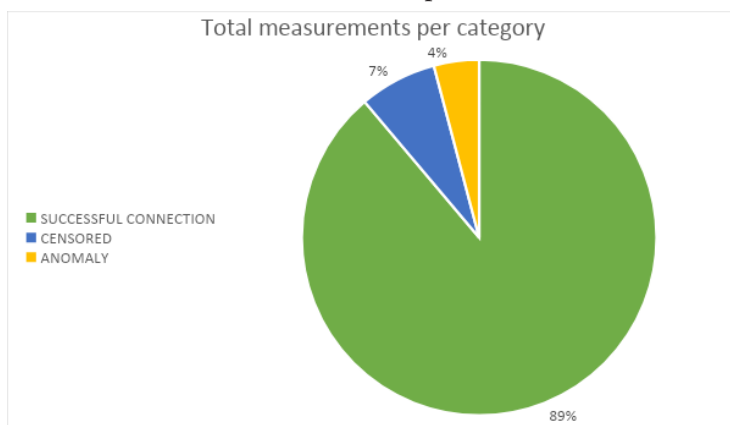
Data from the Censored Planet platform, with the total sum of all three tests (DNS analysis, HTTPS analysis, and HTTP analysis) for the period from July 1 to December 31, 2024, has a total of 1,934,427 total measurements. Of all these total measurements, the question of confirmed censorship was in 136,513 cases, and they make up a total of 7% of the total measurements. If we add the total number of anomalies, that is, possible cases of censorship, that percentage rises to 11%, as anomalies make up 4% of all total measurements. The number of measurements

that showed a successful connection to web pages and the contents of web pages makes up 89% of the measurements. The data is visible in table 3 and in the graphic display 4 below.

3 Table showing data by month and total measurements for the period from July 1 to December 31 (Censored Planet platform)

	JULY	AUGUST	SEPTEMBER	OCTOBER	NOVEMBER	DECEMBER	Total measurements per category
SUCCESSFUL CONNECTION	179429	216387	309214	407481	303360	302321	1718192
CENSORED	6646	8098	30275	35704	27334	28456	136513
ANOMALY	9009	10461	10821	15539	17909	15983	79722
Total measurements per month	195084	234946	350310	458724	348603	346760	
Total measurements in general							1934427

4 Total measurements for the period from July 1 to December 31, 2023 (Censored Planet platform)



Looking at both platforms, it is evident that OONI counts a higher number of internet censorship measurements than Censored Planet in the selected range of months. OONI measurements are 10672302, which is visible in the table, while Censored Planet has almost 451% fewer measurements. Although Censored Planet has a smaller number of measurements of Internet censorship, the difference in measurements that have shown that it is a question of confirmed cases of Internet censorship does not deviate on a large scale. The difference in censorship measurements

is only 28%, with Censored Planet in 136,513 (see table) cases of Internet censorship and OONI in 174,602 cases (see table).

DISCUSSION

Analyzing the data on both platforms found that Internet censorship is ubiquitous; with OONI, it was the case in 2% of the total measurements, and with Censored Planet, it was the case in 7% of the cases with regard to the overall measurements. Anomalies, i.e., measurements that show data on possible cases of censorship, appeared on both platforms; with OONI, they make up 26% of the total measurements, and with Censored Planet, 4%, which greatly increases the number of censorships carried out if we consider that at least part of them was Internet censorship after all. It is therefore visible that the human rights to express, share, and spread ideas in the territory of Russia are largely violated, and thus the original idea of the Internet as a free and safe environment for expressing opinions and introducing changes is being lost. The selected categories of pages belong to those categories that provide access to information about the real time situation and space for expression and exchange of ideas. The social networking category of websites is exactly the one where people communicate every day and, at the same time, exchange information, either about their private lives or about current social topics and events. Hosting and blogging platforms, as well as communication tools, also have the same purpose, which is usually not only related to private communication but also official and business communication. By disrupting this communication, the opportunity to exchange and spread new and current ideas, values, and topics is denied, which again denies human rights. In the theoretical part of the text, tools for anonymization and circumvention are also mentioned as tools developed for the purpose of bypassing Internet censorship; however, we can see that the Russian government still found ways to stop their use and deny its citizens external and internal perspectives. News media categories of websites, those that report on the daily state of society and are available and adapted to all age groups, especially looking at older generations who may not be involved and familiar with other websites categories, such as Social Networking,

