

2019—2020



The Tor Project Annual Report



From the Executive Director

Dear Friend of Privacy,

This year has been difficult for all of us.

As individuals, we've had to adapt to the new normal of COVID-19, and as an organization, the Tor Project also had to adapt to our "new normal" after we made the difficult decision to let go of one third of our organization.

Although challenging, we managed to reorganize in order to meet the goals we originally set for 2020, and I am very thankful for the team and community we have surrounding Tor. Our plans for 2021 demonstrate how ambitious we are in making a better Tor, one that's accessible to everyone, and how dedicated we are to our mission.

And in times like these--where an internet connection has become crucial for workers, educators, health care, human rights defenders, journalists to do their work--we understand how important it is that everybody knows that Tor is here for them to use and that it will continue to improve.

If you want to support all the work Tor does to bring privacy online to millions of people, please [make a donation](#). Your contributions make an impact on whether or not we can complete these plans, and every donation, no matter the size, makes a difference.

Thank you for your never-ending support.



Isabela Bagueros

Executive Director
The Tor Project

2020 Accomplishments

"Resilience" defines every single one of the Tor Project's accomplishments in 2020. Despite all of the challenges we faced:

We created Arti, a Rust Tor implementation.

Arti will allow us to build Tor in such a way that makes it easier for other developers to implement Tor in their tools. Re-writing Tor in rust also increases Tor's sustainability, as this high-level language will make our code more secure, easier to improve, and more welcoming for contributors.

We launched a project to improve Tor speeds for people with slow connections and mobile phones.

This year we began work to improve the speed of the Tor network. Our congestion control system is already working for onion services, improving the speed for downloading files on .onion sites. Soon, this improvement will be available for all Tor users, including those browsing sites outside of the Tor network.

We released a complete overhaul of the user experience for onion sites.

One of our goals is to normalize the use of onion services, and to do so, we drastically improved the way Tor Browser handles .onion sites. Now, Tor Browser displays inclusive error messages that helps users troubleshoot when they try to reach an onion site and encounter problems. We also launched Onion-Location header, a graphic indicator that shows users when a site they are accessing is also available as a .onion. And our campaign #MoreOnionsPorFavor brought a diverse new group of sites to our ecosystem.

We tested our censorship circumvention tools during censorship events across the world.

Together with our partners in the Global South, our Community and Anti-Censorship teams worked to test Tor bridges during censorship events. We created a script tool to help our partners perform these reachability tests. These results of these tests help us learn the methods censors are using and build better defenses against them.

We raised more money than ever before through our year-end campaign.

Despite the financial challenges of the first half of 2020, we ended the year on a positive financial note with the help of our incredibly generous and supportive donors. As a result, we were able to plan for 2021, invest in our people, and begin to build back organizational capacity.

What Users Say

“I love Tor Browser. **It really helps me access censored websites in Iran.**”

“Thank you for helping keep the internet the way it was meant to be—uncensored. **I cannot imagine browsing without Tor Browser.** It is an invaluable tool and one of the few to stand against censorship.”

“I just want to thank all of you for everything you do. Tor, for people living in my country, is a very important tool to circumvent heavy state censorship. **We live in a life or death situation every day and Tor gives us a chance to fight back...** we hope you know how much this means to us.”

“Tor Browser is wonderful, although in my country the internet is not censored, it is extremely supervised, and internet users' data is collected in a very invasive way. **Tor helps me to remain anonymous on the internet and do research and study anonymously, without collecting my data and without tracking.**”

