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“Haystack,” a Program to Provide Unfiltered Internet Access in Iran to be Release

Today Austin Heap and Daniel Colascione announced the upcoming release a new program to provide unfiltered internet access to the people of Iran. In the next week, they will release a software package for Windows, Mac and Unix systems called “Haystack” which specifically targets the Iranian government’s web filtering mechanisms.

Similar to Freegate (<http://blog.austinheap.com/2009/07/02/state-of-freegate-in-iran/>), the program directed against China’s “Great Firewall,” once installed Haystack will provide completely uncensored access to the internet in Iran while simultaneously protecting the user’s identity.

“No more Facebook blocks, no more government warning pages when you try to load Twitter,” said Austin Heap, “just unfiltered Internet.”

The network will be supported by donated high-quality servers outside of Iran. We will be able to provide an individual user with unfettered internet access that costs the donor \$0.015 to \$0.0375 per month.

Proxyheap (<http://blog.austinheap.com/2009/06/22/state-of-the-iran-proxies/>), the precursor to Haystack, was launched on June 22 just ten days after the election. That project, though, was only envisioned as a bandaid. It relied on proxies set up by individual users that were (through no fault of the thousands of generous contributors) unreliable and temporary. Moreover, individual users in Iran had to request access to a proxy. Haystack is a more efficient, effective and long-term solution.

We are in the process of stress testing the network of servers and verifying their functionality. The program will initially be made available at <http://haystack.austinheap.com> but will shortly thereafter be available through other distribution mechanisms to ensure maximal availability on the ground in Iran.

"I've always been a man of principle," said Daniel Colascione, "and helping people just like me gain the same liberty we take for granted is the highest ideal to which I can aspire."

The Khamenei/Ahmadinejad government has been extremely effective at silencing prominent members of the opposition. But the uprising in Iran was not the result of top-down leadership, it was the result of individuals using whatever means they had at their disposal to organize and communicate. We want to continue to support, in whatever way we can, those who started this and will lead it forward, the people.