

YouTube in Brazil

September 27, 2012

You may have read articles in the press over the last couple of weeks about YouTube videos in Brazil. Given all the interest, we wanted to explain what has happened, and why. First of all some basic principles about the service. Our goal is for YouTube to be a community that everyone can enjoy, as well as a platform for free speech around the world. This can cause real challenges, because what is OK in one country may be offensive or even illegal in another.

So we have clear community guidelines about the kind of videos that are unacceptable--and when they are flagged, we review and if necessary remove them. If a video is illegal in a particular country--and we have a local version of the service there, as in Brazil--we will restrict access to it, after receiving a valid court order or government complaint. Because we are deeply committed to free expression, we often push back on requests that we do not believe are valid. For example, we were recently in court in the US arguing that videos were perfectly legitimate and should stay on YouTube.

Now for what's happened in Brazil. As usual during an election season, we have had a lot of court orders to remove videos that are critical of political candidates. As always, we have reviewed them all--and pushed back on the many legal complaints that we believe are invalid. For example, last week, we appealed a court order to remove videos from YouTube. While we were waiting for that appeal to be heard, an arrest warrant was issued for me as country director of Google Brazil.

Late last night, we learned that our final legal appeal has been denied and so now we have no choice but to block the video in Brazil. We are deeply disappointed that we have never had the full opportunity to argue in court that these were legitimate free speech videos and should remain available in Brazil.

Despite all this, we will continue to campaign for free expression globally—not just because it's a key tenet of free societies, but also because more information generally means more choice, more power, more economic opportunity and more freedom for people. As [Article 19](#) of the United Nations' Universal Declaration of Human Rights states, "Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."

Ironically, the user who published one of the videos has now removed it and closed their account--showing just what a chilling effect these episodes can have on free speech.

Posted by: Fabio Coelho, Country Director, Google Brazil