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Country: Global

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Recently there has been more talk about ‘geoblocking’ on social media platforms, and the implications of it. But what exactly is it? You might have heard of the term geoblocking in reference to online video streaming services. It’s the reason why you can’t watch BBC iPlayer content outside of the UK, and why you can watch Gavin & Stacey on Netflix in the UK, but not in the US. [Website administrators use your computer IP address](#) to determine which country you are in, and which content you can access. For streaming sites, this is a way to manage licensing rights limitations.

Social media sites such as Twitter and YouTube also use geoblocking methods to block certain content in specific countries. Twitter refers to geoblocked content as ‘country withheld content’.

[They state that](#)

content may be withheld if “we [Twitter] receive a valid and properly scoped request from an authorized entity,” detailing that “such withholdings will be limited to the specific jurisdiction that has issued the valid legal demand or where the content has been found to violate local law(s).”

Germany is one country in which social media platforms such as Twitter have geoblocked content to avoid violating local laws. This is largely due to the

[German Network Enforcement Act](#)

(Netzwerkdurchsetzungsgesetz), a law which requires social network providers to delete unlawful content within a short timeframe. This applies to any content which is illegal under German law. One example of this is Holocaust denial, which is deemed illegal under German law. This means that through the Network Enforcement Act, Germany requires such content to be removed or blocked within the country. A large portion of the geoblocked content in Germany on Twitter i

[s related to Nazi and white nationalist ideology.](#)

But what about Twitter's own policies and code of practice? All users of the platform agree to the terms and conditions set by Twitter, and thus these policies should be applied universally, not a country-specific basis. [Twitter's hateful conduct policy](#) states they prohibit content which "References to mass murder, violent events, or specific means of violence where protected groups have been the primary targets or victims", "Inciting fear about a protected category" and "Repeated and/or non-consensual slurs, epithets, racist and sexist tropes, or other content that degrades someone." The policy is clear; however, its implementation is less so.

In order to demonstrate the practice of geoblocking and how it lacks effectiveness on the Twitter platform as a whole, I used a VPN to change my IP address to see which content is blocked in certain countries, but not others. I decided to focus on Germany, due to its strict enforcement of the Network Enforcement Act. The following Twitter accounts are geoblocked in Germany, but public elsewhere. The accounts display hateful content which goes against Twitter's hateful conduct policy; however, the content is still available outside Germany.

**@FullGoy**



# Geoblocking: What Is It, and How Effective Is It In Practice?

Profile



@bluecherrot

**Account Withheld**

@bluecherrot's account has been withheld in Germany based on local law(s). [Learn more.](#)

Blücher Rot  
1,431 Tweets



**Blücher Rot**  
@bluecherrot

This account is «withheld» in Germany = censored. "No one is more hated than he who speaks the truth." (Plato)

Joined May 2017

101 Following 56 Followers

Not followed by anyone you're following

Blücher Rot  
@bluecherrot

Perpetrators, not victims. #Holodomor  
Make #truth great again!



6:43 AM · Aug 27, 2017 · Twitter Web Client

Blücher Rot  
@bluecherrot

#Israel must #payback 6,8 trillion Euro for #holohoax!  
Make #truth and #justice great again! Justice for #Germany!



Israel has to pay back the money of Holocaust reparations to Germany with apology until proven in court with evidence that the Holocaust happened. a fairy tale is not proof it is unconstitutional.

9:19 AM · Aug 27, 2017 · Twitter Web Client

Blücher Rot  
@bluecherrot

Als #Hitler die Macht des Geldes brach, indem er an  
Stelle des Geldes die deutsche Arbeit setzte, beschloß  
die jüdische Bankelite den Krieg.

Source: tweet



8:18 AM · Aug 27, 2017 · Twitter Web Client

1 Retweet 1 Like

Blücher Rot  
@bluecherrot

Stop the lies and make #truth great again!



10:32 AM · Aug 27, 2017 · Twitter Web Client

Blücher Rot @bluecherrot · Aug 27, 2017 · Retweeted by @bluecherrot

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The image shows two side-by-side screenshots of the Twitter profile for 'Manon des Sources'. The left screenshot shows the profile header with a bio that has been partially redacted by a grey box. The right screenshot shows a tweet from the same account, also with a redacted bio. The profile name is 'Manon des Sources' and the handle is '@ManonSources'. The bio on the right reads: 'Joined March 2011', '5,000 Following', '4,180 Followers', and 'Not followed by anyone you're following'. The tweet below shows a retweet from 'Manon des Sources' dated Jan 2, 2018, with a redacted bio and a tweet text that is also redacted.

This screenshot shows the Twitter profile for 'Amy Mek' (@AmyMek). The profile picture is a circular image of a woman. The bio is redacted with a grey box. The account is marked as 'Account Withheld'. The bio text on the right reads: 'Joined November 2012', '5,448 Following', and '346.1K Followers'. The bio text on the left is redacted.

This screenshot shows the Twitter profile for 'Loud Report' (@LoudReport). The profile picture is a dark image with the text 'DEFY' and 'L.A.D. REPORT' visible. The bio is redacted with a grey box. The account is marked as 'Account Withheld'. The bio text on the right reads: 'Joined February 2016', '4,380 Following', and '2,200 Followers'. The bio text on the left is redacted.

This screenshot shows a tweet thread from 'Amy Mek'. The top tweet is a retweet of a tweet from 'ALIST FRANCIS' with a bio that is redacted. The tweet text is: 'Women continue to buy MERSAL to STOP sacrificing them at the altar of Mass Rapid Migration - who with "brilliant" based on Facebook'. The reply tweet from 'Amy Mek' has a bio that is redacted and the text: 'The only idea that everyone is "pull the car" is a sick & dangerous lie needing women their lives'. There are two video thumbnails below the tweets.

This screenshot shows a tweet from 'Loud Report' (@LoudReport) dated Oct 18, 2018. The tweet text reads: 'HOLY CRAP! News says it out loud! What WE all know...but what THEY scoff at. Plan for Islam worldwide domination. Listen! [twitter.com/NewsTrump/beat...](https://twitter.com/NewsTrump/beat...)'. The tweet has 4 retweets and 4 likes. Below the tweet is another tweet from 'Loud Report' dated Jun 8, 2017, with the text: 'Why would Brits ease closer to Marxism, responsible for 200+ MILLION murders in 20th century, & embrace never-ending Islam tsunami?'. This tweet also has 4 retweets and 4 likes.

