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Press Release

Anti-Censorship Software Licensed by US Government for Export to Iran

San Francisco, CA, April 14th, 2010: Today, the Censorship Research Center (“CRC”) announced that it has received critical United States Government authorizations required to export anti-filtering technology to Iran.

In response to widespread crackdown by the Iranian government following the June 2009 elections, the CRC developed a program that provides unfiltered, anonymous Internet access. The program, called Haystack, uses a sophisticated mathematical formula to hide the users’ real Internet identity while allowing them to access websites blocked by Iran’s government, such as YouTube, Facebook, Gmail, and Twitter, which have served as important mediums of communication for Iranians. As noted by CRC Executive Director, Austin Heap, “Now we can launch our efforts to help those in Iran access the Internet as if there were no Iranian government filters.”

Exports of U.S. goods and services to Iran are prohibited unless authorized by Treasury’s Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC). OFAC’s decision to approve the CRC’s license application comes in light of recent statements by the Obama administration recognizing the importance of Internet access to democratic movements around the world. U.S. Secretary of State, Hillary Rodham Clinton, highlighted this matter in recent remarks about Internet freedom on January 21, 2010, “[D]espite an intense campaign of government intimidation, brave citizen

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journalists in Iran continue using technology to show the world and their fellow citizens what is happening inside their country,” she said. “In speaking out on behalf of their own human rights, the Iranian people have inspired the world. And their courage is redefining how technology is used to spread truth and expose injustice.”

“Unfiltered and open internet access is a right that all people around the world are intended to have as embodied in Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. The Obama administration has recognized that the right to information should not be denied and is finally taking decisive action to back their stated objectives to see that these rights are realized.” concluded Mr. Heap.

About the Censorship Research Center

The Censorship Research Center (“CRC”), is a San Francisco-based non-profit organization, was founded by Austin Heap and Daniel Colascione in 2009 to provide anti-censorship education, outreach, and technologies. The CRC’s first major project is Haystack, which provides access to information and communications to the Iranian people in the wake of recent restrictions imposed by the government of Iran.

Haystack is the first anti-censorship tool developed specifically for Iran and built to target the methods that Iran uses to filter the Internet. The CRC is the only organization licensed to export such software to Iran.

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