

Support strong for open Internet in developing world

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A man uses a laptop at a coffee shop in downtown Hanoi on November 28, 2013

Support is strong across emerging and developing countries for an Internet without government censorship, a US survey showed Wednesday.

The Pew Research Center found a majority opposed to [government](#) restrictions on online activity in 22 of 24 [countries](#) surveyed.

Support was especially high among younger people and in countries with a high percentage of people using the Internet.

Eighty-nine percent of those surveyed in Venezuela said they supported an unfettered Internet, as did at least 80 percent in Lebanon, Chile, Egypt, Argentina and Brazil.

The numbers were high in Mexico (79 percent), South Africa (77 percent), Bolivia (76 percent), Malaysia and the Philippines (both at 73 percent) and Nigeria (72 percent).

"Support for Internet freedom tends to be strong in nations with high rates of Internet penetration, such as Chile and Argentina, where roughly two-thirds of the population is online," the Pew report said.

"It is less common in nations with lower penetration rates, like Indonesia and Uganda," where 55 and 49 percent, respectively, said they oppose government censorship.

The report comes days after the US government announced it was giving up its key role in charge of the Internet's technical operations, handing over those functions to "the global multistakeholder community."

While US officials said they would work to maintain a free and open Internet, critics of the decision said the move opens the door to other countries to impose new controls on online activity.

In the Pew survey, Pakistan had the lowest percentage of people expressing opposition to censorship—22 percent—but 62 percent of people polled gave no response or were undecided.

Among younger people in the 18-29 age bracket, a strong majority supported an open Internet in every country except in Pakistan, Pew

said.

The results from Russia contrasted with those of the rest of the survey, with a relatively low percentage of 63 percent saying they oppose censorship even though Russia has among the highest levels of Internet use.

The well-educated were more likely to support an open Internet in many countries. In Tunisia, for example, 73 percent of college graduates said it is important to have Internet access without government [censorship](#), compared with 56 percent of the overall population.

Pew researchers polled 21,847 people in 24 emerging and developing economies from March 3, 2013 to May 1 in face-to-face interviews.

The margin of error ranged from 3.5 percentage points in Venezuela to 7.7 points in Turkey, with most of the national surveys between four and five percentage points.

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