



Regulatory Policy

Internet Access Management

Version 1.0

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1 Definitions

Unless the subject matter or context otherwise requires, the terms used in this Regulatory Policy shall have the meaning given to them in the Federal Law by Decree No. [3] of 2003 Regarding the Organization of the Telecommunications Sector, if any. For the purposes of this Regulatory Policy, the following terms shall have the following meanings:

- 1-1 **Blocking Message:** means the message that appears when attempting to access Blocked Content.
- 1-2 **Exemption:** means in respect of a particular User's access to Internet Content, allowing that User to access Internet Content under Prohibited Content Categories fully or partially, permanently or temporarily.
- 1-3 **Internet:** means the publicly available worldwide collection of interconnected networks using the Internet Protocol (IP) that allows them to function as a single, large virtual network.
- 1-4 **Internet Access Management** means the mechanism to permit or block access to Internet Content.
- 1-5 **Internet Protocol:** means an Internet network-layer protocol, defined by Internet Engineering Task Force (IETF).
- 1-6 **Internet Service:** means the service of providing access to Internet Content to the Users.
- 1-7 **Blocking Request:** means a request submitted to the TRA to authorize Licensees to block access to particular Internet Content.
- 1-8 **Unblocking Request:** means a request submitted to the TRA to authorize Licensees to allow access to a particular Internet Content, which has been blocked at the time of the request.
- 1-9 **Prohibited Content Categories:** means the Prohibited Content Categories, as amended and outlined in Annex (1) of this Regulatory Policy from time to time.
- 1-10 **Telecom Law:** means Federal Law by Decree No. 3 of 2003 regarding the Organization of the Telecommunications Sector.
- 1-11 **Internet Content:** means all forms of information, services, resources and content that are available on the Internet, including but not limited to electronic services, websites, systems, Internet-connected devices, data, text, images, animations, software,

applications, video files, audio files, data sources, searches, technologies and protocols.

- 1-12 **Prohibited Content:** means the Internet Content as defined in Article 3.1 of this Policy.
- 1-13 **Blocked Content:** means the Internet Content to which access has been blocked by the Licensees.
- 1-14 **User:** means an individual or entity using the Internet Service in the United Arab Emirates.
- 1-15 **Licensees:** means a holder of a license issued in accordance with the Telecom Law.
- 1-16 **Policy:** this regulatory policy.

2 Policy Scope

- 2-1 This Policy applies to all Licensees who provide Internet Services to Users in the UAE.
- 2-2 This Policy applies to all types of Internet Services allowing normal users to access the Internet. For the avoidance of doubt, this Policy does not apply to Internet connections dedicated exclusively to connect between the Licensees or between telecommunication networks and Internet servers.
- 2-3 The provisions of this Policy shall apply to any Internet Content regardless of the methods used by Users to access that Internet Content.

3 Classification, Identification, Reporting and Notification of Prohibited Content

- 3-1 Prohibited Content is Internet Content that is unacceptable and contrary to the public interest, public morality, public order, public and national security, Islamic morality or any prohibited matter according to any laws, regulations, procedures or requirements applicable in the UAE, as described more specifically in each category of Prohibited Content Categories.
- 3-2 Prohibited Content includes protocols and technologies exclusively designed and used to access Prohibited Content, and are identified by the TRA approval only.
- 3-3 Prohibited Content shall be detected and classified using two methods:
 - 3-3-1 Primarily by using integrated technology systems with Licensees' networks, which are configured and dedicated to classify and identify Prohibited Content.
 - 3-3-2 Reports by the public, competent government entities, law or any list identified by the TRA.
- 3-4 The scope of Prohibited Content shall be identified either by its URL, pattern, or digital footprint or by any technique which can be used to identify the scope of the Prohibited Content without impairing unprohibited content.
- 3-5 The TRA has the sole and absolute discretion to notify the management of any website in the event content exists that fall under a Prohibited Content Category. Provided that the notification shall mention that the website will be blocked or has been blocked according to the Policy.

