

Introduction

As information and communications technologies become increasingly integrated into the workings of Civil Society, it is inevitable that there is an increased concern about access to information, protection of data and safety of communications. Many NGOs struggle with common problems such as protection against virus attack and data loss, others, who work with more sensitive information, have additional concerns, such as security of communications, data storage and sharing - as well as access to information.

The Security Edition of NGO in a Box attempts to address some of these concerns by providing a set of tools and materials, carefully selected for use by those in the non-profit sector. This toolkit is the result of collaboration between two organisations: Tactical Tech and Front Line - who specialise in building the capacity of NGOs and human rights defenders working in developing and transition countries.

As a result of its work with human rights defenders around the world, Front Line has received many requests for support with information and communications technology. It has been participating in the NGO in a Box Security Edition project because it feels that this toolkit can make a real contribution to the varied needs of human rights defenders, working in diverse but often hostile circumstances. Tactical Tech's work is shaped by the day-to-day challenges faced by NGOs utilising information and communication technologies. In particular, it is dedicated to the needs of small to medium sized NGOs with limited resources who don't have time or expertise to make their own decisions about technology use. This edition of NGO in a Box was developed in response to an identified need to reduce the barriers to selection, access and implementation of security and data protection tools.

The ability to communicate reliably and to collect data as safely as possible is an important element in the security of human rights defenders and others who are often at serious risk because of their work. For example, the security of information from witnesses of human rights violations, held in whatever format, is of great importance for all human rights defenders.

Some NGOs have very limited access to the relevant technology. Electricity supply may be intermittent. Computers may be old and hard to maintain. Internet access may be unavailable, difficult or very expensive making download nearly impossible. All communications may be monitored, and some may be blocked.

Some human rights defenders are experts in the use of information and communication technology. Some had to become skilled in finding ways to overcome obstacles and to make things work. Some did not have the chance to develop such skills and knowledge.

This toolkit attempts to enable groups facing such challenges to start using security tools. There is of course no single solution that can suit all users, therefore the tools and materials within this box-set need to be implemented with consideration for the local context. However, its contents have been formulated with a particular set of questions in mind, such as: What tools do I need for which jobs? How do I choose a software application? Where can I get them? How do I know what's useful and effective if I'm not a security expert? Are these tools reliable?

As a result, the tools and materials, contained in this kit, have been chosen by practitioners with security expertise and experience of working in developing countries. These practitioners have tried and tested these tools in the field and combined these with a set of guidelines and tips on using them. The Security Edition of NGO in a box has been developed through several training events and in close collaboration with those working in the field of security for non-profits, such as Privaterra. This has been combined with user feedback and input and review from leading human rights groups.

This toolkit will continually evolve. We recognise that technology changes over time, new tools and materials become available, approaches get outdated and the needs of this toolkit's recipients change or expand. Users' feedback, comments and suggestions will be crucial in this process; only by getting more views and opinions from practitioners in the field can this resource better fit

the needs of real groups working on the ground.

Our hope is that you will find this toolkit useful and as we work to improve and develop its contents.

We look forward to your feedback

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Frontline – ‘The International Foundation for the Protection of Human Rights Defenders’ is based in Ireland, more information about Front Line can be found at: www.frontlinedefenders.org

The Tactical Technology Collective is a Dutch registered NGO working to demystify technology for non-profits in developing countries, more information about Tactical Tech can be found at: www.tacticaltech.org

The Security Edition of NGO-in-a-box is part of a larger family of technology toolkits aimed at the non-profit sector. Please find more information at: www.ngoinabox.org

How to use this Manual

The book you are reading is a manual of reference explaining how to use some of the programs included on the Security Edition CD. It can be a guide or an introduction to the world of electronic security. Our strategy is to increase the security of the data stored on your computer and communicated on the Internet and email. We also hope to raise your interest and awareness when it comes to understanding electronic security and knowing your weaknesses and strengths.

