ANNUAL REPORT 2023

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2023 for Disroot could be marked as a year of steady improvement of the platform, leading to a more mature project. Although not the easiest of the years - while some of the core team members needed to redirect their attention and time to non-disroot related projects and responsibilities, others have taken on a much bigger load navigating the ship to where we are at now. The result of this is a better distribution of the workload on sysadmin front as Meaz had to take over many of the responsibilities from Muppeth and Muppeth had to share his knowledge to make things work in his absence. Same goes for financial/administrative side of things as well as disrooters support. This has exposed some of the shortcomings of the way the project is managed (so called bus effect where if one person suddenly becomes less active the day to day operations are greatly affected or grind to a halt). This situation, however, allowed us to introduce improvements with better responsibility sharing, better documentation, and it has paved the road to further improvements in 2024. Financially we have certainly reached a stability allowing us to consider stable financial compensations for the work put in the project. Although this is just the beginning and the road to full financial independence and self-sustainability for the core team is long and winding, we are happy that we have made it (thanks to all of you) to the next turn. As always with our reporting, below you can read about the highlights of the year, as well as the financial overview and transparency report.

The highlights:

New Servers

At last in 2023 we were able to replace all the servers with the new ones, bought at the end of 2022. It was a long process, the result of which, we're sure you could feel right away. All new servers are hanging in the data-center and all services (except for the cloud) have been successfully migrated throughout the year. This boost in performance is quite significant and it gives us much of the breathing space for years to come. We hope that the migration process was barely noticeable, as we tried to make the downtime as short as possible for each service migrated. We are still preparing migration of Nextcloud, which given its size and importance will be a delicate process, but we are certain we will manage to avoid lengthy downtime with that one as well. But that's a story for next year. The new hardware, apart from obvious performance boost, allows us to introduce new services but also experiment with further stability, performance improvements by introduction of horizontal scaling and prepare for even more users and traffic in the future. It's a great achievement of all of you who were donating to the project making it possible to host a platform like Disroot on self-owned hardware, which seems to be a rare thing these days. Once again thank you all for your support!

Nextcloud

Due to the fragile and critical nature of the service, we have been rather slow in updating our instance in the last two years. This lead us to running versions behind the current upstream stable, which meant we haven't been able to catch up with the recent features. This year we have

managed to close the gap and stay much closer to the latest and greatest (as far as stable stream is) version. Thanks to the fact that everything else has already been moved to new servers, we are very happy with the performance and we hope you have noticed it too. Although while working on catching up with the upstream we did not want to introduce too many new features, we have added a cookbook app for all those who, like us, love making food! In 2024, apart from migration to new hardware of course, we will focus on reviewing current set of apps and on top of the necessary clean up (removing old unused/unsupported), we will also look into new apps introduced to Nextcloud. Many of you are asking for Google-docs type of solution for the cloud. Some of you point in direction of OnlyOffice integration, others to Collabora. Although, previously struggling with resource capacity of the hardware, we are now able to look into some possibilities. OnlyOffice will not be possible, due to its lack of support for the file encryption we are using, but Collabora may be something to look into. We do encourage everyone waiting for collaborative document edition, to look into CryptPad, which we also provide (https://cryptpad.disroot.org). CryptPad offers group document editing and more, plus it comes with end-to-end encryption by default.

Akkoma and the Fediverse

Although rather stable and without major transformation, we have migrated the source code of our Fediverse instance from Pleroma to Akkoma (a fork of the first), and we have settled with Mangane as the front-end of the instance. Through the year we have worked on visual improvements of the platform trying to provide a nice and smooth ride, not only from perspective of maintaining it, but also for all of you (and us) daily driving it. We are very happy to be part of the Fediverse and we are very glad it has gotten a lot of traction as a viable alternative to corporate, toxic social networks. This however did not come unnoticed by BigTech Overlords. So much so, that Meta (owner of Facebook and Instagram) decided to launch a new product as a direct competition with Twitter (now known as X). Meta decided to base its new platform on protocol used by the Fediverse. This means, potentially putting their big slimy foot in our

doorstep. This move created a lot of controversy and discussion within the 'verse' this year. We have also been part of the discussions and released a [statement](https://disroot.org/en/blog/meta_threat/)[1] back in July.

SearXNG

Finally got the paint coat it deserves. It has been properly "Beetrootify'ed" and we have brought back the little dashboard to make it easier for you to launch other services. We really like the direction the work on the theme took this year, and it gave us grounds to introduce more unified look across the board for all services offered by Disroot, which is also something we want to focus on in the coming years.

