GLOSSARY

Note: Glossary definitions based on those available from the following sources, as well as additional explanations drawn from other sections of this study: Merriam Webster Online, www.merriam-webster.com and Webopedia: Online Computer Dictionary for Computer and Internet Terms and Definitions, www.webopedia.com.

3G: Third generation of mobile communications technology, which allows high-speed internet access through mobile phones

Blog: short for weblog, an online personal journal with reflections, comments, and often links to other websites or blogs provided by the writer; most blogs allow reader comments and are used to foster discussion surrounding certain topics; while most contain reflections on bloggers’ personal lives, increasingly they are being used to comment on social and political issues

Blogsosphere: all of the blogs on the internet or within a specific country, e.g. the Tunisian blogsosphere

Broadband: a high-speed internet connection in which a single wire can carry many channels at once, allowing a high data-transfer rate; necessary for viewing multimedia content

Bulletin Board System (BBS): an electronic message center; most bulletin boards serve specific interest groups; users can post information or products for sale, and other posters can respond

Chat Room: an online location that allows multiple users to engage in a real-time, text-based conversation or discussion

Cybercafe: a commercial location where patrons can use the in-house computers to access the internet for a specified fee and time; most often used by travelers or those without a home internet connection

Cyberspace: the nonphysical world created by computer systems; the internet, for example, creates a cyberspace within which people can communicate with one another, do research, or simply window shop; like physical space, cyberspace contains objects (files, mail messages, graphics, etc.) and different modes of transportation and delivery
DDOS Attack: Distributed Denial of Service Attack; generally consists of the concerted efforts of a person or persons to prevent an internet site or service from functioning efficiently or at all, either temporarily or indefinitely; this is usually done by overloading the attacked website with so many requests for information that it crashes and cannot respond to legitimate traffic, or responds so slowly as to be rendered effectively unavailable; those responsible often infiltrate computers around the world and program them to join in the assault as an automated network, or “botnet”

Dial-up: an internet connection over a standard telephone line, usually with a very slow speed that makes it difficult to access some features, especially multimedia applications

DNS: domain name system; an internet service that translates domain names—the appellations commonly used to identify websites, e.g., www.example.com—into numerical IP addresses; because domain names are alphabetic, they are easier to remember, but the internet is actually based on IP addresses; every time a user enters a domain name, a DNS service must translate the name into the corresponding IP address; for example, the domain name www.example.com might translate to 198.105.232.4

DSL and ADSL: digital subscriber line and asymmetrical digital subscriber line; allow data transmission over the wires of a local telephone network, at a faster speed than dial-up permits; the internet connection can be maintained without obstructing telephone use on the same line; ADSL features a greater flow of data in one direction than in the other, so that download speeds are often much faster than upload speeds

Fiber-Optic Cables: Cables made of glass or plastic fibers, used to transmit data. Fiber optic cables have a much greater bandwidth than metal wires typically used for local telephone networks, can carry more data, and are less susceptible to interference

Firewall: a system designed to prevent unauthorized access to or from a private network; can be implemented in both hardware and software; all messages entering or leaving the protected network pass through the firewall, which examines each message and blocks those that do not meet the specified security criteria; while in most countries these are also used by companies to prevent employees from accessing content unrelated to their work, in several countries—most notably China and Iran—firewalls are set up on a national level to prevent citizens from accessing certain content from abroad

Forum: an online discussion group in which participants with common interests can exchange open messages; forums are sometimes called newsgroups
Forum Trolling: the practice of lingering in a chat room or forum and reading the posts instead of contributing to the discussion, often used to denote a “spy” who observes what is being said or discussed and then reports that information to authorities or who attempts to maliciously disrupt conversations or agitate users in a forum or chat room.

Hosting Service/Host: a service provider that houses, or hosts, multiple websites on its server computers in exchange for a fee.

ICT: information and communications technology, including computers and mobile devices.

Instant Messaging/I-Chatting: real-time, text-based communication between individuals in what amounts to a temporary private chat room.

IP Address: the numeric address of a computer on the internet; used to identify a computer and network in much the same way as a social security number or national identity number is used to identify a person.

ISP: internet-service provider, a company that provides access to the internet for a fee; supplies customers with a software package, a username, a password, and telephone numbers to initiate a connection.

IT: information technology, the broad subject concerned with all aspects of managing and processing information.

Local Area Network (LAN): A computer network that spans a relatively small area. Most LANs are confined to a single building or group of buildings. However, one LAN can be connected to other LANs over any distance via telephone lines and radio waves.

Microblog: A type of blog that allows users to publish short text updates that are disseminated to a large number of followers. Twitter is an example of a microblogging site that allows posts of up to 140 characters.

Netizen: citizen of the internet; a person actively involved in the online community.

Packet Sniffer: computer software or hardware that can intercept and log traffic passing over a network; often part of a firewall system; can be used to spy on users and collect sensitive information such as passwords.
**Proxy server:** A server, or a computer that sits between a user and a website to intercept requests. Proxy servers have various uses, but in the context of these reports, they typically refer to a tool used to circumvent blocks on accessing certain websites.

**Real Name Registration:** A system by which users who want to post a comment online have to complete a registration form that collects data on the user’s real name, ID card number, contact phone or address.

**Secure Sockets Layer (SSL):** A method developed for transmitting private documents and data over the internet; uses two-layer encryption to ensure security; most often used in websites that handle private data, such as credit-card or banking information; denoted by the use of “https” in the URL rather than the standard “http”.

**SMS/Text Messaging:** Short-message service; brief text messages of no more than a few hundred characters, sent electronically from one mobile phone to another.

**Social Networking Site (SNS):** A website that enables users to create public profiles and form relationships with the site’s other users, e.g., Facebook, MySpace, Orkut.


**Universal Serial Bus (USB) Modem:** A specific portable USB device that looks similar to a USB flash drive (a data storage device) and can be plugged into any USB port on a computer to allow broadband access to the internet.

**Value-added Network Service (VANS):** A network provider hired to facilitate electronic data interchange or provide other network services; before the arrival of the World Wide Web, some companies formed value-added networks to exchange data with other companies, but contemporary VANS providers focus on offering data translation, encryption, secure e-mail, management reporting, and other services for their customers.

**Video Sharing:** The practice of uploading video clips—including those captured using mobile phones with video features—for viewing by others; some video sharing takes place via paid web-hosting sites, but most occurs on popular free websites such as YouTube.

**Virtual Private Network (VPN):** A way to maintain fast, secure, and reliable...
communication by using the internet to connect remote sites or users; often explained as tunneling a smaller network through a larger network, a VPN can be established to circumvent strict internet controls and censorship within a given country; multinational corporations that operate in repressive internet environments often purchase from the government the right to use VPNs to connect to their home offices.

**VoIP:** Voice over Internet Protocol, a category of hardware and software that enables users to make telephone calls via the internet; these calls do not incur a surcharge beyond what the user is paying for internet access, just as users do not pay for sending individual e-mails.

**Web 2.0:** the metaphorical second generation of the World Wide Web; refers to advanced graphical features, multimedia formats, greater interactivity and content production by users, and related online services, including blog hosting, video sharing, and social networking.

**Wi-Fi:** wireless technology that provides an internet or network connection for properly equipped computers, mobile phones, and other such devices within a given physical or geographical area.