

# **The Free Network Foundation**

**2012  
Annual  
Report**

# LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

We started the Free Network Foundation in the spring of 2011 with a simple, singular conviction: that the construction and operation of communications infrastructure is the right and responsibility of us all. In the nearly two years since we set out, we have made consistent progress towards the realization of this idea. To all of us, it has become increasingly clear: our conviction was well founded – this is an idea whose time has come.

At the core of our philosophy is the idea that we should strive, whenever possible, to think long-term. We seek to build an organization with staying power – one that is capable of effecting radical change in the political economy of one of our society's most powerful tools.

We have built a strong foundation. We have engineered a robust infrastructure for outreach, coordination, and development, while forging relationships with the engineers and activists that are building the next generation of networking tools. Our work has been covered online and in print, by media outlets both large and small – allowing us to expand our audience and raise consciousness of our cause. We have grown as a team, and learned a great deal about what it takes to organize.

In the year to come, we will lean heavily on this foundation. The systems that we've put in place will allow us to facilitate a globally distributed development effort without precedent. We are going to deliver the tools we set out to build. The connections that we've made will allow us to establish a worldwide coalition of like minds. We are going to achieve critical mass, and a popular movement towards digital self-determination will begin in earnest.

It is with urgency and patience in equal measure that we proceed. Now more than ever, persistence is the key to a finer, freer future for us all. We will be holding our second annual Winter Summit on the 25th-27th of January in Austin, Texas. We invite anyone reading this to participate in person, or via telepresence. We invite you to join us in this struggle, because our fates are bound inextricably together, and none of us can succeed alone.

With humility and gratitude for you all,



Isaac Wilder  
Executive Director, The Free Network Foundation

# ABOUT THE FNF

The FNF was founded to steward the emergence of free networks. Our activities in research, development, advocacy, and outreach are predicated upon the idea that unfettered access to information is an essential element of any truly free society.

## 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.



The Free Network Foundation  
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Kansas City, MO 64113  
[contact@thefnf.org](mailto:contact@thefnf.org)

# 2012 IN REVIEW BUILDING THE FNF



*Oak Tower in downtown Kansas City, the location of the FNF's primary on-net facility*

## **GOING WEST**

Last spring, the FNF moved its headquarters from New York, New York to Kansas City, Missouri. We strengthened our relationship with Joe's Data Center, where we host our primary computing environment.

## **NEW SPECTRUM LICENSE**

We applied for and received a license from the FCC to operate radios at 3.65 GHz. This will allow us to experiment with wireless point-to-point links on a less-crowded portion of spectrum.

## **FREE THE NETWORK**

On March 28th, motherboard.tv released a 30-minute documentary entitled 'Free the Network' focused on our work with Occupy and our mission in general. To date, the film has been watched more than 50,000 times.

# 2012 IN REVIEW BUILDING THE FNF

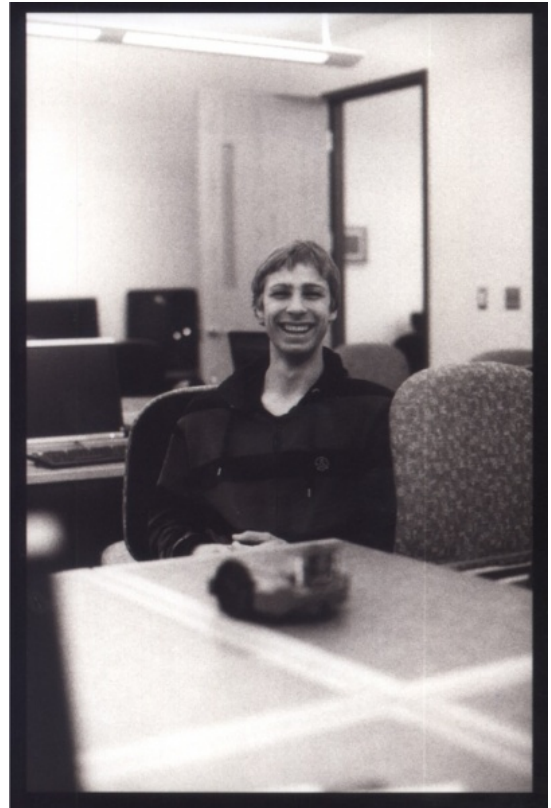
## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors met for the first time last May, and again in December. The Board said goodbye to Venessa Meimis, who stepped down this autumn, and welcomes Martin Dluhos, who is coming on in 2013.

