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# All in for Privacy: Cultivating a Community of Information Privacy Awareness

Lindsay Taylor

*University of Western Ontario, ltaylo96@uwo.ca*

Marni R. Harrington

*University of Western Ontario, mharring@uwo.ca*

Matt Ward

*University of Western Ontario, mward44@uwo.ca*

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# All In for Privacy: Cultivating a Community of Information Privacy Awareness

Lindsay Taylor, Matthew Ward, Marni Harrington  
Faculty of Information and Media Studies, University of Western Ontario

Western FIMS

## Project Overview

As part of an academic community which strongly values privacy, intellectual freedom, and fighting censorship, the FIMS-GRC Library aims to secure and promote these values through advocacy, instruction, and implementation of technology.

Our initiative is a cooperative project within the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS), and in alliance with the Library Freedom Project (LFP).

Our approach is to prioritize ethical considerations of privacy and intellectual freedom, where procedural issues come second.

**About the FIMS-GRC Library:** The Graduate Resource Center (GRC) Library is a special academic library serving the FIMS graduate community, including Masters and PhD students in Library and Information Science, Media Studies, Journalism & Communication, and Health Information Science. Privacy is a core issue to what students are currently studying across all graduate programming. Many graduates are information workers, who will deal in sensitive information and/or vulnerable communities.

### Information Privacy in Libraries

The Library Freedom Project (LFP) "is a partnership among librarians, technologists, attorneys, and privacy advocates which aims to address the problems of surveillance by making real the promise of intellectual freedom in libraries" by providing relevant tools and education on technical, legal, and ethical issues to LIS professionals.<sup>1</sup>



### Surveillance

- Threats to privacy such as government surveillance, commercial retention of personal data, and traffic analysis by ISP's, have been increasing globally.<sup>2</sup>
- This issue is important to libraries as providers of public internet access.

### Valuing Privacy

- ALA code of ethics states:
  - We protect each library user's right to privacy and confidentiality with respect to information sought or received and resources consulted, borrowed, acquired or transmitted.<sup>3</sup>
- Intellectual freedom is dependent on privacy.
  - 1 in 6 writers in PEN survey self-censored because of surveillance concerns.<sup>4</sup>

### Digital Literacy

- Knowing how to use privacy tools effectively protects librarians and patrons from privacy and security breaches.
- Increasing the number of individual users of privacy applications makes digital environments safer for all users.<sup>2,5</sup>

### Library Programming

#### Purpose

- To create learning opportunities for FIMS graduate students to build digital literacy skills and promote critical thinking in the areas of information privacy and security.
- To demonstrate implementation of technology which supports a more secure digital environment both in our academic community and the global community which our students enter after graduation.

#### Guidelines

- Provide hands-on experience with open source and information privacy tools.
- Encourage reexamination of current digital practices, eg. software licensing, personal data retention, and un/encrypted communications.
- Feature applications highly relevant to students, eg. use of secure, encrypted communications when working with vulnerable groups.
- Encourage students to think critically by sharing their own conclusions.

#### The Librarian's Open Source Toolbox

- Interactive display on open source software, with focus on information privacy tools and issues.
- Students compare a computer running Windows and proprietary software against a computer running Ubuntu Linux OS and open source information software.
  - Highlighted tools include Tor Browser for online anonymity, Tutanota encrypted email client, Zotero open source reference management software, etc.

