



# FREEDOM OF THE PRESS FOUNDATION

---

2021 IMPACT REPORT





---

**Front Cover /** A Minneapolis police officer clears a cameraman from near the police department's Fifth Precinct on May 30, 2020. Photojournalist Adam Bettcher, who captured this image for Reuters, was shot at with a projectile after he was identified as press.

*Reuters/Adam Bettcher*



# A LETTER FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

---

FPF 2021 IMPACT REPORT

Dear Readers,

In a world where press freedom is under constant threat, part of our mission here at Freedom of the Press Foundation (FPF) will always be to *defend* investigative journalists who are in the most danger. It's why, here in the United States, we meticulously document the record number of arrests and assaults on journalists through the U.S. Press Freedom Tracker. And when the number of journalists in jail worldwide is at an all-time high, it's critical we keep drawing attention to draconian laws meant to silence dissent.

But we see our job as more than that. We strive to not only *defend* journalists, but to empower them in the face of adversity.

Surveillance is an ever-growing risk, which means SecureDrop, the open source whistleblower submission system, is more important than ever in making sure brave sources can safely talk to journalists. And thanks to constant pressure from FPF and our press freedom allies, this year the Justice Department was forced to adopt the most stringent rules against spying on journalists in modern history.

While reporters of all stripes also face increased threats from online harassment and hacking, we've also expanded our digital security effort to create more tools to help them than ever before. For the first time, documentary filmmakers now have a huge resource to better protect themselves while filming, in the form of our new *Digital Security for Filmmakers* project. And soon, journalism students all across the country will be able to receive the same digital security training previously only available to small groups of investigative journalists. Our *U.S. Journalism School Digital Security Curriculum* project is now available to the public.

There remains so much to be on alert about. We need to hold local governments and police accountable for infringing on the rights of reporters. And the Justice Department continues to pursue a dangerous prosecution that could criminalize important aspects of the constitutionally protected newsgathering process.

Freedom of the Press Foundation, however, is in a stronger position than ever to defend against those threats. And it's in large part thanks to you, our loyal supporters. We can't wait to share what we have in store for 2022.



Thank you for all you do to help us protect press freedom.

Sincerely,

Trevor Timm  
Executive Director, Freedom of the Press Foundation



# OUR MISSION

---

“A cantankerous press, an obstinate press, a ubiquitous press must be suffered by those in authority in order to preserve the even greater values of freedom of expression and the right of the people to know.”

— Judge Murray Gurfein, *Pentagon Papers case*, June 17, 1971



Founded in 2012, Freedom of the Press Foundation (FPF) is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization that protects and defends public interest journalism in the 21st century. We believe that a thriving free press—one that can change the course of history—depends not only on strong advocacy, but also on actively empowering journalists and whistleblowers to do their job in the face of adversity.

We monitor and document virtually every press freedom violation in the United States. We build secure communications tools used by the world’s top investigative news organizations. We teach journalists how to keep themselves and their sources safe in the digital age. And we engage in public and legal advocacy to defend press freedom in the U.S. and around the world.

Our goal is to protect and promote the basic human right of freedom of the press in a world where surveillance, censorship, and hacking risks are becoming more sophisticated and pervasive. These threats can keep the public from learning vital information about their governments. It’s our job to defend the public’s right to know.



# MAJOR PROJECTS & PROGRAMS

## Monitoring Press Freedom

The **U.S. Press Freedom Tracker** project, launched in 2017, documents and counts virtually every type of press freedom violation in the United States—from journalist arrests, camera searches and seizures, subpoenas, and physical attacks to surveillance orders and whistleblower prosecutions. The Tracker is the first and only website to provide reliable, easy-to-access information on the number of press freedom violations, and fills a crucial gap in the journalism landscape.

U.S. PRESS  
FREEDOM  
TRACKER

## Building the Next Generation of Secure Communications Tools



For eight years, Freedom of the Press Foundation has led the development of **SecureDrop**, the open source whistleblower submission system that enables journalists to communicate with anonymous sources in a safe and secure manner. SecureDrop is currently available in 20 languages and it is used by over 75 major news organizations worldwide (including *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *NBC News*, *ProPublica*, *ICIJ*, *The Center for Investigative Journalism*, and many more). It is seen as an increasingly vital tool for all news organizations to offer to whistleblowers, and it has been the source of countless important investigative stories over the past several years.

