

May First/People Link 2013 Co-Directors Report

The past year has seen an unprecedented attention to Internet security and privacy, while at the same time our profile has risen significantly within the movement, our integration with our Mexican members has continued, and we've launched a number of important new services.

Legal and Technical Attacks

May First/People Link and our members continue to come under technical and legal attack. Sahara Reporters experienced an intense denial of service attack by an opponent clearly trying to stifle the expression of the most well known independent news services for Saharan African. Only after 5 days of concerted effort by Ross and other members of the support team were we able to fend it off, keeping the site on-line. A sister organization of ours, GreenNet in the UK, suffered a similar attack, taking most of their entire operations off-line for several days.

On the legal side, we again received department of justice requests for records (for a criminal investigation that turned out to be a spoof), as well as aggressive and threatening letters from Playboy in reaction to a member's political campaign forcing us to move the site between our upstream providers and eventually to a provider in Sweden.

Although our technical and legal defense teams have thus far been successful in thwarting these attacks, we must prepare for more organized attacks in the future.

Infrastructure

Our support team has rolled out a number of new services for members, including our own instant messaging service (im.mayfirst.org), file sharing service (<https://share.mayfirst.org>), social networking site (<https://friends.mayfirst.org>), wiki spread sheet (<https://calc.mayfirst.org>), our own live interpretation conference system (<https://live.mayfirst.org/mexcla>), and a video conference system (<https://live.mayfirst.org>).

The past year has also brought a complete re-design of our control panel software plus the addition of MediaWiki as a application any member can install with the click of a button.

We've added a new on-site backup server with 12 TB of space (three times larger than our previous on-site backup servers). We also moved our off-site backup server to a location with significantly more bandwidth.

We've also added a new payment processor, providing members with the option of not using Pay Pay! And, we've started an experimental backup server in our Mexico City office.

People Of Color Techie training

We completed the first ever People Of Color Techie training! 5 of the 6 mentees completed a full year. We closed the training in Detroit at the Allied Media Conference (where we started it the previous year) with a panel discussion in partnership with the Open Technology Institute on fighting racism and sexism in technology. POC Techie Mentees Tomás Aguilar and Rita Mendez presented on their experiences in the program. Special recognition goes to Leadership Committee member Alfredo for his vision in seeing this through as well as Ross and Nat, our support team members who provided mentorship.

Movement Work

In the past year, the US Social Forum organizing has picked up steam. May First/People Link has been proposing a US Social Forum in multiple cities for several years. This year the National Planning Committee has finally adopted the Polycentric Social Forum idea, which is planned for 2015.

May First/People Link was formally approved as the Media Action Grassroots Network (MAG-Net) co-anchor for the northeast region. Alfredo attended the Summer strategizing session, where privacy was approved as the next national campaign. Thanks to the hard work of Alfredo and Enrique, we organized a presentation to the MAG-Net anchors b Laura Salas on the work of AMEDI, the Mexican association that successfully fought for a communications amendment to the Mexico constitution.

Last February, Ross (support team), Joseph (leadership committee and support team) join Rasha (leadership committee) to support the People's First 100 days campaign.

In addition, through the regular columns written by Alfredo in This Can't Be Happening, we have been invited to speak on numerous panels on technology and privacy, significantly raising our profile within the movement.

Mexico MFPL coop: an instance for organizing and an expression of growth of MFPL

MFPL strategic decisions taken in 2011 to support and integrate the LaNeta.apc.org Mexican on-line progressive community and later during 2012 to invite the occupy movement assemblies to deploy their online communication projects and involve with MFPL, both were indicators of the strength of our association and the relevance of our project: to defend freedom on the Internet, while developing our communications infrastructure with democratic participation of our members to contribute to the processes of social change in the United States, in Mexico and increasingly in other countries.

While the process of technological infrastructure integration from México is not yet complete, the whole process has called the participation of some of our members who -- from the Leadership Committee -- have created a proposal for local organizing with interest from several other members based in this country. The goal is to have an instance of May First / People Link legally constituted as a cooperative to handle the technological and political development, but also its administrative and tax-related needs. This processes will strengthen IT transfer from North to South with a different logic than the one developed by corporations and capitalists states, it will seek to increase local server management capabilities, in order to have servers hosted in Mexico with a local technical support team responsible for them, a team of activists who right now develop various initiatives and have a presence in the social movement. For MFPL this initiative could extend our networks abroad, diversifying its location which is convenient from the legal perspective and engages technologist in the South via technological cooperation.

This initiative is underway and the opening of the Technological Cooperative Primero de Mayo / Enlace Popular - Mexico will take place before February 2014.