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Open Source Advocate, Canadian Copyfighter, and AT&T Whistleblower Win Pioneer Awards Mitchell Baker and the Mozilla Foundation, Michael Geist, and Mark Klein to be Honored at San Diego Award Ceremony

San Diego - The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is pleased to announce the winners of its 2008 Pioneer Awards: the Mozilla Foundation and its Chairman Mitchell Baker, University of Ottawa Professor Michael Geist, and AT&T whistleblower Mark Klein.

The award ceremony will be held at 7pm, March 4th at the San Diego Marriott Hotel and Marina in conjunction with the O'Reilly Emerging Technology Conference (ETech). Michael Robertson -- founder and CEO of MP3.com, Linspire, MP3Tunes and Gizmo5 -- will give the awards' keynote address: "What to Expect When You're Expecting...To Be Sued."

Mitchell Baker is the Chairman of the Mozilla Foundation, which is dedicated to promoting openness, innovation, and opportunity on the Internet through its sponsorship of the open-source Mozilla project. The Mozilla Foundation provides grants, legal services, and other support for development projects involving the Firefox browser, the Thunderbird email application, and other Mozilla software. Baker was previously the attorney at Netscape responsible for all legal issues related to product development and intellectual property protection. During that time she wrote the Netscape and Mozilla Public Licenses.

Dr. Michael Geist is a law professor at the University of Ottawa. Last year, he led the public protest to proposed Canadian copyright law changes that would have devastated consumers' technology rights. The groundswell of opposition caused the government to rethink and ultimately cancel introducing the legislation. Geist serves on the Privacy Commissioner of Canada's Expert Advisory Board and on the Canadian Digital Information Strategy's Review Panel. Geist is also an internationally syndicated columnist on technology law and writes a popular blog on the Internet and intellectual property issues.

Mark Klein is a retired AT&T telecommunications technician who blew the whistle on the government's warrantless surveillance program. When news reports of the illegal spying surfaced in December of 2005, Klein realized that he had been witness to -- and participated in setting up -- massive surveillance technology that violated the rights of millions of Americans. In early 2006, Klein brought EFF authenticated documents showing how AT&T diverted customers' communications to a room controlled by the National Security Agency. EFF now represents AT&T customers in a class-action lawsuit over the illegal spying.

"The Pioneer Award winners this year show us how one person can truly make a difference in our digital world," said EFF Executive Director Shari Steele. "It's hard work to protect freedom, and we are so grateful for the invaluable contributions of Mitchell, Michael, and Mark."

Since 1991, the EFF Pioneer Awards have recognized individuals and organizations that have made significant and influential contributions to the development of computer-mediated communications and to the empowerment of individuals in using computers and the Internet. Past winners include World Wide Web inventor Tim Berners-Lee, Linux creator Linus Torvalds, and security researcher Bruce Schneier, among many others.

The winners of the 17th annual Pioneer Awards were nominated by the public and then chosen by a panel of judges. This year's panel includes Kim Alexander (President and founder, California Voter Foundation), Esther Dyson (Internet court jester and blogger, Release 0.9; founding chairman of ICANN; former chairman of EFF), Mitch Kapor (President, Kapor Enterprises; co-founder and former chairman EFF), Drazen Pantic (Co-director, Location One), Barbara Simons (IBM Research [Retired] and former president ACM), James Tyre, (Co-founder, The Censorware Project; EFF policy fellow) and Jimmy Wales, (Founder, Wikipedia; co-founder, Wikia; chair emeritus of the Wikimedia Foundation).

TCHO is the Platinum Sponsor for the 2008 Pioneer Awards ceremony. TCHO is a new chocolate company for a new generation of chocolate enthusiasts. Founded by Wired co-founder Louis Rossetto and legendary chocolatier and former technologist Timothy Childs, TCHO will sample a "beta release" of their dark chocolate during the awards ceremony. Attendees are invited to taste two different formulas and vote for their favorite. Feedback directly influences the national release bar. Learn more about TCHO at: <http://www.tcho.com>

Bronze sponsors of the event include Atomic PR, Barracuda, JibJab, MOG, and Three Rings.

Tickets to the Pioneer Awards ceremony are \$35. If you plan to attend, RSVP to events@eff.org. You can also pay for your tickets in advance at <http://secure.eff.org/pioneerfundraiser>. Members of the media interested in attending the event should email press@eff.org.

For more on attending the Pioneer Awards:

<http://www.eff.org/awards/pioneer>

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