



# **BITS OF FREEDOM**

Annual Report 2018

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# PREFACE

Sometimes, something happens that suddenly puts the challenges around the internet in our society into focus. The Snowden revelations in 2013 had that effect. Suddenly it became clear how far the secret services could go in monitoring our communication. What initially was only seen by a small vanguard became mainstream.

In the beginning of 2018 there was another one of those moments, again after a whistleblower sought publicity. Christopher Wylie told *The Observer* that he had built Steve Bannon's tool for psychological warfare in the service of Cambridge Analytica. After that, there suddenly was room for discussion everywhere about the role Facebook plays in our society. A company with a questionable moral compass, with over two billion users, and with a large share of our personal attention, trying to make as much money as possible as quickly as possible. What does that mean for our democracy and the rule of law? Suddenly we are all concerned about the role of major tech companies.

2018 was also a crucial year for privacy in the Netherlands. Thanks to the initiative of a group of students, we were allowed to go to the polls in March to advise the government on the dragnet surveillance bill. For three months we did everything we

could to get the "no" vote to win. Our campaign approach was that the Netherlands deserved a better law. We succeeded in controlling the debate. We did so by handing out flyers with volunteers in dozens of large cities, through radio and TV commercials, by speaking up in countless debates and with a permanent presence in the media. The secret services were pushed into a corner and always felt compelled to respond to our arguments. The responsible minister could not say anything without being checked by us. On the evening of the results our Ton Siedsma was live at our national news broadcaster to explain the result to the TV viewer.

And what a result it was... The Netherlands said "No!" to mass surveillance!

After such a year it is no surprise that more and more people are getting involved in our work. In the past year, the number of volunteers that helped us grew enormously. Support from individual donors has also increased drastically compared to 2017. Almost half of our income now comes from private individuals who consider our work to be of great importance. And that is important to us. That way we can continue to

guarantee our independence. In this way we can continue to fully protect human rights in the digital domain.

This annual report focuses on the most important points of 2018. These are the activities that we are most proud of and that have had the most impact. We look forward to making 2019 a year with many highlights, with the support of our donors, volunteers and wider supporters. If you want to help with that, we would of course like to hear from you!

**Bits of Freedom, March 2019**

## Team

Hans de Zwart

Rejo Zenger

Evelyn Austin

Inge Wannet

Imre Jonk

David Korteweg

Karim Khamis

Esther Crabbendam

Barry Smit

Lotte Houwing

## Board

Lonneke van der Velden

Hermine Masmeyer

Clemens la Lau

Judith Blijden

Marjolein Lanzing



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# OUR HIGHLIGHTS OF 2018

OUR



## We won the dragnet surveillance bill referendum

The first quarter of the year was entirely devoted to the “No” campaign for the dragnet referendum. We wanted to persuade people who were still in doubt. (After all, we did not have to convince the people who are already skeptical about the powers of the secret services and about surveillance). We think it makes sense to have secret services. However, because their work is necessarily secret, they can also be a danger to our democracy. The law must therefore be the best possible law. It was clear that the bill was just not good enough. So we campaigned for “a better law.” We formulated five points to improve the proposed law and mentioned them everywhere we went. In addition, we continuously monitored the statements made by the secret services, the government and the political parties. If they proclaimed untruths, we would inform the public.

We printed thousands of flyers and mobilized volunteers to distribute them in dozens of large cities. For three months we talked about the dragnet surveillance bill at some event nearly every evening. And we were constantly present in the Dutch media. With a subsidy from the referendum committee (which supported neutral campaigns, advocates and opponents) we were able to buy commercials on radio and television.

We even produced our own TV show and streamed it live on the internet. Millions of people have come across our reporting in this way. We had a strong position in the debate and our framing (“a vote against the law is a vote for a better law”) was taken over by the most outspoken political opponents of the law. Our direct opposition, the head of the AIVD, therefore had to constantly defend himself against our argument. In the end, even the most fanatical proponents of the law agreed that the law could be improved. During the live broadcast in which the result of the referendum was announced, we were at the NOS studio to deliver our commentary.