4 Blocking of Prohibited Content

- 4-1 Licensees shall block access to Prohibited Content while taking the following into consideration:
 - 4-1-1 The blocking shall not affect unprohibited content (to the extent possible)
 - 4-1-2 The Licensee shall block the Prohibited Content by the ways defined in Article 3.3 of this Policy according to the

procedures set out by the TRA and requirements mentioned in the list of prohibited items.

- 4-1-3 The blocking shall not adversely affect the stability of Internet network and services in the UAE (at the discretion of the TRA).
- 4-1-4 The blocking shall remain perpetual until it is lifted due to the removal of the Prohibited Content based on an acknowledgement or report to the licensees to confirm the said or under the direct instruction of the TRA.
- 4-2 If blocking a Prohibited Content results in or can results in blocking unprohibited content, in such case the Licensees shall seek guidance from the TRA where it will consider the following in reaching its decision:
 - 4-2-1 The scale and impact of the Prohibited Content compared to the scale, impact and significance of the unprohibited content.
 - 4-2-2 Probability of reappearance of the Prohibited Content.
 - 4-2-3 Any other factors the TRA deems to be in the public interest.
- 4-3 Licensees shall inform Users with a Blocking Message once they attempt to access Prohibited Content according to their technical capabilities.
- 4-4 The Blocking Message shall be designed in accordance with the following requirements:
 - 4-4-1 the Blocking Message shall describe to the Users in a user-friendly manner, how they can send their feedback to the relevant Licensee; and
 - 4-4-2 the Blocking Message shall contain a link to a document that includes the Prohibited Content Categories. These categories shall be published from time to time in accordance with the instructions and directives issued by the TRA.
 - 4-4-3 Any other requirements by the TRA.
- 4-5 No Licensee shall use this Policy to block or impede access to any Internet Content that is not prohibited .
- 4-6 Licensees shall apply this Policy equally to all Users, unless an Exemption is given in accordance with Article (5) of this Policy.

- 4-7 The TRA may develop procedures and requirements of blocking including the list of Prohibited Content Categories that can be blocked by the Licensees without a prior approval from the TRA.

5 Exemption Provisions

- 5-1 Licensees shall provide capabilities for Exemption in accordance with this Policy.
- 5-2 Licensees may not provide Exemption to any person or entity without the prior approval from the TRA.
- 5-3 The entity requesting an Exemption shall submit a signed Exemption request to the relevant Licensee with mentioning the reason behind the Exemption and the concerned persons using the exempted line.
- 5-4 The TRA may, at its sole discretion, approve or decline any Exemption request. Purpose of exemption, nature of requesting entity, Internet lines, their use and volume will be taken into consideration in that request.

6 Complaints and Requests

- 6-1 Subject to sections 6-2 and 6-3 below, the TRA will consider Blocking or Unblocking Requests sent from the Licensees only.
- 6-2 Licensees shall handle all requests from Users to block or unblock access to Internet Content.
- 6-3 The Licensee will only send Blocking or Unblocking Requests to the TRA where a similar request has been made to that Licensee by a User, and it is not possible for the Licensee to determine whether the Internet Content in question falls within any of the Prohibited Content Categories or if coordination with the TRA or competent authorities is required.
- 6-4 Licensees shall apply and publish procedures by which Users can request the blocking or unblocking of Internet Content.
- 6-5 All Blocking or Unblocking Requests sent to the TRA must be accompanied by credible justifications by the applicant for the TRA to accept such requests.
- 6-6 All requests to Licensees from Users or other interested parties for the blocking and unblocking of access to Internet Content shall be filed and maintained by the Licensees for at least two (2) years from the date of receipt.

6-7 The TRA may, at its sole discretion, approve or decline any Blocking or Unblocking Request.

