Disroot.org

Annual Report

2020

Annual Report 2020

Table of Contents

Fuck 2020

We're glad it's over... but, is it?

Oh boy what a year it was. Seems like it was centuries ago, yet it is just few months since life on our planet has totally changed. Everyone has been affected by it and everyone is dealing with the aftermath thinking whether we will ever get back to the normality we know from before.

For us, both personally, professionally and "Disroot'ally" this year has been special and extremely challenging as well. As every year we wanted to share some of the highlights of what has happened in Disroot during that roller coaster of a year.

2020 highlights

2020 started very mildly with making up plans for the upcoming year, full of enthusiasm but already feeling pressure of what was waiting for us. We made up a pretty busy plan for next months and started enthusiastically working on pushing the Disroot machine to the next level. The fate of 2020 however has been already decided and so in February everyone around the world got suddenly glued to their screens checking frantically new updates on worldOmeter forgetting about anything else. Once the toilet paper in the supermarket was totally gone, we knew our plans will most certainly need to be slightly adjusted.

COVID19 - KIT

As lockdown hit the planet, we decided to help people scrambling for tools to manage their new situation. We've noticed spike in new users of our services just like all online service providers did, both IT corporations and our fellow Librehosters. For people seeking a toolset for their home office, and do not need the entire Disroot service stack which requires user creation, we decided to put together a set of tools to make collaboration with others easier. We've bundled all services that do not require registration and added few extra tools. And so, we have added Cryptpad (an end-to-end zero knowledge collaboration software) and Mumble (low latency, highly efficient audio conferencing tool) services, to experiment with. The new tools appeared so good, we are now using Mumble internally for our meetings, and some people have hosted conferences of a couple hundreds attendees. Cryptpad appeared to be a blessing from the skies and a proper solution to a missing piece of the puzzle on Disroot, which is a proper team document collaboration. Because of server encryption used on our Nextcloud, we couldn't make use of OnlyOffice (which is what most of the folks around provide). Cryptpad not only solves this issues, it's totally end-to-end encrypted and very lightweight server side, which means we can offer very comfortable, smooth user experience. Both of the services are here to stay, and we can't imagine living without them.

To lower the tension we have managed to organize a Disroot LAN party too. It was great fun, and we are sorry we could not keep up and turn this into reoccurring event. Maybe next lockdown 😭

Saying bye-bye to Diaspora and Matrix

2020 was also the moment we decided to close down Diaspora (federated social network) and Matrix (federated chat protocol).

Matrix demise has been already announced back in 2018 when we've decided to close down registrations for new users and keep the lights on until significant amount of users has moved away. The time to finally close the servers came in December 2020.

Diaspora has been with us from the very start and was the project that made us realize the potential of the federated networks beyond just email. It was the place where we sent our first "Hello world" and it was the community around that network that started using our platform first.

We would like to say big Thank You to both development teams of Diaspora as well as Matrix and we wish them all best on their way. Even though we did part ways, we will surelly meet in the future on the federation multiverse, and who knows, maybe we re-open the servers?

Rebuilding how-to website

Throughout 2020 we have been busy with our tutorial platform where we document the use of all the services so that Disrooters can find help in the maze of features called disroot.org. We have re-modeled the looks of the site and started complete rewrite of the tutorials. Since the software is constantly evolving so does the tutorials that need to be constantly updated. This role is managed by Fede who spends a lot of time improving and coordinating the works on tutorials.

We would like to send special thanks to all the people who have contributed their time translating tutorials and the website's content to many languages, and to those that submitted their own tutorials. We are very grateful for your work. You make onboarding of new Disrooters a breeze!

We are quite excited about the progress we made this year with the tutorial platform and are looking forward to next year when we want to improve upon the existing work. We want to document more, make the navigation easier and start making some of video tutorials as well.

