EFF

2025 Annual Report

The Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) is the leading nonprofit organization defending civil liberties in the digital world.

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A Word from our Executive Director

Dear friends,

In 2025, EFF's core belief that technology should empower people, not control them, came under unprecedented attack. Because of you, our members, donors, supporters, and partners, EFF was able to fight back and, while the work is not done, we made meaningful progress.

We launched our Take Back CTRL campaign to push back against efforts to normalize both surveillance and censorship online. We challenged these measures because history has shown that systems built to monitor and restrict access undermine privacy, security, and free expression for everyone, too often with little benefit in addressing the stated reasons for implementing them.

Across the country and around the world, governments pursued age gating and other proposals that would require internet users to surrender sensitive personal information simply to access lawful content. And automated license plate readers and the vast networks collecting information about where people travel and when came online or were increasingly used in ways that facilitated repression. Through litigation, public records requests, advocacy, and community organizing, we helped expose how these systems operate and the risks they pose to privacy, civil liberties, and democratic accountability.

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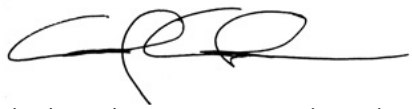
But we didn't stop there. We launched and supported efforts to stop these efforts in the courts and the legislatures, and we even supported citizen groups pushing against them across the country. We brought our expertise to many challenges involving free speech, privacy, and government transparency, including efforts to hold public officials accountable when they overstepped constitutional limits. As we have throughout our 35-year history, we worked to ensure that the law keeps pace with technology while protecting the rights and freedoms that underpin an open society.

We also continued to confront the growing use of technologies that make decisions about people with little transparency or oversight. From algorithmic systems that affect access to opportunities and services to emerging tools that collect and analyze personal data at unprecedented scale, we advocated for safeguards that ensure technology remains fair, accountable, and subject to public scrutiny.

This year also marks a moment of transition for me personally. After 26 years with EFF, I decided to step down as Executive Director in June of 2026. It has been the privilege of a lifetime to work alongside such dedicated staff, supporters, and allies and to help build EFF from a tiny organization to the largest and most effective digital civil liberties organization in the world. What gives me confidence about the future is not any single victory, but the strength of the community that has made those victories possible.

The challenges ahead are significant, but so is our collective resolve. We can only keep doggedly working on these issues year after year because of you, our members and supporters. You engage on these issues, you tell us when something is happening in your city or town, and your donations power everything we do. This is my last Annual Report message, but thanks to you, EFF is here to stay. We're strong, we're ready, and we know how to stick with things for the long run.

Thanks for holding us up.



Cindy Cohn, EFF Executive Director

Issue Areas

Free Speech Online

EFF fights for free expression enabled by technology overcoming the legal, structural, and corporate obstacles blocking people around the world from speaking their minds and accessing information. People should be able to use new technologies to share their ideas; criticize those in power; gather and report the news; and make, adapt, and share creative works. These rights are especially important for those in vulnerable communities, who must be able to safely meet, grow, and make themselves heard without being silenced or drowned out by the powerful.

Digital Privacy

We all deserve a life free from prying eyes, and we know that a more private internet is also a more secure internet. Too many of today's technologies are underpinned by business models that facilitate and promote unparalleled invasions of privacy and reductions in security for all of us. EFF works to pass strong national and international laws that will provide comprehensive privacy against both corporate and law enforcement encroachments, and we fight bad or misguided attempts both in legislatures and in the courts. Ensuring an internet that centers users' rights requires respect for individuals' autonomy, anonymous speech, and the right to free association.

Creativity & Innovation

EFF works to protect and strengthen fair use, innovation, open access, net neutrality, and your freedom to tinker. Our digital future depends on our ability to access, use, and build on information and technology. We challenge patent and copyright trolls in public and in court; argue in Congress for more balanced copyright and patent laws; and urge governments, funders, and educational institutions to adopt open access policies so established players do not silence the next generation of creators.