For months, all polls said the “Yes” vote would win. In the end, a majority voted against the new law. We won the referendum! This makes the Netherlands the first country in the world in which the people have spoken out en masse against mass surveillance.

Unfortunately, the government has done too little with this advice. After a number of suggestions for cosmetic changes the law was allowed to go into effect, even before these changes had been discussed in parliament. We have filed summary proceedings as part of a broad coalition of human rights organizations, journalists, lawyers and a number of companies. We wanted parts of the law to be suspended until

the House of Representatives and the Senate had ruled on the announced legislative changes. Unfortunately, we have lost those summary proceedings. The coalition is now examining whether it is advisable to continue fighting this bill in court.

Although the referendum has not yet led to the hoped changes, it was useful. For the first time, there was a broad social debate about limits to government curiosity. Had we lost the referendum, politicians would feel free in the coming years to come up with more legislation that would put our freedom under pressure. Thanks to the public debate privacy remains high on the political agenda.

## We brought internet freedom to all 14 Liberation Festivals

Together with our volunteers, Bits of Freedom was present at all fourteen Dutch Liberation Festivals: from Vlissingen to Groningen and from Leeuwarden to Roermond. We were there with our self-developed installation “Freedom EXPOsed”, a combination of an exhibition and a puzzle game. People were playfully challenged to think about tracking your location, the Internet of Things, the data grabbing practices of major tech companies and the work of Bits of Freedom.

Watch [this video](#) to get an idea of what Freedom EXPOsed looked like.

In the evening we organized the fifth edition of the Godwin lecture together with De Correspondent and ARTIS. In this annual event, it is allowed to make a historical comparison without being blamed for a making a ‘Godwin’. Amade M’charek spoke about DNA, profiling and race.

## We drew attention to the censorship of large platforms such as YouTube and Facebook

We campaigned against Article 13 in the proposal for new European copyright rules, through our “Save the Meme” website, and by joining a wider coalition of opponents. We also managed to get attention for the way in which we are already censored by Facebook and YouTube. We criticized the randomness with which these companies decided to take certain content and sometimes all content from an account offline. We drew attention on our own site and in Nieuwsuur for the way in which the YouTube account of Women on Waves (a women’s rights organization) was blocked several times and always without good reason.

## We brought the wiretap statistics from the secret services to light

For the past eight years we have gone from courtroom to courtroom to persuade our government to publish annual tap statistics from the secret services. The responsible ministers kept refusing to release these figures. As this would reveal too much of the method of the secret services. The highest judge in the country has repeatedly stated that the ministers could choose: either give a better explanation for why these figures should really remain secret, or simply publish them. In January 2018, the ministers finally chose the second option. They promised that they will continue to do so in the coming years.



## We contested misinformation about the GDPR and tackled the NPO app

In the weeks before the new European privacy rules (the GDPR) would take effect, we ensured within the European digital rights network that a number of publications were written that could be widely translated and used. We also looked back on the four years of struggle that preceded the entry into force of the law. Years in which civil rights organizations have had to fight hard against the lobby from the business community. We played a small role in getting the pan-European websites “GDPR Explained” and “GDPR Today” online. The first provides answers to the most frequently asked questions about the GDPR, the second offers news about the law from a human rights perspective. We translated the first site into Dutch and provided our technical infrastructure (version management of the code and hosting) for both sites.

The NPO released a version of their app at the start of the year. Unfortunately, a tracking wall was thrown up: you could only view their programs if you agreed that the app could track you and offer you personalized advertisements. We quickly came into action with an angry blog post and together with the Dutch Consumer Association wrote a letter to the NPO with the demand to adjust this as quickly as possible. They immediately stopped personalizing the ads and removed the tracking

wall. A few months later, they published a new version of the app that properly asks for permission before you get tracked, and allowing you to still use the app if you do not give permission.