"With more heads involved in steering FNF's direction, our goal is to ensure that it will continue pushing forward with the same momentum, closely collaborating with projects with similar goals," said Martin.

## SUMMIT

From August 17-20, the FNF held its biannual summit in KC. A weekend plus of in-person contact allowed us to strategize for the next year, as well as hack on technical projects and rebuild our server cabinet.

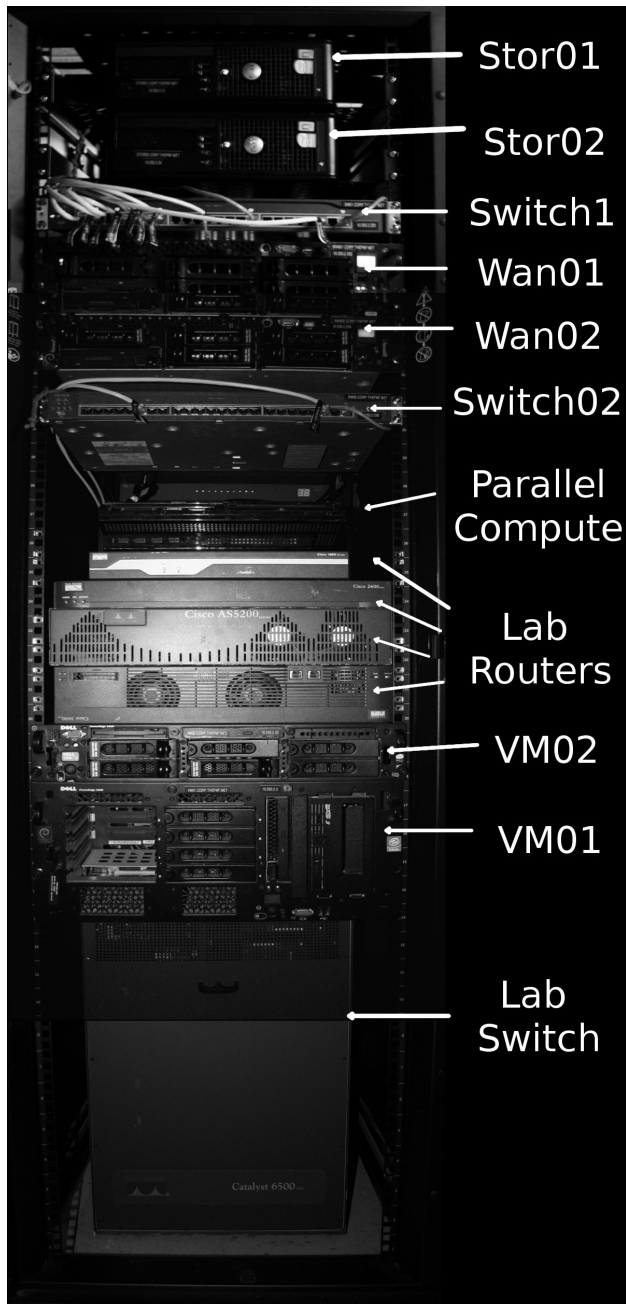


*Martin Dluhos of the Free Software Foundation joins the FNF's Board of Directors*



*Cofounder and CTO Charles Wyble at the Summer Summit*

# 2012 IN REVIEW BUILDING TOOLS



*FreedomCenter, in Oak Tower*

## FREEDOMCENTER

Over the past 18 months, much of our energy has been focused on the design and implementation of FreedomCenter, a robust IT infrastructure capable of supporting a wide-ranging set of workloads.