Transparency

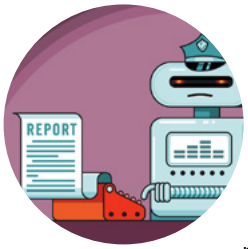
EFF holds governments accountable to the public through federal and state freedom of information laws, the courtroom and the bully pulpit of our blogs, podcast, and social media. We showcase technologies and policies that help the transparency process, such as tools that make it easier to file and track public records requests, websites dedicated to whistle-blowing, or open-government initiatives to improve access to information.

International

EFF's international team advocates for privacy, free speech, and an open internet around the world. We expose mass and unwarranted surveillance and educate unlawfully targeted users on how to protect themselves and their colleagues. EFF uses individual cases to highlight the effect of technology on human rights and defend technologists from persecution and detention wherever they live.

Security

Computer security, and the lack of it, is a fundamental issue that underpins much of how the internet does and doesn't function and is deeply intertwined with privacy. EFF works on a wide range of security issues, including defending encryption use both in the U.S. and internationally; deploying cryptographic protocols like HTTPS Everywhere and Certbot; offering legal assistance to researchers through our Coders' Rights Project; delivering practical security advice to activists through the Surveillance Self-Defense project; directly auditing open-source codebases; and working on the development of new security standards.



Artificial Intelligence

AI technologies are affecting our civil liberties as never before. Ensuring that AI serves people, not power, starts with cutting through the hype. AI technologies are not magic wands—they are general-purpose tools. If we want to regulate those technologies to reduce harms without shutting down benefits, we have to focus on who uses AI, what products they use, and how they use them.

2025 by the Numbers

2,172
Annual Press Mentions

89
Countries with EFF Members

500
Border Surveillance Towers Identified

4 M
Active Privacy Badger Users

678,652
“How to Fix the Internet” Podcast Downloads

125+ M
Certbot-issued certificates

46
Amicus Briefs Filed

15,000+
Atlas of Surveillance Entries

2025 Highlights

FREE SPEECH ONLINE

Section 230 Turned 30 – And Still Needs Defending

The past year brought some of the most sustained threats to free expression online that EFF has seen in decades — from a Supreme Court ruling that opened the door to age verification mandates, to a new federal censorship law passed in the name of protecting victims, to the government surveilling and punishing non-citizens for their protected speech.

Section 230 marked its 30th anniversary with proposals from both parties threatening to gut or sunset it. EFF mounted an aggressive defense, publishing a major piece on why Section 230's elimination would harm small platforms and users, as well as a series of interviews, "The Internet Still Works," with platforms that rely on Section 230. EFF filed an amicus brief in the Ninth U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals defending Section 230 immunity for app stores, warning that stripping that protection would force aggressive content policing across the entire app ecosystem.

In June 2025, the Supreme Court ruled in Free Speech Coalition v. Paxton that Texas could require age verification to access sexually explicit content online. Critically, the Court's reasoning applies only to age verification for obscene content — it does not greenlight age gates on social media, news, or any other category of online speech. That distinction matters, because the momentum to expand age mandates far beyond pornography is strong.

DIGITAL PRIVACY

EFF's Age Verification Hub

Our battle against the censorship and privacy nightmares that come with requirements that internet users submit to age verification is one example of our free-speech advocacy. We've long known that age verification technologies, which aim to block young people from viewing or sharing information that the government deems "harmful" or "offensive," end up becoming tools of censorship for everyone. They often rely on facial recognition and other techniques that have unacceptable levels of inaccuracy and that create security risks. Ultimately, they are surveillance systems that chill access to vital online communities and resources and burden the expressive rights of adults and young people alike.

We launched the Age Verification Hub to help empower the public to understand the risks, challenge these laws, protect our digital rights, and build a safer digital world for everyone, no matter their ages.

