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## **EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF INTERNET REGULATIONS IN ICELAND & UZBEKISTAN ON THE PRICE OF INTERNET ACCESS**

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### **ABSTRACT**

This article explores the Impact of Internet Regulations in Iceland & Uzbekistan on the Price of Internet Access.

### **KEYWORDS**

Internet regulations, Iceland, Uzbekistan constitution, internet price, Iceland internet regulation, digital freedom Iceland, net neutrality Iceland, price of internet in Iceland, Uzbekistan internet regulation, censorship Uzbekistan.

### **INTRODUCTION**

Overview of the Icelandic and Uzbek Constitutions & Internet Regulations

The constitutions of Iceland and Uzbekistan are very different in terms of the internet regulations they contain. Iceland's Constitution, adopted in 1944, provides for freedom of expression, including freedom of the press, speech, and opinion. The Constitution also guarantees the right to privacy and personal data protection. In terms of internet regulation, Iceland is known for its strong net neutrality laws, which prohibit

internet service providers (ISPs) from discriminating against certain types of content or services. Additionally, Iceland has one of the highest internet penetration rates in the world, with 98% of its population having access to the internet.

On the other hand, Uzbekistan's Constitution, adopted in 1992, guarantees freedom of speech and expression, but also allows for restrictions on these rights in the interests of national security, public order, and morality. Uzbekistan has been criticized for its strict

internet regulations, including the requirement for ISPs to obtain licenses from the government and the imposition of high internet prices, which limit access to information for many citizens. In 2020, the Uzbek government introduced a law that requires all foreign internet companies to register with the government and store user data within the country.

### **A Closer Look at Iceland's Unique Approach to Internet Regulation**

Iceland is a small country with a population of just over 340,000 people, yet it has become an unlikely leader in the fight for digital freedom. In 2017, Iceland passed a law that enshrines net neutrality and guarantees its citizens access to the internet without interference from service providers as new EU regulations regarding the same issue were adopted. This makes Iceland one of the few countries to have such progressive internet regulation policies, and it is changing the way we think about our digital rights. Iceland is known for its unique approach to internet regulation, which emphasizes digital freedom and net neutrality.

One of the key features of Iceland's approach to internet regulation is its strong net neutrality laws. In 2010, Iceland became one of the first countries in the world to pass a law guaranteeing net neutrality, which prohibits ISPs from discriminating against certain types of content or services. This means that all internet traffic is treated equally, regardless of its source or content. The law also requires ISPs to provide consumers with clear information about the quality and speed of their internet connections. Another important aspect of Iceland's internet regulation is its commitment to digital freedom. Iceland's Constitution provides for freedom of expression, including freedom of the press, speech, and opinion. The Constitution also guarantees the right to privacy and personal data

protection. This means that Icelandic citizens have the right to express themselves freely online, without fear of censorship or surveillance. In terms of internet access, Iceland has one of the highest internet penetration rates in the world, with 98% of its population having access to the internet. However, the price of internet in Iceland can be relatively high compared to other countries. This is partly due to Iceland's remote location and small population, which can make it more expensive to provide internet infrastructure and services. For example, 500 MB might cost you about \$49. Yet in Uzbekistan cost of Internet usage is much cheaper, \$0.3712 for 1GB according to tariffs of various internet providers topping among the 20 countries in the world with lowest price for Internet in 2022.

### **The Impact of Uzbekistan's Strict Internet Regulations on its Citizens**

Uzbekistan's strict internet regulations and censorship have had a significant impact on its citizens, particularly in terms of limiting access to information and freedom of expression.

One of the most notable aspects of Uzbekistan's internet regulation is the requirement for ISPs to obtain licenses from the government. This has led to a limited number of ISPs operating in the country, which can result in high costs for internet access. In addition, the government has been accused of restricting access to certain websites and social media platforms, as well as monitoring and censoring online content. TikTok is wildly popular in Uzbekistan, but the antics it inspires have attracted criticisms from officials. 'Uzbekistan unblocks, re-blocks popular social media amid TikTok talks' so writes "The Eurasianet". As of April, 2023, this social media is still in block from operations in Uzbekistan. Users have to use VPN in order to gain

access to TikTok. The ban on Twitter was uplifted in August 2022.

In 2023, Uzbekistan is set to hold constitutional referendum, and it is possible that further constitutional changes could be made at that time. This is highly possible because: “Everyone has the right to seek, receive and distribute any information. Everyone has access to the Internet world information network and free use of. These rights can be limited according solely to protect the existing constitutional system, rights and freedoms of other persons, public safety and order, as well as information recognized as a state secret or other secret in cases related to the prevention of disclosure, being allowed by law.’ The abovementioned section of article is Article 29 of new constitutional draft of Uzbekistan. If these changes are adopted in the referendum along with the whole other amendments, they will lead to further liberalization and humanization of Internet usage rights and also human rights in Uzbekistan.

### **How Are Different Countries Regulating Their Internets & What is the True Cost to Consumers?**

In terms of internet regulation, some countries have adopted strong net neutrality laws similar to those in Iceland, while others have more limited protections for consumers. For example, the United States adopted net neutrality rules in 2015, but these rules were repealed in 2017. Other countries, such as Canada and the European Union, have implemented net neutrality rules that prohibit ISPs from blocking or slowing down certain types of content or services.

Regarding the cost of internet access, the prices can vary widely depending on the country and the level of competition in the market. According to data from the World Bank, the average monthly cost of fixed broadband internet in high-income countries was

\$29.10 in 2020, while the average cost in low-income countries was \$70.70 . However, there are significant variations within these categories, with some high-income countries having relatively high internet prices and some low-income countries having relatively low prices.

### **CONCLUSION**

**How the Price and Accessibility of the Internet impacts Society as a Whole.**

The price and accessibility of the internet can have a significant impact on society as a whole. If internet access is expensive or limited, there may be unequal access to information, education, and job opportunities, which can contribute to social and economic inequality. Yet where internet access is affordable and widely available, there may be greater opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and social mobility.

Moreover, the regulation of the internet can also impact society. In some places of the globe where the internet is heavily regulated and censored, there may be limited freedom of expression and access to information, which can hinder social and political progress. In contrast, in other places where the internet is less regulated and there is a commitment to digital freedom, there may be greater opportunities for civic engagement and democratic participation. Therefore, it is important for governments to prioritize the affordability and accessibility of the internet, as well as to ensure that there is a commitment to digital freedom and equal access to information. These measures of steps are also crucial to maintain human rights both locally and globally since the UN on behalf of the global voices advocating right to use Internet is fundamental in nature, not a privilege has already adopted a resolution about this matter amending the



Universal Declaration of Human Rights. By doing so, I think that we can promote greater social and economic equality, as well as greater opportunities for innovation, entrepreneurship, and democratic participation.

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