



2023-2024 Tools & Tech Guide

statevoices.org

Table of Contents

06

SV Tools Stack

54

Recommended Tech

16

Movement Tools

61

Office Equipment

35

Tech Guide

73

Tools For Data Practitioners

38

Software

77

Data & Technology Trainings

48

Digital Security & Privacy

79

AI Best Practices

52

Free Downloads

82

Putting It All Together

INTRO

Welcome to the 2023-2024 State Voices Tools and Tech Guide. Since 2019, the State Voices Data Department has been actively researching tools to recommend and offer a stack that helps our partners and affiliates to maximize the impact of their programs. This guide is designed to help our network save some time and effort that might otherwise be spent discussing options with vendors and finding the right tools for their work.

Through extensive research and investment in tools, apps, and vendors for State Voices' Affiliated Network and partners, we prioritized meeting our communities where they are and continuing to work toward truly representative democracy. The tools recommended herein are the ones our Data Department feels will be the most helpful in our work toward that goal. We have also spent ample time meeting with and speaking to vendors to ensure alignment of mutual goals.

01

State Voices conducts regular audits of the civic engagement and advocacy tools landscape within our affiliated network. These audits take an in-depth look at what tools State Tables are actively using, demoing, had never heard of, were not interested in using, or were recommending that State Voices demo. The tools audited include outreach tools from a variety of areas, including but not limited to legislative advocacy, phone dialers, CRMs, and digital and relational organizing.

As you'll quickly see in this guide, we have gone to great lengths utilizing our vetting procedure for potential new tools and apps to provide you with our assessments and recommendations. As part of the vetting procedure, when a new tool is identified, the State Voices data team—along with the additional necessary departments—would request a demonstration of the tool and complete a comprehensive review to give their feedback on the tool.

The State Voices team has attended hundreds of demonstrations of tech tools and/or vendor services from 2019 through 2023. This guide is the culmination of those efforts.

We deeply believe in decolonizing data and creating accessible environments and digital spaces. This is important because data and accessibility to it can be used to perpetuate discrimination and inequality. By decolonizing data and making spaces more accessible, we can help to create a more equitable and inclusive world. For this reason, we encourage you to evaluate your own needs and organizational needs when reviewing the Accessibility section of the Guide.

Artificial intelligence (AI) has recently emerged as a powerful tool that can be used to solve many problems. However, AI also has flaws, such as the potential for bias and the lack of transparency. AI systems are trained on data, and if that data is biased, the AI system will be biased as well. This can lead to discrimination against certain groups of people. For example, an AI system that is trained on data from a biased hiring process could be more likely to recommend white candidates for jobs. AI, ML, and LLM systems are capable of automating many tasks that are currently done by humans. This could lead to widespread job displacement, as well as economic inequality. It is

important to use AI responsibly and ethically so that we can reap the benefits of this technology while minimizing the risks. In this iteration of the Guide, we have taken the time to provide what we believe are the best practices and recommendations for using AI, machine learning, and similar large language models in an equitable and ethical way.

In addition to our AI recommendations, we have included top-line best practices when handling mis and disinformation. Social media platforms are particularly vulnerable to the spread of misinformation and disinformation because they allow users to share information quickly and easily with a large audience. Additionally, social media algorithms are often designed to promote content that is engaging, which can lead to false information being amplified more than truthful information.

02



HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to give organizations a quick overview of tools and vendors that might benefit the programs they're running. State Voices does not endorse or intend to promote any product. Instead, we hope that this guide will facilitate organizations' research to find the best fit for their programs. State Voices' goal in creating these one-pagers was to be as objective as possible. However, we recognize that even though we used the same form for all demos, it doesn't guarantee each tool or vendor was asked the same questions. For that reason, this guide does not intend to replace an organization's own research. It is simply a supplement or a starting place for organizations attempting to navigate a complex digital space.

03

We encourage each organization to do their own research and assess each new potential tool or vendor based on how well it will meet the needs of their organization, the people they serve, and the programs that will be conducted with said tool or vendor.

We did our best to keep each tool/vendor review to one page. Considerations we factored into our assessments of these tools include but are not limited to the following:

Organizational Values and Practices

It is important to State Voices that the vendors we hold contracts with share values of social justice, representation, inclusion, and progressivism.

Integration Capacity with Movement Technology

As the use of movement technology grows, data and technology professionals play a vital role in connecting these tools with the work. State Voices, like many national progressive groups, uses data services from Community Tech Alliance and Civis for data storage and analysis platforms to blend data from multiple civic engagement tools. As programs become more complex the data and intelligence they create must be shared easily and efficiently to ensure good data informs good civic engagement programs. When considering data storage and analysis platforms for civic engagement consider tools that allow users to access its API or provide support to build custom API processes to share data across your civic engagement data system.

One integration that's considered a standard for civic engagement technology is NGP VAN. VAN integration allows data to be pushed or pulled directly between VAN and a given tool and is very important if your organization uses VAN. If you're a State Voices partner organization that uses VAN through and in a manner governed by the agreement between State Voices and you regarding VAN—we truly hope you're actively using your VAN committee since that's how we do our end-of-year reporting.

There are three types of VAN integration. They are:

- Pull VAN integration which means that data can only be pulled from the VAN and into the tool you're using.
- Push VAN integration means that results can only be pushed from the tool you're using back into the VAN.
- Pull/Push VAN integration means that data can be both pulled from the VAN and into the tool, and results from the tool can be pushed back into the VAN.

VAN integration in any combination is beneficial because it either decreases or eliminates the need for manual loading of data from one tool into another. It also eliminates the need to send data and responses back and forth via email—if you're working with a VAN administrator who's loading the data for you.

Our recommendation to partners reading the guide is that you invest in a tool that integrates with your civic engagement data systems, consistent with the agreement between your organization and State Voices so that state data staff don't have to send you data via email/other online methods. You don't have to worry about sending response data back after a vendor program, etc. When asking a vendor about the integrations they support, it's also important to clarify which data fields can be pushed/pulled. Not all integrations are created alike.

Web-Based Versus Native App

Whether a tool is offered via a website or app can sometimes be a dealbreaker and it's often tied to the above question. When something is web-based, it usually doesn't have an offline mode, because it requires an internet connection to connect to the website. Some apps operate via internet access only.

Something else to consider is the barrier to entry. Often, volunteers or paid staff won't want to download an app onto their personal phones. You then have to consider purchasing phones/tablets to ensure people can actually deploy the tool you invested in.

Longevity of Vendor

New tech will come and go, but the heart of the work will never change. We believe it's vital for organizations to think about where they're putting their money. Organizations should ask tool vendors how long they've been in business and consider longevity a significant factor when deciding where to invest. Ask yourself: will this company still be around 1 year+ after this program? Are they likely to be bought out by another company? How can I recover my data if the company folds?

Data Ownership

This is a crucial factor in ensuring that your data is secure and not shared or sold to third parties. Before entering into an agreement with any vendor, it is essential to read the agreement carefully, have it vetted by a lawyer, and pay close attention to any details regarding data sharing or security.

Pricing Models

Before entering into a contract, be sure you understand the pricing model. Take texting vendors as an example. In the case of texting vendors, you'll want to think about whether a per-text or contacts model is best for your organization. Per-text models charge per outgoing text, allowing you to contact more individuals, while contact models typically charge a flat rate for your organization to text the same individuals as many times per the contract terms.