## We launched our data access tool: My Data Done Right

On the 25th of October—five months after the start of the General Data Protection Regulation—we launched our new data access tool: My Data Done Right. We had eight years of experience with running a tool which lets you request your own data from businesses and other organizations. We used that experience to make our new tool as easy to use as possible.

Volunteers can now keep the contents of the tool (especially the addresses) up to date. More than 20 volunteers have added more than 1000 organizations to the database. A unique aspect of the tool is that all personal data remains on the computer of the user. True *privacy by design*. It has been designed to be easily rolled out in other European countries; the possibility for translation and localisation is already built into the code.

The launch was broadly announced in the media. The website has been visited almost 18.000 times in two months and thousands of people have submitted a request.

One important way in which we will use the tool is by asking our supporters to submit a request each time a company is involved in a data scandal. We have done this for example by calling on people to request their reputation score from Facebook when it got out that Facebook kept such a score on people's trustworthiness.



## We advised the government and parliament in The Hague and in Brussels

We were asked multiple times by the Dutch House of Representatives to offer our advice: about 'horizontal' privacy (the privacy among civilians), about the market dominance of internet- and technology companies, and about the first Dutch national digitalisation strategy. When the government offered their adjustments to the dragnet law for our consultation we took the chance to again state our fundamental problems with the law. We offered some practical suggestions to better secure the rights of citizens.

Our continuing agitation against tracking walls (which only grant access after you have agreed to the tracking) has contributed to the strong Dutch position on this issue. The Dutch House of Representatives has passed a resolution to limit the use of tracking walls in the ePrivacy guidelines. Unfortunately there does not seem to be a majority for this resolution on a European level.

At the beginning of the year we explained to the ALDE fraction in the European Parliament that you cannot maintain the law on one side by continually breaking it on the other side.

## We went to court to defend net neutrality

T-Mobile offers contracts with 'data-free' music. According to us this is a form of 'zero rating' and thus a violation of net neutrality. We therefore asked the Authority for Consumers & Markets (ACM) to act. After research of the contracts on offer with T-Mobile the ACM concluded that these contracts fit within European law. We do not agree and went to court to try to make sure that the net neutrality principle can keep existing in the field of zero rating.

The European Commission has also asked the law firm representing T-Mobile in this case to research the guidelines concerning net neutrality. We made sure that multiple organizations sent a letter to the Commission asking them how they would guarantee that the research would really be done independently.



## We kept the police on its toes

More and more often we see that the government (and especially the police) asks companies for certain data or measures instead of properly using their legal authority to force them to comply. This is a slippery slope because it sidesteps the guarantees that make sure the government does not abuse its authority. We wrote a series of blogposts describing this development and making clear that this has to stop. (Nobody actually thinks this is a good situation.)

The Dutch police is experimenting with data driven detection and enforcement. In Roermond, for example, there is a new approach in which all cars that come into town are profiled. A chance is calculated on whether there are any pickpockets in the car. We are very critical of this plan. In the public debate about the pilot study we took the position that the police endangers our future by experimenting without a clear vision and strategy behind these experiments. Without this vision we risk sliding down to a surveillance state.

2018 also was the year in which the hacking proposal was accepted by the Dutch Senate. During all the phases of this proposal we have fought against the authority of the police to break into our devices. While the proposal was accepted it was improved

on a number of points, also because of our work. The discussion has also matured. The last debate still was mostly about the policy arguments that we consequently brought: the use of unknown vulnerabilities and the lack of proper oversight on the police.