In conjunction with hosting a number of web applications, both public-facing and internal to the FNF, FreedomCenter is designed to organize, facilitate, and host the development of the various network appliances that make up the 'FreedomStack'. Our core team has volunteered hundreds of hours this year to build an infrastructure on which we can rely for many years to come. We are proud to be practicing what we preach in the way of digital self-determination.

Though design and construction took place mostly in the background, comprehensive documentation of our work has been compiled and made publicly available on our wiki. FreedomCenter is a foundation, a playground, a twenty-first century forge.

## PROOF OF CONCEPT

In June, Bryan visited Isaac and Tyrone in Kansas City for a sprint to demonstrate the link-layer integration of FNF's proposed regional-scale community network architecture.

We deployed the first FreedomLink radio element, and built a multi-kilometer "Distribution" link to a temporary FreedomTower site, where radios running the qmp ("Quick Mesh Project") community mesh firmware demonstrated a minimal single-hop "Access" network.

# 2012 IN REVIEW

## BUILDING ALLIANCES



*The FNF helped to set up a free-of-cost wifi network at the Rosedale Ridge apartments in Kansas City, KS*

## OCCUPY

In early 2012, we collaborated with activists at Occupy Wall St and around NYC to prototype free network technologies and raise awareness on the importance of free networks.

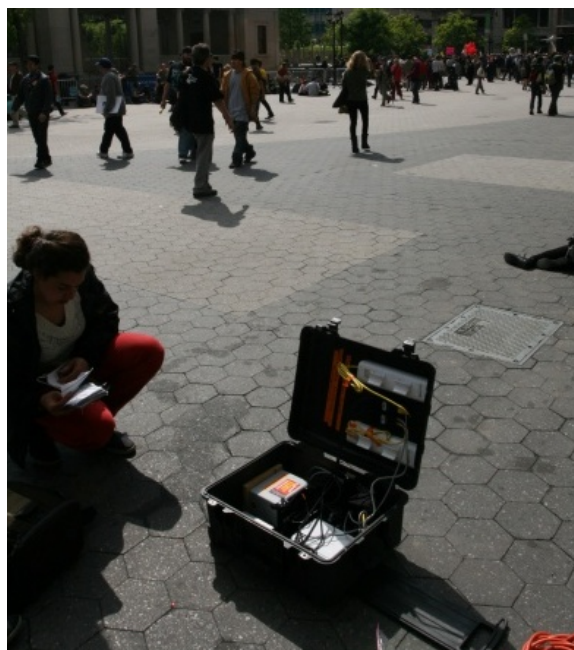
On May Day, Bryan, Elise, and Pablo prototyped and deployed a mobile FreedomTower. They provided a moving wifi hotspot to activists marching that day in Manhattan, and distributed flyers about network freedom.

## CONNECTING FOR GOOD

Through the latter half of this year, the FNF worked with KC non-profit Connecting for Good to set up a wireless network at Rosedale Ridge, a low-income housing complex in Kansas City, KS.

Isaac, who also serves on the board of Connecting for Good, helped C4G negotiate for wireless backhaul with Joe's Data Center and set up a point-to-point link between Oak Tower and the network.

Connecting for Good, which works to bridge the digital divide in KC, will also be offering technology education classes and affordable computers at Rosedale Ridge. Connecting For Good has also agreed to act as our fiscal sponsor while our tax-exempt status is pending.



*An activist logs on to the mobile FreedomTower on May first in NYC*

# 2012 IN REVIEW BUILDING ALLIANCES

## HACKFEST

In February, we participated with the FreedomBox Foundation in a hackfest at Columbia University, where Progress was made on tools that will help to build free networks.

## MAKING CONNECTIONS

Isaac represented the FNF at several conferences on technology and social change this year. He participated in discussion panels at Freedom to Connect in Silver Spring, MD, and Personal Democracy Forum in NYC.

Isaac also represented the FNF at two global events – the Human Rights and Technology Conference (RightsCon) and the Open Internet Tools Project's Circumvention Tech Summit, both in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Along with Pablo and Tyrone, Isaac also attended the Allied Media Conference in Detroit.