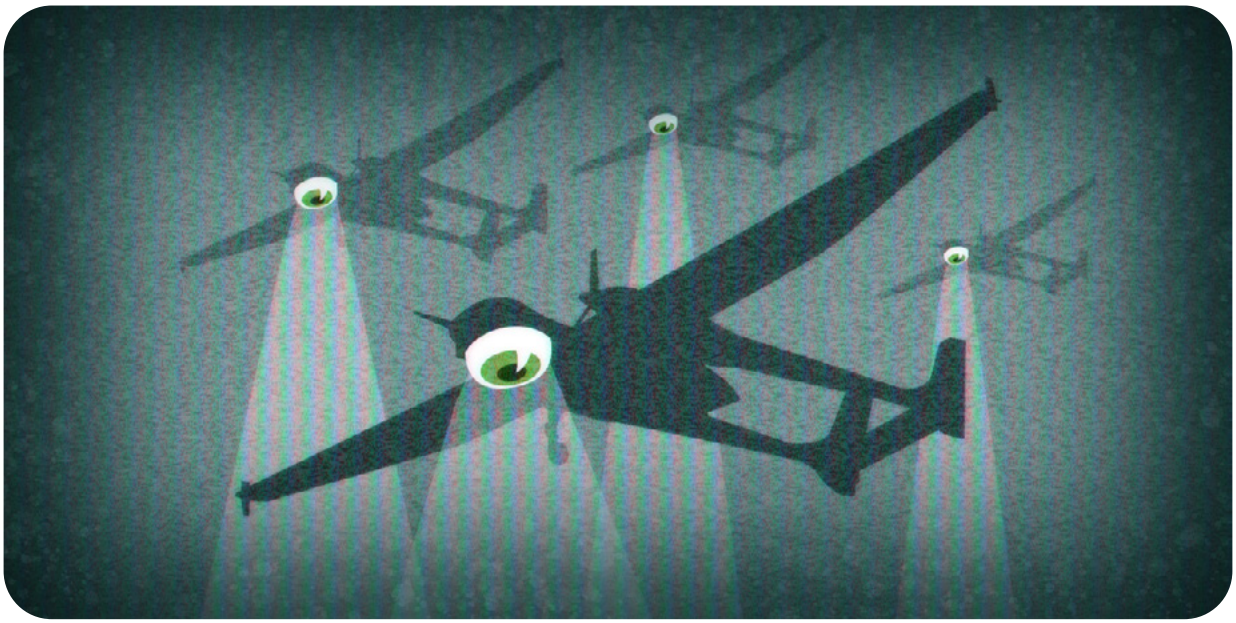
EFF also filed briefs challenging age-gating laws in California (twice), Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, Ohio, Utah, Texas, and Tennessee explaining how age verification laws both violate young people's First Amendment rights to speak and get information online and burden adults' rights and jeopardize everyone's privacy and data security.

The Right to Repair is Now Enshrined in Law in Eight States

Thanks in part to EFF's member support, the right to repair is now law in Washington, joining California, Colorado, Massachusetts, Minnesota, Maine, New York, and Oregon. Gov. Bob Ferguson signed two bills in 2025 guaranteeing Washingtonians' right to access tools, parts, and information so they can fix personal electronics, appliances, and wheelchairs.

The Washington bill affirms our right to repair by banning restrictions that keep people and local businesses from accessing the parts, manuals, and tools they need for cheaper, easier repairs. It joined another strong right-to-repair bill for wheelchairs, ensuring folks can access the parts and manuals they need to fix their mobility devices.