#### Hands-On Workshops

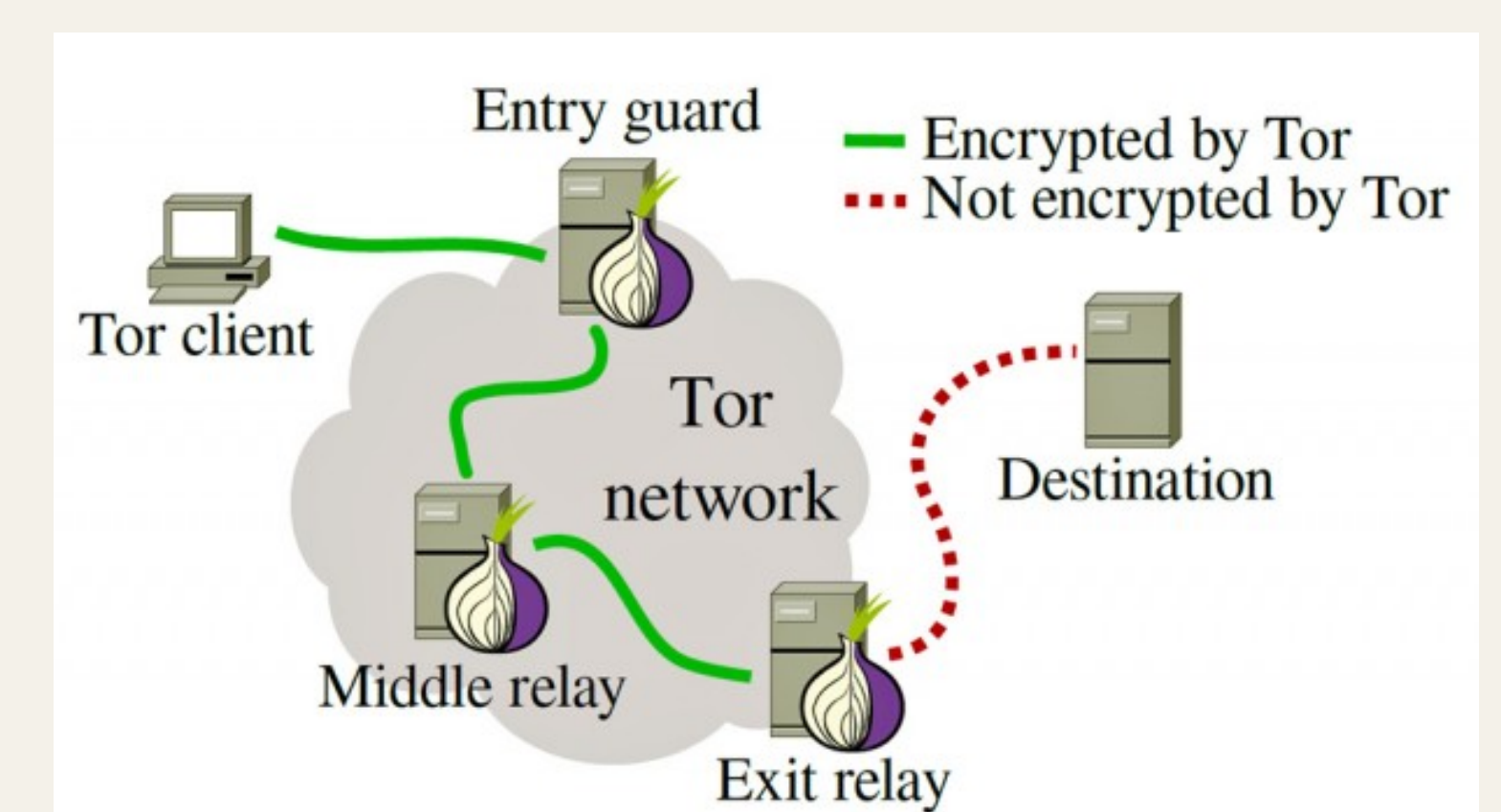
- Practical workshops for students to gain more advanced skills through guided use of digital privacy tools.
- Linux workshop by Software Carpentry
  - Workshops on Tor, encrypted email and password protection by Matthew Ward.

### Tor in the Library

The GRC Library is the first Canadian library to set up a Tor relay, to route anonymous global traffic. The *ellenatfims* relay is part of 7000 nodes running worldwide. Tor Browser is also installed on our lab computers to support anonymous online browsing.