Movim

We have decided to replace a great XMPP webclient - ConverseJS - with as good, and we think more suiting to our and your needs - Movim. Movim is a modern looking, webchat with a micro-blogging features allowing users to share short updates, photos, and links with their contacts. It combines the best of instant messaging and social networking. The decision to change came from the fact we could not invest our time into theming work needed on ConverseJS side. As much as Converse is a great webclient, we think it lacked the aesthetics that would appeal to you, dear disrooters. Throughout the years we have made several attempts to improve this but could never finalize the idea. Many of you complained about this situation. Thanks to the open and versatile XMPP ecosystem, we could shop around and pick something that already looks good and works as good as the previous client. We would like to send a big kiss to JCBrand (the author or ConverseJS), we love your work and we are sure to cross out paths again soon.

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1   https://disroot.org/en/blog/meta_threat/

Roundcube

This year we have officially migrated to Roundcube as our go to webmail solution and we have phased our old webmail service (Snappymail/Rainloop). Roundcube has gotten a layer of Beetroot goodness joining the unified look services on Disroot too. During the year we have added some features such as context menus, labels, folder size, mark as junk and more. We are continuously working on improving the service as we are aware it's the most used piece of the platform. We are also very excited and hopeful for the future of [Roundcube as it has joined forces with Nextcloud](#)[2] (the software powering the Disroot cloud).

Forgejo

Now this is a surprise of the year. We did not realize our git instance will be so much used by you guys. We are very happy to be a home for thousands of repositories and we thank you for your contribution to opensource / libre software! This year we have migrated the source code powering our git instance from Gitea to Forgejo (again, a fork of the first), after Gitea decided to change its direction towards for-profit entity. We are very happy with the community driven fork which is a combined work of free-software enthusiasts from all over the world. We would like to send a special thank you to the team at codeberg.org who are the main initiator and contributors to the software.

LibreTranslate

In October 2023 we have launched new service called LibreTranslate. It's a FreeSoftware response to popular translating services. While not really a new software, thanks to some suggestions and awesome work of Meaz, who managed to squeeze in some extra time to make it happen, we can provide you with an ethical online translation option.

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2   https://nextcloud.com/blog/open-source-email-pioneer-roundcube-comes-aboard-nextcloud/

Lemmy

Ever since [Reddit-gate](#)[3] we wanted to get on track providing a federated alternative. Especially after we have decided to phase out our forum service. RealLife(tm) came in the way to make it happen earlier and, yet again thanks to Meaz, we are happy to announce D·Scribe - https://scribe.disroot.org - a federated discussion forum and link aggregator powered by [Lemmy](#)[4]. It's still in its infancy (as far as our instance is concerned) but given the federated nature, using our instance, you have access to universe of discussion groups spread across galaxies of servers out there. So post, discuss, argue and share.

Tor

Exciting news on the privacy front! We are thrilled to announce that the Disroot website is now accessible through Tor, aligning with our commitment to providing a secure and private online experience for all users. Yet again we are proving that if we say we'll do something, we don't need to be reminded for 7 years every half a year :P

Tor, short for The Onion Router, is a privacy-focused network that allows for anonymous access to websites. By making Disroot available via Tor, we're enhancing your ability to browse and engage with our services with an extra layer of anonymity.

While the Disroot website is now Tor-friendly, it's essential to note that some of our services are still a work in progress (WIP) in terms of Tor integration. We're actively working on extending the Tor support to all our services, ensuring a consistent and secure experience across the Disroot ecosystem.

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3   See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2023_Reddit_API_controversy

4   https://join-lemmy.ml

Your privacy is paramount, and we're dedicated to continually improving our services to safeguard your online presence. Stay tuned for more updates as we progress in making Disroot a more secure and private platform.

Tor page: https://disroot.org/tor

Phasing out Forum and Taiga

A platform like Disroot is an ever evolving organism. Sometimes we introduce changes and improvements, sometimes new services but every now and then we make decision to say good bye to some of the features our platform offers. This time we have decided to phase out our forum software (Discourse) and project board service (Taiga). The reason behind that decision was that in both cases the services were barely used and some of their features duplicated by other services offered by our git, cloud and CryptPad instances, in the case of Taiga, while forum service (used mainly as a Disroot support channel), was duplicated by support email, chat and Fediverse. For that reason Forum was confusing and under-maintained. In contrary to our initial idea, and due to software constrains, it never became the platform to host multitude of discussion forums for groups and organizations (not necessarily Disroot related). We have therefore decided to phase out the forum and look for replacement, which we are happy to started experimenting with. You can find our new Lemmy instance (federated discussion forum / link aggregate platform) at https://scribe.disroot.org.

