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DONT BLOCK THE BLOG!

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

14th September 2007

URL: <http://dbtb.org>

Press Releases: <http://dbtb.org/press-release/>

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**Google/Blogspot IP change results in
Blogspot Ban in Pakistan**

It has being widely reported throughout Pakistan that access to the entire blogspot.com domain has yet again been blocked in Pakistan. For about four months (since May, 2007) Google fortunately had changed the IP address of its Blogspot servers. The new IP addresses were not demarcated as prohibited by the censorship filters located at the Pakistan Internet Exchange. Today, for some odd reason, Google has suddenly reverted back to its original IP address, which has been on the block list since March of 2006. This move has resulted in the blocking of all internet traffic to the blogspot.com domain. Millions of blog readers in Pakistan now are unable to read or and interact with any of these websites.

The block is apparent only on the large number of ISP's that use the FLAG Backbone to connect to the World Wide Web. At the moment, Internet service provided by TransWorld is not affected as they have not yet completed the final stage of merging their traffic with the filters located with the Pakistan Telecommunications Authority (PTA), though there are rumours that they will be complying shortly.

For over the past eighteen months, the PTA has been actively blocking a number of websites after the Supreme Court of Pakistan ordered it to censor twelve specific websites. Upon its own initiative, in an apparent misapplication of the Supreme Court order, the PTA also blocked the entire blogspot.com domain which hosts over 20 million blogs.

Over the past year, the DON'T BLOCK THE BLOG campaign has been recognized both nationally and internationally as a credible organization highlighting free speech issues in Pakistan. The DBTB banner is hosted on a number of websites around the world, and is a testament that many people believe in supporting the cause of free speech in Pakistan.

Don't Block the Blog

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We at Don't Block the Blog continue to strongly oppose any form of internet censorship and request national and international bloggers, print media, and free speech organizations to help support our cause and to continue to highlight this issue of the unfair blanket ban of blogs for internet users in Pakistan. Alternatively, we may even urge the system administrators at Google, Inc to help the people of Pakistan by changing the IP addresses of their blogspot.com servers which may allow us unrestricted access to the blogspot domain

Background:

The PTA (Pakistan Telecommunication Authority) initially blocked access to the blogspot domain on the 3rd of March 2006, due to a Supreme Court decision dated 2nd March 2006 instructing the PTA to ban 12 offending websites which highlighted the blasphemous cartoons on the Prophet Muhammad (PBUH). In adherence to the Supreme Court ruling, all 12 sites were blocked including one that was hosted on the blogspot domain. But rather than block the offending blogspot website, the PTA blocked the entire domain (www.blogspot.com) which happens to be one of the most popular blog hosting domains hosting upwards of 8 million blogs globally, according to some estimates.

The **Don't Block the Blog (DBTB)** campaign (<http://www.help-pakistan.com/main/>) was launched by the Alvi-e team, **Dr. Awab Alvi** and **Omer Alvie**, on 3rd March, 2006 in order to highlight the unfair blanket ban of the blogspot domain and additionally to show support for free internet speech in general. Approximately at the same time the Society Against Internet Censorship in Pakistan (formerly known as The Action Group Against Blogspot Ban in Pakistan - AGABBIP) (<http://groups.google.com/group/AGABBIP>), a mailing list with dozens of contributing members, also was formed to protest this form of censorship in Pakistan.

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