sanskari proxy

(संस्कारी proxy)

sanskari: traditionally cultured and good natured

whoami

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The Problem

Many Indian government websites are geo-blocked to be inaccessible outside India.



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Q: Is this censorship?

The Idea

Run a custom proxy for government websites that gets indexed and crawled by search engines, archivists, and is accessible to researchers and users outside India.

- Make selfregistration.cowin.gov.in accessible at selfregistration.cowin.gov.in.sanskariproxy.in
- 2. (Optionally) Overwrite the robots.txt file to ensure everything gets archived/cached.

The (Legal) Challenge

Running an open proxy makes me legally liable for all requests under the IT Act (Intermediary Rules).

Ref:

- https://www.medianama.com/2021/02/223-summary-internet-intermediary-liability-2021/

The (Technical) Challenge

I made a list of all Government of India websites (~12k Domains), from multiple sources:

- Censys API
- Certificate Transparency Logs (crt.sh)
- GOIDirectory.nic.in

List: git.io/JrjcV



The Compromise

Run a simple authenticated proxy only accessible to trusted researchers and users.

Pro:

- Limited legal liability.
- Trusted users only
- Better than shady VPNs

Cons:

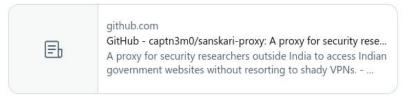
- Still not accessible to search engines

Launch



Are you a security researcher outside India? Do you hate getting geoblocked to Indian government websites?

Well, I made a proxy for security researchers outside India to access Indian government websites without resorting to shady VPNs.



3:56 PM · Sep 5, 2020 · Twitter Web App

twitter.com/captn3m0/status/1302191390508552192

The Side-Effects

Future Research

- 1. Find the extent of GeoBlocking.
- 2. Get (some) geoblocked websites indexed/archived legally.