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Monday 18 January 2016
News updated at 2:35 PM IST

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You are here: [Home](#) » [National](#) » Experts deny ban on video conferencing

Experts deny ban on video conferencing

NEW DELHI, JAN 23, 2012, DHNS:

The likely denial of permission to controversial author Salman Rushdie for an online presentation on Tuesday may have entered a hitherto untouched area of blocking videoconferencing.

Experts on cyber law opine that there is no such law to ban or block videoconferencing. Says noted cyber law expert Pawan Duggal, "The Information Technology Act does not ban any one from reading a banned book, it also does not specifically talk of video-conferencing."

"The book concerned is banned under the Customs Act. The IT Act is clear that in the event of a conflict between the two, the IT Act will prevail. The government can shut down the website as technically it has power under section 69-A of the Act enabling it to directly blocking of any content citing public order."

According to telecom consultant Mahesh Uppal, no such permission is required. "We keep having videoconferencing all the time. It is an extension of normal phone call. As for as regulatory part of telecom is concerned, there is nothing such as blocking videoconferencing."

Rodney Ryder of the Cyber Awareness Organisation, wondered how the police would know what Rushdie will be saying beforehand. "You can not stop somebody from speaking without knowing what he is going to talk about. I am surprised how, logically, they can stop videoconferencing."

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