## We appeared a lot on the radio and television and in the newspapers

In 2018 we appeared dozens of times on the radio and on tv and made the large evening news broadcasts multiple times. Newspapers and magazines found us as well and we published opinion pieces a number of times. Here follows a small selection of the media performances with video and one item from the radio (all in Dutch):

Radar on criminals trying to weasel money from unknowing internet users

NOS op 3 to read the dragnet law in it's entirety

With Dag6 we went backstage at Google

A livestream about the dragnet law produced by us

Rambam about the trading in data

The Nerd Culture Podcast by Gamekings TV about the current state of privacy

Radar on the most important arguments against the dragnet law

Expert at the Privacytest on NPO3

Nieuwsuur on how the KNVB treats the data of its football playing members

Radio 1 on why Dutch people are so rude on social media

Nieuwsuur on how the government handled the no vote on the dragnet law referendum

RTV Rijnmond about cameras on the streets of Rotterdam

## And...

We participated in multiple European campaigns against the upload filter and informed our followers. // We aligned our position on *predictive policing* with Controle Alt Delete and with Amnesty. // We called on organizations and their *community* not to become dependent on Facebook. // We were helped by volunteers to organise a lot of Privacy Cafés. // We pleaded for smart and safe standards for our digital infrastructure, and for being able to hold manufacturers accountable. // We argued once more that it is a bad idea to weaken encryption. // We held dozens of guest lectures and -lessons at all levels of education. // We were present at Privacy Camp 2018 in Brussels. // We reviewed *The Cleaners* and participated in the discussion after the Dutch premiere. // We released 12 updates for updates. // We wrote a practical explanation on how to defend against the Facebook Pixel. // We organised a meeting for our translation volunteers. // We facilitated a session on the EDRi *General Assembly* about the growth plan of the network. // We gave a presentation about different concepts of freedom on RightsCon. // We had a visit from 20 trainees from the government to tell them about our work. // We celebrated (as one of the founders) the fifteenth birthday of the European Digital Rights initiative (EDRi) and attended the farewell party for their director, Joe McNamee. // We were a client at the What Design Can Do festival. // We participated in a *litigation retreat* of the Digital Freedom Fund

(in Montenegro). // We researched how Facebook is blocking activists and makes it impossible for them to communicate with their followers. // We drew attention to our Internet Freedom Toolbox at the “Nacht van de Dictatuur” // We organised a session about sustainable activism and a healthy working environment at Freedom Not Fear. // We participated in a workshop of the Digital Freedom Fund about *future proofing your rights*. // We had Ronald Prins (overseer at the TIB) as a speaker at one of our receptions. // We contributed to an item on “Nieuwsuur” about the failing content moderation policy on YouTube. // We started the use of Yubikeys to encrypt our emails. // We moved our website and email from bof.nl to bitsoffreedom.nl. // We organised a campaign for donors twice. // We prepared for the Big Brother Awards 2018. Among other things we found a jury of seven to decide on the expert award. // We had an important contribution in the discussion about content being taken offline by hosts at the request of the police. // We contributed to a session of the Scientific Council for Government Policy (about artificial intelligence) and to a supervisory committee of the “Rathenau Instituut” (about the use of sensors by the police). // We attended the gathering about 70 years of freedom of speech by the “Humanistisch Verbond”. // We talked to the national police about testing grounds for *predictive policing*. // On World Animal Day we questioned the lack of privacy for animals. // We



visited the 35th Chaos Computer Congress in Leipzig. // We found out who actually profits from the data from cycle trackers. // We had thousands of people vote for the most offensive privacy abusers of the year.



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# ABOUT BITS OF FREEDOM

BITS



**The statutory goal of Bits of Freedom is “to defend and promote digital civil rights in the information society, especially the fundamental right to freedom of communication and the fundamental right to privacy and all that concerns the aforementioned or can be advantageous to it, everything in the broadest sense of the word.”**

## The team

In 2018 the team of Bits of Freedom was made up of the following people: David Korteweg (policy advisor), Evelyn Austin (movement builder), Hans de Zwart (director), Imre Jonk (system manager), Inge Wannet (office manager), Karim Khamis (designer) and Rejo Zenger (policy advisor). After more than five years of loyal service Ton Siedsma has made a career move. His legal skills are legendary by now. Until April Tijmen Swaalf was our campaigner and he leaves us with a mountain of creative ideas. Esther Crabbendam joined us in August as campaigner and Barry Smit became our communication strategist on 15 October. Jessé Vermeulen replaced Imre Jonk for a few months while Imre was doing an internship.

