



University of East Anglia

Information Services Directorate

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21 December 2016

Dear

Freedom of Information Act 2000 – Information request (ref: FOI_16-232)

We have now considered your request of 28 November 2016 for the following information:

Please could you let me know under the Freedom of Information act the full list of websites banned from being accessed on University computers? And which of these websites did people attempt to access on university campus? Please also supply the number of times each website had access to it attempted.

We regret that on this occasion it is not possible to provide the requested information.

In line with section 17 of the Act, this letter acts as a Refusal Notice. The Act contains a number of exemptions that allow public authorities to withhold certain information from release. We have applied the following exemption to your request.

Exemption	Reason
s.24(1), National security	Exemption from release is necessary to safeguard national security

Section 24(1) applies because release of the requested information would make the UK or its citizens more vulnerable to a national security threat, or, in other words, non-disclosure is required for the purpose of safeguarding national security. None of the information within the scope of the s.24(1) exemption is subject to exemption under s.23(1) as having been received from, or related to, a body listed in s.23(3) of the Act.

Whilst there is no statutory definition of national security, we believe that the security of the United Kingdom and its people and the government's initiatives in combating international terrorism would be harmed by the release of the requested information.

Specifically, release of information relating to banning of access to online material in line with our obligations under the [Counter-Terrorism and Security Act](#),¹ would prejudice our ability to effectively carry out those obligations and therefore, as a consequence, be prejudicial to the safeguarding of national security. In particular, by

¹ <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2015/6/contents>

revealing what websites are banned for this purpose, anyone wishing to access such sites will avoid doing so from UEA and we will therefore be unaware of individuals who, by the very nature of accessing such sites could be considered a potential threat to national security. We would thus we have no records of the access attempts and therefore no information on which to base our response to the obligations placed on us by the [Prevent Strategy](#)² and more particularly the [Prevent Duty Guidance: for higher education institutions in England and Wales](#).³ Release of the requested information raises the risk of subversion of our Prevent response and increases the risk of individual being drawn into terrorism.

Having determined that non-disclosure of this information is necessary to safeguard national security, application of the s.24(1) exemption also requires us to consider the public interest in withholding or disclosing this information.

Whilst there is no doubt that there is a public interest in ensuring the public are made aware that any measures or action to safeguard national security are commensurate with the risk involved, and are in fact required, we believe that the severity of the potential harm to the national security of the UK is so great as to outweigh the public interest in disclosure.

We hope this response will meet your requirements, however if you are not satisfied you have the right of appeal. If you wish to appeal, please set out in writing your reasons for appealing and send to the above address. You must appeal within 60 calendar days of the date of this letter. Any appeal received after that date will not be considered nor acknowledged. This policy has been reviewed and approved by the Information Commissioner's Office.

You also have a subsequent right of appeal to the Information Commissioner's Office. Further information is available on their website: https://ico.org.uk/Global/contact_us, or by telephone on 0303 123 1113.

Please note that any material over which UEA has copyright is released on the understanding that you will comply with all relevant copyright rules regarding reproduction and/or transmission of the information provided.

Please quote our reference given at the head of this letter in all correspondence.

Yours sincerely

Dave Palmer
Information Policy and Compliance Manager
University of East Anglia

² https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97976/prevent-strategy-review.pdf

³ https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/445916/Prevent_Duty_Guidance_For_Higher_Education_England_Wales_.pdf