



The Free Network Foundation

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[WEBLOG](#)

[FAQ](#)

[FORUM](#)

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Freedom 0: The freedom to participate in the network

**Anyone may join, use, and expand the network,
and must allow others to do the same.**



The Free Network Foundation envisions a world where communities build, maintain, and own their own share of the global computer network. If you share our vision...

Join us

For supporters



For operators



For technologists



For supporters



See video and print **coverage** of the FNF.

Join our general discussion list

Subscribe to our newsletter and receive periodic updates on our progress.

Contribute your **fiscal support** by becoming a member.

For operators



Stay tuned for the official launch of



A self-service and full-service network planning, provisioning, and funding tool brought to you by The Free Network Foundation and Guifi.net

If you would like to get started with building a network for your community, or you would like beta access to the guifi.us platform, **contact us**

For technologists



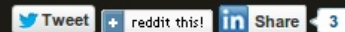
Explore the Wiki and learn about topics related to network freedom, from operations to programming.

Join our technical discussion list and be involved in every aspect of product development.

Checkout our repositories, find out what needs to be done, and lend a hand with a **tracker account**



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About the FNF

People

Our Vision

We envision a world where communities build, maintain, and own their own share of the global computer network.

Our Mission

The Free Network Foundation is a nonprofit organization that provides operators around the world with essential infrastructure for the realization and support of free networks. We engineer tools and develop educational resources to facilitate the deployment of resilient, responsive, and accessible networks.

What We Do

We envision communications infrastructure that is owned and operated cooperatively, by the whole of humanity, rather than by corporations and states. We are using the power of peer-to-peer technologies to create a global network which is resistant to censorship and breakdown. We promote freedoms, support innovations and advocate technologies that enhance and enable digital self-determination.

For detailed information about our activities, finances, and ongoing projects, please see our [Annual Report \[pdf\]](#)

Who We Are

- We are an organization committed to the tenets of free information, free culture, and free society.
- We hold that advances in information technology provide humanity with the ability to effectively face global challenges.
- We contend that our very ability to mobilize, organize, and bring about change depends on our ability to communicate.
- We see that our ability to communicate is purchased from a handful of powerful entities.
- We know that we cannot depend on these entities to support movement away from a status quo from which they are the beneficiaries.
- We believe that access to a free network is a human right, and a necessary tool for environmental and social justice.

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People

[About the FNF](#)[People](#)

Officers

Tyrone Greenfield

Chief Operating Officer

As COO, Tyrone coordinates activities between the FNF and partner groups, in addition to working with media organizations. He also performs administrative tasks for the FNF's Kansas City operations. He started working with the FNF while studying history in Iowa.

Isaac Wilder

Executive Director

Isaac is responsible for the day-to-day operations of the foundation, as well as long-term strategic vision and public advocacy. In addition to writing and speaking on issues of network freedom, Isaac designs, engineers, builds and deploys tools for more democratic networks. He is currently based in Kansas City, MO.

Charles Wyble

Chief Technical Officer

Charles is a systems architect with 10 years experience designing, implementing and supporting large scale systems in many different industries. He is in charge of architecting the FNF's enterprise and production networks, as well as engineering hardware and software tools in support of our cause. He resides in Austin, TX.

James Yox

Chief Information Officer

James Yox

Chief Information Officer

In addition to system and network administration, James is responsible for penetration testing and information security. He lives and works as a software and systems engineer in Kansas City, and is passionate about food, arch linux, and liberty.

Volunteers

The individuals that sustain and contribute to the operations of the Free Network Foundation are too many to mention. Suffice it to say that it is the support and hardwork of individuals like yourself who make this enterprise possible.

Accross multiple continents, and many domains, we rely on individuals who sacrifice their time, expertise and resources to the idea that we can build a freer network, and with it, a freer society. To those that have contributed, we send a heartfelt thank you, and to those that have not, we open the door. If you would like to become a part of our efforts, please don't hesitate to [be in touch](#)

Board of Advisors

Richard Stallman

GNU Project/FSF

Gordon Cook

Cook Report on Internet Protocol

John Stone

Grinnell College

Paul Garrin

John Stone

Grinnell College

Paul Garrin

wifiNY/name.space

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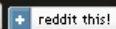
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Get in Touch

If you have questions, comments, concerns, or ideas, and would like to communicate with one of the officers of the FNF, please don't hesitate to send an e-mail to contact@thefnf.org. We usually respond within a day or two, but things may take slightly longer if it's a particularly hectic time.