7 Compliance Monitoring

For compliance monitoring purposes, Licensees shall provide the following to the TRA:

- 7-1 A mechanism to verify the Prohibited Content Category under which particular Internet Content associated or accessed through a specific address (URL) is categorized, if any.
- 7-2 Fixed and mobile Internet connection(s) allowing unrestricted access to all Prohibited Content at TRA's offices in Abu Dhabi and Dubai.
- 7-3 Periodic reports in regard to Exemptions or the blocking or unblocking of Internet Content, as is required by the TRA from time to time.

8 Implementation Procedures

To implement this Policy, Licensees shall comply with the Internet Access Management Regulatory Procedure in effect at the time.

9 Technical System Implementation and Costs

- 9-1 The Licensees shall be responsible for implementing the technical system for classifying and detecting Prohibited Content as well as maintaining it in compliance with the provisions of this Policy and IAM Procedures published by the TRA.
- 9-2 All Licensees shall bear their own direct setup and maintenance costs incurred for implementation of this and any associated Regulatory Policy or Regulatory Procedure, the costs of the Licensee for ensuring that the TRA can monitor compliance with this Regulatory Policy and associated Regulatory Procedure, and the costs of the Licensees for ensuring that the TRA can access all of the all complaints, observations, comments and messages sent by the Users concerning the subject matter of this Regulatory Policy.

10 Effective Date

This Policy shall be effective as from the date of issuance

Annex 1

Prohibited Content Categories

1. Bypassing and accessing blocked content:

This category includes internet content that allows or helps users to have access to prohibited content including the proxy servers and Virtual Private Networks Services (VPNs) that mainly allow access to the prohibited content on the internet.

2. Pornography, nudity and vice:

This category includes the following:

- a. Pornography and nudity content.
- b. Internet content that promotes, or facilitates publishing or exchanging child pornography.
- c. Internet content that motivates, supports, promotes or publishes opinions that include aggression to public manners or involves corrupting youth or calling for embracing or promoting destructive principles such as homosexuality.
- d. Internet content that motivates and supports or promotes practice of vice, adultery, prostitution or illegal and unethical relations and the internet content related to human trafficking crimes or those including prostitution advertisements.
- e. Internet content that promotes or used for the purpose of trading of sexual or immoral goods such as movies, photos, drawings, books, stories, jokes in addition to electronic and interactive games, sexual games and others.

3. Impersonation, fraud and phishing:

This category includes the following:

- a. Internet content that is used in practices of deception, fraud, theft and embezzlement.
- b. internet content that compiles, publishes or allow others to have access to bank statements or accounts, data, credit or electronic card numbers or any electronic payment method and also the content that compiles, publishes or allows others to have access to names, secret numbers or access codes to websites or information technology means such as email and others.
- c. Internet content that impersonate or claims status of others for fraudulent purposes.
- d. Internet content that promotes witchcraft, voodoo or sorcery.

4. Insult, slander and defamation:

Internet content that includes materials of insult, slander and defamation.

5. Invasion of Privacy:

This category includes the following:

- a. Internet content that includes tools for phone tapping, espionage, theft or publication of private information or tracking, recording or intercepting communications or conversation without right.
- b. Internet content that exposes news, photos or comments related to the private or family life even if it is true if publishing the same shall harm the concerned person in publication. In addition, this includes disclosure of a secret that may harm a person's reputation, wealth or trade name or the publication of something intended to threatening or forcing him to pay money or provide benefit to others or be deprived of freedom to work.
- c. Internet content related to medical examinations, medical diagnosis, medical treatment or care or medical records.
- d. Internet content that allows access to private information illegally including those related to addresses and phone numbers of individuals or which allows disturbing others such as spam messages.
- e. Internet content that includes confidential information of public corporations in the UAE.

6. Offences against the UAE and public order

This category includes the following:

- a. Internet content that aims to or publishes information, news, statements or rumors for the purpose of ridicule, abuse or harming the reputation, prestige or status of the UAE or any of its establishments, president, rulers of emirates or their crown princes or deputy rulers, the flag of the UAE, the national anthem or the UAE's symbol, national anthem or its logos.
- b. Internet content that aims to, promotes or calls for overthrowing or changing the regime in the UAE or usurping the same or to invalidate provisions of the constitution or laws prevailing in the country or those opposing the main principles on which the regime in the UAE is established.
- c. Internet content that calls for or provokes noncompliance to the applicable laws and regulations.