#### What is Tor?

- When users connect to the Tor network, their encrypted traffic is routed through multiple semi-random volunteer-run relays across the globe, so data is not connected to a personal IP address, and anonymity is improved.<sup>5</sup>



(Image by Phillip Winter)

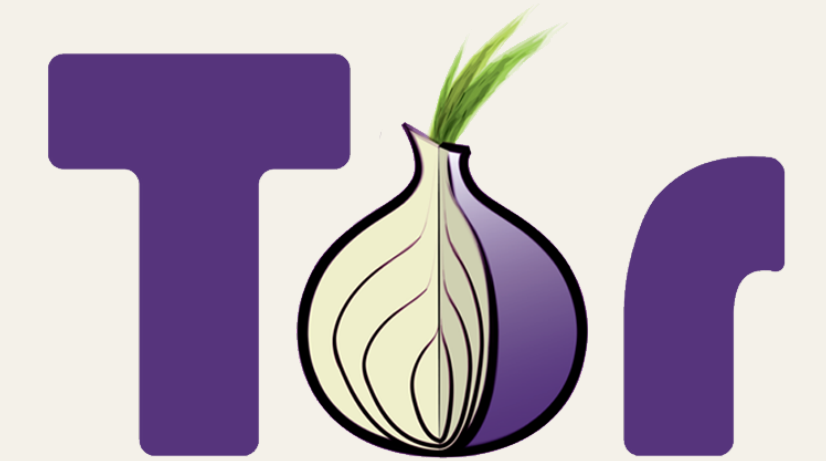
- Tor Browser, for accessing the Tor network, is open source, blocks third party trackers and scripts, and forces https secure transfer protocol, in order to protect anonymity.<sup>5</sup>

#### Why Tor is Important in Libraries

- Tor user groups are consistent with many library user groups, eg. researchers of sensitive topics, people part of vulnerable populations, and victims of online censorship.<sup>5</sup>
- Individuals may not have the resources or a safe environment to set up and use Tor elsewhere.

#### Setting up Tor

- Tor Browser requires:
  - Simple installation.
- A Tor relay requires:
  - Dual/quad core PC.
  - High speed internet connection.
  - Intermediate Linux knowledge.



### Outreach

- We support the right to privacy within our broader academic community, and set an example for our students to advocate for secure and private practices in their own communities.
- We support graduate programming within FIMS classes, as well as open presentations on topics such as Digital Citizenship.
- We promote Tor Browser in Western's volunteer-run Pride Library, as a safe browsing space for patrons and for privacy in LGBTQ+ research.

### Future Steps

- Encourage more Tor relays and use of Tor browser on Western's campus.
- Develop community partnerships eg. share knowledge with local libraries and women's community centres.
- Create *Privacy in the Library* website for information about Tor in our library, including our Tor relay safeguards for liability purposes.
- Refresh the Librarian's Open Source Toolbox passive programming to re-engage the FIMS community.
- Continue to work with computing services on campus to address their liability concerns (e.g. reiterate that data is not stored on Western's servers).

### References

1. 2016. What is the Library Freedom Project? *The Library Freedom Project*.
2. Mendel et al. (2012). *Global Survey on Internet Privacy and Freedom of Expression*. Paris: UNESCO.
3. American Library Association (2008). *Code of Ethics of the American Library Association*.
4. PEN America (2013). *Chilling Effects: NSA Surveillance Drives U.S. Writers to Self-Censor*.
5. 2016. Tor: Overview. *Tor Project: Anonymity Online*.

### Recommendations for Other Libraries

- Privacy instruction is not just for patrons, but for all librarians, staff, and administration in your library system.
- It is valuable to have staff and faculty from a variety of backgrounds involved, including a close relationship with IT/Computing Services.
- If you want guidance, the Library Freedom Project provides many resources, and delivers in-person workshops. They can also help your library advocate your initiative.<sup>1</sup>



Scan the QR code for more information to set up Tor in your library or go to: [privlib.fims.uwo](http://privlib.fims.uwo)

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