Eef Prins supported us as freelancer on the dragnet law campaign. Aleksandar Todorovic was our *Open Web Fellow* from February until the summer and in September

Danae Tapia started in the same role. Mary DuBard had a fellowship to come work in Europe from the USA for a summer and supported us on My Data Done Right. For the My Data Done Right project we also worked with two freelancers: Ruben Doornweerd for the design and Jean Jacques Warmerdam for the front- and backend.

## The board

Until October the board consisted of: Lonneke van der Velden (Chairman), Clemens Ia Lau (treasurer), Manon Oostveen (secretary) and Hermine Masmeyer. As of the 31st of October Manon was discharged. Judith Blijden became our new secretary from that moment on. As of the 20th of December Marjolijn Lanzing joined us as a fifth (and general) member of the board. The members of the board receive a volunteers' fee of €500 a year. The board did not receive any further reimbursement of expenses for their activities.

## The advisory board

The advisory board consists of public figures with expertise in the area of law, politics, media/communications, art, technology and business. At the end of 2018 the board consisted of the following members: Olaf Kolkam (chairman), Amade M'charek, Anneke Jansen, Antoinette Hertsenberg, Eleni Kosta, Jaap-Henk Hoepman, Linda Duits, Lineke Sneller, Maxim Februari, Mohamed el Maslouhi, Ot van Daalen en Sarah Hagens. The members of the advisory board do not receive any compensation (or expenses).

More information about the staff, the members of the board and the members of the advisory board can be found [here](#).

## The volunteers

Much of what we do is dependent on volunteers. Hundreds of people invested their time again this year in the struggle for internet freedom. They helped us with translations, web design and campaigns, and organised their own events. We are very grateful for all the help!

Do you also want to become a volunteer? Click [here](#).

## The international network

We are one of the founders and active member of the *European Digital Rights initiative (EDRi)*. A network of almost 40 organizations that stand up for internet freedom. The network and the European lobby are coordinated from the EDRi offices in Brussels.

More information about the network can be found [here](#).



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# OUR FINANCES

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## Our income over 2018

The income of Bits of Freedom in 2018 amounted to € 689,839. 43% was received from individual donors, large funds contributed 30% and 7% came from business supporters. The last 20% came in through project financing. See:

### Income 2018 (x € 1,000)

	Realization 2018	Budgeted 2018	Realization 2017
Individual donors	296	256	242
Foundations	207	251	276
Corporate supporters	50	49	48
Other	0	0	0
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>552</b>	<b>556</b>	<b>566</b>
Project based	137	164	70
<b>Total</b>	<b>690</b>	<b>720</b>	<b>636</b>

We received € 53,294 more support from individual donors than in 2017. We found 324 new permanent new donors and lost 140, so 184 were added. We are entering 2019 with 2,935 regular donors who donate over € 72 per year on average.

In 2018 we were supported in our core costs by the Adessium Foundation, Internet4all, SIDN, and the Open Society Foundations (OSF).

The following companies supported us with € 5,000 or more: Bitonic, Bl3p, Eureka Unlimited, Leaseweb en Voys. From these companies we received € 2,500 or more: A2B Internet, BIT, Greenhost, IB-Vision, Mollie, Startmail en VoIPGRID. We received € 500 or more from these companies: Argeweb, Autoverzekering - hoyhoy, Autoverzekeringenvergelijken.nl, Autoverzekering.nl, Baak Detailhandel, Bureau Bolster, Easyswitch.nl, First8, GeoCat, Green Mini host, Het Rooster, iCulture, Independer, Intermax Managed Hosting, Inshared, Kennisland, Kentekencheck.nu, Lequal BV, m7, Mijndomein, NederHost, NetExpert, Nijweide BV, Overstappen.nl, PCextreme, Pricewise - energie, PrivacyLab, Prijs Vergelijken, RealConnections, Rebel Internet, Root Legal, Saldo Management, Savvii Managed Wordpress Hosting, Serinus42, SKEPP Kantoorruimte huren, Sooda internetbureau B.V., Telefoon Abonnement, Tifkap Enterprises, Unc Inc.,



