Singapore to cut off internet access for government workers

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Government employees in Singapore will soon lose their internet access at work to make official information systems more secure, authorities said Wednesday.

The government's Infocomm Development Authority said it has begun disconnecting internet access from the work stations of some government employees, and will expand the removal to all public workers by next June.

It said the employees' work will remain the same, while the government information network will become more secure.

Singapore's government is believed to have about 120,000 employees. While authorities did not give further details, the Straits Times newspaper said the move will affect 100,000 computers.

The newspaper said government employees who need the internet for work will be issued separate laptops with web access. If they don't, they can use the internet on personal tablets or cellphones without access to government networks, it said.

The move was greeted with furor on social media. Many saw it as an obstacle to efficiency in the wealthy city-state, where citizens have pushed for a better balance of work and life. Government leaders have often spoken of the need to master and harness technology.

In 2013, a hacker said members of the internet group Anonymous temporarily shut down 19 government websites. Authorities denied the claim and attributed the outages to internal system failures.

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