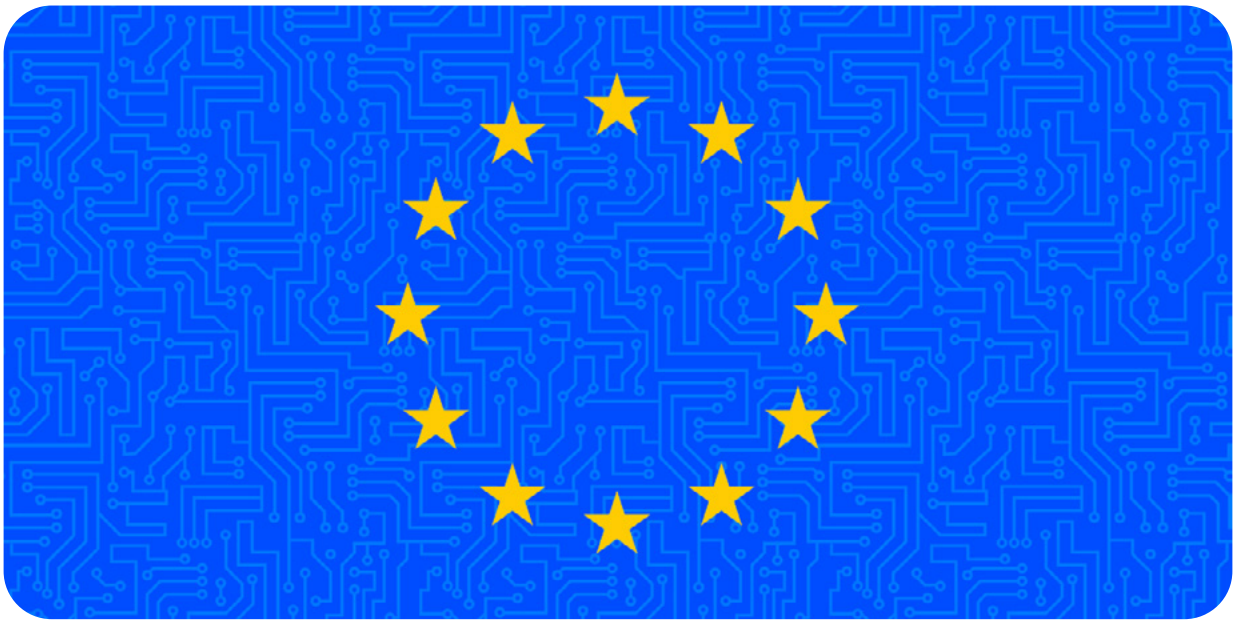
This is the epitome of common-sense legislation:.When you own something, you should have the final say about who fixes, adapts, or modifies it and how. The right to repair movement is gaining serious momentum. All 50 states have now considered some form of right to repair legislation and EFF will continue to fight for this right.



Bolstering Municipal Procurement Power to Fight ALPRs

Too often, decisions about powerful technologies such as automated license plate readers (ALPRs), facial recognition, and data-sharing platforms are treated as technical or administrative matters. This limits public input and allows systems that affect civil liberties to become normalized without meaningful democratic consent. Our work reframes these decisions, creating structured opportunities for residents, advocates, and local officials to engage directly in local governance.

Launched in 2025, our Local Impact Labs work provides technical assistance to local officials and grassroots advocates to operationalize “procurement power:” the ability to refuse, scale back, or dismantle harmful surveillance systems through contract negotiations, renewals, and pilot decisions. By aligning institutional authority with community mobilization, this approach lets cities make decisions that reflect public values. In 2025, 853 ALPR cameras were taken down or blocked in 24 municipalities nationwide.



EU Privacy Regulations

The European Commission (EC) considered a “Digital Omnibus” package in 2025 that would substantially rewrite EU privacy law, particularly the landmark General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). It’s not a done deal and we advocate that it shouldn’t be.

The GDPR is the most comprehensive model for privacy legislation around the world. While it is far from perfect and suffers from uneven enforcement, complexities and certain administrative burdens, the omnibus package is full of bad and confusing ideas that, on balance, will significantly weaken privacy protections for users in the name of cutting red tape.

It contains at least one good idea: improving consent rules so users can automatically set consent preferences that will apply across all sites. But much as we love limiting cookie fatigue, it’s not worth the price users will pay if the rest of the proposal is adopted. We urge that the EC needs to go back to the drawing board if it wants to achieve the goal of simplifying EU regulations without gutting user privacy.