are largely affected by Internet censorship. The results of the analysis are consistent with the theoretical basis of this work. Internet censorship in Russia has increased since 2019, as we can see from the Freedom House report of 2021. If we look at the research conducted in cooperation with Raskomsvoboda and OONI in 2023, we also see the constant attempts by the Russian authorities to block access to Russian and foreign media websites, as well as various tools to circumvent censorship, as well as numerous websites dealing with human rights issues and the war with Ukraine. Roskomsvoboda reported later in 2023 on the same efforts of Russian authorities to block websites. When the results of this analysis are combined with these findings, it becomes clear that the government in Russia in 2023, just as in previous years, is persistently trying to shape people's attitudes and minimize access to content that it deems inappropriate and harmful to achieving its goals.

CONCLUSION

Censorship has a long history, but it is always carried out for the same reasons and by the same censors. Those who censor are actually those who have the most power; today, it is mostly the government, and the reason for censorship is an attempt to shape opinions and deny certain information and content that could threaten their views and ideas. As the new digital age, i.e., the Internet, has brought new possibilities for expressing and spreading opinions, a new form of censorship has also appeared, namely internet censorship. The government has developed new tools with which it censors content, violates human rights of expression, and destroys the original idea of the Internet as a free environment for the creation and exchange of ideas and attitudes. Constant attempts by the authorities to deny access to information and ideas did not stop individual participants in the fight against such actions. For the purpose of resistance, there are numerous organizations today that promote freedom of speech, fight for human rights, and fight against Internet censorship. They report on censorship in new and innovative ways and find ways around it. Thus, we have the organization Access Now, which carries out various campaigns and other activities in order to advocate for free access, then

Freedom House, which every year conducts research to report on Internet censorship in the world, and the RSF organization, which, in addition to actively reporting on censorship, also finds new and interesting ways of circumventing it. The way they used platforms for listening to music and the computer game Minecraft as a communication channel through which they returned censored content to the countries where they originated is particularly intriguing, as it is easy to reach the youth in society, not only those from scientific fields. Computer literacy also enabled the development of various technical ways to bypass internet censorship, such as VPNs and proxy servers, which enable their users to access censored content and be informed of the real situation. Already in 2019, the Russian government actively began to fight against such organizations and ways of bypassing by installing tools for detecting and verifying content in order to disable access to websites that publish inappropriate content for them, but also to those that provide access to tools to bypass censorship. In addition, it has issued a series of laws that try to prevent the spread of information about its activities and rigorously punishes violations of these laws, and the implementation of Internet censorship itself has significantly worsened since the attack on Ukraine in 2022 and will continue at the same pace in 2023, especially when it comes to blocking online pages of journalistic houses, those that provide tools to bypass censorship, talk about human rights, criticize political actions, and those that serve as a channel of communication. Accordingly, the researchers part of the work related to the analysis of data on Internet censorship measurements in Russia in the period from July 1 to December 31, 2023, using the OONI and Censored Planet platforms that provide data on Internet censorship. The success of connecting to web pages was investigated using a tool for displaying internet censorship measurements. Data analysis revealed that Internet censorship in Russia continues, and in the period from July 1 to December 31, 2023, 174,602 cases of censorship were measured on OONI, which is 2% of the total measurements, and 136,513 cases on Censored Planet, which is 7% of the total. measurements. Although OONI had more total measurements than Censored Planet, the difference in those measurements that showed censoring is not significantly large, accounting for 28% of the measurements on OONI, which, when we

take its total number of measurements, is not significantly higher than those measurements obtained using Censored Planet. Regardless of the differences in measurements in both cases, internet censorship has been proven to deny basic human rights and this research has its importance as a basis for further research in the field of internet censorship using these platforms, Censored Planet and OONI, which provide numerous other tools for deeper analysis of internet censorship in different countries.

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