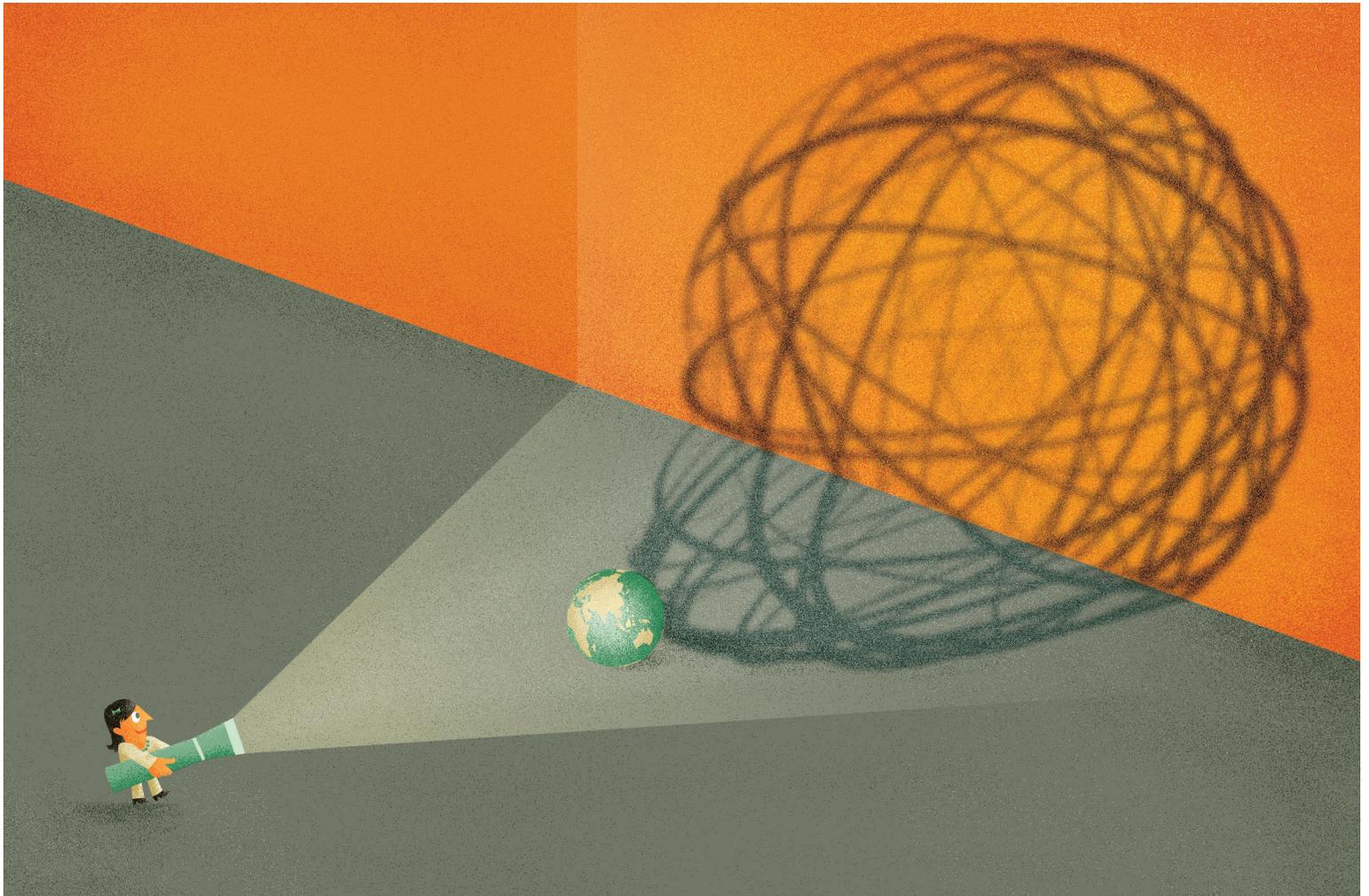




INTERNET MONITOR

INTERNET MONITOR 2013

Reflections on the Digital World



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Urs Gasser and Jonathan Zittrain
Co-Principal Investigators



ABOUT THIS REPORT

This publication is the first annual report of the Internet Monitor project at the Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University. Instead of offering a traditional project report, and to mirror the collaborative spirit of the initiative, we compile—based on an open invitation to the members of the extended Berkman community—nearly two dozen short essays from friends, colleagues, and collaborators in the United States and abroad.

The result is intended for a general interest audience and invites reflection and discussion of the past year's notable events and trends in the digitally networked environment. Our goal is not to describe the “state of the Internet” in any definitive way, but rather to highlight and discuss some of the most fascinating developments and debates over the past year worthy of broader public conversation.

Our contributors canvass a broad range of topics and regions—from a critique of India's Unique Identity project to a review of corporate transparency reporting to a first-person report from the Gezi Park protests. A common thread explores how actors within government, industry, and civil society are wrestling with the changing power dynamics of the digital realm.

2013 has proven to be a particularly interesting year in which to produce the Internet Monitor's first annual report. For better or worse, Edward Snowden's leaks in June 2013 regarding mass surveillance programs conducted by the United States National Security Agency and its international partners have dominated nearly all subsequent discussions of the online space. While we did not set out to focus on the implications of digital surveillance, this emerged as a common theme in many of essays contributed to this publication. Whether taken individually or collectively, it is clear that the authors view the public recognition of digital surveillance as a potential game changer.

The Internet Monitor project has grown out of several key Berkman Center efforts, including the Open Net Initiative, which for over a decade has worked to investigate and analyze Internet filtering and surveillance practices around the world. These roots are evident in this report: we approach questions of privacy, security, architecture, and regulation with the goal of taking a broad view of the evolving dynamics of Internet activity and control, measuring what facilitates or hinders online expression and community formation. In describing these dynamics, we focus on the provision of physical infrastructure, the policies and actions of governments and companies, and the contributions and activities of netizens and civil society groups.

The report reflects the diversity of ideas and input the Internet Monitor project seeks to invite. Some of the essays within this report are descriptive; others prescriptive. Some of the essays are confined to factual observations and others offer personal opinion. We believe that they all offer insights and hope they will provoke further reflection, conversation, and debate in both offline and online settings around the globe.

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