*“SecureDrop is absolutely indispensable. I do feel quite strongly about this... SecureDrop has become such an integral part of the way we work now, on a daily, sometimes hourly basis. And while it is true that we, like other news organizations, cannot say which stories SecureDrop was contributing to, there are a lot. And they happen on a quite frequent basis. I don’t know how we, at The Guardian, would be able to do the work we do in a world where SecureDrop didn’t exist.”*

— Paul Lewis, Head of Investigations at The Guardian



## Empowering Journalists Through Digital Security

It has never been more important for journalists to protect their sources using technology and encryption tools from the moment they start speaking to them—and Freedom of the Press Foundation is the only US-based non-profit organization who has a team of experts who assist journalists in protecting themselves online through the **Digital Security Training Program**.

We operate a growing team of digital security trainers who regularly provide journalists, documentary filmmakers, and media organizations important training on how to protect themselves and their sources online. These trainings include how to lock down your accounts to prevent hacking, how to protect your anonymity online, how to mitigate potential harassment or doxing, and how to encrypt a variety of communications methods such as text messages, phone calls, and emails. Well over 3,000 journalists have attended at least one of FPF's trainings over the past three years.

## Advocating for the Press

In order to fulfill our mission of protecting and promoting the basic human right of freedom of the press, we engage in **public and legal advocacy** around critical press freedom issues. Our advocacy efforts focusing on press freedom include issues such as excessive government secrecy, the persecution of whistleblowers, the dangers of surveillance of journalists, the importance of the Freedom of Information Act, and protecting the right to publish. We have a large social media following, a well-read website, and a robust media profile to push our message centering on strong press freedom rights for all. Additionally, we have a high profile board of directors who allow us to amplify our message even further.





# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR

## U.S. Press Freedom Tracker

- The U.S. Press Freedom Tracker recorded more than 200 press freedom violations in 2021, publishing nearly 600 incidents and updates, and produced nearly 20 separate articles offering substantive analysis on the project.
- When a [journalist faced a trial by jury in April](#), the Tracker was the go-to source for media outlets looking to contextualize the rare event, citing the database and team more than 100 times during a 1-month period.
- The Tracker [open-sourced its website code](#), as the first step in helping advocates in other countries launch their own press freedom tracker.

## SecureDrop

- We completed [the second independent security audit](#) of the *SecureDrop Workstation*, the next generation of SecureDrop, performed by the respected security firm, Trail of Bits.
- The audit concluded that “the SecureDrop Workstation system represents a complex but well researched product that has been thoughtfully designed” and identified no issues that were directly exploitable by an attacker.
- The new *SecureDrop Workstation* greatly simplifies the process of checking SecureDrop and responding to sources. To date, it has been used in production by close to half a dozen newsrooms and very positively received; in the year ahead, we will be rolling it out widely to the 75 news outlets using SecureDrop.
  - We [released](#) SecureDrop 2.0.0. This version enforces the use of the latest version of Tor onion services (v3), which provides both sources and journalists with greater security protections.



## Digital Security Training (DST)

- Despite lockdown, the Digital Security Training team was able to deliver trainings to over 1,300 journalists, filmmakers, and other media makers across the globe.
- We successfully launched the [Filmmaker Toolkit](#) in partnership with Field of Vision, and the [Digital Security Curriculum for Journalism Schools](#) (see special reports, cont'd).
- We piloted the first Training of Trainers (ToT) program, which gave 28 newsroom professionals the tools they need to become better security advocates for their colleagues.
- In partnership with The Center for Investigative Journalism, we produced the first Source Protection Programme, a free program for independent journalists dealing with high-risk sources, whistleblowers, and classified material.

## Advocacy & Activism

- In a shocking development in May, the Department of Justice disclosed to a series of journalists that [it had surveilled their communications](#) during the Trump administration, actions which the Biden DOJ initially defended. FPF leapt into action, strongly condemning the invasions of privacy, and urged the Biden administration to [suspend surveillance of all journalists doing their jobs](#), which it [did in July](#). We are now pushing to [codify those new policies into law](#).
- When Apple announced a plan to bring new surveillance tech to their devices, we [explained the possible consequences of such a development](#) for journalists reporting on sensitive documents and the whistleblowers who serve as their sources and urged the company to reconsider. The company has since [suspended its planned rollout](#), citing backlash from “advocacy groups” like ours and others.
- The Espionage Act charges against WikiLeaks publisher Julian Assange continue to be one of the biggest threats to press freedom rights of journalists everywhere, regardless of one’s feelings about Assange. After a court in the United Kingdom [denied the effort to extradite Assange](#), we organized a coalition of two dozen of the largest press freedom, human rights, and civil liberties organizations in the world, which urged the Biden administration to [drop the charges](#) and not to pursue an appeal.