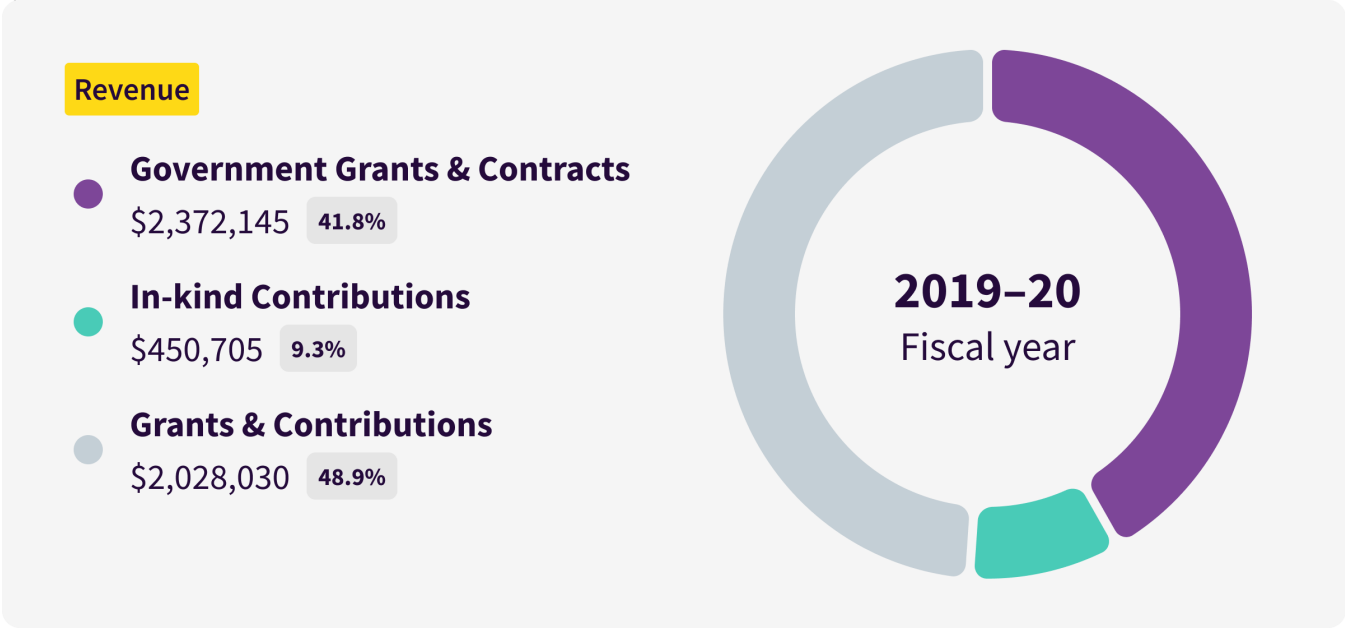
“**Most of the time I would be WITHOUT INTERNET if not for Tor.**”

2019-2020 Financials

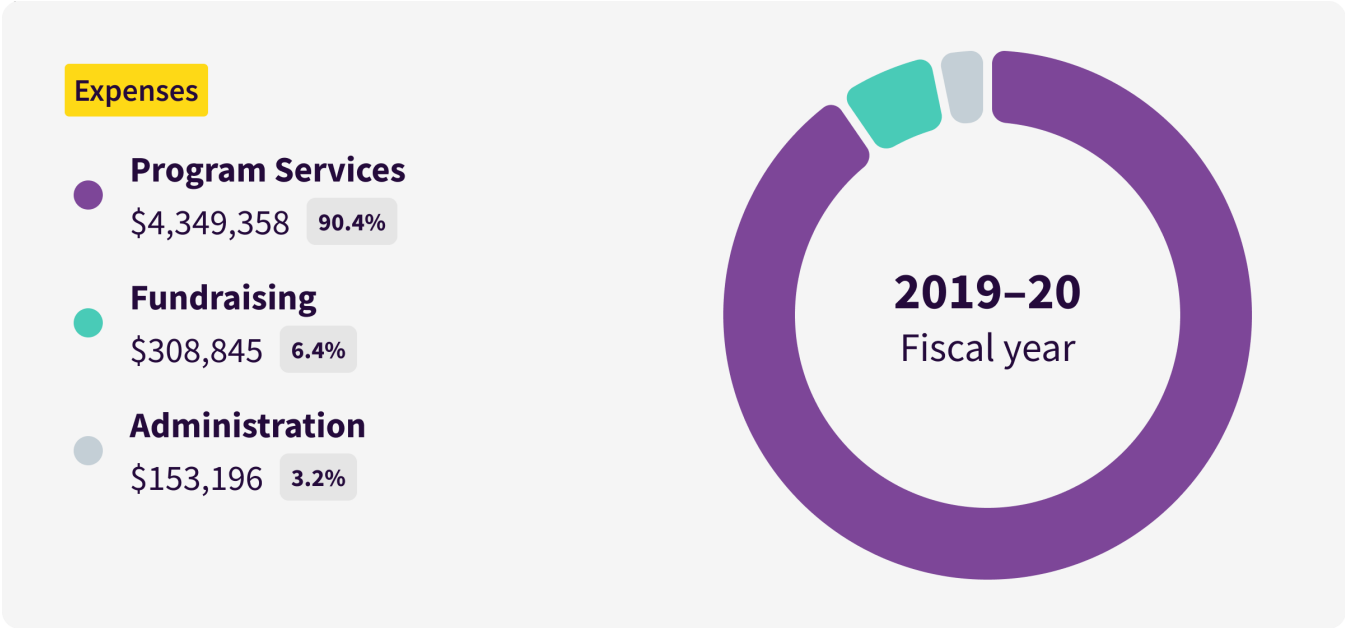
In 2019, you helped the Tor Project break an important record by contributing to our most successful year-end fundraising campaign ever! On the heels of such an important milestone, we were looking forward to building our reserves in 2020.

