NIGERIA

	2009	2011
INTERNET FREEDOM STATUS	n/a	**Partly Free**
Obstacles to Access	n/a	13
Limits on Content	n/a	10
Violations of User Rights	n/a	12
Total	**n/a**	**35**

POPULATION: 158.3million
INTERNET PENETRATION: 28 percent
WEB 2.0 APPLICATIONS BLOCKED: No
SUBSTANTIAL POLITICAL CENSORSHIP: No
BLOGGERS/ONLINE USERS ARRESTED: No
PRESS FREEDOM STATUS: Partly Free

INTRODUCTION

In 1999, Nigeria returned to civilian governance after almost 30 years of military rule.[1] Press freedom and the space for free expression have since increased. Nevertheless, the legal and political environment for traditional media remains harsh, and a number of journalists have been killed in recent years. Online media have been comparatively free from such restrictions to date, though two bloggers were detained for questioning in late 2008. The Nigerian authorities do not carry out any filtering of content, and while access to information technology is still limited for many Nigerians, the number of internet users nearly quadrupled between 2008 and 2010. Several recent legislative initiatives have raised concerns that the relative freedom and privacy enjoyed by online journalists and writers may come under threat in the near future.

The internet was first introduced in the early 1990s, and usage grew more popular following an internet workshop organized by the Yaba College of Technology in 1995.[2] Internet access expanded as cybercafes sprang up in major cities across Nigeria in 1999, though it was still expensive and connections were very slow. The introduction of internet access via mobile-phone service in 2004 spurred further increases in internet use.

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[1] Abegunrin Olayiwola, *Nigerian Foreign Policy Under Military Rule, 1966–1999* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 2003).
[2] The workshop was hosted by the Yaba College of Technology in Lagos in collaboration with the Nigerian Communications Commission, the National Data Bank, the Literacy Training and Development Program for Africa (University of Ibadan), the Administrative Staff College of Nigeria (ASCON), the United States Information Service (USIS), the Regional Information Network for Africa (RINAF), and the British Council. United Nations Economic Commission for Africa, "Nigeria: Internet Connectivity," http://www.uneca.org/aisi/nici/country_profiles/Nigeria/nigeriainter.htm, accessed August 27, 2010.

OBSTACLES TO ACCESS

Internet access in Nigeria has grown exponentially in recent years, particularly after the introduction of mobile-phone data services and Fixed Wireless Access (FWA) services. There were about 100,000 users in 1999,[3] but the figure grew to 11 million in 2008,[4] and reached almost 44 million in 2010.[5] This large jump in access is due to an increase in mobile-phone usage and data services over this period, private sector and government investment in technology, and increased competition between FWA providers. Nevertheless, the penetration rate is only 30 percent of the Nigerian population, and access is greater in urban areas than in rural regions. Cost is a key barrier to access for many Nigerians, as the price for internet use ranges from US$1 per hour in cybercafes to an average of US$7 per megabyte of data on Global System for Mobile (GSM) networks. FWA service costs an average of US$80 per month. By comparison, the new minimum wage announced by the government in July 2010 is US$120 per month.[6] Literacy remains an obstacle as well, as 28 percent of the population is illiterate, particularly in English, the main language used by Nigerian online news outlets and blogs.[7]

According to a May 2009 survey of internet users, most Nigerians access the internet from cybercafes or their workplace, while only 17 percent do so from home. Among these users, a large percentage is well educated, with 41 percent holding secondary school degrees and 32 percent holding bachelor's degrees.[8] In recent years, frequent power cuts have become an impediment to internet access, with many users reportedly using private generators to stay online during outages. A number of cybercafes have closed due to difficulties paying for such expensive backup power generation in addition to internet service. The loss of cybercafes has been somewhat offset by the rise of mobile internet usage and affordable packages offered by FWA service providers. Although many providers use the word "broadband" in their promotional materials, in practice there is limited broadband service available in Nigeria, with some estimates placing the number of broadband subscribers as of December 2009 at only 67,800.[9]

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[3] Ibid.

