

Newsbytes

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Well, if you read nothing else today, read this. Very unsettling. And a good reminder that our freedoms hang by a thread and have for some time. Where this all will stand after January 20 remains to be seen, but for now, censorship goes on behind the scenes in a big way:

They Are Scrubbing the Internet Right Now

By Jeffrey A Tucker and Debbie Lerman October 30 Brownstone Institute

Instances of censorship are growing to the point of normalization. Despite ongoing litigation and more public attention, mainstream social media has been more ferocious in recent months than ever before. Podcasters know for sure what will be instantly deleted and debate among themselves over content in gray areas. Some like Brownstone have given up on YouTube in favor of Rumble, sacrificing vast audiences if only to see their content survive to see the light of day.

It's not always about being censored or not. Today's algorithms include a range of tools that affect searchability and findability. For example, the Joe Rogan interview with Donald Trump racked up an astonishing 34 million views before YouTube and Google tweaked their search engines to make it hard to discover, while even presiding over a technical malfunction that disabled viewing for many people. Faced with this, Rogan went to the platform X to post all three hours.

Navigating this thicket of censorship and quasi-censorship has become part of the business model of alternative media.

Those are just the headline cases. Beneath the headlines, there are technical events taking place that are fundamentally affecting the ability of any historian even to look back and tell what is happening. Incredibly, the service Archive.org which has been around since 1994 has stopped taking images of content on all platforms. For the first time in 30

years, we have gone a long swath of time – since October 8-10 – since this service has chronicled the life of the Internet in real time.

As of this writing, we have no way to verify content that has been posted for three weeks of October leading to the days of the most contentious and consequential election of our lifetimes. Crucially, this is not about partisanship or ideological discrimination. No websites on the Internet are being archived in ways that are available to users. In effect, the whole memory of our main information system is just a big black hole right now.

The trouble on Archive.org began on October 8, 2024, when the service was suddenly hit with a massive Denial of Service attack (DDOS) that not only took down the service but introduced a level of failure that nearly took it out completely. Working around the clock, Archive.org came back as a read-only service where it stands today. However, you can only read content that was posted before the attack. The service has yet to resume any public display of mirroring of any sites on the Internet.

In other words, the only source on the entire World Wide Web that mirrors content in real time has been disabled. For the first time since the invention of the web browser itself, researchers have been robbed of the ability to compare past with future content, an action that is a staple of researchers looking into government and corporate actions.

It was using this service, for example, that enabled Brownstone researchers to discover precisely what the CDC had said about Plexiglas, filtration systems, mail-in ballots, and rental moratoriums. That content was all later scrubbed off the live Internet, so accessing archive copies was the only way we could know and verify what was true. It was the same with the World Health Organization and its disparagement of natural immunity which was later changed. We were able to document the shifting definitions thanks only to this tool which is now disabled.

What this means is the following: Any website can post anything today and take it down tomorrow and leave no record of what they posted unless some user somewhere happened to take a screenshot. Even then there is no way to verify its authenticity. The standard approach to know who said what and when is now gone. That is to say that the whole Internet is already being censored in real time so that during these crucial weeks, when vast swaths of the public fully expect foul play, anyone in the information industry can get away with anything and not get caught.

We know what you are thinking. Surely this DDOS attack was not a coincidence. The time was just too perfect. And maybe that is right. We just do not know. Does Archive.org suspect something along those lines? Here is what they say:

Last week, along with a DDOS attack and exposure of patron email addresses and encrypted passwords, the Internet Archive's website javascript was defaced, leading us to bring the site down to access and improve our security. The stored data of the Internet Archive is safe and we are working on resuming services safely. This new reality

requires heightened attention to cyber security and we are responding. We apologize for the impact of these library services being unavailable.

