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Abstract:

Social media, in its current form has existed since the dawn of the World Wide Web in the early 1990s. Since then, the usage of social media has increased steadily with one social media site (Facebook) now being the most visited website on the Internet.

Since its inception, social media has had a huge impact on society and has played a large part in numerous popular movements such as the 'occupy' movement and the Arab spring. Government's response to social media has varied, with some governments adopting a laissez faire attitude, other governments adopting a more stern approach limiting access to social media and other governments appearing to use social media to further their own agenda outside of their borders.

This research aims to find out if it is possible to categorise different types of governments in terms of their level of democracy and their response to social media. This was accomplished in two ways. Firstly by reviewing various democracy indices and secondly by using a mixed methods research approach and semi structured interviews to gain insight from citizens from different countries and their perception of their government's response to social media in terms of content monitoring and censorship.