

User Research - Bridges

In this small sample, we interviewed two people that live in sensible contexts related to Internet access, Internet shutdown, and human rights. Our **goals** with this research were to find pain-points when using Tor with a bridge, and recommend to developers these key findings.

Sample size and demographics

Our two interviewees were female and young, they are familiar with technologies and how they work, they have been using Tor Browser (Desktop and Android) for their activities and activist actions; they both use (many) VPNs and need more security and privacy to keep their work going. They experienced Internet Shutdowns in their countries, and many websites blocking, as well social media.

Quotes

"I believe security and privacy is important now because the government is threatening to arrest people who use VPNs. So privacy and security is now or never."

Testing

Our first user is familiar with bridges, her comment is that using Tor with a bridge is usually slower than without a bridge.

We had the opportunity to test a bridge with our other Tor user: on our **first try** (request a bridge) it didn't work; on our **second try** (obsf4) it didn't work either; on our **third try**, we provided a custom bridge and it worked. It enhanced the difficulties one might find when we needed a bridge.

Other related issues: one interviewee commented on difficulties when using orbot - trying to use it and getting disconnected by the app. Then, she chooses to use a VPN.

Recommendations

1. Finding a useful bridge automatically.
2. Our users in this sample comment that Tor Browser is slow compared to their ordinary browser and VPN. They highlight their internet access/bandwidth is not that good, and if it could be possible to have **Tor designed for people who have poor internet bandwidth**.
3. Captcha: audio box set for people with disabilities.
4. As they all use many VPNs, and are afraid of how the government can turn on that because of the use of VPN, in both conversations it came that it would be useful to have Tor as a VPN.

Appendix

Follow this issue: <https://gitlab.torproject.org/tpo/ux/research/-/issues/16>

Activitiy and research questions:

<https://gitlab.torproject.org/tpo/ux/research/-/blob/master/scripts%20and%20activities/2020/discovery-bridges.md>