VBVB ICT, Het Vertaalcollectief, Vimexx, VoiceCowboys VPN Diensten, VPN Gids en Zygomatic. Finally, we received in-kind support from: Bitonic, Blendle, Cyso, Leaseweb, Mollie, Nines, Xolphin en XS4ALL.

The Amsterdam Committee for May 4th and 5th and ARTIS both contributed to the organization of Freedom EXPOsed and the Godwin lecture on Liberation Day. The SIDN Fund supported My Data Done Right with € 53,136. The Democracy and Media Foundation gave us € 23,740 to design and produce our Do-It-Yourself kits for expanding our local departments. The Open Society Foundations (OSF) wanted to support Max Schrems' lawsuit against Facebook. Because Max had no foundation at that time, we acted as an intermediary. We received € 1,193 from OSF as a contribution to our administrative costs.

Normally we do not accept money from the government. We made an exception for the referendum on the dragnet surveillance bill. We did this because you could choose whether you wanted to campaign in favor, against or neutrally, and thus our independence was not affected by it. We received € 49,978 from the Referendum Committee for our campaign.

## Our spending in 2018

The expenditure over 2018 was € 630,211:

### Spending 2018 (x € 1,000)

	Realization 2018	Budgeted 2018	Realizations 2017
Staff costs	498	510	460
Housing	25	28	37
Office	7	12	7
Communication	9	5	19
Movement building	3	20	16
Operational costs	25	44	26
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>567</b>	<b>619</b>	<b>565</b>
Project based	64	174	79
<b>Total</b>	<b>630</b>	<b>793</b>	<b>644</b>

Most of the project based costs were made for My Data Done Right and the campaign for the dragnet referendum.



## Results over 2018

The depreciation was € 10,536 over 2018. This ended the year with a positive result of € 49,092.

Bits of Freedom wants to work as efficiently as possible. Our goal is to make sure no more than 20% of our money and time is spent on fundraising, management and administration. The most important fundraising activity in 2018 was the organization of two donor campaigns in October and December. In 2018, approximately 7% of our resources were spent on fundraising. In addition, approximately 8.5% of our funds has been spent on management and administration. Almost 85% of our received funds are therefore directly spent on the objective of Bits of Freedom: defending digital civil rights and standing up for internet freedom.

In the area of asset management and financial reserves, Bits of Freedom strives to maintain a continuity reserve of at least a quarter of its annual costs for the coming year. This is a common percentage for NGOs of our size. This reserve is used for unexpectedly high expenses and unexpectedly disappointing or late income. In this way we can guarantee the continuity of the foundation for a number of months. It also makes it possible to take responsible risks with the budget. At the end of 2018, the

reserve was € 308,630. This is not invested in risky financial products.

The annual financial report for 2018 has been audited by WITH Accountants (specialized in non-profit organizations) and can be downloaded [here](#).

## Our budget for 2019

We expect an income of € 655,215 over 2019.

### Expected income over 2019 (x € 1,000)

	Budgeted 2019
Individual donors	303
Foundations	235
Corporate supporters	80
Other	-
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>618</b>
Specific projects	22
New projects	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>655</b>

We want to find 500 new regular donors who contribute an average of € 85 per year. A number of funds have already promised their support for 2019 (Adessium, Internet4All, Open Society Foundations, SIDN and the Democracy and Media Foundation) and it is our ambition to find another € 30,000 from a fund in 2019. We think we can find around € 32,000 in new business supporters. The project income depends on subsidies awarded for specific projects and events. We already know that the RIPE NCC Community Fund will contribute € 21,300 so that we can find partners for My Data Done Right in other European countries. We also receive € 3,000 from XS4ALL once again to enable us to organize the Felipe Rodriguez award at our yearly Big Brother Awards.