Join the Discussion

Our mailing lists are the best way to get up to speed on projects, be a part of the community, and contribute. [Discuss](#) is a general discussion list for topics related to free networks, and [Builders](#) is a list for technical discussion regarding routing, radio technology, software, firmware, hardware, and network tech of all kinds.

Stay Informed

[Our newsletter](#) is the easiest way to stay informed about the progress of the FNF. We'll send you quarterly and annual reports, as well as updates on major events. We use this list very sparingly, generally sending fewer than a dozen e-mails per year.



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Chat with us

We use Internet Relay Chat for real time communications. You can participate by using going to [this page](#), or by configuring an IRC client to join channel #fnn on irc.thefnn.org. Use port 6669 if you would like to participate over SSL.



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FAQ

General

Technical

So, what does the FNF actually do?

Right now, we're beginning the deployment of a demonstration and community laboratory computer network in the Kansas City metropolitan area. We helped KC non-profit Connecting For Good to offer free wifi at low-income housing in KC, Kansas, and are in the process of expanding to other sites. In addition, we are hard at work on two development projects: FreedomStack is a set of tools for building free networks, and guifi.us is a planning, provisioning, and crowdfunding tool that will help people use FreedomStack. In general, we design, implement, deploy and talk about all sorts of network tech that can be used to build freer networks.

What has the FNF been up to since the days of Occupy Wall Street?

We've put hundreds of hours into building what we call "FreedomCenter" In essence, it's a solution for enterprise data ownership/digital self-determination. Most development project would just use IaaS/cloud tools, but we think that, in the long run, we'll be much better served by the flexibility and security of running our own systems. FreedomCenter powers our web properties, but more importantly, it powers our lab, which offers a continuous build, integration, and radio runtime testing environment. The idea is to ultimately offer this infrastructure to the wider world of network hackers. We're opening it now to a few trusted parties, but we don't think it will be ready for the general hacker public until the spring.

What do you mean, "Free?" I can surf the web without paying for it?

We like to think of it as "free as in freedom, not as in beer." In French or Spanish, for instance, we would use the word "libre" rather than "gratis." There are real costs to running a network, such as electricity, bandwidth, and maintenance, and users will need to pay something for access. However, the real costs of running a network are an order of magnitude lower than what the public currently pays to ISPs. By employing a cooperative model, we can ensure that participants only ever have to pay for the actual costs, and not to bolster the profit margins of the incumbents.

Isn't what you're talking about illegal?

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Not in the least! Networks that are owned by their users are subject to the same rules and regulations as networks that are owned by for-profit operators. The laws regarding data networks, radio transmission, and privacy can be fairly opaque at times, and so the FNF sees public education on relevant jurisprudence as part of its core mission.

How are you funded?

Between June 2011 and December 31st, 2012, the FNF took in a total of \$24,394.72, and spent a total of \$18,987.71. A large share of the FNF's income came from a \$10,000 award at the Contact Conference, a summit on using technology for social change, in October 2011, and from a \$5,000 grant in October 2012 from the Jerry Greenfield and Elizabeth Skarie Foundation. The remainder was made up of individual donations, many from monthly contributors. We have been supported in-kind by the Sarapis Foundation, lghtsrc.org, and the New York City General Assembly. We're now working on building a membership-base that will allow us to continue our work long-term – you can join by going here. A complete account of the FNF's financial data may be found on the Commons.

What would my contribution go towards?

At this point, our main operational expenditure is the cost of colocation for our servers. We pay about \$424 each month. At present, the FNF is all-volunteer. We'd love to be able to pay our staff something so that they can devote more time to our important work, and less time to making ends meet. We would also love to have a travel budget, so that we can attend more conferences, meet more innovators, and reach a larger audience.

How long until the network is free?

It's hard to say. Things are moving very quickly, and yet the scope of our work is practically beyond comprehension. All we can really tell you is this: we will keep working even after a ubiquitous civil network exists to serve the public good. The struggle for greater freedom and greater sovereignty on the net is not new, and will continue for some time. We try to take the long view whenever possible, in contrast to for-profit actors who feel compelled to focus on short-term gains. Sustainability is a central part of our operating philosophy, and so we plan not just for months and years of work, but for decades. One thing is for sure – it'll go a lot faster if we work together.