## ENGAGING THE COMMUNITY

This year, the FNF organized several community meetings with interested individuals in NYC.

Since moving to Kansas City, we have held two community meetings for interested individuals, where we discussed what a free network will look like and how to help free networks get started and take root here.

Community meetings have helped particularly in developing the Free Network Compact, a practical codification of what it means for a network to be 'free'.



*Isaac spoke, alongside Eben Moglen and Doc Searles, at Freedom to Connect in Silver Spring, MD on May 22*



# FNF IN THE NEWS



**"SOPA Will Wash out Freedom,"** The Valdosta Spectator, 19 January 2012

**"Introduction to the Free Network Foundation,"** video, Internet Society of New York, 18 February 2012



**FASTCOMPANY** **"The World's 50 Most Innovative Companies,"** Fast Company, 20 February 2012

**Free the Network,** video, Motherboard.tv, 28 March 2012



**"Movement aims to decentralize the Internet,"** CNN.com, 28 March 2012

**"Occupy the Internet: Protests Give Rise to DIY Data Networks,"** TIME Tech, 28 March 2012



**GIZMODO** **"Occupy Wall Street and the War to Free All Internet,"** Gizmodo, 28 March 2012

**"A Telecom-Independent Internet, Tested at Occupy Wall Street, for Just \$2,000,"** Betabeat, 30 March 2012



## ON OUR PROJECT WITH CONNECTING FOR GOOD



**"Free Wi-Fi service begins today at Rosedale Ridge public housing in KCK,"** The Pitch Weekly, 14 December 2012

**"Kansas City Nonprofit Launches Free Wi-Fi for Low Income Housing,"** Kansas City Business Journal, 14 December 2012



**"Nonprofit Throws Digital Lifeline to KCK Apartment Complex,"** Kansas City Star, 17 December 2012

For more stories of FNF in the news, including those from 2011, please check out <http://commons.thefnf.org/index.php/Clippings>

# THE YEAR AHEAD

As we enter 2013, we find ourselves very well situated to make waves in the world of networks. Our team in Kansas City has settled into a new office and warehouse space, and all components of the runtime testing lab are in place in Austin.

## WINTER SUMMIT

Preparations are in place for our 2013 Winter Summit, which will take place in Austin at the end of this month. Coming out of the summit, we intend to launch a capital campaign that will allow us to dive into product development, improve our infrastructure, and devote more time to the cause.

## RELEASE OF FREEDOMCENTER

We are rapidly closing out our feature and bug backlog in preparation for opening FreedomCenter to the public at the end of Q1. FreedomCenter isn't necessarily intended to be a released/supported product, but if user interest is there, we may enter the "enterprise data ownership" space. This is a fully documented and replicable application/service suite, which we will use to enable various development efforts. Where most groups would have relied upon the Infrastructure-as-a-Service 'cloud', we are confident that the decision to build and maintain our own development systems will pay long-term dividends in terms of stability, flexibility, and security.

## DEVELOPMENT WORK

Our lab (powered by FreedomCenter) will be used by numerous open source projects in the coming year to build a "Ubuntu LTS WISP-in-a-box (FreedomTower/Link)". This process will be performed almost entirely by the respective upstream projects who, until now, haven't had any permanent test/interop environment. FNF staff efforts will be focused around FreedomBox and FreeeomNode and ensuring 100% end to end carrier grade crypto is available to all in a turnkey package.

## COALITION BUILDING

We have some exciting partnerships in the works, but will have to wait until they are formalized to announce them widely. Expect big news on network deployments stateside, and federation of free networking efforts worldwide.