Volunteer fee

2020 marks also a very important milestone in the road to sustainability. Dutch legislation allows foundations such as ours (in our case a non-profit one) to pay a small fee for volunteer work. It cannot be more than €170 a month or more than €1700 a year in total (= aprox. €140 a month). We decided we'll try to reach a point where we could pay out such fees to the core team members under the following conditions.

In addition to the monthly costs and FLOSS donations, we also try ensure up to €400 per month for unexpected expenses and for future investments. Once the costs and expenses are covered, if there are at least €140 left, we could pay a volunteer fee to one of the Team members. If there are over €280 we could pay two volunteers and so on. As a safety net, if we fail to gather sufficient funds three months in a row, we will stop paying the volunteer/s.

We are very happy to announce that as of July 2020 @muppeth and @fede are receiving monthly volunteer fee. 2020 has been a very good year for us, financially, because as the end of the year has reached final calculation allowed us to pay out at once retrospectively also to @antilopa and @meaz. We hope that we will manage to secure funding in the upcoming 2021 year to pay monthly volunteer fees to all 4 of us.

Mailbox encryption

2020 given its craziness, did not allow for much work we could spend on implementation of mailbox encryption we initially planned to accomplish. However we did spend a good deal of time into research. Thanks to that we have decided to settle on the form of mailbox encryption as well as exactly piece of software we want to use. The software of choice although, not worked on in years seems like a perfect match to our use case. We have decided to move to end-to-end mailbox encryption that uses GnuPG as a base. In October, we have applied for funding for development and implementation of the mailbox encryption and to our surprise we have secured funding from NLNet for work on this project in 2021. This means the additional work on this project will be funded and mailbox encryption will surely land on Disroot and due to the open source nature of the work, anywhere else soon. We plan to start working on mailbox encryption starting in spring 2021, and we will keep you all posted on the development throughout the year via blog posts and newsletters.

Microsoft and Google blocks

Oh yes. The big boys decided to show their power. Around the end of October 2020 we have gotten multiple reports from Disrooters that their emails sent to Microsoft owned addresses such as outlook.com/office360.com/... have been rejected. To our surprise it appeared all emails sent from Disroot were rejected without giving any reason why. We quickly tried to contact Microsoft to see what the problem was so we could workout a solution and allow users on both ends to communicate. Little did we know that this wouldn't be easy. Quickly we were faced with the faceless nature of big corporation. All our emails were replied with automated and templated answers which did not state any information as to the reasons for the blockage

and possible solutions. Since there were no other ways to get in touch with any human beings from Microsoft we got stuck in the loop of sending emails and receiving the exact same replies

just signed by different names. For over a month, we did not get to talk to a human. After posting about it on the blogpost and social media and sending over hundreds of emails to Microsoft a miracle happened. After yet another email sent to their support, the reply we got was a bit different. Unscripted, with details, and a solution. After all that time, finally a human being from Microsoft had replied to our email. Since no issue could be seen from their end (our domain keeps quite good reputation) disroot.org domain was unblocked.

The same month Google has decided to mark all Nextcloud shares from Disroot as harmful. Since practically all browsers (firefox, safari, chromium based crap) uses Google's Safe browsing feature (where Google decides what is safe for you and what isn't), all of their end-users are dependent on Google deciding what is safe and what isn't safe on the net. Due to a report filled at Google

