

GLOBAL INFORMATION SOCIETY WATCH 2014

Communications surveillance in the digital age

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Preface

The internet is a critical way to push for the progressive realisation of people's rights – but, through communications surveillance, its potential to be used as a tool for collective, democratic action is slowly being eroded. Users have even lost trust in it as a safe platform for day-to-day personal communications.

Using the 13 International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance as a basis, this Global Information Society Watch (GISWatch) considers the state of surveillance in 53 countries. Eight thematic reports frame the key issues at stake.

As the reports show, both states and businesses are complicit in communications surveillance. While there is a need for systems to monitor and protect the public from harm, the right to privacy, the transparency and accountability of states and businesses, and citizen oversight of any surveillance system are important advocacy concerns.

These 13 Principles are an important starting point for civil society to achieve this collective action – to push action for democratic oversight of surveillance. We hope this issue of GISWatch contributes towards this change.

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