[4] "Nigeria Internet Users Tops 11 Million, Penetration Now 7.8%," *Web Trends Nigeria* (blog), October 8, 2009, http://webtrendsng.com/blog/nigeria-internet-users-tops-11-million-penetration-now-7-8/.

[5] Internet World Stats, "Internet Usage Statistics for Africa," http://www.internetworldstats.com/stats1.htm#africa, accessed August 27, 2010.

[6] Funmi Komolafe, "The Road to a New National Minimum Wage," *Vanguard*, July 22, 2010, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2010/07/the-road-to-a-new-national-minimum-wage/.

[7] United Nations Children's Fund, "At a Glance: Nigeria—Statistics," March 2, 2010, http://www.unicef.org/infobycountry/nigeria_statistics.html.

[8] 'Gbenga Sesan, "Digital Lifestyle of Connected Nigerians: Advance Report," Paradigm Initiative Nigeria, March 2010, http://www.pinigeria.org/download/dlcnadvance.pdf.

[9] Internet World Stats, "Africa: Nigeria," http://www.internetworldstats.com/africa.htm#ng, accessed August 27, 2010.

The number of mobile-phone subscribers has increased dramatically over the past decade, from almost no users in 2000 to over 83 million in 2010.[10] Mobile internet penetration has also increased, reportedly reaching 7.3 million users by 2008.[11] While users with any smart phone can access the internet on their mobile devices, specific handsets such as Nokia's *C3* and Research in Motion's *Blackberry* provide bundled data services to mobile subscribers. The number of BlackBerry users appears to be growing, particularly among young Nigerians, though the cost of the service, whose efficiency is limited, remains $20 per month. According to credible sources in the industry, there were approximately 86,500 BlackBerry subscribers with the service providers MTN, Zain, and Etisalat as of July 2010.[12]

Until recently, most businesses requiring high bandwidth—such as internet-service providers (ISPs), banks, and telecommunications companies—relied on satellite links and the SAT-3 undersea cable for their international internet connection. When the SAT-3 cable encountered problems in July 2009,[13] as much as 70 percent of the country's internet traffic was cut off.[14] In March 2007, the government established the Nigerian Internet Exchange Point as a means of connecting ISPs to one another; as of mid-2010, it had 22 members[15]. Several telecommunications companies have also migrated to private fiber-optic cable projects, such as Glo-1 and MainOne. The latter cable went live on July 1, 2010, and now provides connectivity for the ISPs MTN, Etisalat, and Starcomms,[16] though the reduced cost of a cable rather than a satellite connection has yet to be passed on to consumers. Despite media reports in 2009 that the Glo-1 cable had been connected,[17] as of late-2010 it was still not operational.

The video-sharing website YouTube, the social-networking site Facebook, the microblogging application Twitter, and various international blog-hosting services are freely available and among the most popular websites in the country. As of December 2010, there

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[10] Nigerian Communications Commission, "Subscriber Data," http://www.ncc.gov.ng/subscriberdata.htm, accessed December 27, 2010.

[11] "Mobile Internet Usage Soars in Nigeria," ITNewsAfrica.com, December 4, 2008, http://www.itnewsafrica.com/?p=1906.

[12] Interviews with employees of MTN, Zain, and Etisalat who requested anonymity, August 2010. Globacom figures were not available at the time of writing.

[13] Efem Nkanga, James Emejo, and Chinwe Ochu, "Nigeria: Damage to SAT-3 Cable Cripples Banks, Internet Services," *This Day*, July 29, 2009, available at http://allafrica.com/stories/200907290153.html.

[14] "Damage to SAT-3 Cable Disrupts Internet Services in Nigeria," *Afrique en Ligne*, July 29, 2009, http://www.afriquejet.com/news/africa-news/damage-to-sat-3-cable-disrupts-internet-services-in-nigeria-2009072932548.html.

[15] Internet Exchange Point of Nigeria, "Our Members," http://www.nixp.net/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=13&Itemid=13, accessed December 29,2010.

[16] Sean Buckley, "Main One Cable Rakes in Three Carrier Customers," *Fierce Telecom*, July 22, 2010, http://www.fiercetelecom.com/story/main-one-cable-rakes-three-carrier-customers/2010-07-22.