- d. Internet content that is involved in planning, organizing, promoting or calling for demonstrations, marches or the like without authorization from the competent authority.
- e. Internet content that would threaten the security of the UAE or affect public order.
- f. Internet content that includes news of official confidential communications or military affairs.
- g. Internet content that would harm the national currency or lead to confusion about the economic condition in the country.

7. Supporting criminal acts and skills:

Internet content that provokes, calls for, promotes or provides information about how to carry out acts of crime or felony or contributes to or facilitates carrying out or supporting the same such as theft, fraud, robbery, forgery, faking, bribery, killing, suicide, blackmail, threat, rape, commercial cheating and breaching the properties of others, abduction, evasion from application of law, money laundry, smuggling prohibited content and other crimes punishable by the law.

8. Drugs:

Internet content that promotes or contributes to trading with drugs and mind affecting substances and the manner of using or manufacturing the same or obtaining drugs or facilitating their circulation in circumstances that are not legally authorized.

9. Medical and pharmaceutical practices in violation of the laws:

This category includes the following:

- a. Internet content of health establishments, doctors, medical professionals in violation of the relevant laws.
- b. Internet content that includes health advertisements in violation of cabinet resolutions concerning health advertisements.
- c. Internet content that is used in promoting or trading pharmaceuticals that are issued against prescription and to provide the same without asking for the medical prescription.
- d. Internet content that promotes medicine and medical products that are prohibited or unlicensed including dietary supplements, weight loss products, weight increase and unlicensed cosmetic pills and creams.

10. Infringement of intellectual property rights:

This category includes the following:

- a. Internet content that infringes the rights of intellectual property such as providing and publishing movies, photos, drawings, books, electronic programs and games, encrypted TV and radio channels and other intellectual property rights in electronic form.
- b. Websites that provide information, tools and methods aiming to infringing intellectual property rights and penetrating the protection means used for protecting such rights such as decoding movies and coded TV channels and operation of copied magnetic diskettes and copied electronic programs and games and deactivation of protection systems designed exclusively for combating piracy.

11. Discrimination, racism and contempt of religion:

This category includes the following:

- a. Internet content, which contains or promotes offending, defaming, insulting, ridiculing or violating any of the religions or any of its rites, sanctities or divine books, or interfering with freedom to practice one's religion by violence or threat.
- b. Internet content, which contains or promotes inciting apostasy and leaving Islam or inciting conversion to a religion other than Islam. This includes websites that incite atheism.
- c. Internet content that promotes or favors what would raise sedition, hatred, or racism, or sectarianism, or harming national unity or social peace, or disturb the public order or public morals.
- d. Internet content that would make any form of discrimination and provoke hate speech or inciting tribal prejudices with intent to incite hatred between individuals and groups.
- e. Internet content that exploits religion to disbelief individuals or groups by using one of the methods of expression or using any of the means in order to achieve special interests or illegal purposes.
- f. Internet content that promotes magic and sorcery, which are contrary to the teachings of Islam.

12. Viruses and malicious programs:

This category includes the following:

- a. Internet content that promotes, or supports, or contributes to establishing, publishing, distribution and development of malicious programs and viruses, hacking and piracy programs and the sites that provoke, promote or publish information about how to hack networks,

- information technology devices or communications or having access to the same without right or to disrupt them in addition to the sites that provide supporting services for the above.
- b. Internet content that supports or provokes attacking information technology or communications networks for the purpose of disrupting the same.
 - c. Internet content and networks that are infected with viruses or malicious programs or from which viruses, malicious programs or intentional attacks are released in order to disrupt another service or network, and sites and systems of command and control of networks infected with viruses.
 - d. Internet content that downloads malicious code that gather personal information of the users or make it possible to manipulate their devices without their knowledge.