Lacre

Not everything we want always ends up as we plan. Lacre's implementation on Disroot servers has not happen in 2023. Although @pfm did an incredible, awesome job solving most of the issues, polishing the code and introducing improvements increasing the performance of the service, due to time constrains and other factors we have not managed to test Lacre on production email servers in the last year. We know some of you are waiting to see it in action and we are certain this will happen in 2024.

Financial update:

As every year we would like to share with you some of the information about the current state of finances on Disroot. We are excited to say, you have exceeded our expectations on that front. We think Disroot has reached a moment where the option to pay the staff for their work on the platform became more real than ever. Kind of a critical point in Disroot's history. For the coming year, for the first time, we have drafted a budget where, aside from monthly re-occurring costs such as rack space for the servers, domain names, etc, we have included a budget for legal-aid fund, future hardware upgrade fund and a partial financial compensation for one of the core team members (Muppeth). To play it safe, we have decided to allocate money for mentioned budget spending based on current financial state. Especially when it comes to wages, it makes it safe for us - the Disroot foundation - as we do not contract/spend money we do not have, and it gives a sense of security for the ones contracted, as they can be sure the funds for their contributions in

the following year has been already secured. And so, in order to reimburse the core team members in the future, it is crucial to raise enough money in the year prior. Last thing we want to do is ride on debt or drive the platform to the ground by overspending. We are excited we are in this place and can't wait to make Disroot our "day job" (in terms of money as it has already been our dayjob for years), but we understand there is still long way to get to that point.

We are happy we could, at least partly, compensate Muppeth's contribution this year and we are looking forward into the future. Muppeth will be getting monthly compensation of € 1000 in 2024.

We would like to thank everyone who decided to donate to Disroot over the years and motivate those that didn't yet consider making a contribution. If every disrooter would decide to buy us a beer/coffee/tea/juice once a month, not only we all would be able to work full time on Disroot but we would be able to get better equipment as well as contribute financially to open source projects which would directly improve your experience. Everything costs money, so while free software is free, without the needed funds it can't compete with commercial solutions. Every penny counts and makes a difference. So don't wait till you're rich enough to donate those millions you think Disroot deserves, just get us that cup of coffee a month - that would be super helpful!
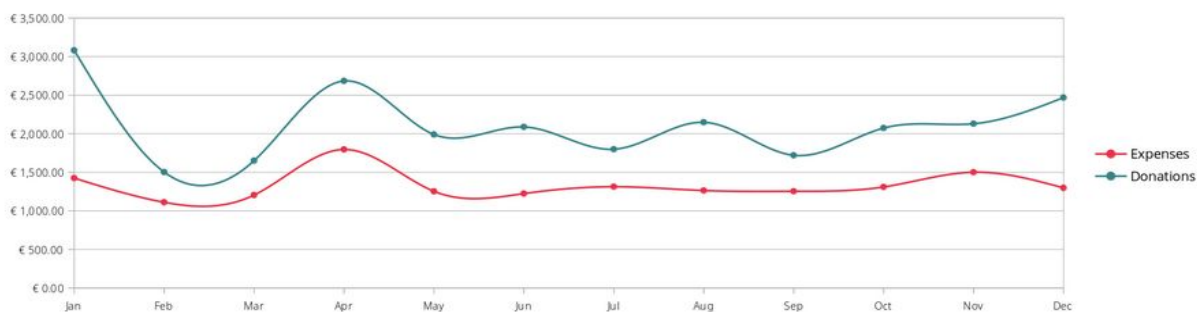
Here are the different ways you can help the project as of now:

Or check our <u>website</u>[5] for the bank details.

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5   https://disroot.org/donate