[17] Rebecca Heacock, "Nigeria: New Submarine Internet Cable Lands in Lagos," *Global Voices*, September 7, 2009, http://globalvoicesonline.org/2009/09/07/nigeria-new-submarine-internet-cable-lands-in-lagos; Prince Osuagwu, "Glo 1 Submarine Cable Lands in Lagos," *Vanguard*, September 6, 2009, http://www.vanguardngr.com/2009/09/06/glo-1-submarine-cable-lands-in-lagos.

were reportedly 2.1 million Facebook users.[18] According to Alexa, a website rating company, the 10 most popular websites in Nigeria as of mid-2010 were Yahoo!, Facebook, Google.com, Google.com.ng, Blogger.com, Live.com, YouTube, Wikipedia, Nairaland (a Nigerian online discussion forum), and Twitter.[19] Three other Nigerian websites—*Punch* newspaper at number 13, GTBank at number 18, and *Vanguard* newspaper at number 20— were cited in the top 20. The growing demand for advanced web applications has sparked multiple local clones of internationally known services.

The information and communication technology (ICT) market in Nigeria has expanded significantly over the past decade. The number of ISPs has risen from 18 in 2000 to 151 licensed and active providers as of mid-2010,[20] as well as 14 active FWA providers,[21] and four GSM mobile-phone operators that also provide internet access to their subscribers.[22] A recent study that analyzed data from 2,069 internet users across Nigeria found the leading service providers to be Globacom, MTN, Starcomms, Zain, and Multilinks.[23] Globacom, MTN, and Zain are GSM service providers, while Starcomms and Multilinks are FWA service providers. All of the above companies are privately owned. The only government-owned firm in the market, NITEL, is not particularly competitive. It has remained on the government's privatization list for several years following multiple attempts to sell it. In February 2009, Transcorp, a local conglomerate with strong ties to the government, relinquished its 51 percent stake, which it had acquired in 2006.[24] In February 2010, New Generation Telecoms, a consortium that includes China Unicom, won a controversial bid to purchase the company.[25] Responding to allegations of corruption surrounding the purchase, the president initiated an investigation, and as of mid-2010 the transaction had yet to be concluded.[26]

Internet services are governed by the Nigerian Telecommunications Act, which vests regulatory responsibilities in the Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC). All ISPs must obtain a license from the NCC to operate, but there have been no reports of any ISP

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[18] Facebakers, "Facebook Statistics Nigeria," http://www.facebakers.com/countries-with-facebook/NG/, accessed December 29, 2010.

[19] Alexa Web Information, "Top Sites in Nigeria," http://www.alexa.com/topsites/countries/NG, accessed August 27, 2010.

[20] Nigerian Communications Commission, "Internet Services," http://www.ncc.gov.ng/Licensees/Licensees-Internet_Services.pdf, accessed December 31, 2010.

[21] Nigerian Communications Commission, "Fixed Wireless Access," http://www.ncc.gov.ng/list_of_licensees/Current/Fixed_Wireless_Access.pdf, accessed August 27, 2010.

[22] Nigerian Communications Commission, "Digital Mobile License," http://www.ncc.gov.ng/list_of_licensees/Current/Digital_Mobile_License.pdf, accessed August 27, 2010.

[23] Sesan, "Digital Lifestyle."

[24] Transcorp, "NITEL Board Ratifies Appointment of Chairman: About NITEL," September 24, 2008, http://www.transcorpnigeria.com/corporatecom/archives.php?page=fullstory&nid=60; Betrand Nwankwo and Juliet Alohan, "Nigeria: Transcorp Relinquishes 51 Percent Equity Share in Nitel/Mtel," *Leadership*, February 26, 2009, available at http://allafrica.com/stories/200902260498.html.

[25] Camillus Eboh, "New Generation Telecoms Acquires NITEL," Reuters, February 16, 2010, available at http://234next.com/csp/cms/sites/Next/Home/5527697-146/new_generation_telecoms_acquires_nitel_.csp.