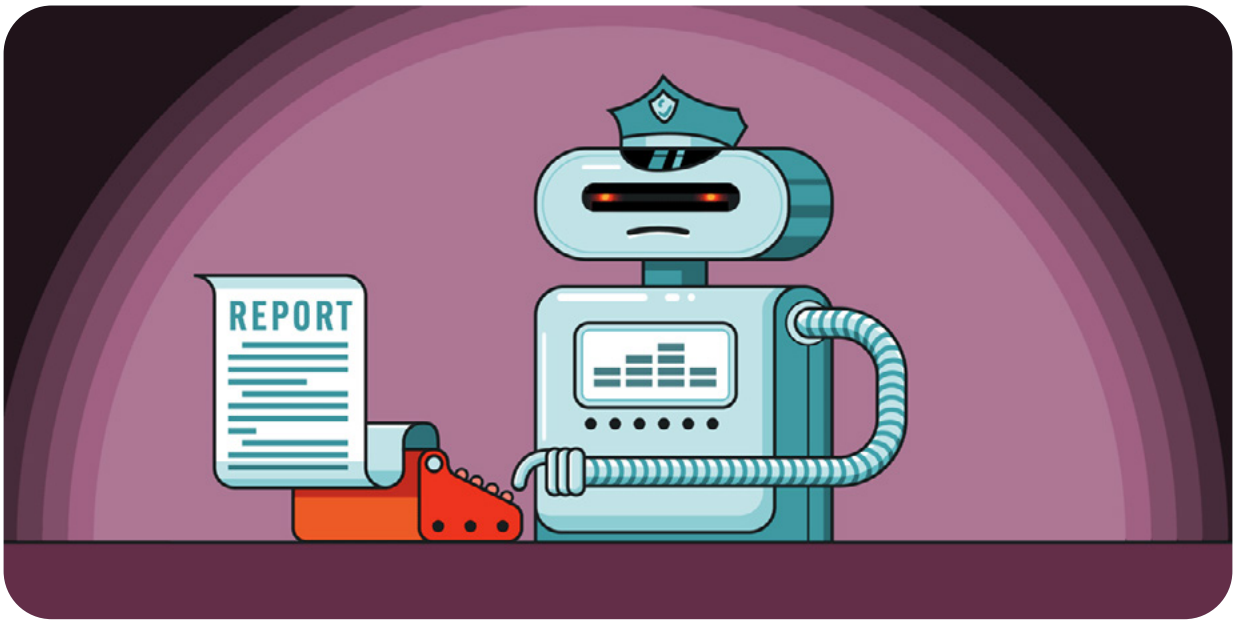
Surveillance Self-Defense

Our Surveillance Self-Defense (SSD) guides, which provide practical advice and explainers on how to deal with government and corporate surveillance, had a big year. We published several large updates to existing guides and released three all-new guides. And with frequent massive protests across the U.S. and around the world, our guide to attending a protest remained one of the most popular guides of the year, so we made sure our translations were up to date.

The new SSD guides launched in 2025 included iPhone and Android privacy guides, which walk users through all the various privacy options of their phone.

Both guides received a handful of updates throughout their first year as new features were released, or in the case of the iPhone, as a new design language was introduced. These also got a fun little boost from a segment on “Last Week Tonight with John Oliver” telling people how to disable their phone’s advertising identifier.

We also launched our How to Manage Your Digital Footprint guide. This guide is designed to help users claw back some of the data they may find about themselves online, walking them through different privacy options across different platforms, removing themselves from people-search sites, and much more.



Accountability in Government Use of AI

Artificial intelligence is quickly being embedded in systems that surveil communities, evaluate healthcare claims, decide immigration cases, and write the official record of arrests. EFF spent the past year fighting on every front where AI threatens civil liberties, from courtrooms and legislatures to public records requests and congressional testimony.

In July, EFF published the results of a major investigation into Axon's Draft One, an AI tool that writes narrative police reports. Based on public records requests from dozens of law enforcement agencies, EFF found that Draft One is deliberately designed to prevent audits: It does not retain prior drafts, making it impossible to determine what the AI wrote versus what an officer added or changed after the fact. EFF called on California Gov. Gavin Newsom to sign SB 524, which would require transparency for AI-written police reports and mandate retention of original AI-generated drafts. In a major victory, the bill became law.

In November, EFF opposed a Trump administration directive to preempt state AI regulations, arguing that state laws governing algorithmic discrimination in housing, healthcare, and employment are often the strongest protections users have, and that federal preemption would hand AI companies a liability shield.

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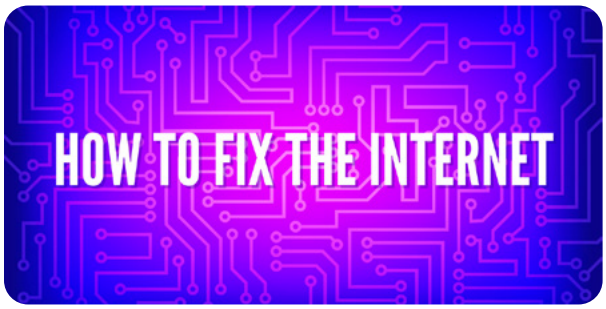
A tidal wave of copyright lawsuits against AI developers threatens beneficial uses of AI, like creative expression, legal research, and scientific advancement. How courts decide these cases will profoundly shape the future of this technology, including its capabilities, its costs, and whether its evolution will be shaped by the democratizing forces of the open market or the whims of an oligopoly. As these cases progressed through the courts in 2025, EFF intervened to defend fair use, promote competition, and protect everyone's rights to build and benefit from this technology.