Voter File Vendors

When using a tool that requires voter file data, you should inform your state table or Tools for All, so they can provide the necessary paperwork to ensure your vendor is approved and has authority per State Voices' contract with its voter file vendor. Not all vendors have the authority or ability to use data from the State Voices VAN.

Open APIs

An API is a set of applications, functions, and/or procedures that provide programmers with the structure for communication between applications. This allows tools to automatically transfer data from one to another and facilitates layered contacts, reporting, and data integrity. It enables organizations to easily build and share capacity with the larger progressive community for more efficient and seamless data operations.

Open Source versus Non-Open Source

Open source technology/tools are tools in which the source code of the technology/tool is available for modification. This means an organization can adapt the tool to meet its needs.

While being able to make edits to the software can seem great, it often comes with a few drawbacks.

- First, you need to have someone on your team who has the skill to make those edits. If not, you have to pay someone, like a developer, which can be costly.
- Second, open-source tools are typically not as fleshed out, which can create a lot of work for your staff or a developer to make the product meet the needs of your organization.

Language Accessibility

The ability to translate information and features into other languages easily is essential for those who may not speak English as their primary language to have equitable access to a tool. Language support is a helpful addition to a tool's support offerings to ensure those who may not speak English as their primary language can receive assistance.

SV TOOLS STACK

Based on our research, we believe that the following vendors currently best fit our needs and may best fit the needs of our tables and partner organizations, but we still recommend that each organization do their own research to find the best fit for them. To the extent that a certain number of these tools are available through State Voices, we remind partner organizations that the terms and conditions of usage of the tool, services, or software, including pricing, are specified in an agreement between State Voices and partner organization which must be signed by a partner organization and we recommend that you refer to such agreement for accurate information regarding such terms and conditions of use. Please contact datateam@statevoices.org for more details and the relevant agreement for any tool, services, or software used through State Voices.

06

- **Customer Relationship Management (CRM):** Action Network
- **Digital Organizing & Online Fundraising:** Action Network
- **Voter File:** Catalist and TargetSmart
- **Event Management and Promotion:** Mobilize
- **Voter Portal (Voter Guides, Polling Locations, Voter Registration):** BallotReady's Civic Center
- **Voter Guides and Ballot Issue Support:** Ballot Ready's Ballot Engine
- **Texting Services:** State Voices Dispatch (Spoke platform)
- **Door and Event Canvassing:** OpenField
- **Data Warehouse Platform:** CTA PAD (Progressive Action Database)
- **Data Analytics and Visualization Platform:** Google Looker Studio
- **Legislation Tracker:** LegiScan
- **Voter Registration Tool:** Blocks



CRM: Action Network

Website: actionnetwork.org

Purpose: A digital tool and a CRM to organize people to take online and offline actions, send mass messages to recruit and mobilize new activists, and raise funds to fuel important work.

Cost: actionnetwork.org/partnerships

Contact: Obed Ventura, obed@actionnetwork.org

Created: Launched in 2012 by Brian Young utilizing a cooperative model to produce technology for the progressive movement, Action Network first came into prominence in 2014 with its work on the People’s Climate March. It continued to develop the tool further to play an important role in the Women’s March, March For Our Lives, and other notable civic actions.

Pros:

- Petitions and advocacy tools for targeting decision-makers
- One-click email donations
- Pre-load content to create consistent engagement across an entire campaign
- Federated tools structure for chaptered organizing
- “Activist” profiles with full action history
- Ability to send mass emails and track engagement through opens, clicks, unsubscribes, and actions
- Fundraising features to raise money for specific causes online
- Mobile messaging through Twilio with pre-written scripts and intuitive targeting
- Built-in wait times and specific emails or texts dependent on people’s responses and how long it takes them to respond
- Create custom dashboards with action items
- Ability to phone bank and text bank using CallHub and Mobile Commons, and New/Mode
- Click-to-dial elected officials integration
- A few preset languages are available to create actions, more can be added if you have a translator

Integrations: BallotReady, Catalist, ActBlue, Salesforce, HubSpot, New/Mode

Support:

- Weekly Getting Started training for different aspects of the tool
- Tech support hours are 9 am – 5 pm ET, the average response rate is within hours during the business day

Security: actionnetwork.org/privacy

Similar Tools: SalsaLabs, Blue State, Nationbuilder, Mailchimp

Voter File

Catalist

Website: <https://catalist.us/>

Purpose: Catalist compiles, enhances, stores, and dynamically updates data on over 256 million unique voting-age individuals across all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Catalist provides data to help build membership, target persuasive messaging, engage activists, drive an issue agenda, and register or mobilize voters.

Cost: Included with State Voices Affiliates and Partners, Tools for All members. Cost varies.

Contact: <https://catalist.us/contact-us/>

Created: 2006

Pros:

- State Voices has been working with Catalist since the very beginning, and has a great relationship with them
- Primarily servicing the non-profit, progressive industry, committed to not selling data for commercial use
- Owned by a collaborative trust of civic-minded, progressive organizations with a variety of goals
- Support is top-notch
- They offer a variety of models that help refine contact universes

Integrations: NGP VAN, Civis Analytics,

Support: Through each organization's account rep, or through State Voices if an affiliate or partner

Similar Tools: TargetSmart, HaystaqDNA, PDI

TargetSmart

Website: <https://targetsmart.com/>

Purpose: TargetSmart specializes in providing data-driven solutions that empower their clients to understand, engage, and activate their key stakeholders. TargetSmart empowers forward-thinking campaigns, companies, governments, labor unions, and non-profits to harness the full power of data, technology, and strategy to win their battles and build a better future.

Cost: sales@targetsmart.com

Pros:

- Long-term data vendor and partner to the progressive community, providing voter data to allies like America Votes and progressive labor unions
- Host of progressive modeling and data science for civic engagement
- Various data solutions including communications, consulting and public affairs analysis
- Research solutions including polling, focus groups and online panels

08

Integrations: NGP VAN, Google Data Studio, Civis, Amazon Web Services

Support: Through State Voices if an affiliate or partner

Similar Tools: Catalist, HaystaqDNA, PDI

Event Management: Mobilize

Website: mobilize.us

Purpose: Hub for event & volunteer management as well as volunteer recruitment and online actions.

Cost: Varies depending on the number of dashboards and signups

Contact: Isadora Hudson isadora.hudson@bonterratech.com

Created: 2017, acquired by EveryAction in 2020

Pros:

- Setup and administration are simple
- Automated confirm emails and SMS
- Integration with NGP-VAN tools

Support: Email, HelpDesk

Integrations: EveryAction, Phone2Action, VAN's My Voters, Zoom

Security: help.mobilize.us/en/articles/3614010-how-does-mobilize-secure-my-data

Support: HelpDesk, Email, Chat

Similar Tools: Eventbrite, Facebook Events, Luma

09



Voter Portal: BallotReady Civic Center

Website: organizations.ballotready.org

Contact: partnerships@ballotready.org

Purpose: Platform for voters to take civic action in all 50 states including voter registration, pledge to vote, request a ballot to vote by mail, find your polling place, research your ballot or view a slate card, and see elected representatives down to the local level.

Cost: Subscription-based, contact BallotReady. State Voices affiliates and partners will have access through State Voices in 2024.