Then, of course, the COVID-19 pandemic changed the world. Individual donations took a drastic downturn, events (where we raise donations at booths) were canceled for the rest of the year, and foundations shifted their funding strategies to stabilize their current grantees. Some foundations even completely halted their giving for the year. Because of this change, we had to make the difficult decision to let go of one-third of our organization.

Despite these challenges, our community came together in an extremely strong show of support and helped the Tor Project end the financial year (June 2020) in a strong place amidst global challenges. The support continued through the rest of 2020, breaking another year-end fundraising record! Thanks to this support and the hard work of the whole Tor team, we arrived in 2021 with the financial stability to start hiring our personnel back.



In the 2019-2020 fiscal year, **90.4% of our expenses were associated with program services**. That means that a very significant portion of our budget goes directly into building Tor and making it better. Next comes fundraising at 6.4% and administration at 3.2%.



According to [Charity Navigator](#), technology nonprofits for which program services make up more than 82.5% of their expenses receive the highest “financial health” score in their ranking system. This means that we’re meeting and significantly exceeding the “industry best” for tech nonprofits. We’re proud to show that our work is both efficient and effective.

2021 Goals

2021 is a very exciting year: it's Onion Routing's 25th anniversary!

And we plan to spend this year setting the path for its future, making sure the Tor Project is strong for another 25 years.

We want to make sure that Tor is accessible and safe as possible, and we want to renovate anything that needs a refresh in the process.

In 2021, our goals are to:

- **Prepare Arti for testing**

We want to promote this project and build support for it within the developer community, as our goal is to have as many third parties test the Arti prototype in their apps as possible.

- **Make bold changes in the Tor Browser user experience**

Since we launched our User Feedback Program in 2017, we have addressed many usability issues in Tor Browser. For the past four years, every major Tor Browser release has featured drastic improvements. 2021 won't be different, and we're excited for these big steps forward!

- **Build connections with human rights defenders around the world**

Censorship events are increasing, along with the risks associated with using the internet to fight for human rights. We will continue to support our partners in the face of internet freedom attacks, as well as using their feedback to improve our tools.

- **Build automated tools to identify malicious relays**

At the core of our Network Health team is our relay operator community, and we will work on building resources to better support operators, as well as building tools to better identify malicious relays.

- **Deploy congestion control and other improvements to the Tor network**

These changes will build on work we completed in 2020 and make Tor faster for those connecting over mobile phones and slow connections.

- **Deprecate v2 onion services**

The newest version of onion services, v3, is the gold standard. By the fall of 2021, v2 onion services will no longer be available, and this year we are working to transition v2 operators over to the newest, most secure version of onion services.

Who We Are: Board of Directors

We are an international team who believes everyone should have private access to the uncensored web.

Alissa Cooper VP/Chief Technology Officer, Cisco Systems

Chelsea Komlo Principal Technical Advisor & Researcher, Zcash Foundation

Design Chinniah Creative Technologist

Gabriella Coleman Professor, McGill University

Board Clerk

Isabela Bagueros Executive Director

Julius Mittenzwei CEO, Open Publishing

Kendra Albert Clinical Instructor, Harvard Law School

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Rabbi Rob Thomas CEO, Team Cymru

Ramy Raouf Senior Research Technologist, Egyptian Initiative for Personal Rights