

Censorship Is a Serious Problem in China

Paul Wiseman

In the following viewpoint Paul Wiseman argues that censorship is a common and serious problem in China. China restricts its people's access to information by tightly controlling what information they see, hear, and read. Wiseman explains that any information or material that criticizes the government's policies, including news stories, blogs, television, and movies, is either gravely distorted or suppressed altogether. In some cases Chinese citizens are not told the truth about important events; in other cases the government shares only information that makes the administration or the Communist Party look good. As a result the Chinese people are misinformed about current events and history, which keeps them powerless. Wiseman concludes that the suppression of information undermines the Chinese people's basic human right to freedom of information and independence of thought.

Paul Wiseman, "Cracking the 'Great Firewall' of China's Web Censorship," *USA Today*, April 23, 2008.
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Wiseman is a regular contributor to *USA Today*, and he covers international news in Asia and the Middle East.

AS YOU READ, CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS:

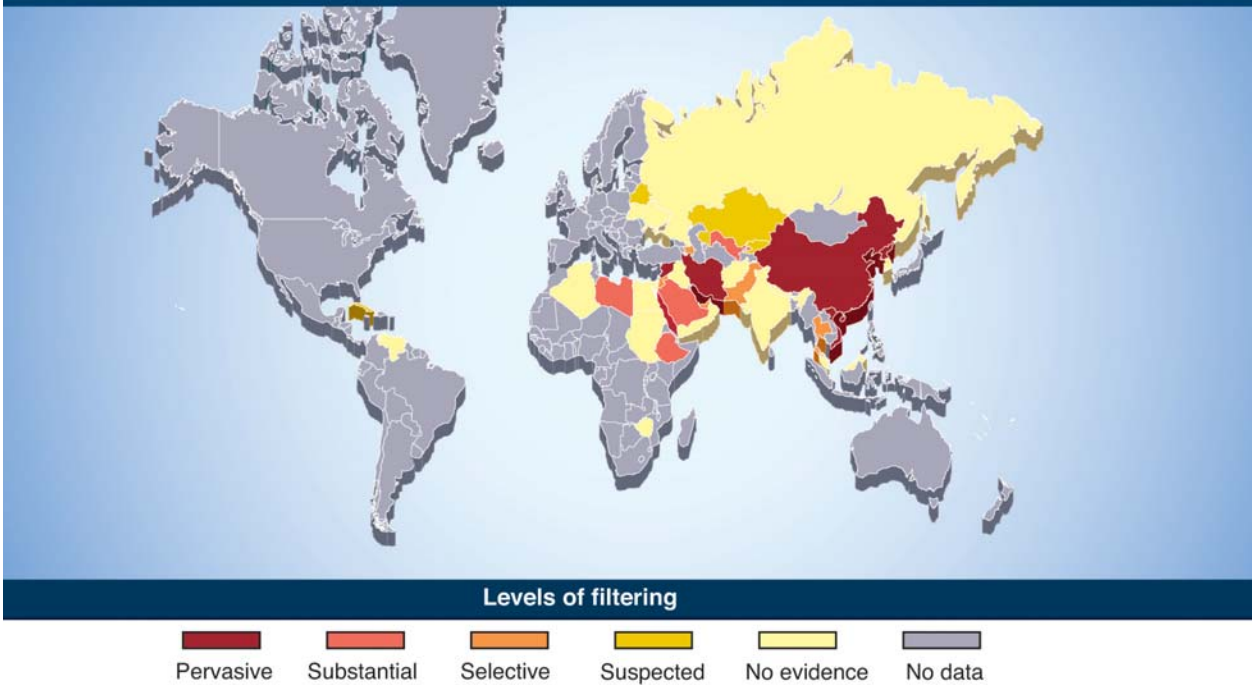
1. What are “hacktivists”? What role do they play in the fight against censorship in China?
2. What two events does the author say caused Chinese officials to step up Web censorship in March 2008?
3. Explain the main difference in the way the United States and China channel their Internet traffic.



Chinese youths surf the Web at a Beijing Internet café. The Chinese government controls all access to and censors the Internet in China.

The Great Firewall of China

China is among just a handful of nations that practice pervasive censoring of political material on the Internet.



Taken from: OpenNet Initiative, September 22, 2008.

FAST FACT

A study by researchers at Harvard Law School found **19,032** Web sites that were inaccessible inside China.

EVALUATING THE AUTHOR'S ARGUMENTS:

In this viewpoint Paul Wiseman discusses the role American companies have played in China's censorship of the Internet. What is this role? Do you approve or disapprove of these companies' decisions? Explain your position.