

**Cuba prohibits computer sales****by Robert Lebowitz, Digital Freedom Network****(March 26, 2002) In a new effort to curb Internet access, the Cuban government has forbade the sale of computers for personal use.**

**This past January, a resolution was passed with the following article: "The sale of computers, offset printer equipment, mimeographs, photocopiers...as well as their parts, pieces, and accessories, is prohibited to associations, foundations, civic and nonprofit societies, and natural born citizens."**

**"The sale of computers...is prohibited...to natural born citizens."**

**Marta Roque, leader of the Cuban Institute of Independent Economists, surmised that the government's crackdown was a reaction to the increased availability of Web sites offering Cuban dissidents an opportunity to get their message heard.**

**"They knew that dissidents were buying computers and constructing Web sites," said Roque. Since Roque does not have access to her own site from Cuba, she sends written material to Miami, where it is posted on her Web site.**

**Roque herself recently created a Web site, which was designed to show the opposing viewpoint of life in the Communist state, independent of government influence. Roque's site is located at [www.cubaicei.org](http://www.cubaicei.org).**

**A call to Cutisa, an electronics provider in Cuba, confirmed that the outlet was no longer selling computer equipment to the general public, but only to businesses and government. When asked why, the salesman replied simply that it was a government order.**

**However, according to Rosa Berre of Cubanet, it is still possible to get a computer either through a businessman selling off his old computers or else through the black market. In fact, other illegal means of circumventing Internet censorship have sprouted in Cuba: hackers regularly gain access to the Web, which can normally only be accessed through one server.**

**Still, according to Berre, obtaining computer equipment for personal remains a challenge. "It's not easy," said Berre.**

**"You have to have a friend."**

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