Financial Overview 2023

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Donations	€ 3,080.81	€ 1,502.60	€ 1,650.96	€ 2,684.27	€ 1,989.85	€ 2,087.93	€ 1,798.63	€ 2,148.44	€ 1,720.09	€ 2,073.23	€ 2,129.41	€ 2,467.92
Costs	€ 388.72	€ 298.68	€ 382.46	€ 895.64	€ 379.56	€ 328.21	€ 483.77	€ 364.00	€ 428.25	€ 431.49	€ 646.39	€ 347.76
Subtotal	€ 2,692.09	€ 1,203.92	€ 1,268.50	€ 1,788.63	€ 1,610.29	€ 1,759.72	€ 1,314.86	€ 1,784.44	€ 1,291.84	€ 1,641.74	€ 1,483.02	€ 2,120.16
15% Donated to FOSS	€ 403.81	€ 180.59	€ 190.28	€ 268.29	€ 241.54	€ 263.96	€ 197.23	€ 267.67	€ 193.78	€ 246.26	€ 222.45	€ 318.02
Volunteer fees	€ 632.00	€ 632.00	€ 632.00	€ 632.00	€ 632.00	€ 632.00	€ 632.00	€ 632.00	€ 632.00	€ 632.00	€ 632.00	€ 632.00
Total Expenses	€ 1,424.53	€ 1,111.27	€ 1,204.74	€ 1,795.93	€ 1,253.10	€ 1,224.17	€ 1,313.00	€ 1,263.67	€ 1,254.03	€ 1,309.75	€ 1,500.84	€ 1,297.78
Monthly Income	€ 1,656.28	€ 391.33	€ 446.23	€ 888.34	€ 736.75	€ 863.76	€ 485.63	€ 884.77	€ 466.06	€ 763.48	€ 628.57	€ 1,170.14

Net income in 2023:   € 9,383.2

Balance:	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
	€ 5.274,35	€ 6.525,11	€ 14.299,74	€ 19.713,00	€ 26.216,97	€ 15.399,48	€ 24.782,69

In 2023, we received a total of **€ 25,334.14** from an average of 197 Disrooters each month. After spending **€ 15,952.81**[6], we were able to add **€ 9,381.3** to our general funds.

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6   Our costs in 2023 were divided between the monthly infrastructure and payment fees - **€ 5,320.63**, office supplies - **€ 54.30**, volunteers fees - **€ 7584**, and our donation to FLOSS projects - **€ 2,992**.

Amount of supporters each month:

January	February	March	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November	December
215	189	188	207	189	202	191	203	185	195	190	212
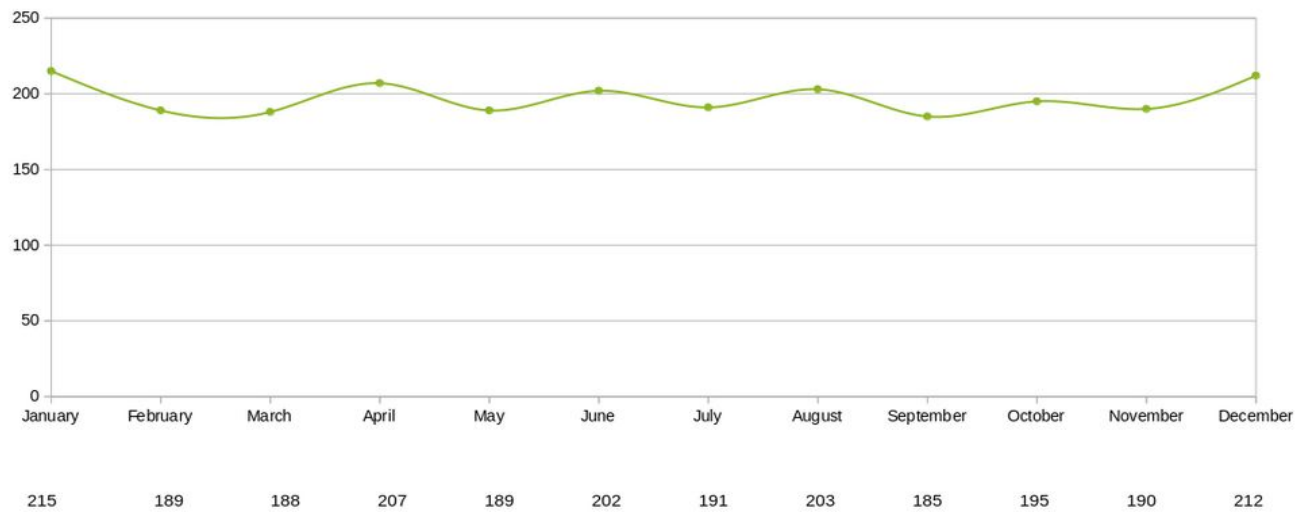
FLOSS donations 2023:

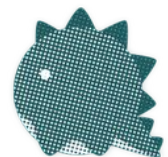We are also very pleased to announce we have donated € 2992 from our overhead to the following FLOSS projects:

Akkoma

Conversations

Cryptpad

Dino

F-droid

FairEmail

Forgejo

SearXNG

Budget 2024

To be added to emergency funds:

Hardware upgrade	€ 1,500
Legal fees fund	€ 300

Recurring expenses:

Monthly fees	€ 5,400
Volunteer fees and wages	€ 18,300
Team supplies / trainings	€ 1,000
Fundraising expenses	€ 400