Created: 2015

Pros:

- Ability to check your voter registration and be directed to your Secretary of State website
- to register to vote if needed or use state APIs where available
- Users can view the options in their area for early voting and Election Day polling places, as well as absentee voting drop-off sites
- Users can see bios and issue stances for candidates and measures down to the local level or view a personalized slate card of endorsements
- Organizations can make endorsements and/or add custom content to candidate profiles
- For an additional cost, an organization can offer users the ability to have their voter registration form mailed to them
- Organizations can brand and configure their white-labeled Civic Center with their logo colors, and customized URL
- Organizations can gather the name, email address and phone number of users to send customized reminder texts about voting and add the users to their email list
- Organizations can translate their Civic Center into multiple languages
- Multiple integration options including VAN and Salesforce

Support: Support ticket system; dedicated customer lead; Knowledge Base



Texting: State Voices Dispatch Platform

Website: <http://dispatch.statevoices.org/>

Purpose: Dispatch shares MoveOn's Spoke civic technology that offers person-to-person texting to large audiences in a short amount of time. Dispatch works on any web browser and provides movement organizations with a tool that integrates with State Voices' array of data technology.

Cost: State Voices 2023 SMS Messaging Rates are based on the number of text segments

- Under 1 million: \$0.019 per segment
- 1-5 million: \$0.0175 per segment
- Over 5 million: \$0.015 per segment
- MMS: \$0.024 per segment

Contact: dispatch@statevoices.org

Created: Spoke, originally created by Saikat Chakrabarti and Sheena Pakanati, was acquired by MoveOn in 2017

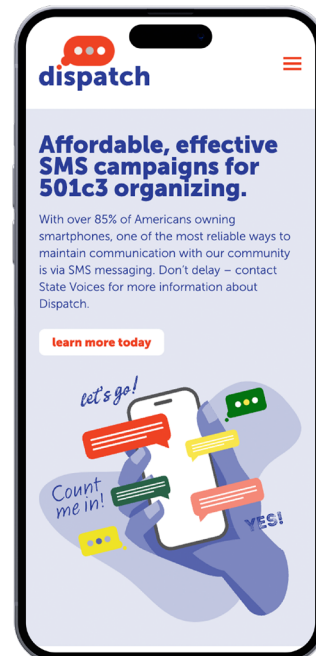
Pros:

- Multiple Custom Responses for Campaigns, Texter Custom Canned Responses
- VAN API Support, Action Kit, and Mobilize Integrations
- Dynamic Assignment for Texters; Custom styling for campaigns; Multiple administrators for organizations;
- Heroku, Microsoft Azure, and AWS deployment integration support;
- Support for outgoing multimedia messages (MMS) and US Short Codes;
- Admin message review board for campaigns, texters, live campaign administration of scripts, messages, and conversations

Support: FreshDesk, Slack

Security: [Latest MoveOn Release Notes](#)

Similar Tools: Hustle, ThruText, Scale to Win



Canvassing and Phone Banking: OpenField

Website: <https://openfield.ai>

Purpose: Distributed, deep canvassing application that lets you knock on every door, on or off your list. Also allows for street canvassing and hand-dial phone banking.

Cost: Inquire with OpenField for individual pricing options; Schedule a Demo [here](#)

Contact:

- General inquiries: Info@openfield.ai
- State Voices partners and affiliates: data@statevoices.org

Created: 2019 by community organizers and data directors with decades of experience- Ari Trujillo-John and Emily Del Beccaro

Pros:

- Automatic turf cutting based on Census blocks that takes into account best walking routes
- Check out more turf as you go; share it with a friend
- Canvassers can start knocking without a list and add people on the go matching to the national address file
- Capture and analyze open-ended responses; word cloud analysis
- Real-time data streaming back including a GOAT and Leaderboard
- Offline mode- canvassers can download turf for canvassing in areas with bad cell service

Integrations:

- NGP VAN (MyVoters / MyCampaign)
- Google Sheets
- AWS S3
- AWS Redshift
- Community Tech Alliance PAD

Support:

- Troubleshooting hours: M-F 9 AM ET - 7 PM PT; response within 1 business day
- Support requests: support@openfield.ai
- Knowledge Base: <https://openfieldhelp.zendesk.com/hc/en-us>

Security: End User permission is handled at the SuperAdmin level, which includes all data approvals. Once approvals are granted, the end user is only granted access to data via the conversation code, which is created at the SuperAdmin or Admin level. More information on security procedures can be found [here](#).

Similar Tools: MiniVan, Reach, Empower



Data Analytics Platform: CTA PAD

Website: <https://www.communitytechalliance.org/>

Purpose: Consolidates all the data in one place facilitating retrieval and secure storage without having to manage your own server.

Cost: Contact CTA

Contact: hello@techallies.org

Created: Founded 2021

Pros:

- Integrates with our most commonly used tools
- Consolidates all data in one place
- Support is very responsive
- Lowers barriers to using APIs and programming

Integrations: Notably Google Drive, NGPVAN, Action Network, OpenField <https://www.communitytechalliance.org/data-syncs>

Support: Email, HelpDesk

Security: <https://www.communitytechalliance.org/security>

Similar Tools: Civis Analytics, Redshift, Google Firebase

Data Visualization: Google Looker Studio

Why might you need this?

To create data visualizations, such as charts, graphs, or maps. Most people can comprehend data better in a visual format, rather than just numbers on a spreadsheet.

Website: <https://support.google.com/looker-studio>

Cost: Free

Non-profit discount: Included in Google Account Suite

Created: 2016

Purpose: Visualize your data with reports and tables, share and collaborate on reports with your team, and connect to a variety of data sources.

Pros:

- It's free! Included in your Google Account Suite
- Great tool for beginning your visualization journey without having to pay anything
- Easily connect to your spreadsheets in Google Sheets
- Easily share reports, charts, and graphs with anyone
- Easily collaborate with anyone, similar to Sheets, Docs, and Slides
- No SQL needed

Support: Help Center, Guides, Support Community

Security: [https://support.google.com/looker-studio/answer/General Data Protection Regulation](https://support.google.com/looker-studio/answer/General+Data+Protection+Regulation)

Integrations: <https://lookerstudio.google.com/data>

Similar Tools: Tableau, Periscope

Recommendation: Any and all data staff should take full advantage of Google Data Studio. It can be on the fly, with no risks, low investment reporting and visualization tool that helps to get the job done when you just need something simple and quick. It would still be recommended to use Tableau or other options for larger and more demanding visualization, however.

Legislation Tracker: LegiScan

Website: <https://legiscan.com/>

Purpose: Legiscan is the nation's first impartial real-time legislative tracking service designed for use across all sectors regardless of organization size. LegiScan offers its Government Affairs Information Tracking System (GAITS) as a flexible software solution to manage tracking of legislative agendas.

Cost: <https://legiscan.com/pricing>

Pros:

- Registration is free!
- OneVote, LegiScan's free public service offered with registration
- Online full-text national search engine for state legislation, elected officials
- Data and mapping widgets available for reporting and analysis
- Keyword alerts for new or changed bills matching user saved searches
- Daily change and weekly summary email reports for tracked legislation
- No SQL Needed

Integrations: Facebook, Twitter and Other Social Media platforms

Support: API Guide, Help Center

Similar Tools: Fast Democracy, Enview, GovPredict, BillTrack50, Plural, VRL tracker

Voter Registration Tool: Blocks

Website: <https://politech.io/>

Contact: ashley@politech.io for sales and general questions

Cost: Please contact sales for individual pricing

Created: 2012

Purpose: This tool is used for managing voter registration and quality control programs.

