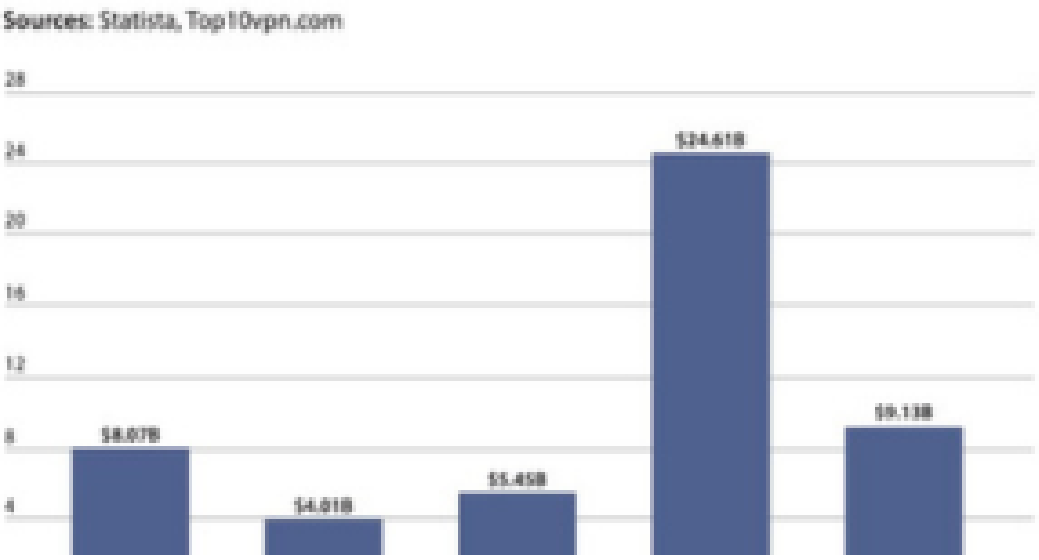
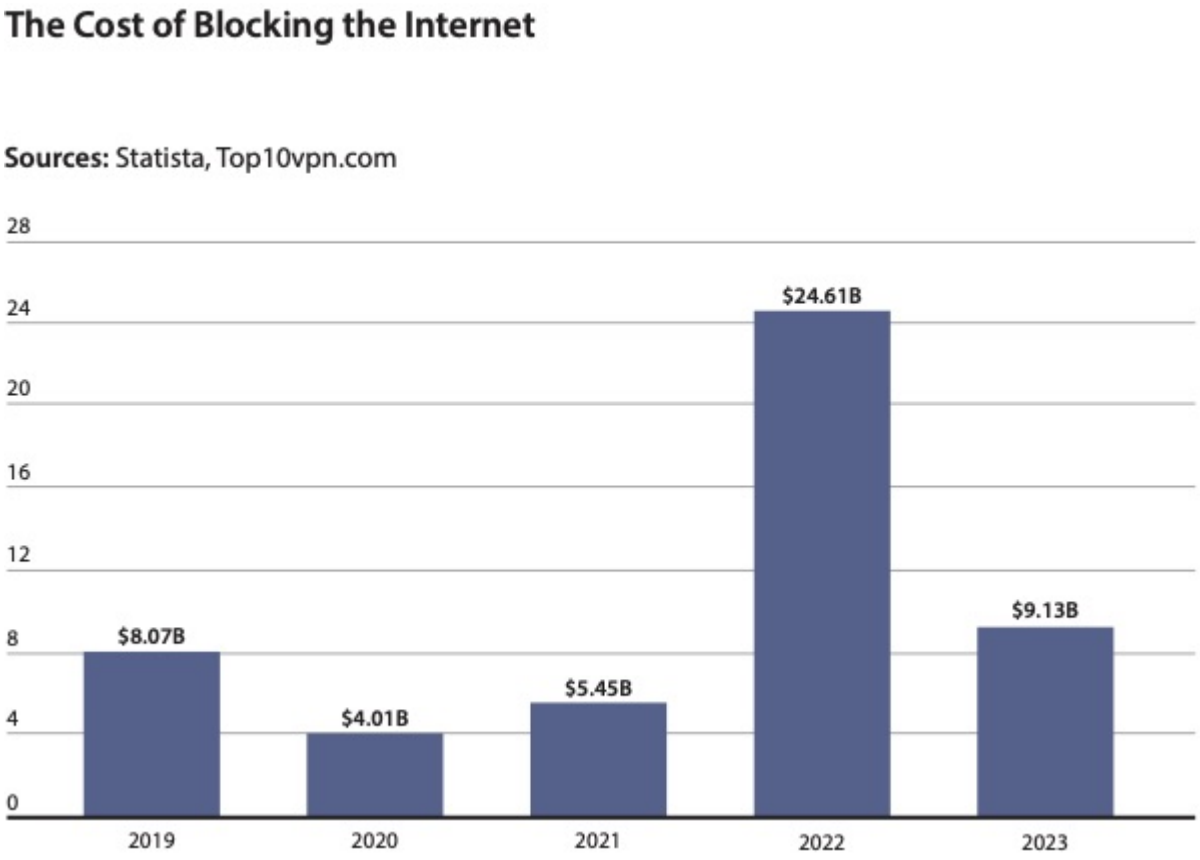


