

Internet Freedom of Expression

WHEREAS Research in Motion and other information and communications technology (ICT) companies face increasing government pressure to comply with the laws and policies of countries that require censorship and disclosure of personal information in ways that conflict with internationally recognized human rights laws and standards.

In the last year the governments of Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates threatened to halt BlackBerry service unless their demands for greater access to BlackBerry data streams were met. The Company held similar discussions with India, Lebanon and Indonesia. As mobile devices become the primary mode of communication in developing countries, governments have expressed concern they may be used by terrorists to organize attacks or by others to violate national mores by providing access to pornography. However, government access to private messages also raises the specter of unethical surveillance for political purposes by repressive regimes.

U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Clinton has commented on attempts by governments to monitor BlackBerry communications: "There is a legitimate security concern, but there's also a legitimate right of free use and access." This is an important ethical and business dilemma for our company. Giving in to demands for wholesale data review in repressive countries that lack democratic processes or due process of law opens the door to unbridled government surveillance. It can affect users' expectations of privacy and security including Canadian and U.S. citizens' expectations when they travel in other countries.

As the situation last year with Saudi Arabia and UAE demonstrates, failure to resolve these concerns poses a substantive business risk to our company.

These dilemmas for ICT companies led to development of the Global Network Initiative (GNI), a multi-stakeholder effort to protect freedom of expression and privacy online. Its corporate members include Google, Microsoft Corp. and Yahoo. GNI developed a set of Principles on Freedom of Expression and Privacy that provide guidance on how to protect and advance user rights to freedom of expression and privacy, including when faced with government demands for censorship and disclosure of user personal information.

We believe the Company can benefit enormously by working with other ICT companies on these difficult issues, sharing information and strategy. Working together, ICT companies can build a stronger, collective voice and develop more effective strategies to respond to government information demands in a manner that protects freedom of expression and privacy.

RESOLVED: Shareholders request the Board publish a report to shareholders within six months, at reasonable expense and omitting proprietary information, providing a summarized listing and assessment of concrete steps the Company could reasonably take to reduce the likelihood that its business practices might enable or encourage the violation of human rights, including freedom of expression and privacy. The assessment should include discussion of joining the Global Network Initiative, a multi-stakeholder effort to protect freedom of expression and privacy online.