Support: Onboarding support, direct and regular training, train the trainer, user guides, national administration and oversight, reporting support, troubleshooting support, and regular ongoing support.

Pros:

- Flexible with integrations to external databases.
- A strong and long-standing relationship between State Voices and Politech staff.
- Strong development support and feedback implementation from Politech.
- In-tool reports.
- In-tool field management functionality and resources.
- In-tool quality control functionality and resources.

Similar Tools: RegTrak

Additional resources

The Voting Information Project helps voters find information about their elections with collaborative, open-source tools: <https://www.votinginfoproject.org/>

15



MOVEMENT TOOLS

Recommended Tools & Best Practices

Social Media Management and Disinformation

16

Misinformation and disinformation are both false or inaccurate information, but the distinction is in the intent. Misinformation is false information that is spread, regardless of whether there is intent to mislead. Disinformation is false information that is deliberately spread to deceive. Misinformation and disinformation have become prominent issues when managing your presence online. Below are some best practices we believe can help stop the spread.

Deciding whether or not to respond to disinformation should depend on two things: the likelihood of the message reaching your audience and the likelihood of it causing them harm. The instinct may be to address every piece of false information online, but it's far more strategic to be selective and take a step back before amplifying or responding to these messages.

- **Avoid amplification:** Social media algorithms feed on engagement, whether negative or positive. Even reacting with “angry” on a Facebook post boosts it and creates the possibility for more people to see the piece of disinformation. Only comment on disinformation that is a high-level threat to debunk false information.
- **Do report:** If you encounter a piece of disinformation, flag it for removal from the social network.
- **Avoid cross-pollination:** If you see a post on Facebook, avoid posting on Twitter about it, even to remark that it is incorrect. That only helps the disinformation spread and makes it more likely that it will become viral on other platforms.
- **Do inoculate:** Prime your audience to distrust disinformation when they see it by naming bad actors' motivations and sharing factual information from trusted sources.
- **Disinformation Defense League provides a series of seminars on different disinformation topics. To be alerted of upcoming trainings, join their listserv [here](#).**

Additional Resources

- **Disinformation Defense League Email List:** The Disinfo Defense League is a real-time, rapid response network designed to disrupt disinformation and voter suppression campaigns deliberately targeting the intersections of Black, Afro-Latinx, Latinx, Indigenous, and immigrant communities. The DDL email list has roughly 500 members. [Click here](#) to apply for membership in the group.
- **Disinformation Landscape Analyses from GQR:** These analyses include detailed information about the disinformation landscape for the following states: New Mexico, Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, Nevada, Michigan, Minnesota, New Hampshire, North Carolina, Florida, New York, Ohio, Georgia, Texas, California, Arizona (highlighted states are locations of State Voices Tables).
- **Political Ad Observatory from NYU Cybersecurity for Democracy:** This tool allows users to explore political advertising across Facebook and Instagram and is searchable by keywords, topic, sponsor, or region.
- **Election Protection Disinformation Threat Matrix:** This resource from 2020 walks through examples of inoculation messaging and provides a matrix for guiding decisions about whether or not to respond publicly to online mis and disinformation.

17

Social Media Management: Organiz

Website: <https://organiz.org/>

Purpose: Organiz is a digital organizing tool for coordinating Twitter and Facebook storms and has a dashboard feature that tracks engagement metrics.

Cost: Contact Organiz

Contact: Amanda Khan, amanda@organiz.org

Created: 2017

Pros:

- Eliminates the need for social media toolkits
- Affordable pricing
- Easy to use
- Client success manager available to help organizations brainstorm campaign ideas

Support: Email, Phone

Similar Tools: HootSuite

Content Creator Collaboration

Why might you need this?

Reaching out to diverse audiences is challenging. It requires creative thinking and at times a willingness to decentralize power so that movements can go beyond the reach of traditional leaders. One new model for civic engagement on platforms like TikTok and other social media is to hire people from the communities we are trying to reach and give them the freedom to execute strategies they know will work as well as craft authentic messages that speak to communities in their own words and style. This can help to ensure that the decision-making power is concentrated in the hands of the people who are most affected by the issues.

Social Currant

Website: <https://socialcurrant.co/>

Purpose: Platform that matches progressive non-profits, impact, and issue-focused organizations with social media creators to reach audiences more effectively. Working with creators can include a number of cumbersome steps- this tool solves for this by automating a number of these pieces and facilitating a platform for the rest.

Cost: \$249/month for 2 creators, \$499/month for 5 creators, \$999/month for 12 ++ creators

Contact: Ashwath Narayanan – ashwath@socialcurrant.co

Created: Social Currant was founded in 2020 by Ashwath Narayanan, Ellie Artone & Vidyut Ghuwalewala when they were in college. Their goal was to represent young people in progressive spaces. They did their first creator campaign for Community Change, sent 10,000 people to the White House’s website with resources around the Child Tax Credit, and were hooked. Since then, they’ve worked directly with over 1500 creators.

Pros:

- Creator sourcing, matches, and approval- access to Gen Z creator experts
- Negotiating contracts, payments, 1099s
- Custom reports
- Large creators catalog by issue, cause, zip code
- First party sign on to get access to creator data

Integrations: DocuSign, Meta, TikTok APIs, Dots/Stripe payment processing

Support: Slack channel; dedicated customer rep; weekly calls; learning library with a coaching program; weekly office hours, 24/7 access to the team.

Security:

- The platform does not store any client data
- Data encryption practices include ensuring data both at rest and in transit is encrypted. In addition, PostgreSQL db has SSL enabled. Ensure proper and secure HTTPS requests
- Authorization follows both role and permission-based access

Timeline:

- Average campaigns are 4-6 weeks.
- Rapid response campaigns have been executed in 3-5 days if needed

Similar Tools: atAdvocacy

18

SoSha

Website: <https://www.sosha.ai/>

Purpose: Build, manage, and track social share campaigns with easy-to-use, dynamic toolkit

Cost: Plans range from \$0-\$575 per month, 10% discount for 501c3 non-profit organizations
<https://www.sosha.ai/pricing>

Contact: Tudor Mihailescu, cofounder

Created: 2019

Pros:

- Reliable alternative to paid ads
- Social Media Share toolkits
- Live analytics; Collects metrics like impressions, conversions, shares
- Library of ready-made posts that are fully customizable
- Toolkits on topics/categories

Integrations: Facebook, X, Instagram, TikTok, WhatsApp, LinkedIn, and more; ActionNetwork, PR newswire, manual integrations using iFrame/HTML code embeds - for website builders and CRMs. Live [toolkit](#)

Support: Email at support@sosha.ai

Security: A range of access control options, including user authentication, role-based access control, and permission settings; Mandatory two-factor authentication enforced for production environment; User passwords are encrypted & salted, using bcrypt; Communication between the client and the server happens through an encrypted communication protocol using Transport Layer Security; [Terms of Use](#)



Polling and Message Testing: GrowProgress

Why might you need this?

