

Google fears web crackdown after Arab uprisings

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CEO of Google Eric Schmidt attends a press conference in May 2011. Schmidt warned that the ongoing Arab uprisings could lead to an upsurge in internet censorship and an increased risk of arrest for colleagues working in restive nations.

Google chairman Eric Schmidt on Monday warned that the ongoing Arab uprisings could lead to an upsurge in internet censorship and an increased risk of arrest for colleagues working in restive nations.

Speaking at the Summit Against Violent Extremism in Dublin, Schmidt claimed regimes were keen to clamp down on internet freedoms after the web was widely used by dissidents to organise anti-government movements in the Arab world.

"The reason is that as the technology becomes more pervasive and as the

citizenry becomes completely wired and the content gets localised to the language of the country, it becomes an issue like television," Schmidt reasoned.

"If you look at television in most of these countries, television is highly regulated because the leaders, partial dictators, half dictators or whatever you want to call them understand the power of television imagery to keep their citizenry in some bucket," he added.

[Google](#) has repeatedly come into conflict with China over the Asian powerhouse's attempts to regulate access to websites.

The executive chairman expressed concern that Google workers in certain countries were in danger of being arrested due to the recent unrest, which has led to the toppling of regimes in [Egypt](#) and Tunisia.

"There are countries where it is illegal to do things that Google encourages," he explained. "In those countries, there is a real possibility of (employees) being put in prison for reasons which are not their fault."

Google executive Wael Ghonim was detained and blindfolded for two weeks as [protests](#) raged in Egypt in January.

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