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## SOPA protest by the numbers: 162M pageviews, 7 million signatures

The numbers for yesterday's protest against the Stop Online Piracy Act and ...

by Timothy B. Lee - Jan 19 2012, 10:45am PST

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Photograph by Phil Stearns

Tens of millions of Americans, and millions more overseas, had their normal Internet routine disrupted Wednesday as some of the Web's most popular sites, including Google, Wikipedia, and Craigslist, staged protests against the Stop Online Piracy Act (SOPA) and its companion PROTECT IP Act (PIPA). The organizations that staged these protests are beginning to release hard numbers on the response, and they are staggering.

The Wikimedia Foundation says it reached 162 million people with Wikipedia's 24-hour English-language protest of the antipiracy bills. Of those, more than 8 million readers in the United States took the opportunity to look up contact information for their members of Congress through the site. Presumably, that generated tens (if not hundreds) of thousands of calls to congressional offices.

"The Wikipedia blackout is over and the public has spoken," said Sue Gardner, Wikimedia Foundation Executive Director. "You shut down the Congressional switchboards, and you melted their servers. Your voice was loud and strong."

Google did not black out its entire site as Wikipedia did, but it still **generated** at least 13 million page views to its anti-SOPA page and got **7 million people** to sign its **petition**.

The Progressive Change Campaign Committee, a liberal advocacy group, logged 200,000 signatures on its **petition**. The organization also says more than 30,000 Craigslist users called Congress through the the PCCC's website.

Opponents of SOPA and PIPA also staged in-person protests around the country; two of the largest were in New York City and San Francisco. Ironically, these metropolitan areas house the nation's largest high-tech communities, yet all four of their senators are PIPA co-sponsors. **Close to a thousand** protestors descended on the Manhattan offices of Sen. Chuck Schumer (D-NY) and Kirsten Gillibrand

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(D-NY) to protest the senators' support for PIPA.

In the San Francisco protests, speakers ranged from Internet librarian Brewster Kahle to rapper MC Hammer. "When they say that it is to protect rights to content, that may be the surface, but as you drill down, you see all these other clauses that would put a tremendous burden upon service providers and a whole lot of other people," Hammer said. He described SOPA as a "barbaric" bill that would "give the government the ability to shut down sites without due process."

### Political impact

Evidence of the protest's political impact has continued to pour in. Staffers on Capitol Hill said that the volume of SOPA calls was heavy on Wednesday.

"This was one of the biggest outpourings of grassroots sentiment that I've ever experienced on Capitol Hill and it's begun to tip the scales against SOPA and in favor of an open Internet," Chris Fitzgerald, communications director for Rep. Jared Polis (D-CO), told Ars. "The phones rang off the hook once people became more aware of how SOPA will endanger jobs, free speech, and the Internet itself." Polis is a longtime SOPA opponent.

At least 19 senators **declared their opposition** to PIPA (including seven former co-sponsors) yesterday, with Senator, **Patty Murray (D-WA)** expressing new reservations about the legislation.

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**Timothy B. Lee** / Timothy covers tech policy for Ars, with a particular focus on patent and copyright law, privacy, free speech, and open government. His writing has appeared in Slate, Reason, Wired, and the New York Times.

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