[26] Camillus Eboh, "Nigeria Cabinet Sacking Delays Nitel sale," Reuters, March 19, 2010, http://www.reuters.com/article/idUSLDE62I0WS20100319.

being denied a license or renewal of registration. However, new ISPs seeking to enter the market have faced challenges in their operations due to competition from larger ISPs and investor focus on the mobile sector. Although the NCC's nine-member board is nominated by the government, the regulator's decisions are viewed as relatively independent.

LIMITS ON CONTENT

The Nigerian government has not been reported to engage in any form of internet filtering.[27] According to a study by the OpenNet Initiative, several websites were inaccessible surrounding elections in 2007. However, the researchers concluded that the disruptions were due to technical problems, not government intervention.[28] The complex nature of Nigeria's internet framework as described above makes it difficult to carry out systematic filtering or censorship. Some ISPs have been known to block access when users infringe on laws by downloading copyrighted content, but this has been done to manage network traffic rather than protect intellectual property.

In June 2009, reports emerged that the Nigerian government planned to invest in sponsoring pro-government websites and blogs.[29] In practice, it has not been possible to confirm whether the plan was implemented. Websites, blogs, and commentators are generally divided among anti-government, pro-government, and neutral leanings, and this has continued as online political discussions have increased in advance of polls scheduled for April 2011.

The country is home to a diverse blogosphere, with entertainment blogs drawing the most readers and a growing number of Nigerians blogging about their personal lives or social activism. Blogs have gradually emerged as an important platform for discussion and a source of reliable news for many users. Readers often leave comments on popular news-oriented blogs to express their frustration with societal ills. Although traditional media outlets often shy away from sensitive topics, such as late president Umaru Yar'Adua's declining health, such topics are addressed freely online, with commentary ranging across blogs, Facebook, and Twitter. The Nigerian blogosphere includes both Nigerians living abroad and locally based writers. While many of the former are longtime bloggers, only in the past five years have Nigerian residents actively joined the blogosphere,[30] with local

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[27] OpenNet Initiative, "Country Profile: Nigeria," October 1, 2009, http://opennet.net/research/profiles/nigeria.
[28] OpenNet Initiative, "Internet Watch Report: The 2007 Presidential Elections in Nigeria," November 2007, http://opennet.net/research/bulletins/014.
[29] Global Voices, "Nigeria government launches attack against bloggers,", June 25, 2009, http://advocacy.globalvoicesonline.org/2009/06/25/nigeria-government-launches-attack-against-bloggers/; Sahara Reporters, "Umaru Yar'adua Regime Launches $5 Million Online War," June 16, 2009, http://www.saharareporters.com/news-page/umaru-yar%E2%80%99adua-regime-launches-5-million-online-war.
[30] Remmy Nweke, "Nigeria: Blogging as a Trend in Nigeria," *Daily Champion*, January 12, 2006, available at http://allafrica.com/stories/200601120144.html.

blogging gaining momentum following a 2008 Nigerian bloggers' conference.[31] Although two attempts to create Nigerian blog aggregators failed,[32] GlobalVoicesOnline.org, Blogger.com, Afrigator.com, and WordPress.com are popular platforms for Nigerian bloggers to interact and learn from one another. The popularity of blogs has influenced the traditional media environment, with major newspapers adding interactive features to their websites. For example, 6 of the 10 most visited Nigerian websites as of July 2010 are owned by newspapers that have embraced the blogging culture.[33]

ICTs have also played an important role in mobilizing people for "real life" protests and providing updates on unfolding events. In November 2008, a widely circulated YouTube video showed an admiral and several other military officers severely beating a woman who they deemed too slow in making way for their convoy.[34] Following a public outcry, and with legal aid from the state government, the woman sued the officers for assault and battery. In January 2010, a court awarded her 100 million naira (US$670,000) in compensation.[35] In another instance, BlackBerries were a key factor in galvanizing thousands of young professionals for a March 2010 political rally held in Abuja, Nigeria's capital, to protest a wide range of problems, including poor infrastructure, fuel shortages, and power blackouts.[36] Civil society groups and candidates are also using new media tools ahead of Nigeria's 2011 elections. Popular citizen-initiated campaigns include the Save Nigeria Group,[37] the Enough Is Enough Nigeria coalition,[38] and the "Nigerians Say No to Ibrahim Babangida as President" Facebook group.[39] Prospective presidential candidates such as celebrity journalist Dele Momodu, former governor Donald Duke, former military ruler Ibrahim Babangida,[40] and the current president are using websites, mobile-phone text messages, e-mail, Twitter, and Facebook to reach potential voters and run their campaigns. Particularly notable during the latter part of 2010 was President Goodluck Jonathan's use of

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[31] ˙Gbenga Sesan, "The Nigerian Bloggers' Forum," *Oro* (blog), September 22, 2005, http://www.gbengasesan.com/blog/?p=10.

