

From: CIO-FOI (MULTIUSER)
Sent: 13 August 2009 17:15
To: 'XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX'
Subject: FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST 05-08-2009-122740-002

Dear XXXXXXXXXXXX,

Thank you for your FOI request received 3 August 2009 asking for a list of those websites to which access from MOD computers has been blocked, on instructions from the MOD to BT.

Most MOD office-based computers can connect to the internet via the Enterprise Gateway Service (EGS). This is a service provided under contract by BT to the MOD. As part of this service, BT provides web filtering, based on standard commercial software. This software categorises web sites. MOD decides which categories we wish to block, and which to allow.

I attach a document (Information Management Protocol 049) that is published on our intranet which explains the overall approach. It also explains which general types of sites which we block, namely:

a. those which are likely to contravene the MOD Acceptable Use Policy (JSP 740) <http://www.mod.uk/NR/rdonlyres/1B0FB54C-C19D-4712-84EE-B48820554DA8/0/JSP740AUPVersion1.pdf> (published on main MOD web site)

- categories such as gambling and pornography;
- individual sites such as commercial auction sites;

b. those which pose a risk to the technical security of the network, or to broader information security.

- categories such as web-based mail systems and translation sites;
- individual sites such as those using mobile code, such as Java or Active X;

c. those likely to result in excessive consumption of bandwidth or other technical resource, or of staff time.

- categories such as streaming media and social networking sites.

There are of the order of 100 categories defined in the web filtering software used by BT, and we block around 40 of them. All 40 fall into one of those 3 general types.

Occasionally sites come to our attention (whether through media publicity or from a query by an EGS user within MOD) that have not been allocated by the web filtering software into a blocked category, but which do come under one of the three general criteria above. When this happens, perhaps as a result of mis-categorisation, we ask BT to block the site individually. There are likely only to be a handful of such sites, an infinitesimally small number compared to the sites blocked through the categorisation route. Within the last 12 months the two most high-profile of these have been Wikileaks and Craigslist.

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In keeping with the spirit and effect of the Freedom of Information Act, all information is assumed to be releasable to the public unless exempt. The MOD therefore will be simultaneously posting the information you requested, together with any related information that will provide a key to its wider context, in our online FOI Disclosure Log at <http://www.foi.mod.uk>.

If you are not satisfied with this response or you wish to complain about any aspect of the handling of your request, then you should contact me in the first instance. If informal resolution is not possible and you are still dissatisfied then you may apply for an independent internal review by contacting the Head of Corporate Information, 6th Floor, MOD Main Building, Whitehall, SW1A 2HB (e-mail CIO-FOI-IR@mod.uk). Please note that any request for an internal review must be made within 40 working days of the date on which the attempt to reach informal resolution has come to an end.

If you remain dissatisfied following an internal review, you may take your complaint to the Information Commissioner under the provisions of Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act. Please note that the Information Commissioner will not investigate your case until the MOD internal review process has been completed. Further details of the role and powers of the Information Commissioner can be found on the Commissioner's website, <http://www.ico.gov.uk>.

I hope this provides the information you require, and please let us know if more clarification is needed.

Yours sincerely

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Enclosure: Information Management Protocol 049 (EGS Filtering)