## SPECIAL REPORT

# DIGITAL SECURITY CURRICULUM FOR JOURNALISM SCHOOLS



PFF 2021 IMPACT REPORT

As journalists conduct more of their work online, newsrooms are experiencing a torrent of surveillance, state-sponsored digital attacks, coordinated harassment campaigns, and worse. One way we support journalists and newsrooms to work safely and sustainably is through digital security training. Just as we believe this kind of defensive knowledge is critically important to contemporary newsrooms, we also believe journalism schools should prepare the next generation of young reporters for this challenging environment.

That's why we're thrilled to share that, after a year of research and developing materials with help from security leaders and academic collaborators, PFF has launched a powerful [U.S. Journalism School Digital Security Curriculum](#) to help J-schools bring critical digital security education to their programs.

Based on [our extensive and original research](#), we know that roughly three in four U.S. journalism programs offer no digital security education of any kind, and that they have the difficult task of juggling and re-prioritizing new technical topics to teach each year. That's why we designed our curriculum in a modular format, to assist instructors in targeting specific topics in digital security, beginning with foundational concepts (e.g., [threat modeling](#)) and progressing to more advanced topics examining chat safety, authentication practices, malware, source protection, and more. We also provide a "[Digital Security 101](#)" for programs looking to get started with a beginner-friendly digital security workshop.



## SPECIAL REPORT

# DIGITAL SECURITY FOR FILMMAKERS

DIGITAL SECURITY FOR FILMMAKERS

Risk Assessment Security Topics All Resources Overview



## DIGITAL SECURITY FOR FILMMAKERS

EVERY WEEK, FREEDOM OF THE PRESS FOUNDATION AND FIELD OF VISION are approached by documentary filmmakers seeking advice on digital security. These guidelines are an effort to answer filmmakers' digital security concerns, and address the needs of different risk and skill levels.

We built this guide for people working in documentary film who need to overhaul their team's digital security practice, or pick up advanced skills. It is not designed for sources, who encounter threats we don't address in our recommendations and guides.

Lyric Cabral, on the sensitivity of documentary projects

*"I generally report on subjects who are under surveillance. My subjects have included people who are going through national security cases, they have included people who are involved in federal investigations — civil rights investigations, eye witnesses to high profile crimes that are being investigated by the government."*

FPF 2021 IMPACT REPORT

Our digital security team is inspired by the brave work of the documentary film community. For years now, our trainers have engaged with these storytellers, producing training series, assisting with field security, and speaking at leading documentary festivals. Through this work, we've learned about the unique digital security challenges filmmakers face—when duplicating sensitive footage ensures ease of access for your team, but can also open up more avenues for interception or tampering.

So, when celebrated filmmaker and board member Laura Poitras approached us with the idea to create a living digital security resource for filmmakers, we were eager to share our team's expertise with the public. We wrote and developed the Digital Security for Filmmakers platform in partnership with documentary production house Field of Vision, and [celebrated its release](#) this year with a remote event hosted by the Sundance Institute, featuring documentarians Lyric Cabral, Yance Ford, Elena Fortes, Melissa Gira Grant, Ed Ou, and Malika Zouhali-Worrall.

This platform is the home to over 30 individual resources on the subjects of footage, mobile, desktop, communications, and travel security. We want readers to have all the tools at their disposal to build their bespoke security plan, so in addition to a dedicated risk assessment module, each resource is categorized by relevant risk level, skill level, and time and financial costs. To raise awareness about this resource in the film community, we hosted the Digital Security Clinic with Field of Vision, where we facilitated six weeks of free digital security programming for dozens of filmmakers. We look forward to our continued work in the film community in 2022.



# EXPANSION IN 2022

## U.S. Press Freedom Tracker

**Documentation of Violations** / With 2021 being another near-record year for press freedom violations in the United States, the Tracker aims to ramp up our ability to quickly document specific incidents, highlight general trends and offer more analysis in 2022.

**Additional Team Capacity** / The Tracker is expanding its editorial team, adding a full-time Spanish-speaking reporter and a social media fellow, creating a pathway for purposeful diversity outreach and engagement responses.