claiming that one of the public shares on our cloud platform was violating copyright laws, Google has decided that instead of contacting us to inform about this one incident, they will instead mark entire webiste, with all it's public and private shares as harmful. Just like Microsoft, in order to get to speak with anyone, we had to jump through hoops, by creating a Google account and linking that account to Disroot domain.
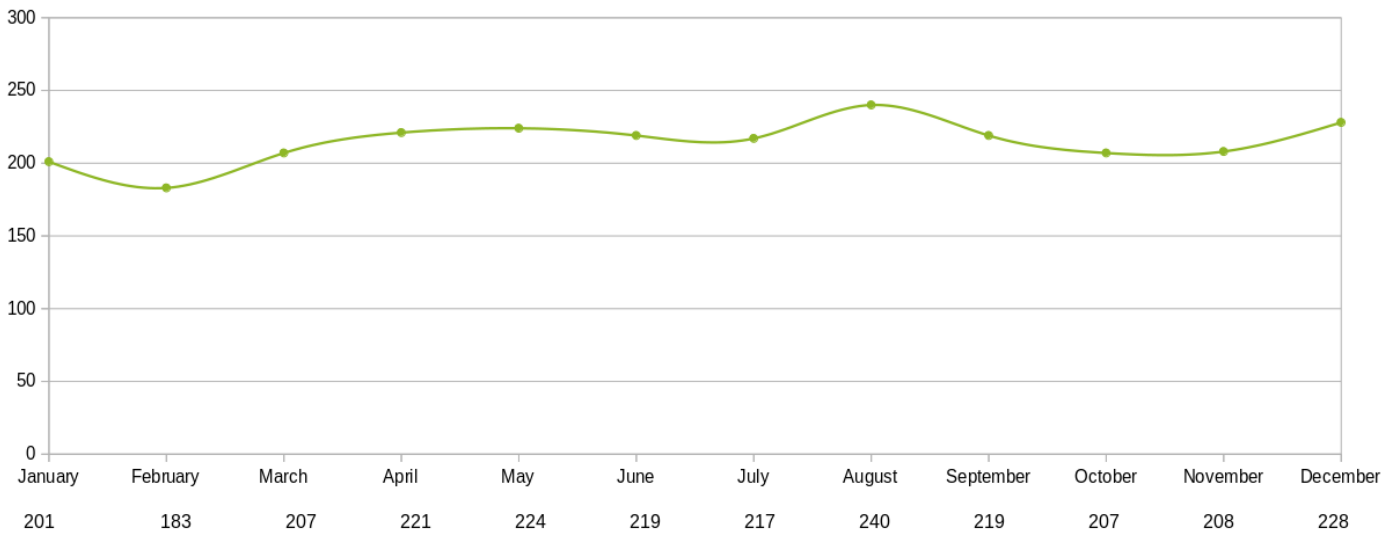
Both of this cases only show how dominant role big tech has on the internet, even the parts of it that do not want to have anything to do with them. They create complicated procedures to lure you in to their ecosystem by imposing their ideas on pretty much the whole internet . As a result, even independent projects, software and services are highly dependant on it.

Financial update

Below you can see the graph showing our financial situation.

In 2020, we managed to get total of €13,465 sponsored by an average of 119 Disrooters each month. We have managed to close the year with an added €5,046 in our general funds. This is a remarkable achievement which we are very thankful. It brings us closer to sustainability and will provide us with a safety net for future hardware spending and legal aid. Thanks very much for this to everyone who decided to contribute in 2020. We hope this will only grow in years to come.

Amount of supportes each month:

	January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
	201	183	207	221	224	219	217	240	219	207	208	228

We are also very pleased to announce we have donated €1,685.89 to FLOSS projects we are so much dependent on. Throughout 2020 we have donated money to these projects:
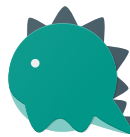
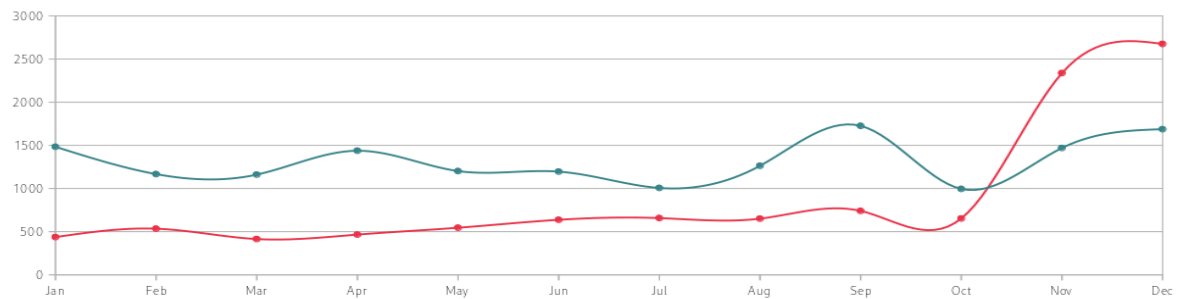**Gitea**

DAVx5

F-droid

Cryptpad

Conversations

Hubzilla

Dino

Debian

Thank you very much for providing your amazing software!