FAQ

General

Technical

What are some good resources to get me started?

We usually find ourselves recommending *Wireless Networking in the Developing World* to those that would like to learn about the technical aspects of what we do. For a compelling treatment of the political economy of networks try *The Wealth of Networks*. If you want a textbook treatment of networks in general, and you're willing to pay, we recommend *Computer Networking: A Top-Down Approach*. If you're not looking to pay, wikibooks has two relevant texts: *Communications Networks* and the narrower *Computer Networks*.

What is your vision for the future of networking?

In general, We are building a network with no choke points - be they material or logical. It starts with the individual, and grows from there: the individual organizes the neighborhood, the neighborhood organizes the city, and so on and so forth, until you arrive at a global network that is owned and operated by every one and no one, for the good of us all. And yet the upper and lower layers of the networking stack need to be decentralized at the same time. Material decentralization is contingent on logical decentralization. That is why projects like tent.io, Freedombox, sneer, et cetera are so important. If the logical flows remain centralized, we will not be able to take advantage of the efficiencies of local routing, not mention still being spied on by purveyors of 'false p2p' (G+ and FB being prime examples). This is not going to happen overnight: it will be gradual, and from the inside. It is already happening, and we view its continuation and evolution as inevitable.

What are all these "Freedom" projects, like FreedomLink, FreedomTower, and FreedomNode?

FreedomLink and FreedomTower are network appliances. FreedomLink is designed to anchor a regional network coop, and FreedomTower to anchor a neighborhood one. The regional network would be made up of neighborhood networks, linked together. Mostly, these projects consist of the integration of existing tools into a tested and turnkey suite. The other project of note is the FreedomNode, which would anchor a home/business/building network. One of the key ideas of the whole project is that we can implement transparent crypto on the node, so that all traffic is encrypted end-to-end.

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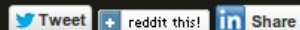
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Can mesh networking truly scale? Is it a potential replacement to traditional network configurations?

It's all in the details. There are limitations to mobile ad-hoc - this is what most folks understand "mesh" to mean: that the nodes can move around. Free networks are much bigger than mesh, though - they can be implemented in fiber, copper, fixed wireless, or mobile ad-hoc. It is a matter much more of political economy than of technology. So, the solution is simply not to try to make mobile ad-hoc scale. Isolate link-dynamic media access domains into pockets of manageable size, and join those pockets together with more static links. In this way you can scale, still offer a mobile experience, and use whatever technology is most appropriate for the geography. DNS is something of a separate question, but we see no reason why a distributed naming scheme shouldn't come to prominence in the next few years. There are several in the works. The general idea here is to use a DHT for discovery of names that are self-authenticating and globally unique, but ugly (like BTC addresses), then, once you've discovered the machine-readable name for the resource in question, simply give it a pet name, like we used to do on AIM. There are certainly challenges ahead, but our vision is well within the realm of technical feasibility. There are already sizable cooperative networks in Spain, Athens, Berlin, Kabul, Nairobi and a host of other cities. These last-mile networks can be connected securely using tunneling while research continues into low-cost, long-haul communications platforms.



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Contributors

Guifi.us - builder planning

no votes

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Feb 25 '13 charlesnw

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Contribute to the FNF, ensure that everyone has the freedom to connect:

Choose your level of support. We ask you kindly to make your contribution a monthly one - sustained support allows us to better plan and grow.

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- Benefactor - \$ 150.00
- Sustaining Member - \$ 100.00
- Supporting Member - \$ 50.00
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Billing Name and Address

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Bitcoin (BTC) is a decentralized digital currency based on an open-source, peer-to-peer protocol. They can offer anonymity to your donations if you so desire. You can learn more about BTC at [We Love Bitcoins](#) or [We Use Bitcoins](#). Our Bitcoin address is 18S8ugWEuWLBMP9DBpBdDk9SN6CiRxZB8S



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We Use Stuff

If you've got a resource, chances are we could put it to good use. Roof space, office space, old computers, shop tools, AV gear, an old car, books – whatever you've got. Our current needs include Soekris Boards, UBNT Radios, and semi-permanent radio space on roofs with a view of the Kansas City skyline. Our main offices are in Kansas City and Austin, but we've also got contingents operating in Boston, New York, and the Bay Area. If you think you've got something that could be of use, [let's talk](#).



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