



Foreign &
Commonwealth
Office

Knowledge & Technology Department
Foreign and Commonwealth Office
King Charles Street
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Website: <https://www.gov.uk/fco>

22 January 2018

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION ACT 2000 REQUEST REF: 1144-17

Thank you for your email of 1 December asking for information under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) 2000. You asked:

I would like to know, covering the period of the past 12 months, a list of all websites visited by computers within your government department.

On 4 December you agreed to refine the request to:

The top 200 websites visited over the last 6 months from our centrally managed system in the UK.

I am writing to confirm that we have now completed the search for the information which you requested.

I can confirm that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) does hold information relevant to your request and that we are able to release some information to you.

The FCO has software and systems in place that can monitor and record all Internet usage on official systems. The data we are able provide is taken from our centrally managed system in the UK and is in the form of three separate reports due to the configuration of our network and the reporting tools available to us. The data includes browsing activity for our overseas posts on our main network but it does not cover all Information Communications Technology (ICT) systems or devices used by staff for internet access.

Each report lists the top 200 domains, which received the most hits from centrally monitored computer terminals across the FCO's estate. They include the domains of advertisements and social media sites, which appear as content within frames of other websites viewed by staff. This means a user may visit a website once, but generate a number of "views" for other non-related content. The volume of viewed content does not equate to the number of times, staff have visited a website. This is a limitation of how websites are constructed and work on the modern Internet, rather than limitations of the data available to us. The FCO

provides access to the internet to help staff to do their jobs. Reasonable personal use is permitted and staff are required to follow an Acceptable use Policy.

We are however withholding details about Government or other external web sites that are not available to the general public domain under Section 31(1)(a) Law Enforcement of the FOIA, this exemption is subject to the balance of the public interest test. This means that a public interest test must be carried out to determine whether the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

We consider that on balance disclosure would include some technical information, which would be useful to those wishing to harm the FCO's IT systems. Attacks on the FCO's IT systems could of themselves constitute a crime or create a vulnerability to criminal activity. Therefore, on the balance we have decided that it is not in the public interest to provide that information.

Yours sincerely,

Knowledge & Technology Department



We keep and use information in line with the Data Protection Act 1998. We may release this personal information to other UK government departments and public authorities.