While traditional polls can measure your cause's current support, Rapid Message Tests can tell you how to change your support. Determining which specific message sways someone's opinion accurately is challenging. Instead, we can focus on observing the actual impact of each individual message on changing opinions, similar to the approach used in medical trials.

Website: growprogress.ai

Purpose: Rapid message testing and audience understanding to help progressive strategists and advocates infuse their messaging with emotionally resonant, values-based language.

Cost: Credit-based system for its Audience Understanding surveys and Rapid Message Tests.

Overview

- The cost of a survey or test depends on factors such as:
 - The number of messages tested (more messages = more credits)
 - Target audience size (larger target audience = fewer credits)
 - Type of content tested (images/text is cheaper than video)
- Special bulk pricing discounts for State Voices tables and partners.

Contact:

- **State Voices partners and affiliates:** Yoav Magid, Senior Director of Partnerships
yoav@growprogress.ai
- **General Inquiries:** <https://growprogress.ai/contact/>

Created: Founded in 2018 by Matt Martin and Josh Berezin

Pros:

- Rapid Message Tests can be run in a matter of hours nationally, or a few days in most states
- Comprehensive analytics in an interactive dashboard that is easy to navigate and understand
- Deep and rich insights into your target audience (e.g. undecideds) – what are their values, hopes, fears, trusted messengers, etc.
- Excellent support with a dedicated success and optional strategy support add-ons

Integrations:

- Audience Understanding surveys are, and Rapid Message Tests can be, matched to the voter file.

Support: Onboarding and ongoing support

- **New Client Onboarding:** a joint kickoff call, overview training on the platform, and guidance on the first message test from the client success manager
- **Ongoing Support:** shared test planning resources, feedback on your test setup, questions about results interpretation, and troubleshooting support as needed through support@growprogress.ai
- **Recurring Touchpoints:** check-ins with a client success manager for guidance on long-term testing strategy, tool features, and client best practices.

- Average waiting time for a ticket: response within 1 hour; resolution within 1 day
- Additional support options: optional addition of dedicated strategic support of up to 10 hours/month.

Security: The platform with which clients and partners interact is authenticated with strong password rules, multi-factor authentication, brute force protection, and suspicious IP throttling.

- Data is always encrypted, both at rest and in transit.
- OWASP top 10 standards compliant
- Error and security monitoring

Similar Tools: Blue Rose Message Testing Library (uses synthetic [AI-generated] responses), Swayable (priced for corporate clients)

Petition Signature Collection: eQual

Website: <https://equal.us/>

Purpose: eQual is a campaign technology platform that helps people-centered organizations gather signatures to qualify for the ballot.

Cost: \$3500 per month per campaign

Contact: info@equal.us

Created: 2021

Pros:

- Closed-loop petition tracking and signature validation
- Campaigns can track the productivity and validity rates of campaign organizers, teams, and partner organizations via dashboard views and filters
- A flexible API layer allows for customizable syncing of all campaign data with 3rd party voter files, CRM, and volunteer management systems
- Custom landing pages
- Automatically pre-verify a prospective signer's voter registration status by matching against voter files, collect a prospective signer's preference for how to connect with the campaign in order to sign the petition, allowing for the efficient deployment of field resources, with configurable methods of signing such as download and print, postal mail, signing events, and door canvasses.

Integrations: VAN, ActBlue

Support: Up-front training/demo; on-platform user guide; email support 9 am ET to 5 pm ET.

Security: <https://go.equal.us/security>

Similar Tools: PetitionTrack

Legislation Tracking: Plural

Website: <https://pluralpolicy.com/>

Purpose: AI-powered legislative tracking on state and federal levels, alerts, and reporting as well as public policy collaboration

Cost: Pricing is based on the number of legislatures you want access to, starting at \$500/month; no additional charges for the number of users

Contact: JJ Imbeaux, VP of Revenue, jj@pluralpolicy.com 917-263-1848

Created: Adewunmi Yemi and her co-founder Damola Ogunipe began Plural in 2019, as what was then known as Civic Eagle. The origins of the company’s mission came about when Adewunmi and her team started pondering how it could apply technology towards making civic engagement more accessible (in both senses of the word) to everyone. In 2020, the company integrated [Open States](#), an open-source data project covering state legislation, in an effort to apply technology to the policy-making process.

Pros:

- Unlimited workspaces
- Automation for CTAs on bills your organization is tracking
- Boolean searches that work like “save search” in VAN
- Custom tags
- AI bill summary tool with internal QA
- Mobile friendly
- The free version offers 1 workspace
- Collaborative functionality and ability to share out with dynamic link updates

Integrations: Open API; More information on the [API can be found here](#).

Support: Knowledge Base in the platform; ability to talk to dedicated human resource via email, phone, or chat, and submit questions via chat as well.

Security: [Plural Information Risk Management.docx.pdf](#)

Similar Tools: Fast Democracy, Enviview, GovPredict, BillTrack50, LegiScan, VRL tracker

Election Law and Legislation Tracking: Voting Rights Lab

Website: tracker.votingrightslab.org

Purpose: Track legislation related to voting and ballot access, search for legislative trends, compare and contrast laws in different states

Cost: Free

Contact: Christopher Diaz- Director of Legislative Tracking chris@votingrightslab.org; For general tracker inquiries: tracker@votingrightslab.org; For general inquiries about the Voting Rights Lab: hello@votingrightslab.org

Created: 2018

Pros:

- A comprehensive resource of current legislation and legislation going back two years
- Can search by impact as well as topic and state
- They also compile current laws so you can compare the process of voting in different states or see how legislative trends stack up against the current legal landscape
- Bills are summarized and the current legislative stage is noted
- You can save a particular search and sign up for an alert when there is movement on certain bills or when new bills are introduced

Support: <https://tracker.votingrightslab.org/how-to-use-this-tracker>

23

Voter Education and Outreach: InfoVote App

Website: <https://infovoteapp.com/>

Purpose: InfoVote assists individual users and fosters connections between organizations focused on voter education and outreach: voter registration information, absentee ballots, candidate insights, polling locations, unbiased news, and educational resources for voters.

Cost: Free resources and tools; \$50/month and up partnership plans [Partner Pricing, Licensing Packages](#)

Contact: Download the app: <https://infovoteapp.com/vote-fest/>

Created: 2021

Pros:

- Ability to check voter registration status and be redirected to register to vote if not registered
- Resources page on locality specific voter information
- Ability to poll users on issues

Integrations: EveryAction, Ballot Ready, Mobilize, VAN (can be tailored to organizational needs)

Support: Email support; Monthly Maintenance Package that covers potential outages, updates, and user errors. Options to develop a custom chatbot to assist users with organization related questions and election / voter specific queries.

Security: AWS servers, MFA supported

Legislative Advocacy Tool: Fiscal Note

Why might you need this?

If you are tracking legislation in various states, you might want to use a tool like this to monitor and alert you to changes in the legislation.

Website: <https://fiscalnote.com/>

Purpose: Allows organizations to monitor and be proactively alerted about state legislation and regulations, including bills, bill summaries, research reports, committees, hearings, voting records, and state executive orders.

