Banned Websites

24 August 2015

Request for Information.

Thank you for your request received 29 July in which you asked:

1. *A breakdown over the years 2011and 2015 by year of the amount of attempts to access banned websites on your servers.*
   Please break it down by the genre of website banned (e.g. if 929 attempts to access websites banned for violence and 105 attempts to access websites banned for pornography)
2. *The top 50 'banned' websites attempted to be accessed by your servers between 2011-2015 (so number of attempts in ranking order) (if individual sites can't be named then please label the type eg: 20,000 hard core porn, 15,000 foot fetish etc.)*
3. *A breakdown since 2011 of attempts to access Pornography websites via your servers.*
4. *A list of banned websites via your server, or the way they are filtered.*

The National Assembly for Wales does not hold information about attempts made by users to access banned websites. Websites are not 'banned' as such, (for the reason that Assembly staff (particularly researchers), and Assembly Members and their offices, need to access sites on a variety of subjects for the purposes of their work, and banning websites is not conducive). The Assembly instead requires that users abide by security rules which sets out acceptable and appropriate use of Assembly resources.

The Assembly also employs a third party blocking software.   The purpose of which is not to monitor or identify individual users who may attempt to access inappropriate websites, rather it is to protect the Assembly ICT infrastructure from websites which may pose a security threat to it. The software uses real-time security, with a list of 60 million websites, which is amended and updated daily, and uses content and data classification; anti-

malware engines; and reputation analysis to provide a blended approach to protecting and securing access to web sites.

The supplier can provide information about how often their software has been 'triggered', however, it is not possible to decipher from that data whether those triggers were deliberate attempts (as you request), or inadvertent (for example where a user accesses a page, such as twitter, which contains a live link, a widget, or on-screen advertising, to a site which triggers the software).

As there are no 'banned' websites, and because we cannot provide you with the numbers of 'attempts' which you have asked for, I am unable to provide you with any information which answers your questions. If you are interested in the number of 'triggers' of the third party software, rather than deliberate attempts, please do let me know.

Your request has been considered according to the principles set out in the Code of Practice on Public Access to Information. The code is published on our website at http://www.assemblywales.org/abthome/about_us-commission_assembly_administration/abt-foi/abt-foi-cop-pub.htm
If you have any questions regarding this response please contact me. If you feel you have cause for complaint, please follow the guidance at the end of this letter.

Yours sincerely

Buddug Saer
Freedom of Information and Project Support Officer
National Assembly for Wales

<u>Cause for concern or complaint with your FOI response?</u>

If you believe that I have not applied the Code correctly or have not followed the relevant laws, you may make a formal complaint to the Chief Executive and Clerk at the National Assembly for Wales, Cardiff Bay. Details of the Assembly's complaints principles are set out in the Code of Practice on Complaints available on the Internet at http://www.assemblywales.org/conhome/con-complaint.htm. Please advise me if you wish to receive a printed copy.

If you are not content with the outcome of the internal review, you have the right to apply directly to the Information Commissioner for a decision. The Information Commissioner can be contacted at:

Information Commissioner's Office
Wycliffe House
Water Lane
Wilmslow
Cheshire
SK9 5AF