The core expenditure of Bits of Freedom is expected to be € 674,373 in 2019, taking into account seven people who work four or more days a week and three part-time employees (7.7 FTE) and unforeseen costs. A number of specific projects and events have already been budgeted for € 29,000. For example, for organizing the Big Brother Awards, rolling out My Data Done Right across Europe, and organizing the Godwin lecture. The actual project costs (and therefore the decision whether projects are to be implemented) also depends on how many project grants are awarded. The total



expected expenditure thus amounts to € 717,373:

#### Expected expenditure 2019 (x € 1,000)

	Budgeted 2019
Staff costs	573
Housing	28
Office	13
Communication	6
Movement building	14
Operation costs	26
<b>Subtotal</b>	<b>673</b>
Specific projects	29
New projects	15
<b>Total</b>	<b>717</b>

The difference between the budgeted income and expenses is € 62,158. This negative result is supplemented by the continuity reserve, which brings it to 29% of the expected costs of the following financial year.

## Our funding in the coming years

It is very important for Bits of Freedom to have a sustainable financial situation. We prefer structural funding over project-based funds. Bits of Freedom wants to remain completely independent. With our financial planning we always try to look five years ahead for as much as this is possible.

We are funded from four sources. We want to receive at least a third of our income from individual donors. We would also like to receive at least a third of our income from funds or foundations. We never want the share of business supporters to exceed one third of the total income. No business supporter may donate more than 10% of our continuity reserve. Finally, in addition to our core funding, we also receive project funds.

It will be a challenge to continue at the current scale in the coming years, with an occupation of around 8 FTE. The multi-year support from a number of funds will come to an end after 2019. They think that we can now stand on our own two feet. Our number of new donors is growing rapidly (to 65% of our income in 2023) and we are going to invest in finding business supporters so that they will provide 19% of our income in five years. But even with that there is still a gap in our budget of between

€ 50,000 and € 100,000 in the coming years. That will have to be filled with renewing contracts with existing foundations and through finding new funds.

Do you want to become a Bits of Freedom supporter with your company?

Then look [here](#).

As a private individual your financial support for Bits of Freedom is fiscally beneficial too. See [here](#).



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**WE WILL CONTINUE**

**TO FIGHT FOR YOUR**

**INTERNET FREEDOM IN 2019**

**INTERNET FREEDOM**



**In the coming year our privacy and freedom of communication will continue to be under pressure. Here is a sneak preview of our plans for 2019. We will speak up for your internet freedom:**

## **By attacking the problems of Facebook and Google at the root**

Whether you call it surveillance capitalism, *Behaviours of Users Modified, and Made into an Empire for Rent (BUMMER)* or just platform problems: companies like Facebook and Google do not play a healthy role in our digital world at the moment. There are problems with censorship: we are becoming more and more dependent on companies that can be their own judge about what is and is not allowed online. And there are problems with how our data is treated: the companies get more and more powerful every day and become better at following, profiling and ultimately manipulating our behaviour.

We should not give up hope. The problems we face now with social media are not the fault of the internet. They arise out of a revenue model in which the exploitation of data is the norm. Even without Facebook and Google we can use the internet to share knowledge and culture with each other. We are going to work on an agenda in

which human rights are central again. We want an information ecosystem which is characterized by plurality, accountability and freedom.

## **By speaking up for the rule of law with a government that abides the law**

The past year it became known that the tax authority does not observe the GDPR. The police does not observe the police law. More and more often we see that the government allows itself broad powers and pressures our freedoms. There are too few safeguards to protect the ordinary internet user from abuses of power and arbitrariness. In the coming year we will again closely monitor the police. We will make clear how we feel that law enforcement should handle the internet. We are critical of predictive policing, think the police should not ask for what they should use a warrant for, and want to make sure that finally good ground rules are made about what they can and cannot do on the internet.