Cost: The starting price for state access is \$6,900 for up to five users (discount if you are a State Voices member/affiliate)

Contact: Kristina Dorsey, kristina.dorsey@fiscalnote.com

State Voices affiliated tables contact Policy@statevoices.org

Created: 2013

Pros:

- Covers all 50 states+ for all legislation and regulations pertinent to your issue areas, keywords/phrases
- State and local tracking for any county/town/city/village/municipality across the US with a population of 2,000+
- Can create customized alerts to scan through agendas, minutes, and ordinances. to be notified of relevant policy measures.
- Can create very tailored, Boolean searches for bills and regulations
- Can filter bills by legislative session, point in the process, and other criteria
- Bill information includes sponsor affiliation, “likelihood of passage” predictor, and Virtual Whipboard
- Has contact information for legislators and their staffers
- Allows users to create various lists of bills and share them as emails, website embeds, PDFs, or Excel spreadsheets
- Allows users to associate their own notes, contact records, etc. with relevant policy

Support: Provides initial training, email support, and online training library

Similar Tools: Fast Democracy, Enview, GovPredict, BillTrack50, Plural, Legiscan, VRL tracker

Distributed Organizing Tools

Action Builder

Website: <https://www.actionbuilder.org/>

Purpose: Organizing toolset geared mostly towards holding space for lists and performing relational organizing. It is focused on one-on-one organizing with tools to develop leaders, track campaign support, and empower activists to make a difference in their community.

Cost: \$80/per administrator; activist users are free

Contact: join@actionbuilder.org

Created: 2023

Pros:

- Assign tasks
- Track progress
- Identify volunteer leaders

Integrations: [API documentation](#); [Action Network <> Action Builder Integration](#)

Support: support@actionnetwork.com Action Builder demos are held weekly, every Tuesday, starting at 3:00 pm Eastern time, and typically run 30 to 45 minutes. Sign up [here](#)

Security: Action Builder is a new digital tool from [Action Network](#), Privacy Notice can be found [here](#)

Similar Tools: Shire.vote

25



ControlShift

Website: <https://www.controlshiftlabs.com/>

Purpose: ControlShift is a distributed organizing toolset that puts your supporters at the center of your advocacy with member-led petitions, events, and local groups. ControlShift empowers supporters to easily start campaigns in their communities, provides them with tools to make their actions successful, and makes it easy for organizations to moderate and manage all activities created on the site.

Cost: <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1mDv5z5u1gw9TdejAsmhi2lxpXFr77eT/view?usp=sharing>

Contact: talk@controlshiftlabs.com or kristy@controlshiftlabs.com

Created: Founded by Nathan Woodhull in 2011 as a project of GetUp! in Australia, which wanted to build a member-led petitions tool to support their distributed organizing work. Later expanded the toolset to include member-led events and local groups.

Pros:

- Built for distributed organizing – the supporter-facing tools are easy to use, even for those without a lot of technical expertise.
- Admins have powerful moderation tools to make it easy to manage the items created on the site
- White-labeled and customizable to match your organization’s look and feel
- Multilingual support for public-facing and staff-only pages, with 22 current languages including right-to-left support

Integrations: various CRMs: Action Network, ActionKit, Engaging Networks, EveryAction, NationBuilder, and Salesforce. Analytics and workflow tools: Google Analytics, Google Tag Manager, Segment, Matomo, Piwik, Slack, Freshchat. The ability for organizations to build custom experiences with the tools they’re already using via authenticated REST APIs and webhooks.

Support: via email during US ET business hours; written/video tutorials available in the Help Center. Twice weekly office hours, which are generally organized around a specific topic but also allow for general questions. Customers are also able to schedule special trainings and help calls whenever they’d like via Calendly.

Security: <https://www.controlshiftlabs.com/details/privacy-and-security>

Similar Tools: Mobilize, Action Network

Predictive Dialer: ThruTalk

Website: <https://www.getthru.io/thrutalk-dialer>

Purpose: Predictive power dialer capable of making calls to both landlines and cell phones

Cost: Discounted rates for State Voices and affiliates available- contact ThruTalk directly; General Pricing

Contact: New accounts: sales@getthru.io. Existing clients seeking technical support: support@getthru.io

Created: 2016

Pros:

- WCAG (the web's standard for accessibility) compliance is partially implemented and more in development
- Intuitive script builder with VAN mapping capabilities
- Live monitoring for spam flagging
- Mobile friendly
- PDI integration

27

Integrations: bidirectional, real-time integrations with PDI, all iterations of NGPVAN. Support for nightly s3 export delivery, and integration to BigQuery in development.

Support: 7 days a week 9 AM to 10 PM ET. Recorded and custom training sessions. Live chat, Email, Support tickets, [Knowledge Base](#); 15-minute average response time; average resolution-less than 2 hours.

Security: 10DLC, TCPA compliant, support for MFA in toolsets for clients. More information is available here: [Compliance](#), [Security](#). Options for Incident Response Plans, Security Standards, INFOSEC Policies, and Disaster Recovery Plans upon request. [Privacy Policy](#)

Similar Tools: HubDialer, CallHub, Impactive, Scale to Win



Voter Registration Tool: Rock the Vote

Website: <https://rockthevote.org/>

Purpose: Online voter registration portal

Contact: Melissa Wyatt, Director of Civic Technology and Policy | melissa@rockthevote.org
Camille Martin, Civic Tech Partner Manager | camille@rockthevote.org | Dominic Lowell, Interim Director, Civic Tech | dominic.l@rockthevote.org

Cost: Special rates for non-profits are available here: [RTV_2023_Civic_Tech_Rate_Sheet.pdf](#).
Free for non-profits with an annual budget under \$1.25 million.

Created: 1990

Pros:

- History of working with State Voices tables for over a decade
- A clean and simple user interface
- Customizable branding that can be embedded in other websites
- Multi-page process likely leads to higher conversion rates
- Robust access to data that will be easy to get into VAN

Support: Provide a start-up guide, FAQs, and ongoing support

Similar Tools: VoteAmerica, BallotReady Registration Engine, REGISTER2VOTE, Vote.org, TurboVote

Knowledge Management and Support Ticket System

Why might you need this?

FreshDesk Knowledge Base is a web app for managing internal documentation, allowing institutional knowledge to live in one place, organized, and easily accessible without having to request it. FreshDesk Ticket System tracks support requests. It helps with time tracking, improving response time, and coordinating support from multiple people and more than one department.

FreshDesk

Website: <https://www.freshworks.com/freshdesk/>

Cost: Knowledge Base is included in a subscription to FreshDesk Support Ticket System. There is a free plan with limited options. The paid subscription starts at \$15/agent per month.

Non-profit Discount: Varies up to 15%

www.freshworks.com/freshdesk/industries/helpdesk-software-for-non-profit

Compatibility: Online, Apps for iOS and Android available

Created: 2010

Purpose: It's an application that allows staff and volunteers to find answers to questions and documentation quickly and easily as well as tracking requests and a centralized place to ask for help

Pros:

- Simple to use
- Collaborative editing
- Easy to organize documents
- Free Version: Email & Social Ticketing, Knowledge Base, link tickets
- Paid Version: Automated Ticket routing, ID tickets already being addressed

Support: Support HelpDesk, Phone, Email

Security: SSL certificate enabled by default; restrict login access by whitelisting only office network addresses for agents and employees

Integrations: More than 1000 integrations are available

Recommendation: The free version is surprisingly robust, but larger teams will need the Premium version. Definitely apply for a non-profit discount.

