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INTERNET KILL SWITCH

WHO WILL DECIDE THE COMPLETE DIGITAL BLACKOUT ON A GLOBAL SCALE?

WWW Reloaded

The idea of an Internet Kill Switch arises, both locally and on a global scale, as a kind of protective "countermeasure". It is the ability of governments to restrict or directly block access to the Internet: shut down all servers and connections. Considering all that the Internet entails in our daily lives, it is an extremely powerful weapon.

"Internet Kill Switch" is more of a descriptive or discursive term than a formal or technical name. It is a concept that occupies a central role in debates about the relationship between the Internet, state control and individual freedoms. Opinions are divided between those who claim that it is an essential tool for national security, as it allows governments to respond immediately in times of crisis or cyber-attacks, and those who claim that it is a tool for potential abuse of authority, which also infringes on civil liberties and democratic values.

The very idea that a government can shut down the Internet generates intrigue and controversy. Several countries have used this tool in times of "crisis": for example, it was used during the Arab Spring, the uprising that ended the Mubarak government in Egypt in 2011.

But there is yet another level of blackout possible: a global one. When influential and powerful sectors such as the World Economic Forum suggest the possibility of a global Internet blackout, the issue takes on a new dimension. We must think of much more than just responses to possible crises: it could be a