## By being a guide for the Internet of Things

We are fed up with all the ridiculous incidents surrounding the Internet of Things. A week does not pass without a toy being hacked, a supplier shutting down a service from a distance, or a machine secretly saving data without you knowing. We have recommendations to better regulate matters on the Internet of Things. We are going to actively track and bring to light the problems and force the manufacturers to take their responsibility.

## By going to court

Last November we brought a case to court against the Authority for Consumers & Markets to defend our net neutrality against T-Mobile's nefarious contracts. We expect the decision of the judge at the start of 2019. If we win the case, it means that we, along with our European partners, can ban zero rating from the EU. Should we not win this case, we will deliberate whether to appeal.

After our win at the referendum about the dragnet law, the government formulated a few (cosmetic) changes to the law. Next year they will debate these in the House of Representatives. Together with a broad coalition of civil rights organizations,

lawyers, journalists and companies we will keep a very close eye on this discussion. We are deliberating about subsequent legal steps to stop mass surveillance in the Netherlands. This of course also includes that we will carefully read and comment on all the reports of the two overseers.

The past years we have often forced the government to be more open. At the start of 2018 for example we got the judge to release the tapping statistics of our secret service. In 2019 we will again be in court one or multiple times to, for example, force the police to make their plans more transparent.

Finally we want to explore how to uphold the European privacy rules by way of a judge. We are going to have as much impact as possible on the way companies treat your personal data.

## By organizing the Big Brother Awards

It will happen again in January of 2019: the next edition of the Big Brother Awards, this time in the Rode Hoed in Amsterdam. Once a year we look at the state of privacy in the Netherlands. This time we have, among other things, a judge of experts nominating a privacy abuser in each domain (think care, work, housing).

## By giving people the tools to liberate themselves

In 2019 we again want to help as many people as possible to deal with privacy and freedom of communication on the internet more consciously. Our successful Internet Freedom Toolbox will get a visual and content overhaul.

Besides that we have worked last year on making Do It Yourself kits with activities you can use to organise meetings about internet freedom yourself. In 2019 we will roll out these kits and we will start a number of new local chapters besides Groningen and Eindhoven. One of the DIY Kits is Freedom EXPOsed. After the first presentation on 14 liberation festivals the project has been developed further to an exposition and an internet freedom quiz.

Our brand new data access tool My Data Done Right was made in such a way that it is easily translatable and put to use in other countries in the EU. In 2019 we will look for partners that want to use the tool in their local situation with our help. Then it will be possible for people throughout Europe to get insight in how companies use their personal data.

## And by keeping a sharp eye on everything and sharing our work as much as possible

The past year the press was able to find us. Journalists will be able to find us in 2019 as well when they want to hear from an organization with expertise on privacy and internet freedom.

Of course we prefer to keep our followers informed ourselves. We can be found on social media, but would rather reach you through your mailbox. The coming year we will start a number of new newsletters. With a series of mails we want to help you to go online safer and more free for example or you can get a short introduction into our dossiers.

You can subscribe to our newsletters [here](#).



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# COLOPHON

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Stichting Bits of Freedom (Bof) is headquartered in Amsterdam and registered with the Chamber of Commerce under number 34121286. The organization of Bits of Freedom consists of the board and the bureau. The bureau consists of the director and the other staff. An independent advisory board assists the director on strategic questions relating to the content. The daily and strategic management of Bits of Freedom lies with the director.

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[Statutes](#)

**Address:**

Prinseneiland 97hs

1013 LN Amsterdam

<https://www.bitsoffreedom.nl/>

**Contact:**

Hans de Zwart

+31 6 2185 6845

[hans@bitsoffreedom.nl](mailto:hans@bitsoffreedom.nl)

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