Similar Tools: Confluence, Notion, Google Drive, ZenDesk, Jira, ZohoDesk, HappyFox

29

Relational Organizing

Relational organizing is a community-based approach to civic engagement that emphasizes building deep relationships with people in order to mobilize them around shared values and goals. In short, it is asking activists to mobilize their own personal networks for the common cause. This strategy focuses on developing people's leadership skills and empowering them to take action in their own communities. Relational organizing is based on the idea that people are more likely to take action if they feel like they are part of a community, when they are contacted by someone they know and trust, and that their voice matters. Relational organizers work to build relationships with people, listen to their stories, and help them to identify and develop their own strengths. They also work to create a sense of shared purpose and solidarity among people who are working towards the same goals.

Relational organizing can be especially successful in historically neglected and underrepresented communities where traditional tactics fail to reach people. Thus, relational organizing can be used in progressive civic engagement campaigns, such as voter registration, voter turnout as well as fundraising. It is also used in social movements, such as the labor movement, the environmental movement, and the racial justice movement. Some common tactics can include one-on-one conversations, house meetings with friends and family, canvassing activists' own contact list via door knocking, texting and phone calls from the same activist, paid activists in hard-to-reach communities leveraging their networks and community expertise for best practices, and more. While there are several platforms that can help you accomplish this type of civic engagement like Reach, Empower, Impactive, and more, below are some examples.

30



Reach

Website: <https://www.reach.vote/>

Purpose: Digital organizing tool to track contacts regardless of where you meet them, facilitating site-based and event-based canvassing as well as on-the-spot recruitment.

Cost: <https://www.reach.vote/pricing/>

Contact: Jake DeGroot, jake@reach.vote

Created: 2018

Pros:

- Information added by a volunteer for a person on the voter file can be exported and loaded into VAN by an admin
- Leaderboard and Action Points can create friendly competition and serve as incentives for different organizing actions
- Offline mode provides greater accessibility for users organizing in rural areas or native lands
- Users can easily share Reach actions from admins on their social media
- It is easy to import personal contacts based on area code or name, and users can assign their contacts different relationship types that are created by the admin
- Users can reach out to imported contacts on any messaging app they have on their phone, utilizing a pre-written script
- The Action Feed acts as a home base, directing users to a variety of actions they can take, which can be prioritized by the admin (import contacts, sign up for events, petitions, articles, post something on social media, etc.)
- The UI: User interface can be translated into various languages, including Spanish and French, with the ability for anyone to translate into another language via the Reach admin system
- Text magnification and screen reader support for increased accessibility

Integrations: VAN My Campaign, VAN My Voters, EveryAction, Slack

Security: <https://www.reach.vote/knowledge-base/a-note-about-data-security/>

Support: Email and phone support for admins; email-only support for users; Help Desk

Similar Tools: Impactive, OutreachCircle, OpenField, Empower

Rally

Website: <https://www.relentless.vote/rally>

Purpose: Relational organizing tool with options to engage low mobility activists on any accessible device from home

Cost: Individual statewide pricing starts at \$1,500

Contact: Sydney Throop- sydney@relentless.vote; 310-749-2951

Created: 2022 by Davis Leonard and Zoe Stein

Pros:

- One-step magic link onboarding
- 90% voter file match rate with no activists data mining with options to avoid deadnaming
- Voter registration flow options for none-matches
- Robust analytics dashboard for Admins and Mobilizer impact page
- Fully integrated Spanish language
- Screenreaders accessible with the ability to create relational workflows for low-mobility activists

Integrations: BigQuery sync

Support: support team at help@rally.win where the Client Success team is monitoring the support inbox from 12 pm-6 pm ET Monday through Friday; support hours will be extended closer to the 2023 election

Security: Data storage- GCP Cloud SQL for PostgreSQL, in-flight requests via HTTPS using managed TLS certificates provided by GCP. GCP encrypts data at rest. Internal users sign in via Google SSO (MFA required); role-based access for external users.

Similar Tools: Reach, Empower

32

Empower Project

Website: <https://empowerproject.us/empower-app/>

Purpose: Empower Project is the leader in relational organizing with over a decade of experience, 1,000+ organizations supported, over 85,600 people trained, and nationwide involvement in all 50 states. They empower communities, progressive organizations, and nonprofits by offering advanced technology and comprehensive training. Their aim is to harness the strength of personal relationships, enabling you to build power.

Cost: Free for State Voices partners

Contact: For general inquiries: hello@empowerproject.us / To request a demo: visit Empower website and click “Get Started.”

Created: 2019

Pros:

- Free to nonprofit organizations and suited to organizations running a field-based relational program
- Spanish language capability
- Mobile and desktop intuitive interface
- Seamless VAN integration
- Relational Organizing support
 - Robust ongoing training/coaching support on the latest best practices
 - Supports volunteer relational programs and paid/incentivized relational programs
- Canvassing support
 - Rapid turf-cutter; volunteers can request turf near their location
 - Open canvassing for tabling, events and crowd canvassing

Integrations: VAN, LAN, EveryAction connection. Support for calling, texting, WhatsApp, Facebook Messenger, Snapchat, Instagram, and Signal. Share links to Facebook and Twitter. Send mass messages via text, email, and push notifications.

Support: 8-session in-depth monthly Relational Organizing Cohort Program, one-on-one coaching, monthly webinars

Security: Monthly two-week training sessions, weekly basics trainings to get started, ticket system, knowledge base, and in-app feedback and bug reporting.

Similar Tools: Reach, Rally, Impactive

Relational Organizing, Event Recruitment, Fundraising: DaisyChain

Website: <https://www.daisychain.app/>

Purpose: Daisychain helps progressive organizations engage their audiences through powerful workflows and authentic conversations.

Cost: Starts at \$100/month <https://www.daisychain.app/pricing>; anyone referred by State Voices will receive a 10% discount.

Contact: Organizations can [book a quick demo](#) to make sure Daisychain is a good fit for them, and/or [register an account](#) when they're ready to get started. From there DaisyChain will schedule a live training to cover the Daisychain platform, initial configuration, and data imports. General questions can be sent to hello@daisychain.app

Created: Daisychain was created in 2022 when two progressive organizers and technologists Jon Warnow and Nathan Woodhull in New York's Hudson Valley took a hike up a mountain. On the hike, they discussed the recurring patterns of tech and data problems faced by organizations everywhere. That conversation planted the seeds for Daisychain.

Pros:

- Voting reminders for GOTV with local polling places information
- Automated donor onboarding and built-in ActBlue integration with nudges for best fundraising times
- Donor pathways for reoccurring donors
- Event recruitment and automated shift reminders
- Inbox for real-time communication

Integrations: ActBlue, Mobilize, ActionNetwork, EveryAction, VAN

Support: email-based Help Desk from 9 am - 8 pm ET, as well as trainings and strategic support as needed

Security: Data stored via AWS US East Region, SOC-2 Type 2 Certified, TLS/SSL encryption to protect data in transit, standard AES-256 encryption for storage of data at rest. [Privacy and Security](#)

Similar Tools: Mobilize, Funraise, Raftr, ControlShift

Relational Fundraising

Why might you need this?