[32] The Nigerian Blog Aggregator was available at http://www.nigerianbloggers.com and the Nigerian Weblog Ring was at http://nwr.cowblock.net.

[33] "Most Visited Nigerian Websites in July 2010," *Web Trends Nigeria*, August 9, 2010, http://webtrendsng.com//blog/most-visited-nigerian-websites-in-july-2010.

[34] *Brutalization of Uzoma Okere* (YouTube, November 10, 2008), 1 min., 40 sec., http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VHdkyvn41us.

[35] "Uzoma Okere Won N 100 Million," *Nigerian Curiosity* (blog), January 29, 2010, http://www.nigeriancuriosity.com/2010/01/uzoma-okere-won-n100-mn-video.html.

[36] Stephanie Busari, "Rare Anger as Nigerian Youth Hit Streets," CNN, March 16, 2010, http://edition.cnn.com/2010/WORLD/africa/03/16/nigeria.youth.protests/index.html.

[37] The group's website is located at http://www.savenigeriagroup.com.

[38] The coalition's website is located at http://www.enoughisenoughnigeria.com.

[39] "Nigerians Say No to Ibrahim Babangida as President," Facebook, http://www.facebook.com/pages/YOUTH-SAY-NO-TO-EVIL-GENIUS-IBB-IN-2011/114209978613655#!/group.php?gid=116661691680343&ref=ts.

[40] These three men's campaign-related websites are located at http://www.delemomodu2011.com, http://www.donalddukeorganisation.org, and http://www.voteibb.org, respectively.

Facebook, earning him the label "Facebook President."[41] The president's daily profile updates emerged as a popular avenue for public engagement. Citizen comments to the page have been known to influence high-level policy making, such as a July 2010 decision to reverse a ban on the country's football team.[42] Similarly, the president's formal declaration of his candidacy for the 2011 electoral race was first announced on Facebook.[43] In December 2010, he released a book compiling his interactions with citizens via the social-networking website.[44]

VIOLATIONS OF USER RIGHTS

Nigeria's legal framework is fairly archaic, as many laws have not been updated to reflect modern realities, including the use of new media technologies.[45] This lack of internet-specific legislation has generally fostered an open environment for online activities. In recent years, the government has introduced several bills that could be used to restrict users' rights to free expression and privacy, though their passage in the near future is unlikely due to the expected elections in early 2011. Much of the public accepts the need for some regulation of internet use in light of the unchecked cybercrime in the country, and the costs it has imposed on Nigeria's economy and global reputation.

The 1999 constitution guarantees freedom of expression and of the press, but the state often uses arbitrary and extralegal measures to suppress political criticism in the media, and there is a culture of impunity for crimes against media workers. Libel remains a criminal offense, and the burden of proof rests with the defendant. Journalists covering sensitive issues such as official corruption, the president's health, and communal violence are regularly subjected to criminal prosecution. However, no such cases have yet been brought for online expression.[46] The implementation of Sharia (Islamic law) penal codes in 12 northern states has generally not affected internet freedom. However, in March 2010, a

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[41] George Webster, "Goodluck Jonathan: The Facebook President," October 1, 2010, http://articles.cnn.com/2010-10-01/tech/goodluck.jonathan.facebook.profile_1_facebook-fans-popular-social-networking-site-nigerian-president.

[42] "Facebook influences Nigeria football team ban U-turn," British Broadcasting Network (BBC), July 6, 2010, http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/10525699.

[43] "Formal Declaration of Dr Jonathan Ebele Goodluck For President 2011," Nigerians For Goodluck/Sambo Ticket on Facebook, http://www.facebook.com/topic.php?uid=147860418583907&topic=210, accessed February 11, 2010.