Additional goals:

Add €500 monthly to next year wages in 2025	€ 6,000
Add funds to invest in team supplies and trainings	€ 1,000

€ 33,900

Transparency Report:

As the popularity of the platform rises so does the abuse of it. Every year we see increasing amount of abuse of our project. People creating email accounts to scam others, send spam, upload illegal content or in any other way try to use Disroot to abuse others. Some years back we were forced to create sign-up system that would go under manual approval. And although it did stop some of the typical abusers, it does not stop all of them, and as much as the registration process is a pain in the ass, some of those individuals are willing to go through with it to continuously abuse the service. Over the years we have been getting several take-down or data requests from various authorities around the world. However, since they were not sent through Dutch authorities (Disroot is a registered non-profit foundation in the Netherlands), we have ignored those. This year however, we have received such requests. Therefore we wanted to provide some information about those:

Number of requests from Dutch law enforcement: 4

Request for user information[7]: 4

Mailbox seizures: 0

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7   User information as in: email address, phone numbers, addresses, aliases, bank accounts

Request for data traffic: 0

Surveillance of an account for specified time period: 0

Number of releases: 0 (since Disroot does not require such information there is no information to give in the first place)

Additionally to those requests we were dealing with number of DMCA requests this year which we took very seriously because of the nature of the abuse. The incident has happened between 29th March - 12th April where Lufi (our upload system) has been used number of times to upload and distribute CSAM (child abuse material) content. Thanks to cooperation with meldpunt-kinderporno.nl which monitors child abuse we were able to identify those uploads, remove them and prevent further abuse. Since then we have been monitoring better the Lufi uploads/downloads to prevent spiked downloads of suspicious nature.

Plans for 2024:

As always tons of plans. Perhaps, this time to avoid over-hyping we will just rather focus on the realistic ones and leave the hype train in the station this time.

Lacre

We are so close to complete the initial work on Lacre, we are certain it will hit Disroot servers and stay for good. Once Lacre is made available for the advanced users (those who know how GnuPG works), we will focus on possibilities to onboard less technical people. This will require

creating good tutorials, videos explaining how encryption works so that people deciding to opt-in for Lacre will not only have an easy on-boarding but also learn a thing or two about encryption.

New authentication system

One of the things we really need to change and improve is the way new account registration works. Additionally we want to introduce proper two factor authentication across the board, including services like email. It's probably going to be the main project for the coming year as this will not only involve re-doing the way we create new accounts, handle all options and preferences for users, but also the way users are authenticated to the services. It will also decide what type of technology/service we will be getting into for the next years to come. We are considering some options, however, it is too early to say much about it. We will naturally keep you posted as the work progresses.

Theming

We hope to finalize this part of the project. For some years we have been working on our versions of some of the themes for services offered on Disroot. Betrootyfying services is something we would like to finalize this year. The idea behind it though is not only to change some of the color schemes but lay a ground work for easily adjustable color palettes. In the future, when anyone could easily spin their own Disroot like node, it will be crucial to provide system where by defining few colors (e.g. foreground, background, accent colors) all themes on the platform get re-build accordingly providing smooth unified experience without the need for each node to maintain their own versions of them.

Staging server

Two years ago we were preparing updates using virtual environments on our laptops/desktops. Last year Muppeth and Meaz had setup their own mini-test servers (Disroot like nodes setup in their homes). This was a great progression where updates were tested and approved by both of them on similar infrastructure before landing on the official live Disroot servers. This year we would like to take another step in the form of staging server. This server will play a very significant role. It will provide a better testing ground for the rest of the team (and other active disrooters) to test upcoming updates, new features and themes. It will also allow us to catch issues instead of those being discovered in the production environment. Of course this does not mean all issues will be caught but we believe going through test-servers -> staging server -> production has lots of potential to iron out most of the possible problems. It also involves more people into the preparation stage which means we will be able to also report back to all of you with more details about what's new on Disroot on regular monthly basis. Additionally, the intent for this new server is to run 100% automated, this means we will be making big step towards the possibility of independent Disroot like nodes, run/maintained/offered by others.

Although looking to be a very tense and unstable year globally, we hope the 2024 on Disroot will mark another steady growth in level of user support, improved user experience, financial growth to secure funds for years to come, and most importantly lots of fun from delivering alternative to commercial big tech offerings, proving that a world without GAFAM and a thriving future of decentralized, federated and free internet is possible!

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- The Disroot Team

Muppeth, Antilopa, Meaz, Fede & AvgJoe