13. Promotion of or trading in prohibited commodities and services:

Includes the sites that promote or used for trading or allow advertising or dealing with commodities prohibited in the UAE under the applicable laws or the restricted commodities that require license from the competent authorities and are being promoted or circulated without authorization from the competent authorities, including, but not limited to, the following:

- a. Gambling tools and machines.
- b. Counterfeit money.
- c. Hazardous waste.
- d. Prints, paintings, photographs, drawings, cards, books, magazines and stone sculptures, which are contrary to the Islamic religion or public morals, or involving intent of corruption or sedition.
- e. Endangered species of animals, birds and plants or their members according to international treaties such as raw ivory (elephant's tusk), rhino horn, bustards and falcons unless licensed by the competent entities.
- f. Chemical and radioactive material.
- g. Liquor.
- h. Tobacco and smoking.
- i. Counterfeit and fake goods.
- j. Radar detection devices.
- k. Firearms, ammunitions and explosives.
- l. Satellite receivers, which transmit encrypted satellite channels illegally or related services.
- m. Relics and artistic masterpieces other than the cases authorized by law.

- n. Wireless and wired communication devices according to the Telecom Law.
- o. Real estate.
- p. Universities, educational institutes, and nurseries.
- q. Other commodities that are prohibited or restricted as decided by the competent entities from time to time.

14. Illegal communication services:

This category includes internet content that promotes or allows access to illegal communication services according to a regulation or decision by the competent authority.

15. Gambling:

This category includes internet content that promotes gambling and similar activities such as bets and lottery and those related to electronic gambling activities.

16. Terrorism:

This category includes the following:

- a. Internet content relating to terrorist groups or any illegal group, association, organization or body or any content that facilitates communication with their leaders or members or to attract members or promote and favor their ideas or assist in financing their activities or contribute to assisting them actually or any content that publishes methods of making fire or explosive devices or any other tools used in terrorist acts.
- b. Internet content that incites, encourages or enables the commission of a crime against the UAE or one of its citizens or employees or its interests or public funds or public facilities abroad, including embassies, consulates, missions, or affiliate offices.
- c. Internet content that incites, encourages or enables the commission of a crime for the purpose of influencing the UAE or getting it or one of its officials to do or abstain from doing something.
- d. Internet content that incites, encourages or enables the commission of a crime onboard a means of transportation registered with the UAE or carrying its flag.
- e. Internet content that incites, encourages or enables the commission of a provocative act of crime in the territory of the UAE or abroad.

- f. Internet content that incites, encourages or enables the commission of an act that would or intend to threaten the stability of the UAE or its safety, unity or security, or oppose the basic principles underlying the regime, or intend to overthrow or takeover the regime, or invalidate some of the provisions of the Constitution unlawfully, or prevent one of the establishments of the UAE, or one of the public authorities from exercising their work, or harming national unity or social peace.

17. Prohibited Top level Domains

This category includes top-level domains on the internet allocated for purposes that violate the laws of the UAE regardless of website content falling under them. e.g. top-level domains for pornographic material .xxx and others.

18. Illegal Activities:

This category includes internet content that is mainly used to practice activities in violation of the laws in the UAE other than those mentioned in the other categories such as:

- a. Promoting or calling for the collection of donations without an authorized license.
- b. Promoting investment portfolios or funds and trading of stocks, currencies and metals without obtaining a license from the competent entities according to prevailing laws.
- c. Organizations (such as clubs, non-profit organizations, groups, corporations and bodies) banned in the UAE.
- d. Any other illegal activities.

19. Upon the order of the judicial authorities or in accordance with the law:

This category includes internet content that is blocked by order from the judicial authority (local or federal) or public prosecution in the UAE whether in relation to criminal, civil, commercial, legal case or other cases or those that are blocked according to the laws prevailing in the UAE.