**We believe that 2013 is the year we make history -- with your help, it surely will be.**

# PERSONNEL

## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Isaac Wilder (Chair)  
Gregory Foster  
Patti Wyble  
Tyrone Greenfield  
Martin Dluhos

## OFFICERS

Isaac Wilder, Co-founder and  
Executive Director  
Charles Wyble, Co-founder and CTO  
Tyrone Greenfield, COO  
James Yox, CIO

## ADVISORY BOARD

John Stone  
Jon Lebkoswky  
Jeff Sterling  
Paul Garrin  
Devin Balkind  
Richard Stallman



*FNF AINT NOTHIN TO FUCK WIT*

## AND MANY THANKS TO OUR TIRELESS VOLUNTEERS

Patrick Anderson  
Anna Armstrong  
Devin Balkind  
James Boothe  
Pablo Jose Varona Borges  
Nick Daly  
Anita Dixon

Martin Dluhos  
Marcus Eagan  
Elise Gallant  
Patrick Gibbs  
Dylan Gumm  
Charlie Gunzelman  
Sophie Klein

Jeff Leep  
Adam Longwill  
Joshua Mercado  
Bryan Newbold  
Travis Newton  
Steve Price  
Harris Wilder

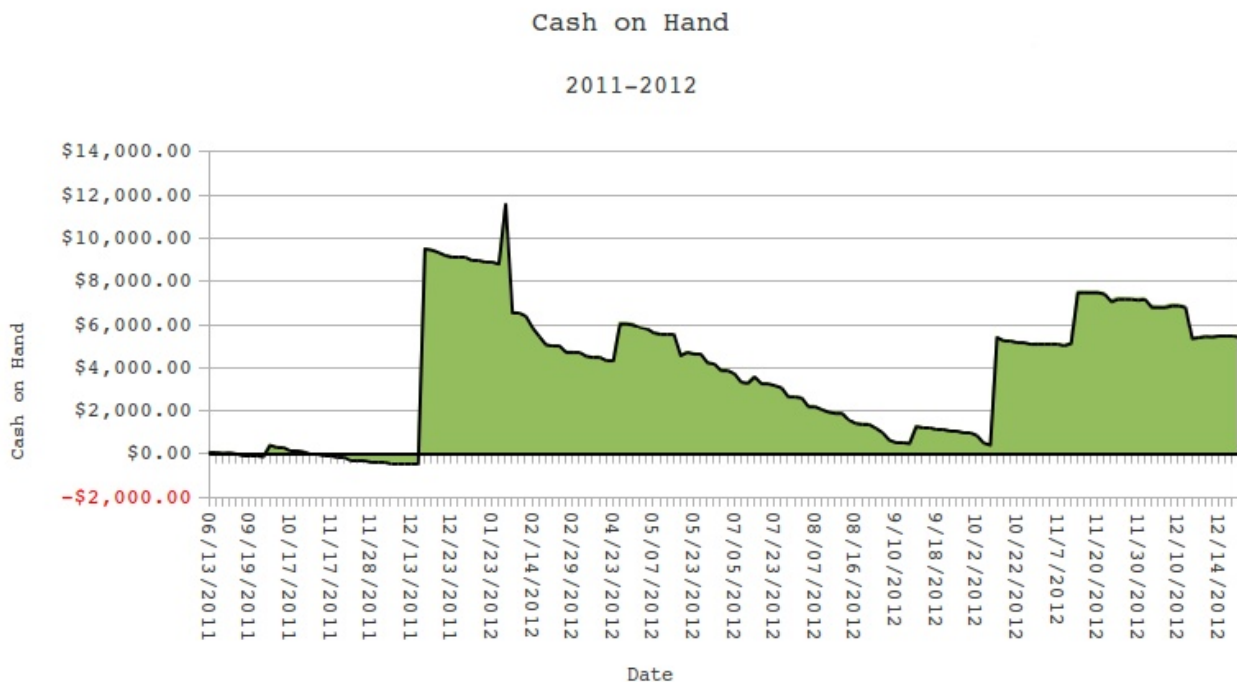
# FNF FINANCIAL REPORT 2011-2012

## SUMMARY

Because this is our first Annual Report, the following figures reflect the Free Network Foundation's finances to date (June 2011-December 2012). 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.

