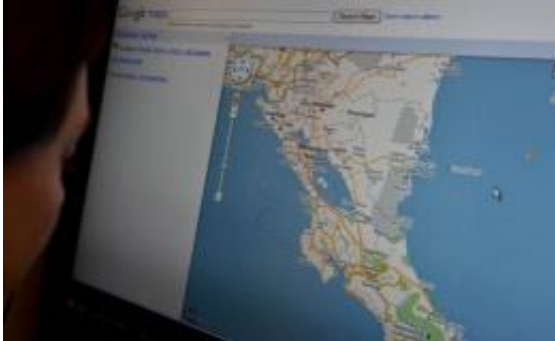


Google software for the masses lands in Iran

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A person looks at a map on the popular search engine website Google. The web titan has made mapping, photo-sharing, and Web browsing software available for the first time to people in Iran but blocked access by government computers there.

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Google worked with US officials on the nuances of making Earth, [Picasa](#) and Chrome programs available for download in Iran in a way that comports with export restrictions eased early last year.

"For the first time, we are making [Google](#) Earth, Picasa and Chrome available for download in Iran," Google export compliance programs manager Neil Martin said in a blog post.

"As a condition of our export licenses from the Treasury Department, we will continue to block IP addresses associated with the Iranian government."

Martin recounted how Iranian officials deported foreign journalists, disrupted mobile phone connections, and shut down media outlets to suppress protests of the controversial presidential election results in June of 2009.

"In spite of this, the sharing of information using the Internet prevailed," Martin said.

"YouTube and Twitter were cited by journalists, activists and bloggers as the best source for firsthand accounts and on-the-scene footage of the protests and violence across the country."

US sanctions at that time barred allowing downloads in Iran of software that protestors might have been able to use to their advantage, he noted. Some of those export restrictions have been lifted.

"Our products are specifically designed to help people create, communicate, share opinions and find information," Martin said.

"And we believe that more available products means more choice, more freedom, and ultimately more power for individuals in Iran and across the globe."

Iranian demonstrators protesting the results of presidential elections used Twitter extensively, both to organize marches and to release information about their movement.

Twitter lets people use mobile phones to share news and coordinate activities using short text messages that can be broadcast to multitudes.

The use of web technology amid the [Iran](#) protests was closely watched in Washington, where a State Department official asked Twitter to postpone a planned maintenance shutdown by a day to allow Iranians to speak out and organize.

Their use of the microblogging site led some to dub the pro-democracy action against President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad a "Twitter revolution" and made the Iranian election one of the top "trends" on the site that year.

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