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A Wired and Safe Vietnam

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Fast-paced, colorful, increasingly modern. A youthful and exuberant population roars through the city on motor-scooters and spends much of its waking hours surfing the Web. Internet cafes are everywhere. That's what our team discovered when we visited Vietnam in 2007. We wanted to see the Internet explosion and the vibrancy of this economy first-hand before meeting with U.S. diplomats and non-governmental organizations (NGOs) to discuss the state of affairs in Vietnam around the issues of free expression and privacy.

The Internet – and Yahoo! – has a growing presence in Vietnam. By next year, thirty-five percent of the population is expected to get online – staggering when you consider Vietnam didn't substantially embrace the Web until 2005. We entered the market a year later with a Vietnamese-language version of our homepage (vn.yahoo.com), followed by Mail, Messenger, Search, and News. We now run one of the country's leading blogging services. And since few people own computers, we're working with the Internet café industry through our iCafe program to improve the Internet experience for all involved.

Unfortunately, like other regions where communications are controlled, Vietnam is exploring ways to place restrictions on the Internet. The government recently issued regulations on Internet blogging that aim to limit certain online content, particularly posts considered more political in nature. Not surprisingly, these rules have been roundly criticized as an attempt to stifle internationally recognized speech. As a company committed to user safety and trust, we'll continue to review these and any new rules to determine what effect, if any at all, they would have on our own policies.

We've learned tough lessons as pioneers in the emerging markets, and we're now applying them to how we build businesses in new markets. In the case of Vietnam, we took deliberate steps when launching services there to protect our users. Our business, policy and legal advisors visited the country to assess the landscape as part of our human rights impact assessment – a process we committed to when we created [Yahoo!'s Business & Human Rights Program](#) last year. It helped us tailor our business to be consistent with our corporate human rights commitments. For example, we decided to manage and operate Yahoo!'s Vietnamese language services out of Singapore so the services would be governed by laws with stronger protections than in Vietnam today. We're also providing further protections for our users and employees through legal structures, internal policies, user terms of service, and tailored approaches on data access and location.

We believe deeply in engagement in markets like Vietnam. It's good business. It's also empowering for local citizens, as they communicate, exchange ideas, and learn about the outside world in unprecedented ways. The online community is thriving in Vietnam, and we're in a leadership position in that important and growing market. We're proud of the business Yahoo! has built there and while we know we'll face evolving challenges, we're also confident in the approach we're pursuing to protect the online rights of our users.

Doing business globally is challenging in any industry. Given the speed, scale, and dynamism of the Internet, our industry has some unique challenges. Some of those same issues in the emerging markets are also opportunities to spread enormously empowering information and communications tools and platforms to citizens hungry for

access and openness. We're a company founded on the principles of openness and user trust, and we're not alone in our commitment to protecting and promoting these rights. We're confident our partnership with companies, human rights groups, academics, and investors in the [Global Network Initiative](#) offers a powerful platform for collective action to promote freedom of expression and privacy online around the world, including in promising places like Vietnam.

You can read more about our global human rights initiatives [here](#).

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