A complete account of the FNF's financial data may be found on the Commons, at <http://commons.thefnf.org/index.php/Finances>



# FNF FINANCIAL REPORT 2011 2012

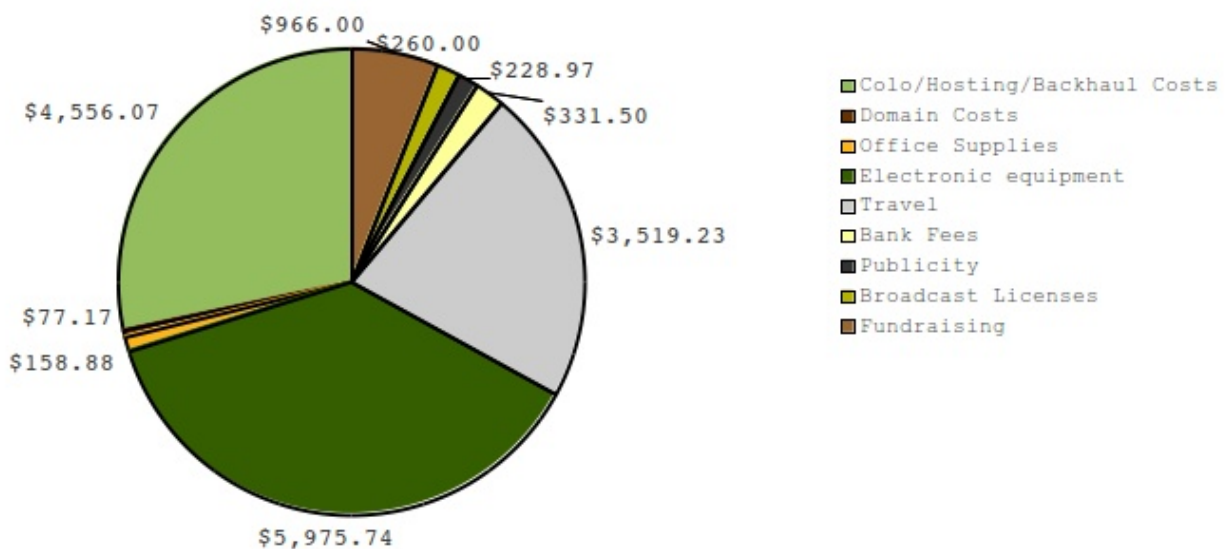
## EXPENSES

Of the \$16,488 we spent between June 2011 and November 2012, the largest portion went into colocation, hosting, and backhaul costs. We are colocated in facilities in Dallas, TX and Kansas City, MO, that currently cost us a total of \$424/mo. Until summer 2012, we also kept an account with Clear for 4G backhaul.

About a quarter of our costs were travel-related, either to and from conferences, or to get core team members to key FNF meetings. A large portion of our expenses also went into electronic equipment, mostly components to build FreedomCenter or prototype FreedomTowers. About 5% of our costs so far went to printing t-shirts and hoodies for fundraising. It should be noted that \$5,000 worth of our expenses incurred in 2011 came from a loan that was paid back in 2012, and are listed for 2011 in itemized expenses, but for 2012 in overall expenses.