**Web Redesign** / Ahead of its 5-year anniversary in 2022, the Tracker website, [pressfreedomtracker.us](https://pressfreedomtracker.us), will undergo an exciting redesign that will give users the incredible ability to visualize and analyze this robust database.

## SecureDrop

**Migration to the SecureDrop Workstation** / In 2022, we will expand the roll-out of the new *SecureDrop Workstation*, further cementing SecureDrop as an integral part of the day-to-day workflow of investigative journalists.

**Additional Team Capacity** / The SecureDrop team will hire a full-time User Experience Designer to work with us on the next generation of the software; a Support Engineer to assist more newsrooms with the migration to the new system; and invest in project and product management capacity.

**Security Updates** / We will continue prototyping further improvements to the SecureDrop system, including state-of-the-art zero-knowledge architecture for SecureDrop servers.



## Digital Security Training

**Expanding Remote Services** / The team plans to reach over 1,000 more journalists, filmmakers, and other media makers in the coming year, with a special focus on small and independent media outlets with limited resources, as well as documentary filmmakers.

**Regional Expansion** / We will expand our digital and operational security support, with a focus on international and region-specific journalists and media makers, and establish a pipeline for providing incident response to journalists in sudden need.

**Digital Security Education** / We will assist at least two journalism schools in implementing our digital security curriculum by the Fall '22 semester.



## Advocacy & Activism

**Lead Policy Conversations** / We have seen major developments in policy issues that have long been at the core of our work, with meaningful proposals on Espionage Act reform, public records policy, and more. We will be bringing our expertise to those discussions to influence meaningful press freedom improvements.

**Connecting with the Cutting Edge** / We will ramp up our exploration of how developments in technology can help advance our mission, from supporting censorship resistance through decentralization to researching business models and organizational structures enabled by new software.

**Engaging with the Community** / Press freedom supporters are passionate and want to be involved in our work, and we are learning how to tap into that enthusiasm. In the coming year, we'll be doing more outreach and movement building, and adding a team member to support this work.

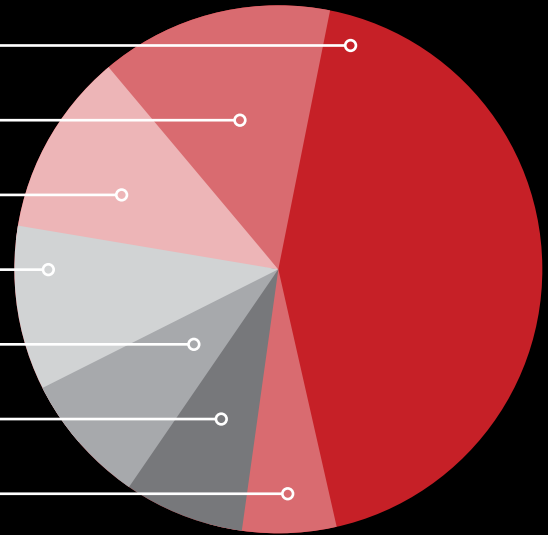


# 2021 FINANCIAL REPORT

Please note: All figures are preliminary and unaudited. Complete audited financial statements and IRS 990 forms from previous years are available at FPF’s website, [freedom.press/about/reports-financials](https://freedom.press/about/reports-financials).

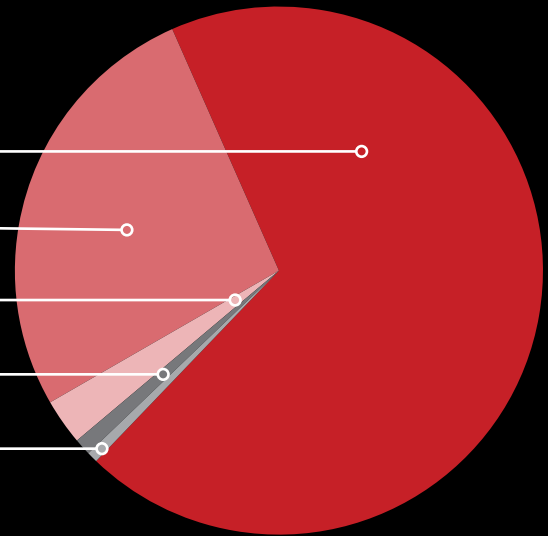
## Expenses

Technology/SecureDrop (43.3%)	\$1,746,000
General Programs (14.3%)	\$575,000
U.S. Press Freedom Tracker (11.1%)	\$447,000
Digital Security (10.2%)	\$412,000
Operations (8.1%)	\$325,000
Advocacy (7.3%)	\$293,000
Development (5.9%)	\$236,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,034,000</b>



## Revenue

Foundations (68.8%)	\$2,960,000
Individuals (26.7%)	\$1,150,000
Program Revenue (2.8%)	\$120,000
Corporations (0.9%)	\$40,000
Other (0.7%)	\$30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$4,300,000*</b>



FPF 2021 IMPACT REPORT

\*Excluding one-time NFT auction fundraiser, see next page for details.