At the same time, rightsholders stepped up their efforts to control fair uses through everything from state AI laws to technical standards that influence how the web functions. In 2025, EFF fought policies that threaten the open web in the California State Legislature, the Internet Engineering Task Force, and beyond.

ONGOING WORK



How to Fix the Internet

The Electronic Frontier Foundation podcast *How to Fix the Internet* delves into solutions to build an equitable, engaged, and open digital world. We inspire a broad audience of technologists, policy wonks, social media creators, gamers, fan communities, and everyone else who relies on digital tools to see that better world as achievable. Season 6 featured conversations on protecting public-interest journalism, post-quantum cryptography, separating AI hope from AI hype, and more.

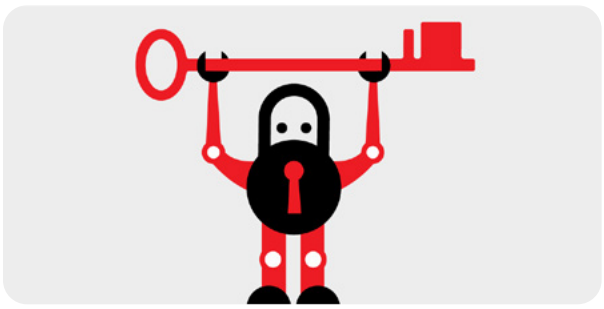
Atlas of Surveillance

The Atlas of Surveillance is a project of the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the Reynolds School of Journalism at the University of Nevada, Reno, comprising research compiled by more than 1,000 students and volunteers, and incorporating datasets from a variety of public and non-profit sources. The Atlas remains the most comprehensive database of its kind, capturing more than 15,000 deployments of surveillance tech as of 2025 – an invaluable tool for journalists, researchers, and community activists. As the police surveillance industry shifted, expanded, and doubled down on its efforts to win law enforcement customers, EFF added new spyware and equipment to this database. This included a growing category of police technology that we call the "third-party investigative platform" We use this term to describe software platforms that collect data from a range of sources and share it with law enforcement, enabling police to analyze this data using AI.

EFFecting Change Livestream Series

EFFecting Change is EFF's livestream series that takes a deep dive into privacy and free speech issues shaping the future of technology. In *EFFecting Change's* 2025 season, we invited panelists from all over the globe to answer questions about protecting digital freedom, digital rights in the new administration in the U.S., and how to address complex questions and risks in AI among other topics.

PUBLIC INTEREST TECHNOLOGY



Privacy Badger

Privacy Badger is a browser extension that stops advertisers and other third-party trackers from secretly tracking where you go and what pages you look at on the web. Originally launched in 2014, EFF has continued to maintain and improve the tool, including updates in 2025 that increased accessibility, especially for those using screen readers. Translation support has been improved and is now available in 30 languages. Available to the public for free, Privacy Badger was the first browser extension to specifically focus on blocking tracking in advertisements, instead of just the ads themselves.

Certbot

Certbot—EFF's free, open-source tool to help websites encrypt their traffic and keep their sites secure - aims to build a web that is more structurally private, safe, and protected against censorship. At the end of 2025, there were 4.5 million Certbot installations maintaining 24 million certificates for 33 million domains.

Rayhunter

Cell-Site Simulators (CSS), also known as International Mobile Subscriber Identity (IMSI) catchers, are among law enforcement's most closely-guarded secret surveillance tools. They act like cell phone towers, "tricking" mobile devices into connecting to them to intercept the information that phones send and receive, like the location of the user and metadata for phone calls, text messages, and other app traffic.

