

Country report for end users in Iran



Introduction

This report is intended for internet users from Iran. In Iran, access to websites and services may be blocked and monitored by the Iranian government. This report summarizes the characteristics of a number of tools you can easily use to circumvent the blocking and monitoring system in Iran, and will help you to choose the right tool for your situation.

Freedom House

The information provided in this report is brought to you by an American organization called Freedom House. Since its founding in 1941 by prominent Americans concerned with the mounting threats to peace and democracy worldwide, Freedom House has been a vigorous proponent of democratic values.

This country report is derived from a much longer report by the Freedom House Internet Freedom team, which covers many more details. It is available online at the Freedom House website at the following address:

<http://www.freedomhouse.org>

This country report enables you to quickly see the tools and recommendations that apply to Iran.

Country results for Iran

A number of users from Iran have been surveyed regarding the circumvention tools they use, and regarding how people generally access the internet. Freedom House has also tested a number of tools that you can use in Iran if your internet connection is blocked.

Although some groups have a more elaborate system for evaluating circumvention tools (see, for instance <https://www.torproject.org/press/presskit/2010-09-16-circumvention-features.pdf>). Freedom House has tested

three critical things about common circumvention tools for use in Iran:

- ▶ **Their usability**
- ▶ **Their safety and security**
- ▶ **Their performance**

Freedom House has also asked people from Iran which tools they use, and how well they perform in these three areas.

