C A L Y X

CALYX INSTITUTE

Annual Report

May 1st, 2018 – April 30, 2019

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Mission & Objectives

THE CALYX INSTITUTE is a not-for-profit education and research organization devoted to studying, testing, developing, and implementing privacy technology and tools to educate the public and promote free speech, free expression, civic engagement and privacy rights on the Internet and in the mobile telephone industry.

The mission of The Calyx Institute is to educate the public about the importance of privacy in digital communications and to develop building blocks that Internet users and service providers alike can use to build "privacy by design" into their Internet experience. Calyx seeks to incorporate privacy and anonymity controls into services at root levels, and make these controls easy for all people to access and use. In order to achieve the ultimate goal of reinforcing the fundamental right to freedom of expression, we seek to make robust privacy tools and ubiquitous strong encryption available to everyone.

Letter from the Executive Director

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The 2018–2019 fiscal year saw continued growth for The Calyx Institute at a time when the interest in online privacy in the face of surveillance and privacy-invasive business practices rocketed into the center of public discourse. The question of how to preserve privacy and anonymity on the internet and through our telecommunications in the face of increasingly widespread tracking and profiling is technologically and politically complex. We are proud of the efforts Calyx has made to educate the public on these issues and of our efforts to develop and support technologies and infrastructure that is freely available to all.

Along with this increased public interest in our mission, Calyx spent much of last year resolving the growing pains we experienced as a result of our explosive growth in membership. We overcame the challenges associated with interest in Calyx and with supporting members new and old, and we are now well-positioned to sustain this growth and provide support for Calyx Institute members for years to come.

Our success in 2019 will be determined by how well we can balance these two mutually reinforcing priorities: continuing to develop, deploy, and educate the public on tools to protect privacy, online security, and circumvent censorship while increasing our membership and the support we provide them. We are excited to find answers to questions such as: How should Calyx be structured to manage an ambitious slate of privacy and security technology development projects? How can Calyx best contribute to online privacy and security education in a period where such concerns are entering the mainstream? And, in a year with perhaps as much attention on digital privacy and security since the Snowden leaks in 2013, what can Calyx do to foster an open and secure internet?

Nicholas Merrill
Executive Director

Accomplishments

MEMBERSHIP GROWTH

WE CONTINUED TO SEE GROWTH in our membership. 990 new member donors joined the Calyx Institute in the fiscal year, bringing the total membership to over 2100. In order to support our sizeable membership list, we hired a full-time Membership Coordinator to respond to requests for help or assistance from current or potential members, package and ship membership benefits including our wireless internet hotspots, and work to sustain membership growth and retention. Our Membership Coordinator has created a dramatic increase in response time to member requests, regularization of membership benefit package shipment, and increased member satisfaction. We expect to see increased membership retention in the following year as a result of this, as well as increased membership growth due to positive word-of-mouth.

Our membership growth was assisted by a generous grant for Google Ads, allowing Calyx to reach potential members searching for ways to support internet freedom or find out about our wireless internet membership benefit.

CONFERENCES CONVENINGS

CALYX REMAINED ENGAGED with our colleagues, friends, and partners in the privacy and technology community. We have continued to sponsor CryptoHarlem (https://cryptoharlem.party/), the digital surveillance and cybersecurity clinic run in the Harlem neighborhood of New York City. We also made appearances at hacker conventions and developers meetings throughout the world, including at the Hackers on Planet Earth conference in New York City, DEFCON in Las Vegas, as well as the Tor developers conference in Mexico City, the Open Technology Fund summit in Taipei, and the Internet Freedom Festival in Valencia.

STAFF EXPANSION

CALYX ADDED TWO full-time staffers during the fiscal year: Membership Coordinator Catie Wilkinson, and Project Manager Jeff Landale. Working from Washington, DC, Jeff brings over 8 years of digital rights activism, policy research, public interest lobbying, and project management experience to Calyx. Prior to joining the Calyx Institute, Jeff fought for Net Neutrality with Demand Progress, helped rein in mass surveillance with X-Lab, and researched telecommunications companies human rights impact with Access Now. Catie is a member engagement and logistics specialist. Formerly with Habitat for Humanity NYC, she has organized events, managed databases, coordinated fundraising initiatives, and galvanized volunteers to realize community-powered responses to the shortage of affordable housing in NYC.

Catie Wilkinson — Membership Coordinator   Jeff Landale — Project Manager

DATA CENTER AND OFFICE EXPANSION

AS A RESULT OF a year of rapid growth, Calyx needed more space. To this end, we moved to a significantly larger office in Industry City, Brooklyn.

We also increased our space for more than just the growing Calyx staff. This year we moved, upgraded, and expanded our data center in New York City. Tor node hosting grew tenfold by both upgrading the uplink from 1 Gbps to 10 Gbps, fulfilling a promise made at DEFCON 2017, as well as getting all new server hardware that does AES encryption in the hardware.

As of the end of this fiscal year (April 30, 2019), our 14 servers carry approximately 3 Gbps of peak traffic on the Tor network. Up-to-date statistics are available on the Tor Metric page here: https://metrics.torproject.org/rs.html#search/CalyxInstitute

Our JabberXMPP service currently supports over 200,000 accounts on the regular part of the xmpp server and the Tor hidden service combined.

CALYXVPN

NEAR THE END of the fiscal year, Calyx launched a custom android client for our Virtual Private Network, called CalyxVPN, which is available in the f-droid repository. CalyxVPN, an implementation of the LEAP Encryption Access Project (www.leap.se), is one of the free services, funded and supported by members, provided to users looking to increase their privacy and circumvent web censorship around the globe.

