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# Regulatory Policy

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## Internet Access Management

**Version 1.1**

**Issue Date: 19 April 2017**

## 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 which 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) which 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 TDRA to authorize Licensees to block access to particular Internet Content.
- 1-8 Unblocking Request: means a request submitted to the TDRA 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 which 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 TDRA 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 TDRA.

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 TDRA 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 TDRA 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 TDRA).
- 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 TDRA.
- 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 TDRA 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 TDRA 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 TDRA.

4-4-3 Any other requirements by the TDRA.

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 TDRA 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 TDRA.

## 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 TDRA.

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 TDRA 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 TDRA 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 TDRA 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 TDRA 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 TDRA must be accompanied by credible justifications by the applicant for the TDRA 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 TDRA 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 TDRA:

- 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 TDRA'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 TDRA 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 TDRA.

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 TDRA can monitor compliance with this Regulatory Policy and associated Regulatory Procedure, and the costs of the Licensees for ensuring that the TDRA 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.