Costs and spending:

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donations	€ 1,483.26	€ 1,166.61	€ 1,160.71	€ 1,437.58	€ 1,201.57	€ 1,195.62	€ 1,006.28	€ 1,262.84	€ 1,725.64	€ 994.87	€ 1,469.48	€ 1,686.91
Monthly Costs	€ 252.30	€ 422.60	€ 282.40	€ 294.15	€ 429.44	€ 209.36	€ 265.91	€ 212.95	€ 237.12	€ 262.49	€ 2,056.48	€ 213.88
Subtotal	€ 1,230.96	€ 744.01	€ 878.31	€ 1,143.43	€ 772.13	€ 986.26	€ 740.37	€ 1,049.89	€ 1,488.52	€ 732.38	€ 587.00-	€ 1,473.03
15% Donated to FOSS	€ 184.64	€ 111.60	€ 131.75	€ 171.52	€ 115.82	€ 147.94	€ 111.06	€ 157.48	€ 223.28	€ 109.86	€ 0.00	€ 220.95
Volunteer fees						€ 280.00	€ 280.00	€ 280.00	€ 280.00	€ 280.00	€ 280.00	€ 2,240.00
Total Expenses	€ 436.94	€ 534.20	€ 414.15	€ 465.67	€ 545.26	€ 637.30	€ 656.97	€ 650.43	€ 740.40	€ 652.35	€ 2,336.48	€ 2,674.83
Monthly Income	€ 1,046.31	€ 632.41	€ 746.56	€ 971.92	€ 656.31	€ 558.32	€ 349.32	€ 612.41	€ 985.24	€ 342.52	€ 867.00-	€ 987.92-

Current funds: € 13,614.9

2020 Expense overview

Infrastructure -

Servers and domains costs	**€ 2269.70**
Hardware	**€ 477.95**
Legal fees	**€1.771,44**
Volunteer fee	**€ 3920.00**
Donation to FOSS projects	**€ 1685.90**
Paypal and bank fees	**€ 545.44**
Total:	**€ 10670.43**

Transparency report

In 2020 we have been asked for users details once by the local dutch authorities. However due to the fact we do not collect any personal information on our users, we did not have anything to give.

What's planned for 2021

Next year will be a very important year for Disroot and extremely busy year packed with long awaited milestones. We are planning to work on mailbox encryption which will be a huge project anticipated by many of you. We are also preparing for inevitable hardware upgrade as we notice we are reaching the limits on the current servers. As we spent big chunk of this year working on cleaning up our setup and automating as much as possible to reduce the amount of time we spent on maintenance. We hope to share some of this work with those who want to host services on their own. Last but not least. We would love to reach a place where all core team members are being paid a volunteer fee for their labor or, who knows, perhaps an actual wage. To make it possible we must focus on better onboarding and better handling of the administrative tasks, which no one wants to do, but are crucial for the well-being of the organization.

Here are the different ways you can help the project as of now:

Or check our website for the bank details.

We wish you all great 2021. We wish all of us to put 2020 behind as if it never happened. We know recovery will be a long lasting and difficult process and we hope that dark, dystopian glimps of the future we have experienced through out this past 12 months will be lived again only through sci-fi fiction. To all Disrooters, developers, selfhosters and librehosters of the world, thanks for making the internet free, decentralized, ethical and fun to be around.

<3

- The Disroot Team

Muppeth, Antilopa, Meaz & Fede

10 May 2021