David Basin, Prof. Dr.
Editor-in-Chief
ACM Transactions on Privacy and Security (TOPS)
1601 Broadway, 10th Floor
New York, NY 10019-7434

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Dear Dr.Basin

We are writing to submit our manuscript entitled, "Unobservable Messaging with MessageVortex" for consideration as a TOPS article. The paper is an excerpt from our thesis document covering an unobservable and censorship-resistant protocol for messaging. We created a generic protocol that is capable of piggybacking other common messaging protocols such as SMTP and XMPP. It may hide its message flow within such protocol and routes in a unique way, where routing nodes are unaware of what information they route and what the final destination of a message is. Furthermore, the protocol requires no custom or modified infrastructure on the internet.

Given that subscribers of TOPS are interested in privacy and applied knowledge, we believe that the findings presented in our paper will appeal to these readers. Our findings allow TOPS readers to gain new insights into message routing under non-free conditions. Considering recent development in terms of privacy in countries such as the USA, China, or Myanmar, the work gained unexpected additional attention. While privacy-preserving technologies such as ToR, I2P, or SCION strive for anonymity only, we have extended our focus on being censor-ship resistant. This censorship-resistance is far harder to achieve as anonymity is just a fraction of its requirements.

Each of the authors confirms that this manuscript has not been previously published and is not currently under consideration by any other journal. Additionally, all of the authors have approved the contents of this paper and have agreed to the TOPS's submission policies.

Should TOPS select our manuscript for peer review, we would like to emphasize that we do not propose any reviewers. Instead, we think that based on the information provided on the TOPS editorial page Dr. Florian Kerschbaum and Dr. Bradley Malin may have an excellent background to choose reviewers. To the best of our knowledge, none of the above-suggested persons have any conflict of interest, financial or otherwise.

Each named author has substantially contributed to conducting the underlying research and drafting this manuscript. Additionally, to the best of our knowledge, the named authors have no conflict of interest, financial or otherwise.

Please note that the thesis document and the source code is not yet publicly available. Both do exist and may be provided at any time upon request to the reviewers. The source code is currently complete but poorly documented. It furthermore still requires a considerable amount of external infrastructure to repeat our experiments. We intend to publish the implementation together with the publication of the article in TOPS to enable interested parties to verify our results. At that time, we will introduce a simplified, local message-passing protocol to simplify experiments. As for the thesis document, the publication process is depending on the processes of the University of Basel. We may, however, publish a draft release on the project website if required by TOPS. The referenced RFC draft document has been published by IETF and is available for public download.

Sincerely,

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