## SPECIAL REPORT

# HISTORIC NFT AUCTION: STAY FREE (EDWARD SNOWDEN, 2021)

FPF 2021 IMPACT REPORT



In April of this year, Freedom of the Press Foundation (FPF) received the proceeds from the sale of whistleblower Edward Snowden’s first original NFT artwork, sold at auction for 2,224 ETH (approximately \$5.5 million at the time of sale). Snowden has served as president of the board of directors since 2016.

The unique, signed work combines the entirety of a landmark court decision ruling the National Security Agency’s mass surveillance violated the law, with the iconic portrait of the whistleblower by Platon (used with permission). It is the only NFT produced by Snowden.

A portion of the funds were used to [offset carbon emissions](#) associated with the minting and transfer of the NFT on the blockchain. We worked with the decarbonization platform Aerial to secure a blend of credits from verified forest conservation projects and cutting-edge “negative emissions” carbon capture technology developed by Charm Industrial.

This one-time gift has allowed FPF to hire five additional staff members for the 2022 year, as well as provide an initial investment in a reserve fund, which will contribute to the long term sustainability of the organization, and more importantly, to preserve our independence. The reserve fund represents an investment in the security of journalists, whistleblowers and activists for generations to come.



# STAFF MEMBERS

---

FPF is a non-profit organization incorporated in California, with staff in New York, Massachusetts, Oregon, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Wisconsin and Canada.

## **Executive**

**Trevor Timm** / Executive Director

## **Advocacy**

**Parker Higgins** / Director of Advocacy

## **Development & Operations**

**Louise Black** / Vice President of Development & Operations

**Sophie Hagen** / Operations Assistant

**Ryan Rice** / Development Coordinator

## **Editorial**

**Kirstin McCudden** / Vice President of Editorial

**Stephanie Sugars** / Senior Reporter, U.S. Press Freedom Tracker

**Kio Herrera** / Reporter, U.S. Press Freedom Tracker

**Beck Jaeckels** / Social Media Fellow

## **Digital Security**

**Harlo Holmes** / Chief Information Security Officer

**Olivia Martin** / Deputy Director, Digital Security

**Martin Shelton** / Principal Researcher

**David Huerta** / Digital Security Trainer

## **SecureDrop & Technology**

**Conor Schaefer** / Chief Technology Officer

**Erik Moeller** / Vice President of Engineering

**Maeve Andrews** / Senior Site Reliability Engineer

**Allie Crevier** / Senior Software Engineer

**Kevin O’Gorman** / Senior Software Engineer

**Michael Z** / Senior Software Engineer

**Rowen S** / Software Engineer

**Keturah DB** / Senior DevOps Engineer & IT Lead

**Harris Lapiroff** / Principal Web Developer

**Abigail LP** / Newsroom Services Coordinator

**Cory Myers** / SecureDrop Fellow





# BOARD OF DIRECTORS

---

**President /** Edward Snowden

Laura Poitras

Daniel Ellsberg

John Cusack

Rainey Reitman

Trevor Timm

Wesley Lowery

John Perry Barlow (*in memoriam*)





# MAJOR SUPPORTERS

*Freedom of the Press Foundation is extremely grateful to our supporters, partners, and friends whose generosity makes our work possible. Thank you for all you do to help protect press freedom.*

---

1Password  
Acton Family Giving  
Anonymous  
Committee to Protect Journalists  
Craig Newmark Philanthropies  
David D. Dodge Foundation  
David Heinemeier Hansson  
Filecoin Foundation for the Decentralized Web  
FLC, Foundation of Philanthropic Funds  
The Ford Foundation  
James B. McClatchy Foundation  
John S. and James L. Knight Foundation  
Leonard C. Goodman  
John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation  
The Omidyar Group  
Wellspring Philanthropic Fund  
Yelp Foundation

*\*Please note: we only provide the names of funding sources who have previously given permission to release their information.*

