

DATA AT A GLANCE

# Only About One-Fourth of Countries in the World Have Internet Freedom

APSSR Editorial Team  
romeo.lee@dlsu.edu.ph

As of January 2020, the Internet had 4.54 billion users globally (Statista, 2020). Most users would claim to be free to say and do anything they like via the Internet, but is there truth to this assertion? What does the prevailing evidence suggest?

Freedom House (2019) carried out a comprehensive study of Internet freedom in 65 countries throughout the world. Using a 21-item questionnaire, the study examined Internet access, freedom of expression, and privacy issues pertaining to country-level developments reported from June 2018 to May 2019. A country is said to be “free” if its composite score was 70–100, “partially free” if the score was 40–69, and “not free” if the score was below 40. Based on the Excel file downloaded from Freedom House’s website (<https://tinyurl.com/y4snxqem>), we categorized and identified the countries accordingly for this report.

Table 1 reveals that, of the 65 countries, 23.1% (n=15) had Internet freedom, 44.6% (n=29) had partial Internet freedom, and 32.3% (n=21) had no Internet freedom. The table likewise lists three sample countries for each category. Additional data indicate that, among the 15 countries with Internet freedom, Iceland (score: 95) and Estonia (score: 94) were on top. Specifically, Iceland had no obstacles to Internet access, and it had just a few limits on Internet content and users’ right. Among the 21 countries without Internet freedom,

China (score: 10), Iran (score: 15), and Syria (score: 17) had the most restrictions on Internet access, content, and users. Data have enormous ramifications for the future of citizenship, human rights, and democracy in the world.

**Table 1**

*Internet Freedom and Number of Countries (n=65)*

	<b>Number of Countries (%)</b>	<b>Sample Countries (Score)</b>
Free	15 (23.1)	Argentina (72)/ France (76)/Canada (87)
Partially free	29 (44.6)	Brazil (64)/ Philippines (66)/ Ukraine (56)
Not free	21 (32.3)	China (10)/Egypt (Kong (9.00)/Vietnam (24)

## References

- Freedom House. (2019). *Freedom on the net 2019: The crisis of social media*. <https://tinyurl.com/y4snxqem>
- Statista. (2020). *Global digital population as of January 2020*. <https://tinyurl.com/yxp24xpy>