CALYXOS

AT THE INTERNET Freedom Festival in Valencia, Spain, we publicly launched CalyxOS, a mobile phone operating system built with "Privacy by Design." Inspired byprojects such as TAILS and Qubes, CalyxOS is a privacy and security enhanced version of Android that is completely open source, strips out Google's proprietary tracking, and includes a wide range of privacy and circumvention tools and apps such as Tor, Signal, and the CalyxVPN available by default.
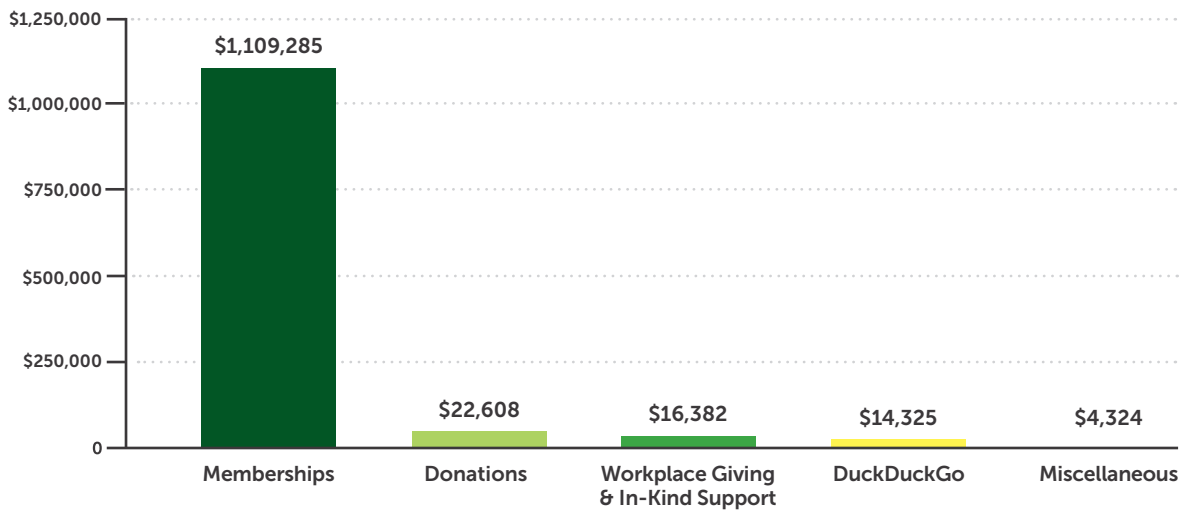
WIRELESS INTERNET IN PUERTO RICO

AFTER A SUCCESSFUL fundraiser with the support of Duck Duck Go, Calyx has begun deploying mobile hotspots to community centers in Puerto Rico to help with the recovery efforts. We will be continuing this work in the next fiscal year.
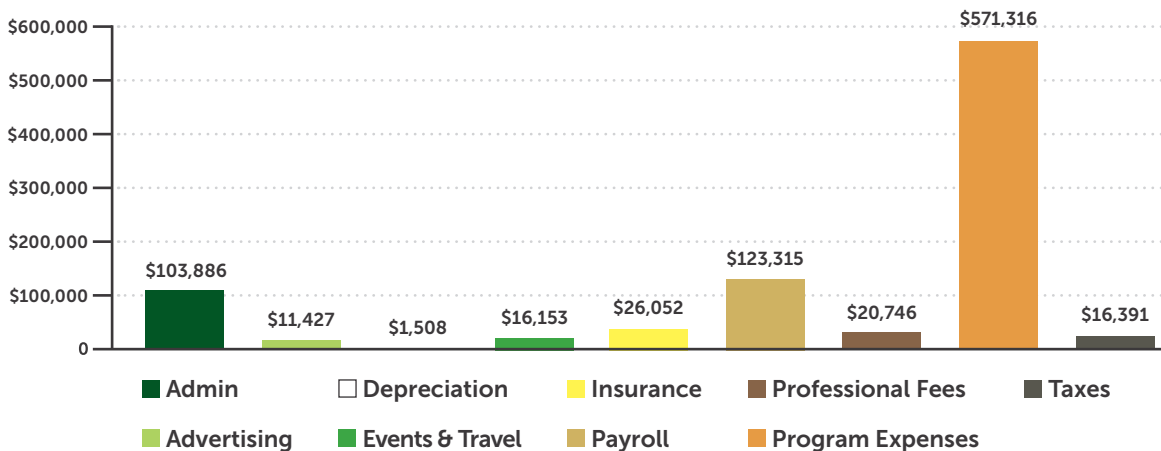
Financials

Calyx received the majority of our funding through our growing membership program. In the fiscal year covered here, Calyx received $1,166,924 in revenue, and had $890,793 in expenses.

2018 INCOME

	Memberships	Donations	Workplace Giving & In-Kind Support	DuckDuckGo	Miscellaneous
Amount	$1,109,285	$22,608	$16,382	$14,325	$4,324

Total Revenue – $1,166,924

2018 EXPENSES

Admin	Advertising	Depreciation	Events & Travel	Insurance	Payroll	Professional Fees	Program Expenses	Taxes
$103,886	$11,427	$1,508	$16,153	$26,052	$123,315	$20,746	$571,316	$16,391

Legend: ■ Admin □ Depreciation ■ Insurance ■ Professional Fees ■ Taxes ■ Advertising ■ Events & Travel ■ Payroll ■ Program Expenses

Total Expenses – $890,793
Gain/Loss – $276,132