PRESS RELEASE

South Koreans turn to VPNs ahead of online censorship, BestVPN.com reports
VPN searches from South Korea up by 1573%

Liverpool, February 18 2019 - South Koreans are turning to Virtual Private Network (VPN) technology following the announcement that the South Korean Government plan to extend their online censorship, according to lead VPN comparison site BestVPN.com.

South Korean censorship has historically utilized Doman Name System (DNS) blocking. The proposed updated approach uses Server Name Indicator (SNI) data capturing technology which will enable the Korea Communications Commission (KCC) to know exactly which domains a user is trying to access.

The announcement has resulted in a spike in interest of VPNs among South Korean internet users, according to internal data from BestVPN.com The comparison website recorded a 1573% increase from the 11th-17th February compared to the same period the week before.

The official announcement has made it clear that the seven South Korean Internet Service Providers (ISP) plan to full collaborate with the plan. Instead of uncensored web pages users will see a warning page bearing the Korea Communications Standards Commission (KCSC) logo and that of the Korean National Police Agency for blocked HTTP websites. Sites blocked using Server Name Indication (SNI) filtering will result in a 'this site can't be reached' error.

This decision is will likely spark opposition from advocates of internet freedom. In in 2011 Reporter without Borders included South Korea on its list of countries under surveillance, stating that: "South Korean authorities sometimes seem to abuse their powers."

Also unhappy are citizens of the country, with one South Korean internet user @onefnvl12 taking to Twitter to say: "Help us and let us know this fact. South Korea is currently losing its freedom. The current president is telling us that freedom is something we need to do. Internet censorship, YouTube, etc. We're censoring even our favorite TV show."

Ray Walsh Digital Privacy Expert at BestVPN.com commented:

"The use of SNI filtering to block HTTPS websites is a new development that is allowing the South Korean government to impose ever more restrictive censorship on its citizens.

South Korea is a nation that is at the forefront of technology. It is a nation that prides itself on cutting edge information communication technology, lightning fast internet connections, and one of the most comprehensive internet penetration rates in the world.

Despite this progressive, state of the art environment, the South Korean government exerts a strong-armed approach to what citizens can access online. With DNS website blocking, and search engine results also being filtered in the nation, the addition of SNI filtering can be considered a severe deterioration in the state of South Korea's internet freedom. For the people of South Korea, this signals a severe elevation in the efficacy of its government's censorship programme."

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