Rayhunter is a new open-source tool we created in 2025 that runs off an affordable mobile hotspot to empower everyone, regardless of technical skill, to help search out CSSs around the world. We hope that activists, journalists, and others will run these devices and help us collect data about the usage and capabilities of CSSs. One goal is to determine conclusively if CSSs are used to surveil free expression such as protests or religious gatherings, and if so, how often. With this data, EFF can engage in threat modeling about the risks of CSSs. Additionally, any data we find will be useful to those who are fighting through legal process or legislative policy to rein in CSS use where they live.

IMPACT LITIGATION

Legal & Legislative Victory Highlights

1. EFF Sues OPM, DOGE and Musk for Endangering the Privacy of Millions (2/11/25) Federal
2. Privacy Victory! Judge Grants Preliminary Injunction in OPM/DOGE Lawsuit (6/9/25) Federal
3. Torture Victim's Landmark Hacking Lawsuit Against Spyware Maker Can Proceed, Judge Rules (8/13/25) International
4. US S. Ct. - Cox v. Sony - EFF et al. EFF filed an amicus brief (9/5/25) Federal
5. EFF v. DOJ, DHS (ICE tracking apps) Federal
6. Labor Unions, EFF Sue Trump Administration to Stop Ideological Surveillance of Free Speech Online (10/16/25) Federal
7. Lawsuit Challenges San Jose's Warrantless ALPR Mass Surveillance (11/18/25) State

Chief Development Officer's Message

Thank you for supporting EFF and the fight for digital rights.

This year, the work that EFF does to secure freedom of speech, freedom from surveillance, digital privacy, and innovation felt more important than ever. But as I write this, I realized that I've also said that every year I have worked at EFF. I wondered if it was disingenuous, but instead I've landed on a sense that this is fundamentally true. EFF's work to secure your rights in the digital world is more important each year than it was the last.

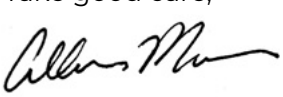
As the world becomes more infused with technology, the opportunities for users grow and grow—along with the ways governments and corporations use that tech to surveil, censor, and commodify us. EFF has to fight harder all the time. We fight for young people's right to access information. We fight against government sharing data given to the IRS with other government agencies, including law enforcement and immigration. We fight the data brokers that commodify your most mundane and your most intimate information. We fight municipal governments contracting with ALPR companies that surveil our communities and sell citizens' data. With the rise of authoritarianism in the U.S. and around the world, there were days when the only thing that got me out of bed in the morning was working for EFF. I felt so proud to be able to support my brilliant colleagues in the fight for our rights and democracy. Grateful that I get to show up and be part of the work. And I felt so humbled by the generosity of supporters and friends like you.

My colleague Cory Doctorow said it well: "EFF sues. EFF advocates. EFF codes. And EFF wins."

And we can only do that because of supporters like you. Your support is what makes campaigns like Take Back CTRL, tech projects like Rayhunter, and fights like those protecting federal employees from the theft of their data possible.

It is my privilege to thank you for the support you have shown EFF this year.

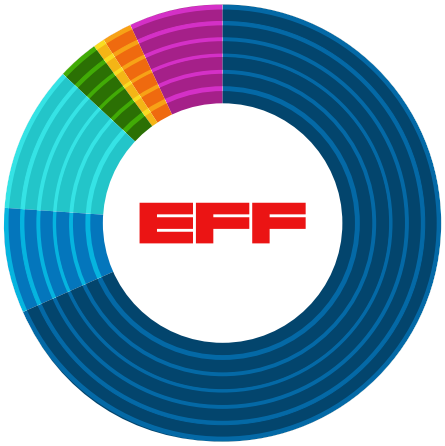
Take good care,



Allison Morris, Chief Development Officer

Financial Report

FY 2024-2025 PUBLIC SUPPORT



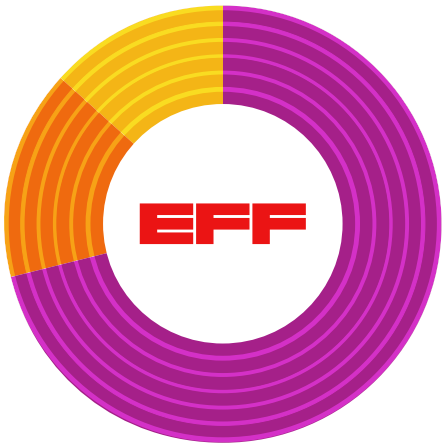
EFF FY 2024-2025 PUBLIC SUPPORT

Individual	$14,667,000
Individual through Foundation	$1,678,000
Foundation	$2,268,800
Employee & Customer-Directed Gifts*	$660,400
Corporate	$169,000
Cy Pres	$474,300
In-kind Contributions	$1,482,800
Total Public Support	**$21,400,300**
Other Revenue	$4,705,500
Total Public Support & Revenue	**$26,105,800**