FNF Expenses by Type

June 2011-December 2012



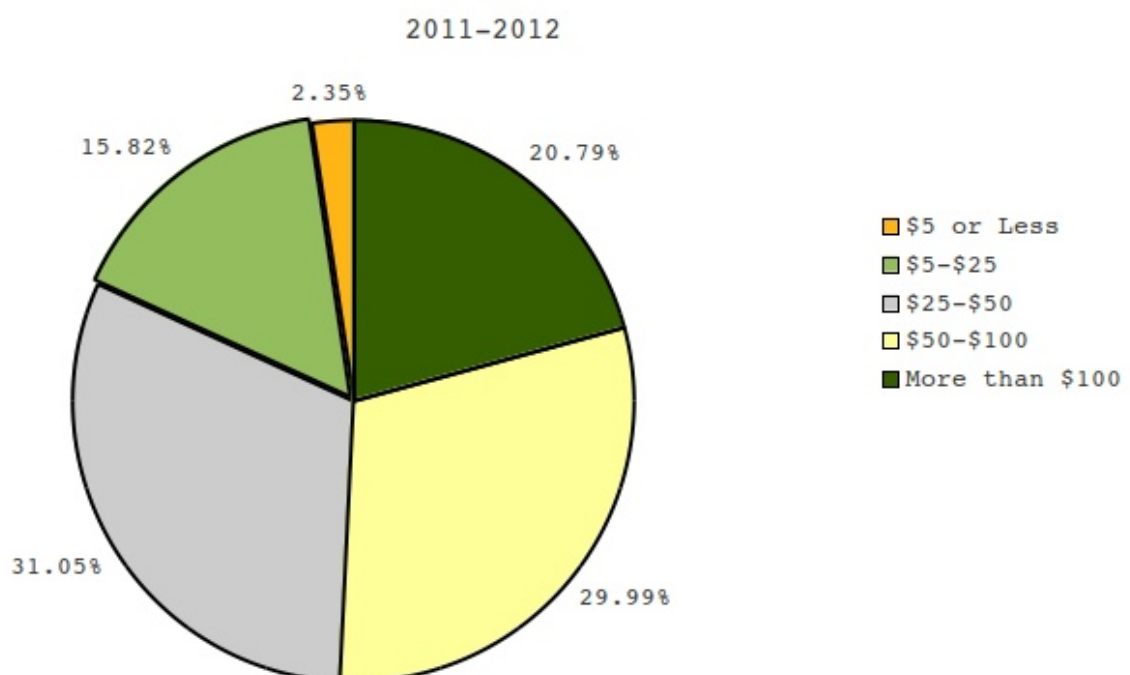
# FNF FINANCIAL REPORT 2011 2012

## DONATIONS

This data on donations includes donors who gave to the FNF through Paypal, Indiegogo, or WePay. It does not include either the \$10,000 or \$5,000 awards we have received, or donations we have received in cash, all of which are included in the above data on income. Our statistics on donations consider monthly contributions as a collection of one-time contributions.

Since June 2011, the FNF has received 185 donations. The median donation was \$25.00, and the mean donation was \$41.89. The greatest number of donations so far, both monetarily and by frequency, happened during our Indiegogo fundraising campaign from October 2011 until the end of that year. The relatively even slope in the graph "Donations to the FNF" on the following page shows our growing reliance on monthly contributors.