We have selected 20 programs from the CD and have described in detail here how to use them. Where relevant we also try to introduce and explain some concepts to improving security in the digital world. The topics range from keeping your computers free of viruses to the latest methods of cryptology. The book is separated into chapters, each covering a particular program. After the program chapters you will find general information on using your computer, installing and uninstalling programs and a guide on removable storage. At the end there is a glossary that lists and defines the technical terms used throughout the manual. All entries in the glossary appear in bold within the text.

Why do I need this manual?

It is often difficult to realise the need and importance of security, before it is too late. With the advent of computers and the Internet, surveillance and censorship has swiftly moved from the desks of interior ministries to the air conditioned computer rooms all around the world. As more and more of our information is stored and passed around digitally, the concepts of data and personal security need to be adjusted. It does not make much of a difference to a computer whether to store and sift through a thousand lines of text or a million. We did not cry out loud enough in the beginning and the majority of governments around the world have already created a surveillance friendly Internet infrastructure.

When legislation changes (or stiffens) and freedom of speech, expression and information is limited, how do we respond? What tools do we have at our disposal to be able to reclaim privacy and freedom of our information?

There is of course another major problem with computers. They always seem to break down and lose so many documents you have been working on! They are constantly plagued by viruses and they freeze and they never have enough memory or something! You're not alone in these concerns and we address the functionality of your computer system as a major component of the overall security.

The software provided on the CD and explained in this manual can be your first step in resolving the problems above. These tools are not aimed at computer professionals and we hope our explanations will make sense to one with basic computer skills.

The manual describes how to use the programs after installation. However we suggest that you browse through the manual first and make sure you understand the type and purpose of the program you are installing. You do not need to read the manual in any particular order, but if you are really unsure when it comes to using computers, we suggest that you start with the Appendices at the back. If you store are afraid that your computer may break down by installing new programs, then we suggest that you start with the Backup Tools section.

This is a growing project that is still in its early stages of development and we have numerous ways for you to seek support and provide feedback on the project itself or on any particular aspect of it. If you feel that you could assist us with improving the content or translation of this manual, please let us know!

Freeware and Open Source

All the programs described in this manual (and the majority of additional programs found on the CD) are free. Nobody makes money when you install and use the program.

Open source is a growing and increasingly popular approach to writing programs. It involves the Internet community contributing as much or as little as they want to the creation of a new program. Nobody owns the rights to this program and we can all benefit from its use.

It turns out that two heads are often better than one, and as open source projects have a lot more contributors than salary paying software companies – the programs are getting better all the time. There are inevitable glitches and hiccups along the way, yet the benefits are gradually outweighing the problems of open source.

Windows

The majority of computers today are functioning with a Microsoft Windows operating system. This software contradicts principles of the free and open source community. However if we were to publish a manual that is based on Linux or another open source system, not many people in the non-profit community would know what we are talking about. For now we do not have the luxury of being purists and must stick to reality! Funnily enough, many of the security concerns come about because so many of us are using the Windows system. This allows the writers of this manual to fill up more chapters with tools and remedies!

This program pictures in this manual relate to a computer running Windows 2000. This will affect some colours and screens if you are using a different version of Windows. Generally though, the difference is not great.

Program Updates

All software is constantly being modified and improved. New flaws in the programming are found and new patches are made to make the program fit into today's computer or Internet environment. That is why it is important to have the latest versions of programs on your computer. This is especially true for anti-virus, spyware and firewall tools. All programs on this CD have a version number. Within a while most of them will become outdated. You can always find upgrades or additions to the programs from the developer's website. Please check regularly for these updates.

Legality

Countries around the world have many different laws and standards. This also applies to computers and the Internet. Some of the science and methodology presented in the programs within this manual may not be legally recognised or accepted in your country. Please bear the responsibility of knowing the local legislation and deciding for yourself whether to install and use a particular program or not.