EFF FY 2024-2025 EXPENSES

Program	$19,348,200
Administrative	$4,180,400
Fundraising	$3,579,500
Total Expenses	**$27,108,100**

FY 2024-2025 EXPENSES



Income

Public Support

Individual Contributions	
Individual Contributions - Legacy Gifts	$6,645,300
Individual Contributions over $50,000	$864,400
Individual Contributions $10,000 - $50,000	$1,112,900
Individual Contributions $1,000-$10,000	$1,766,700
Individual Contributions under $1,000	$4,277,700
Total Individual Contributions	$14,667,000
Individual Contributions through Foundations	
Individual Contributions through Foundations Over $50,000	$1,361,100
Individual Contributions through Foundations Up to $50,000	$316,900
Total Individual Contributions through Foundations	$1,678,000
Foundation Grants*	$2,268,800
Cy Pres Awards	
Anurag Gupta, et al., v. Aeries Software, Inc.	$16,200
Komins v. Yonamine, et al. (MobilityWare)	$50,000
T.K. v. Bytedance Technology Co., Ltd., Musical.Ly Inc., Musical.Ly The Cayman Islands Corporation, and Tiktok Inc	$110,400
Helyer v. Smile Brands Inc.	$2,700
Pfeiffer et al v. Radnet Inc.	$17,400
Garges v. Liberty Partners Financial Services, LLC	$18,000
Parker v. Chinos Holding (J Crew)	$37,500
Khederlarian v. Utility Trailer Manufacturing	$217,600
Parker v. Chinos Holding (J Crew)	$4,500
Total Cy Pres Awards	$474,300
Corporate Contributions	
Employee and Customer-Directed Gifts**	$660,400
Other Corporate Contributions	$169,000
Total Corporate Contributions	$829,400
In-kind Services	$1,482,800
Total Public Support	**$21,400,300**

Revenue

Net Investment Income	$4,463,800
Attorneys' Fees Awarded	$0
EFF Event Income, net of expenses	$46,400
Miscellaneous	$195,300
Total Revenue	**$4,705,500**
Total Support and Revenue	**$26,105,800**

Expenses

Salaries & Benefits	$20,456,900
Legal & Professional Fees	$2,503,500
Furniture & Equipment Expense	$1,545,700
Membership Expenses	$541,600
Planning and Development	$441,300
Office Expenses	$335,500
Building Expenses	$299,900
Amortization & Depreciation	$273,900
Travel Expenses	$200,700
Corporate Insurance	$162,500
Litigation Expenses	$147,700
Awareness Events	$116,900
Other Administrative Expenses	$61,300
Intern Expenses	$18,900
Other In Kind Contribution	$1,900
Total Expenses	**$27,108,200**
Net Income* **	**-$1,002,400**

** This category includes newly awarded grant amounts during FY24-25 (accrual basis) and does not include additional funds awarded in prior years but disbursed during this FY.*

*** This category includes payments made to match verified employee donations, charity awards chosen by employee groups, and portions of customer purchases designated for charity.*

**** EFF experienced negative net income in 2025. We were able to maintain operational expenses by utilizing funds from our cash reserves.*

Thank You

EFF's members around the globe drive the movement for digital privacy, the free exchange of ideas, and an online world in which the public's interests come first. Together, we make a better digital future possible.

EFF is grateful for the support of the following foundations:

The Ford Foundation

Filecoin Foundation for the Decentralized Web

Kaphan Foundation

Alfred P. Sloan Foundation

Special thanks to Fastly, DuckDuckGo, Corellium, and No Starch Press for their generous support.

EFF