Deep state? As with all these things, there is no way to know, but the effort to blast away the ability of the Internet to have a verified history fits neatly into the stakeholder model of information distribution that has clearly been prioritized on a global level. The Declaration of the Future of the Internet makes that very clear: the Internet should be “governed through the multi-stakeholder approach, whereby governments and relevant authorities partner with academics, civil society, the private sector, technical community and others.” All of these stakeholders benefit from the ability to act online without leaving a trace.

To be sure, a librarian at Archive.org has written that “While the Wayback Machine has been in read-only mode, web crawling and archiving have continued. Those materials will be available via the Wayback Machine as services are secured.”

When? We do not know. Before the election? In five years? There might be some technical reasons but it might seem that if web crawling is continuing behind the scenes, as the note suggests, that too could be available in read-only mode now. It is not.

Disturbingly, this erasure of Internet memory is happening in more than one place. For many years, Google offered a cached version of the link you were seeking just below the live version. They have plenty of server space to enable that now, but no: that service is now completely gone. In fact, the Google cache service officially ended just a week or two before the Archive.org crash, at the end of September 2024.

Thus the two available tools for searching cached pages on the Internet disappeared within weeks of each other and within weeks of the November 5th election.

Other disturbing trends are also turning Internet search results increasingly into AI-controlled lists of establishment-approved narratives. The web standard used to be for search result rankings to be governed by user behavior, links, citations, and so forth. These were more or less organic metrics, based on an aggregation of data indicating how useful a search result was to Internet users. Put very simply, the more people found a search result useful, the higher it would rank. Google now uses very different metrics to rank search results, including what it considers “trusted sources” and other opaque, subjective determinations.

Furthermore, the most widely used service that once ranked websites based on traffic is now gone. That service was called Alexa. The company that created it was independent. Then one day in 1999, it was bought by Amazon. That seemed encouraging because Amazon was well-heeled. The acquisition seemed to codify the tool that everyone was using as a kind of metric of status on the web. It was common back in the day to take note of an article somewhere on the web and then look it up on Alexa to see its reach. If it was important, one would take notice, but if it was not, no one particularly cared.

This is how an entire generation of web technicians functioned. The system worked as well as one could possibly expect.

Then, in 2014, years after acquiring the ranking service Alexa, Amazon did a strange thing. It released its home assistant (and surveillance device) with the same name. Suddenly, everyone had them in their homes and would find out anything by saying “Hey Alexa.” Something seemed strange about Amazon naming its new product after an unrelated business it had acquired years earlier. No doubt there was some confusion caused by the naming overlap.

Here’s what happened next. In 2022, Amazon actively took down the web ranking tool. It didn’t sell it. It didn’t raise the prices. It didn’t do anything with it. It suddenly made it go completely dark.

No one could figure out why. It was the industry standard, and suddenly it was gone. Not sold, just blasted away. No longer could anyone figure out the traffic-based website rankings of anything without paying very high prices for hard-to-use proprietary products.

All of these data points that might seem unrelated when considered individually, are actually part of a long trajectory that has shifted our information landscape into unrecognizable territory. The Covid events of 2020-2023, with massive global censorship and propaganda efforts, greatly accelerated these trends.

One wonders if anyone will remember what it was once like. The hacking and hobbling of Archive.org underscores the point: there will be no more memory.

As of this writing, fully three weeks of web content have not been archived. What we are missing and what has changed is anyone’s guess. And we have no idea when the service will come back. It is entirely possible that it will not come back, that the only real history to which we can take recourse will be pre-October 8, 2024, the date on which everything changed.

The Internet was founded to be free and democratic. It will require herculean efforts at this point to restore that vision, because something else is quickly replacing it.

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Lights Out at Strasbourg Cathedral as City Finances Huge New Mosque

Every Evening Since the End of August, Strasbourg Cathedral Has Been in Darkness

October 25, 2024 Giulio Meotti
Arutz Sheva -- Israel National News



It is difficult not to give in to pessimism, as the great Algerian novelist Boualem Sansal, author of “2084,” does when he says this week: “Islam is preparing to conquer France.”