Percentage of Total Individual Donations by Amount



# THANKS TO OUR DONORS

## 20112012

2 Acre Studios, \$8*	Fair Play, \$1	Mauricio Vergara, \$25
Adam G Anderson, \$40*	Francis Deslauriers, \$25*	Nancy Hipsh Wolff, \$200*
AIRSHP, \$25	Frank Fort, \$20	Nick Daly, Undisclosed†
Alex Horn, \$25	Fred Murphy, \$50	Nicolas Marchildon, \$5
Alex Limkin, \$50	Frontera Networks LLC, \$20	nmgridl, \$50
Alexander Melia, \$20*	FutureScape LLC, \$5	nzurow, Undisclosed†
amurphyone, \$25	Gary Weiner ADR, \$50	Patrick McClung, \$100
Andrew B Wood, \$10	Gary Haith, \$100	Paul Mannings, \$50
Andrew Long, \$5	Grant Moritz, \$50	Paul Tavarez, \$25
Anne McGregor, \$300*	Hank Sohota, \$200*	Peter Wey Wey, \$1
Anonymous,	Harlene J Hipsh, \$650*	Rayce Jacobson, \$25
Asa Wilder, \$500*	Ivan Marti, \$25	Rex Unger, \$25
Ben Finney, \$50	Jacqueline Fellner, \$30*	Richard Seabrook, \$25
Benedetto Piscitelli, \$5	James Doom, \$50	ritterer, \$25
Benjamin Abrams, \$50	James Valleroy, \$20*	Robin Boast, \$50
Bill Koonce, \$100	Jared Congiardo, \$20	Roderick Mackenzie, \$25
Brian Hayes, \$10	Jason Schechter, \$100	Roger Glasel, \$50
Brian Wilson, \$25	Jaynie Schultz, \$100	Sally Wengrover, Undisclosed†
briandbrownwalker.com, \$5	Jeff Rabena, \$5	Sylvain Saubier, \$2*
Carl Rigney, \$100	Jennifer Ryan, \$125*	SEO Ohio, \$10
Cesar Flores, \$62.40	JoAnn Tanis, Undisclosed†	Stephen P Price, \$100*
Charles Gunzelman, \$100	John T Drefahl, \$300*	Tal Messing, \$50
Chris Conde, \$10*	jon.lebkowsky, \$25	Tammy LacherScully, \$20
Colin Grove, \$25	Justin Amos, \$2*	The Fondo, \$10*
Cyprien Huissoud, \$100	Katharyn Waterfield, \$10	Torvald de Boskat, \$120
Daniel Levy, \$50	Katrin Leinweber, \$50	Victoria Mercer, \$25
David Lambert, \$250*	Ken Runge, \$25	William E Rice, \$50
David Rodarm, Undisclosed†	Krista Gullickson, \$10	Zachary Addair, \$100
David V Allen, \$10	Leslie Brothers, \$100*	Zev Averbach, \$25
David Wlazlo, \$10	Lindsey M Taggart, \$25	
Debra Goodman, \$10	Louis R Weigele, \$10	
Demons of the Hell Pit, \$100	Marc Shade, \$5	
Doug R Greer, \$20*	Marko Veselinovic, \$5	
Douglas Rushkoff, \$50	Martin Achermann, \$20	
Dylan Gumm, Undisclosed†	Matthew O'Connor, \$10	
Emil Volcheck, \$10	Matthew P Kowal, \$10	
Erika Peterson, \$20		
Fabien Lannoye, \$50		

\* Indicates a recurring donor

† Donors to our Indiegogo fundraising campaign were given the option not to disclose the amount of their contribution

# HOW TO CONTRIBUTE

Without your support, our work would be impossible. Innovation under austerity is something that takes a village. It means that we've all got to pitch in, in whatever way we can. For some of us, that means devoting our time, our energy, and our skills. For others it means donating money, hardware, or resources. For all of us it means sacrifice, dedication, and a will to build a more equitable world.

We hope that this document has shown you that the FNF is an organization that is capable of making a few resources go a long way -- now we'd like to highlight some of the ways that you can support the mission of the FNF in the new year:

**HACK WITH US** -- Having spent the last year building a world-class playground for network hackers, we could not be more excited about the prospect of having the wider community of researchers make use of our resources. If you are interested in working in, on, or around FreedomCenter, please don't hesitate to be in touch.

**KEEP THE LIGHTS ON** -- The blinking lights, that is. Keeping all of our systems online and available for the world to use takes money. Becoming a member of the FNF not only helps us pay our bills, but it helps us grow and plan in a way that is sustainable. You can sign up on our website or by emailing [contact@thefnf.org](mailto:contact@thefnf.org)

**CHANGE THE GAME** -- Making a donation to the FNF is making an investment in our collective future. We use our funds to get tools built -- tools that are useful in fight for freedom in the online sphere. We welcome gifts of any size, and are happy to work with donors to see that funds are directed towards and activity of their choosing. In addition to accepting Federal Reserve Notes through our website, the FNF is thrilled to accept Bitcoins. **Our Bitcoin address is 18S8ugWEuWLBMP9DBpBdDk9SN6CiRxZB8S.**

**GIVE IN KIND** -- 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 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.

**BE A PART OF IT** -- The world can be daunting, and our needs go far beyond the material. More than anything, the moral and spiritual support of community is what sustains us. Our [Discuss] list is the center of our community, and we hope you'll consider being a part of the conversation.



**YOU  
CAN  
SHARE  
THIS  
DOCUMENT  
UNDER**



**BY - SA  
3.0**