

INTERNET CONTENT CENSORSHIP STRENGTHENED

Internet Content Censorship Strengthened The Minister of Communications and Informatics issued Regulation No. 19 of 2014 on Controlling Internet Websites Containing Negative Content (Regulation 19). Regulation 19 has been in force since 17 July 2014. This regulation aims to implement “the safe and healthy use of the internet” by all social groups by blocking access to websites that contain pornographic or unlawful material (negative content).

Government institutions, law enforcers, and the general public may submit reports to the Minister or the Director General of Informatics (Director General) requesting that named websites be blocked due to their negative content. Upon receiving a report, the Director General will place the reported website on the “TRUST+ Positive” list, a database of websites reported to have negative content.

Internet service providers are required to update their own databases of prohibited websites according to the TRUST+ Positive list regularly, at least once a week. In cases where immediate action needs to be taken, they must update their websites within a day of the website being placed on the TRUST+ Positive list.

If the reported website is a non-domain website (e.g., pornographic materials on an individual’s Facebook account) the Director General will ask the website’s owner to block or delete the negative content.

Internet service providers that fail to block websites on the TRUST+ Positive list are liable to criminal and administrative sanctions available under Law No. 36 of 1999 on Telecommunications, Law No. 11 of 2008 on Information and Electronic Transactions, and Law No. 44 of 2008 on Pornography.

Owners of blocked websites and members of the public may file a request to unblock a website on the TRUST+ Positive list to the Director General. If the reported website does not contain pornographic or unlawful material, the Director General will remove the website from the TRUST+ Positive list.