The environmentalist municipality of the city of Strasbourg, which houses one of the two wings of the European Parliament, the European Court of Human Rights and the Council of Europe, has decided to turn off the cathedral’s lights at 11 pm “to save energy and money.”

Every evening since the end of August, Strasbourg Cathedral has been in darkness. The green municipality has decided to immerse the religious building in darkness to be “exemplary at a time when efforts to reduce energy consumption are being asked of all citizens.”

Strasbourg Cathedral, whose construction began in 1176, is the fifth tallest in the world. A jewel of Gothic art with light filtering through the stained glass windows, the historiated portal and the famous “Pillar of the Angels,” which Victor Hugo called “a marvel of grandeur and grace.”

An exemplary story.

The same city council of Strasbourg has, in fact, arranged for the financing of 2.5 million euros for the construction of an immense Turkish mosque at the behest of the Green mayor Jeanne Barseghian.

Strasbourg city council has arranged for the financing of 2.5 million euros for the construction of an immense Turkish mosque at the behest of the Green mayor Jeanne Barseghian.

That means 44 meters high for the minarets, 28 domes, a prayer room for 3,000 faithful and another outdoor space for 2,500 people, “the largest mosque in Europe” had a subsidy of 2.5 million and financial help from Qatar, a country whose royal house is in tears these hours for the killing of the head of Hamas, Yahya Sinwar.

The mosque financed by the city of Strasbourg is built by a country, Erdogan’s Turkey, which makes no secret of wanting to Islamize Europe.

Where does the mentality come from that leads them to cut the cathedral lighting to save 1,728 euros a month, when they vote for a subsidy of 2.5 million euros for the construction of the Islamist Eyyub Sultan mosque in the city? There are no logical or rational explanations: the only answer is submission.

This summer, the city of Metz donated €490,000 for the construction of the new mosque. Three years ago, the first stone was laid for a gigantic building of 5,649 m², equipped with a museum for immigration and an institute for the Arab world, with a 34-meter minaret that can accommodate 1,500 Muslims.

In Clichy, where Muslims have been praying in the street for years in the face of secularism, the Great Mosque will open: €270,000 in subsidies from the municipality.

In Strasbourg there is not only the Great Mosque designed by the Italian architect Paolo Portoghesi (the same one who built the Great Mosque of Rome) and financed by Morocco, Saudi Arabia and Kuwait. The Great Mosque has already received funds from municipal and regional governments.

Strasbourg today has 22 mosques.

Boualem Sansal said that “France has made agreements with the Islamists: there were 10 mosques once, today there are 3,000.”

And currently, more than 410 new mosques are being built. Some are already under construction, others are raising the necessary funds. It is not difficult to understand why there are already more Muslim believers than Catholics.

After October 7, the city of Strasbourg removed the Israeli flag raised in solidarity with the victims of Islamic terrorism after just 36 hours.

Happy submission!

Government Shakeup: Netanyahu Fires Defense Minister Gallant, Position To Be Filled By Foreign Minister Israel Katz

Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu fired Defense Minister Yoav Gallant in a brief, three-minute conversation on Tuesday evening, before issuing a press release.

Netanyahu began the statement by saying his “highest obligation as prime minister of Israel is to maintain Israel’s security and bring us to a complete victory.”

“In the midst of a war, more than ever, full trust is required between the prime minister and the minister of defense,” Netanyahu continued.

The premier said that during the first months of the war, “there was such trust and there was very fruitful work,” however, he claimed, “during the last months this trust broke between me and the minister of defense.”

“Significant gaps were discovered between me and Gallant in the management of the campaign, and these gaps were accompanied by statements and actions that contradict the decisions of the government and the decisions of the cabinet,” Netanyahu remarked.

Netanyahu also said that the gaps between him and Gallant “came to the knowledge of the public in an unacceptable way, and worse than that, they came to the knowledge of the enemy.”

The prime minister announced that he is replacing Gallant with Foreign Minister Israel Katz, and that Gideon Sa’ar, who only recently joined the coalition government, would take the position of foreign minister.