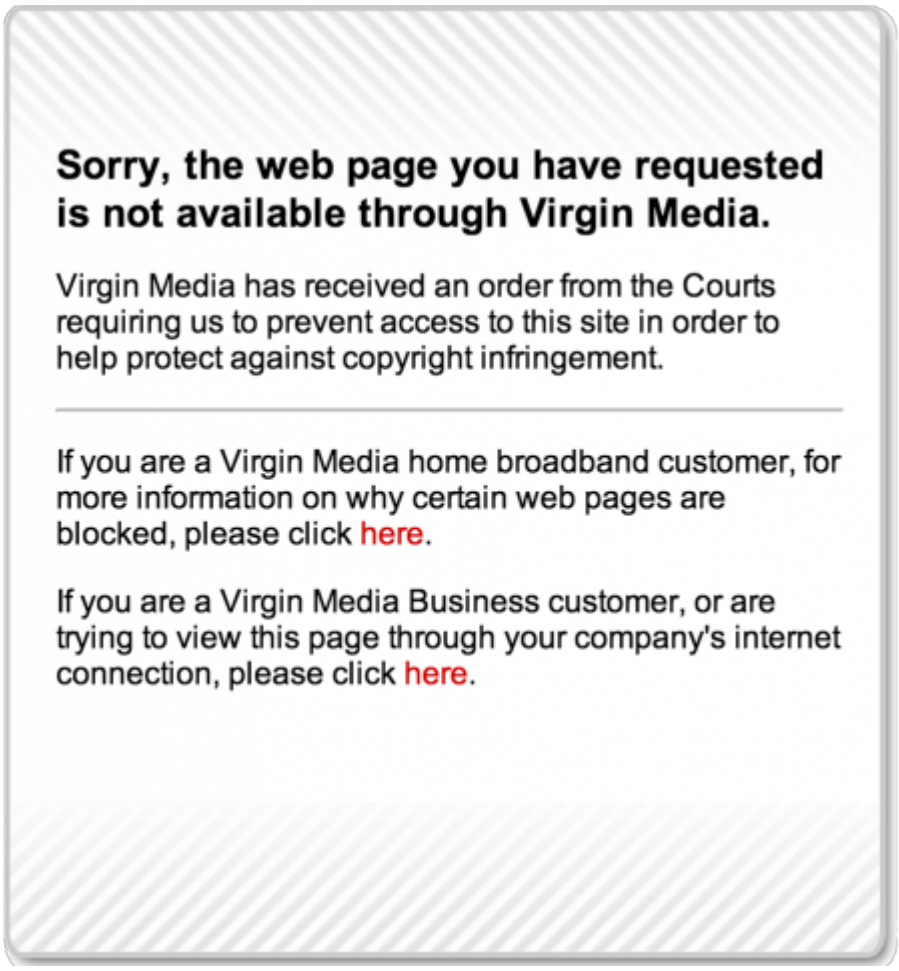
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Web Blocking [1]

The Issue



Right now, we don't know how many websites are blocked in the UK or exactly which are, but we do know that the five largest ISPS are blocking a lot of websites. These sites have been singled out by the likes of movie studios and the music industry. Both of these industries are trying to prop-up their refusal to innovate or accept societal changes by looking for ever broader methods of protecting what they see as their exclusive rights.

The blocks here in the UK prevent access to far more than specific films or songs owned by those taking action, they are broad blocks preventing access to whole sites and hinder innovation in methods to ensure that people have access to art, culture, music and other media.

What you need to know

Circumvention

Whilst site blocks can be easily circumvented by switching to one of the UK's smaller ISP's or using Tor, VPNs, site specific and general web proxies etc.. , they prevent 95% of internet in the UK from accessing the blocked sites.

Too broad

The blocks aren't targetted on specific pages or particulart items of content they block everything on a given site. They also make access to some media, especially niche and hard to find material like out of copyright films and audio harder. They don't discriminate between content we can share and everything else.

Ineffective

The blocks have done very little to make it harder to watch or download the latest films or chart hits. Instead site blocking is being used by thes giant corporations and interest groups to continue to ignore the impact their own poor practices. Staggering releases by region, limiting access to music and films by media type all drive people away from 'legal content' toward the content they can actually use.
Web blocking intrusive and overly broad and it harms the principle of an open internet.

Transparency

The lack of transparency surrounding the blocks, and mistakes in blocking mean that there is a lack of trust in those responsible for it being put in place. This form of censorship also stops the legitimate circulation of material. Its time to roll it back.

National interest

Whilst blocking is being driven by US based companies, no sites have yet been blocked in the US - blocking there would be seen as excessive and a curtailment of individual freedom. In the US the same companies who can remove whole sites from the UK internet can only ask that content they own is taken down. This also means that the UK will see less innovation when it comes to sharing and distributing culture and art.

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