[44] David Olagunju, "Between Jonathan and his friends," *Nigerian Tribune*, January 3, 2010, http://tribune.com.ng/index.php/politics/15546-between-jonathan-and-his-friends.

[45] For example, the Evidence Act does not provide for the acceptance of digital evidence in court, although an appellate court in Lagos ruled in May 2010 that computer-generated bank statements could be admitted in the graft trial of a former minister. Patience Akpuru, "Nigeria: Fani-Kayode Appeal Court Admits Computer Print-Out," *Daily Champion*, May 28, 2010, available at http://allafrica.com/stories/201005310338.html.

[46] Karin Karlekar, ed., "Nigeria," in *Freedom of the Press 2009* (New York: Freedom House, 2009), http://www.freedomhouse.org/inc/content/pubs/pfs/inc_country_detail.cfm?country=7675&year=2009&pf.

Sharia judge in Kaduna state banned efforts by the Civil Rights Congress of Nigeria to initiate online discussion of an amputation sentence on Facebook and Twitter.[47]

The Nigerian authorities have a history of arresting and intimidating traditional media workers, and at least eight journalists have been killed in connection with their work since 1998.[48] Although no individuals had been sentenced to prison or physically attacked for online activities as of mid-2010, security agencies in late 2008 detained and interrogated two overseas bloggers upon their arrival in Nigeria. Jonathan Elendu, author of the website Elendu Reports, was arrested in October 2008 by the State Security Service, which is known to take orders directly from the president. He was reportedly questioned in relation to national security issues and for "sponsoring a guerrilla news agency."[49] Many observers believed he was detained due to an alleged connection with another online platform, Sahara Reporters, that published photographs of President Yar'Adua's 13-year-old son "waving wads of money around and holding a policeman's gun,"[50] or for falsely reporting during the 2007 presidential election campaign that Yar'Adua had died. Elendu was released after two weeks without facing charges.[51] The following month, another U.S.-based online journalist, Emmanuel Emeka Asiwe, editor of the Huhuonline website, was detained. The State Security Service similarly stated that Asiwe was being questioned about "matters of national security," and released him after a week of interrogation.[52]

Nigerian security services do not appear to monitor internet and mobile-phone communications, but many online journalists suspect that they are being monitored by the state. In addition, lawmakers are currently considering measures that could pave the way for comprehensive surveillance. One bill that has raised concerns among free expression advocates is the Cyber Security and Information Protection Agency Bill, introduced in January 2009 and still pending as of mid-2010. Section 29(2) of the bill includes a vague provision that grants power to any law enforcement officer—upon a "reasonable suspicion that an offence has been committed"—to decrypt data or require the holder of subscriber or

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[47] The case centered on Buba Bello Jangebe, whose hand was amputated in 2000 as punishment for stealing a cow. See Imam Imam, "Nigeria: Sharia Judge Bans Amputation Discussion on Facebook, Twitter," *This Day*, March 24, 2010, available at http://allafrica.com/stories/201003240460.html; "Civil Right Congress—Nigeria," Facebook, http://www.facebook.com/group.php?gid=372845616580; Shehu Sani, "CRC Condemns the Amputation of Buba on March 22, 2000," Twitter, March 30, 2010, http://www.twitter.com/shehusani.
[48] Committee to Protect Journalists, "8 Journalists Killed in Nigeria Since 1992/Motive Confirmed," http://www.cpj.org/killed/africa/nigeria/, accessed August 27, 2010.
[49] Ndesanjo Macha, "Nigerian Blogger Arrested for Sponsoring a 'Guerilla News Agency,'" Global Voices, October 24, 2008, http://globalvoicesonline.org/2008/10/24/nigerian-blogger-arrested-for-sponsoring-a-guerilla-news-agency.
[50] "News Blogger Detained in Nigeria," British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), October 23, 2008, http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/africa/7686119.stm. Sahara Reporters stated that Elendu was not on their staff and had nothing to do with the photos.
[51] Reporters Without Borders, "Nigeria: Online Journalist Emmanuel Emeka Asiwe Freed After One Week," news release, November 18, 2008, available at http://allafrica.com/stories/200811181177.html.
[52] Ibid.