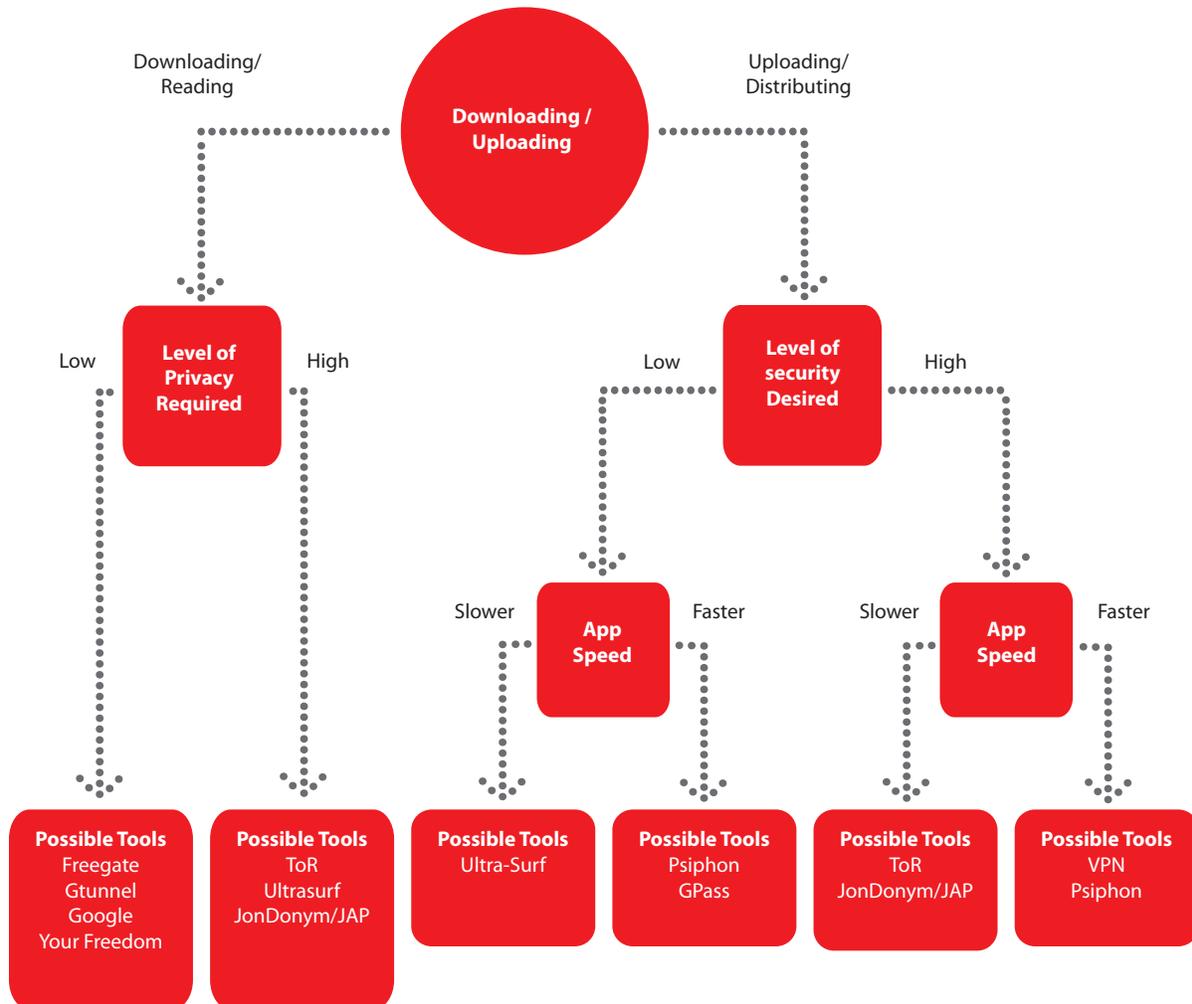
Choosing the right tool in Iran

Choosing the right tool to circumvent the Chinese blocking system is best done on the basis of how you intend to use the internet. If you intend to send sensitive information outside of the country, or to your fellow citizens, then you face more risks than people merely accessing blocked websites for casual internet browsing. For this reason, the first thing to ask yourself is whether you intend to send or receive blocked or illegal information. Next, you should identify whether you run a high or a low risk of punishment if this information is found and traced back to you.

Finally, we recommend that you decide on the speed that you will need to effectively use the internet. Just sending text messages on Twitter does not require an application that is as fast as what you need when you are sending a video to YouTube, for instance. Have a look at the schema below that sums this up.

Findings and recommendations for Iran

Most Iranian users indicated that they access the internet through a home broadband connection. They have an average need for secure communications, and prefer tools that work at good speeds. If you have the same preferences, you will find that Ultrasurf, Gpass, or Psiphon may be the right tools for you. Please note that Psiphon requires an invitation to use the system.



Speed is a complex decision. Doing things fast can sometimes avoid detection. This depends on the level of monitoring and logging on the network since high levels of logging and monitoring will prevail over speed.

The Freedom House survey showed that people from Iran seem to prefer the following three tools overall:

- **VPN connections**
- **Google**
- **Your Freedom**

You may want to try these too, but keep in mind that the community of internet users surveyed did not have the benefit of this overview report at the time of the survey, and may have chosen these tools for various

other reasons and in different situations, or perhaps even for the wrong reasons. In particular, using a tool that performs very quickly sometimes proves to be a risky choice. This is especially true for Google, since they do not usually apply encryption to secure your connection. Also, the faster the tool, the more likely it is to rely on a single service provider being available for the internet connection, which makes it easier to block.

Overview of technical testing

If you want an even broader overview of the options for circumventing the Iranian blocking system, please have a look at how other tools were tested by Freedom House as well. The following table sums them up.

Concluding recommendations

In closing, we draw your attention to the following recommendations from the Freedom House report:

- ▶ Many users prefer to have tools that perform at fast speeds. These are, however, not always the most secure options. It is important to understand the risks you potentially face when you attempt to circumvent your country's blocking infrastructure.
- ▶ Many users seem to think that when they do things quickly, the government may not notice. This is not true most of the time, however. If the government is able to intercept your internet connection, they will be able to see what you were doing afterwards.
- ▶ While these tools may be able to hide what you are doing online, they cannot hide that a circumvention tool is being used. If your government can intercept your internet traffic, they will also be able to detect that you were circumventing their blocking infrastructure.

We wish you safe surfing and hope your government will consider providing free and unfiltered internet access to your country in the near future.

For the full report and a discussion of all the tools mentioned here, please visit the Freedom House website.

Results for Iran		Ease of Use	Performance	Support & Security	Overall
1	Dynaweb	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
2	Freegate	★★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
3	Freenet	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
4	Garden GTunnel	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
5	Google (Translate Reader Cache etc.)	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
6	GPass	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
7	Hotspot Shield	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
8	JAP	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
9	Proxy	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
10	Psiphon	★★★	★★★	★★	★★★
11	Tor	★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★
12	Ultra Surf	★★★★	★★★	★★★★	★★★
13	Your Freedom	★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★
14	VPN	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★