

US to allow web service exports to strict nations

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File photo shows a woman using her laptop computer. Washington will allow technology companies to export Internet services to Iran, Cuba and Sudan in a bid to exploit their libertarian potential, The New York Times has reported.

Washington will allow technology companies to export Internet services to Iran, Cuba and Sudan in a bid to exploit their libertarian potential, The New York Times reported late Sunday.

"The more people have access to a range of [Internet technology](#) and services, the harder it's going to be for the Iranian government to clamp down on their speech and free expression," a senior administration official told the paper.

The Treasury Department will issue a general license Monday for exports of free personal Internet services such as instant messaging, chat

and photo sharing as well as software to all three countries, said the unnamed official.

The move will allow Microsoft, Yahoo and other Internet services providers to get around strict export restrictions, the report said.

Until now they had resisted offering such services for fear of violating existing sanctions.

But there have been growing calls in Congress and elsewhere to lift the restrictions, particularly after Iran's post-election protests illustrated the power of Internet-based services such as [Facebook](#) and Twitter, The Times said.

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