The World Economy Has Lost Over $50 Billion Due to Internet Shutdowns in the Past Five Years

March 18, 2024. Jastra Kranjec



Last year, almost 750 million people worldwide were affected by government-caused internet blockages and shutdowns. By controlling, partially blocking, or even going into full internet blackouts, governments not only cut people off from information but also caused huge financial damage to the economy. In 2023 alone, these shutdowns cost the global economy over $9.1 billion. The cumulative figures for the past five years are even more shocking.

According to data presented by Stocklytics.com, government internet shutdowns have cost the global economy more than $50 billion since 2019.

Almost 600 Major Internet Shutdowns Lasted more than 205,000 Hours

According to the United Nations, internet access has been considered a basic human right since 2016. However, governments worldwide continue pulling the plug on the Internet and social networks during critical periods like war, protests, and elections.

Although they justify these blockages and shutdowns for a variety of reasons, from preventing protests and protecting national security to avoiding cheating on school exams, they usually cover fraud and human rights abuses. Despite all the efforts, Internet or social media blockages and shutdowns still count in hundreds each year and affect millions worldwide.

The Top10VPN data show that since 2019, almost 600 major internet shutdowns have taken place across the globe. These shutdowns lasted for over 205,000 hours and caused a shocking $50 billion economic cost. Analyzed by year, 2019 saw the highest number of internet blockages, 134 lasting more than 19,200 hours. Statistics show 2022 remains the absolute record year in terms of total economic cost. That year alone, internet blockages cost the world economy a shocking $24.6 billion. That means almost half the five-year cost of internet blockages and shutdowns happened that year.

Still, 2023 saw the longest total duration of internet blockages. Although the total economic cost of government-caused internet shutdowns dropped by 60% to $9.1 billion, last year saw more than 79,000 hours of internet disruptions, the highest number in the past five years.

Russia Is the Most Affected Nation by Internet Blockages With a Cost of $25 Billion, Half the World's Total

Analyzed by geography, Russia is undoubtedly the most affected nation by government-caused internet blockages and shutdowns.

In 2023 alone, the total cost of internet and social media blockages in the country hit over $4 billion, while the five-year figures climb to over $25 billion, or half the world's total in this period.

The Top10VPN data also showed that X, formerly Twitter, is generally the most blocked social media platform, suffering more than 10,600 hours of deliberate disruption in 2023, 26% more than TikTok and 18% more than Instagram.

Also, over half of all government internet outages last year were associated with additional human rights abuses, most frequently restricting freedom of assembly.

Jastra is an editor, writer, and PR specialist with years of experience in news, research, and report writing. Over the years, she has covered different topics and

markets, including social media, digital content, the creator economy and the entertainment industry.


Screenshot