traffic information to share relevant details and related content.[53] There are similar provisions in the Mobile Phone Registration Bill,[54] and in the Electronic Fraud Prohibition Bill,[55] introduced to the National Assembly in July 2008. As mentioned above, as of December 2010, discussion and passage of these bills had been put on hold given the shifted focus of politicians on expected elections in 2011. As part of efforts to crack down on cybercrime, law enforcement officers have been known to raid cybercafes and randomly stop drivers to ask youth why they have laptops or printed documents (especially e-mail messages) in their possession.

Cybercafes do not require customers to register or present any form of identification, and any "monitoring" software installed on their computers is used only for billing purposes. In June 2009, drawing on the 2003 Nigerian Communications Act, the NCC announced that mobile-phone companies would be expected to register all SIM cards by March 1, 2010 (later postponed to May 1, 2010).[56] Although the registration process has commenced, implementation has been slow.

Cybercrime, particularly online fraud and spamming, is a serious problem in Nigeria. Between 2002 and 2009, the country repeatedly appeared among the top three cybercrime "perpetrator" countries in the annual ranking published by the U.S.-based Internet Crime Complaint Center.[57] In 2007, the government established the Directorate for Cybersecurity to respond to criminal activities related to the internet, granting it a budget of 1.2 billion naira (US$7.8 million).[58] The directorate has since ceased to exist, but in August 2010 the government approved the formation of a Computer Crime Prosecution Unit, to be supervised by the Justice Ministry's Public Prosecution Department.[59] Cyberattacks are not prevalent, though the website of the National Assembly was hacked on October 1, 2010 by activists who posted remarks criticizing the ruling elite for poor governance and

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[53] *A Bill For An Act To Provide For The Establishment Of The Cyber Security And Information Protection Agency Charged With The Responsibility To Secure Computer Systems And Networks And Liaison With The Relevant Law Enforcement Agency For The Enforcement Of Cyber Crimes Laws, And For Related Matters*, Nigerian National Assembly document (HB. 154), 2010.

[54] *A Bill For An Act To Provide For The Registration Of Mobile Telephone Line For Security Reasons And For Matters Related Thereto*, Nigerian National Assembly documents (HB. 116), 2010.

[55] *A Bill For An Act To Provide For The Prohibition Of Electronic Fraud In All Electronic Transactions In Nigeria And For Other Related Matters*, Nigerian National Assembly documents (SB. 185), 2010.

[56] Nigerian Communications Commission (NCC) and National Identity Management Commission (NIMC), *Design, Development and Delivery of SIM Card Registration Solution* (Abuja: NCC and NIMC, June 15, 2009), http://www.ncc.gov.ng/Headlines/SIM_Registration_RFP.pdf.

[57] National White Collar Crime Center and Federal Bureau of Investigation, *Internet Crime Report 2006* (Washington, DC: Internet Crime Complaint Center, 2007), http://www.ic3.gov/media/annualreport/2006_ic3report.pdf.

[58] Shina Badaru, "FG Okays N 1.2 Billion for Cybersecurity Directorate," *This Day*, June 4, 2007, available at http://www.cipaco.org/spip.php?article1272; Hilary Okeke, "DfC Helpless as Scammers Wreck Havoc on Nigerians," *Nigeria Communications Week*, July 28, 2008, http://www.nigeriacommunicationsweek.com.ng/details.php?category=topnews&id=301.

[59] Gowon Emakpe, "FG Approves Prosecution Unit for Cybercrime," *Next*, August 19, 2010, http://www.234next.com/csp/cms/sites/Next/Home/5608571-146/fg_approves_prosecution_unit_for_cyber.csp.

wastefulness in spending significant resources on celebrations of Nigeria's fifty years of independence.[60]

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[60] "Protest Against Wastage At 'Nigeria At 50' Anniversary: Hackers Hijack National Assembly Website," Sahara Reporters, October 2, 2010, http://www.saharareporters.com/news-page/protest-against-wastage-nigeria-50-anniversary-hackers-hijack-national-assembly-website.