Relational fundraising is a long-term approach to fundraising that focuses on building relationships with donors. This is in contrast to transactional fundraising, which is a short-term approach that focuses on making one-time asks for donations. Relational fundraising focuses on getting to know donors as individuals and understanding their interests and motivations. By building relationships, fundraisers can create a sense of trust and loyalty as well as ownership with their donors. A robust recurring grassroots small-dollar donor base can be an unmatched asset for many civic engagement initiatives.

Funraise

Website: <https://www.funraise.org/>

Purpose: Built to solve the problems faced specifically by non-profit fundraisers with tools to finetune personalized grassroots fundraising and relationship cultivation with small donors.

Cost: No platform transaction fees. Donors Cover Fees model allows donors to add an additional fee, but if they opt out, Funraise absorbs the platform transaction fee. Overall costs can vary between \$2,500/yr. to \$10,000/yr. Pay as you raise options.

Contact: Jack Kentopp - Account Executive Jack.Kentopp@Funraise.org (562) 578-5429

Created: 2016

Pros:

- Ability to fundraise through relational conversations via text that comes from your personal number
- Holistic view of interaction history with each individual donor
- Donor portal and app to facilitate fundraising in person
- Ability to track in-kind and checks
- Canned and custom automation for relationship flows and nudges

Integrations: Salesforce, QuickBooks Online, Raiser'sEdge NXT, Virtuous, SpringBoard, HubSpot, MailChimp, Constant Contact, Klaviyo, Zapier

Fundraising Integrations: Facebook, Instagram, StreamLabs, Twitch, Double the Donation

Data Enrichment Integrations: Shopify, Google Maps

Payments: Stripe, Venmo, PayPal, Apple Pay, BitPay, DonateStock

Support: 2 tiers of support. All levels include an onboarding Zoom call with non-profit professionals to help set up accounts and answer questions. Continued support via live chat. For Premium customers, access to a Customer Support Manager who will provide support via chat, phone, text, email, or Zoom along with quarterly strategizing sessions.

Security: Compliant with PCI Level 1, ISO 27001, SOC 1 and SOC 2/SSAE16/ISAE 3402 (Previously SAS 70 Type II), FISMA Moderate, Sarbanes-Oxley (SOX)

Similar Tools: DaisyChain

34

TECH GUIDE

The purpose of this guide is to give organizations a concise overview of current technology, software, and office equipment that might assist them in their day-to-day work.

This guide is not meant to replace an organization's own research. Designed to empower non-profits, it serves as a supplementary resource or a stepping stone for organizations aiming to evaluate their technological needs. It is crucial to underline that this guide isn't a replacement for internal research. Rather, it stands as an information repository, priming you for your unique journey of exploration.

We encourage each organization to do its own research and assess each item based on how well it will meet the needs of the organization, the people it serves, and its ongoing operations. We would note that, unlike our Tools Guide, we did not do a values assessment of the companies in this Guide, due to the fact that none of their items are limited in their availability to a specific type of organization. Everything listed here is available to the general public for any and all use cases.

Considerations we factored into our assessments of these tools include, but are not limited to the following:

Need

The 2023 Tech Guide continues to be geared toward technology, software, and office equipment that is optimal for working from home as this has become more popular and necessary during COVID-19. Future iterations of this guide may adjust to account for more traveling and office work.

Equity in Tech

When purchasing technology, it's important to be mindful about creating an inclusive, equitable, and accessible work environment. NTEN has put together a wonderful guide on how to eliminate biases that often play out in the distribution of technology in the workplace: <https://www.nten.org/change/equity-guide-for-nonprofit-technology>

User/Buyer Reviews

When seeking items to suggest for each category, particularly those in the hardware and office sections, we narrowed to items that had four to five-star reviews, and those with many reviewers (usually in the hundreds or thousands). This helps to ensure quality while also filtering out those items that only have fake or paid reviews.

Pricing

We understand that non-profits have limited resources and as such, decided to focus on technology and office needs that are affordable. We also used a browser extension (CNET Shopping) to help us find the website that was selling the item for the lowest possible price, so note that many of these items may also be available on other sites. Likewise, the software that we included in this guide is either free, has free trials or generous non-profit discounts, or is generally affordable for individual users or small teams. To the extent that a certain number of these tools are available through State Voices, we remind partner organizations that the terms and conditions of usage of the tool or software, including pricing, are specified in an agreement between State Voices and partner organization and we recommend that you refer to such agreement for accurate information regarding such terms and conditions of use. Please contact datateam@statevoices.org for more information and the relevant agreement for any tool, services, or software used through State Voices.

Integrations

Since non-profit organizations already have access to and use a variety of tools in their everyday work, we made an effort to choose software that seamlessly integrates with the most commonly used tools by non-profit organizations, such as Slack, Google Suite, and the most commonly used browsers. Many of these also have apps that can be downloaded onto Apple or Android devices.

Longevity

We made an effort to list companies and websites that have a proven track record of reliability and innovation. Most of the software listed has been around for over a decade with a few exceptions. The hardware is available from vendors that are well-established and widely used in the tech community.

Ethical Buying

Before diving into a few points on ethical buying, we think it's important to lift up the need for funding tech, software, and office equipment. When creating budgets and requests for funding, we believe that it's very important to not just budget and request funds for the typical expenses: staffing, print costs, etc. but also the technology and tools that help your organizations get the work done. We made an effort to source for best cost-effective choices on all the items because we recognize that many grassroots and non-profit organizations are operating on tight budgets.

Unfortunately, many of the cheaper prices are found on websites that don't always match our values. We encourage you to use browser add-ons that allow you to look for the best price. Ethical consumption is nearly impossible to achieve in a capitalistic environment where consumers are often forced to choose cheaper, less ethical options. This is because corporations are incentivized to maximize profits, which often means cutting costs on labor and environmental protection. As a result, consumers are often left with a choice between buying cheaper, less ethical products or paying more for ethical products that they may not be able to afford. The burden of providing ethical purchasing options lies with the big players in the market. Corporations have the resources and power to make ethical choices throughout their supply chains, from sourcing materials

to manufacturing and distributing products. They can also use their influence to advocate for policies that support ethical consumption. Consumers can play a role in ethical consumption by making informed choices and supporting businesses that are committed to ethical practices. However, it is important to remember that the ultimate responsibility for ethical consumption lies with corporations.

In addition, we would encourage anyone reading this guide to do further research into affordable options at other retailers who match prices or support your values, or to consider local stores in your area that support your local economy.

SOFTWARE

38

Computer Backup Software

Why might you need this?

Protects files against data loss from hardware failure or theft. It's constantly scanning the files for changes, and every time a file is saved on your computer, it's backed up on a server. This tool is explicitly designed to prevent data loss and not for collaboration like syncing programs (like Google Drive).

Acronis

Website: <https://www.acronis.com/en-us/>

Cost: Multiple subscription levels from \$49.99/year to \$124.99/year. You can try the product for 30 days without the need to provide payment information

Compatibility: Mac or PC

Created: 2014

Purpose: One of the most flexible backup tools on the market, it offers local backups, cloud backups, full-drive imaging, individual folder syncing, and more. There's also protection from ransomware, a vulnerability scanner, and a good antivirus.

Pros:

- Local and cloud backup options, full image to file-level
- Active disk cloning
- Ransomware and malicious URL protection
- Ability to add cloud storage

Support: Chat, Phone, Email

Security: End-to-end encryption AES-256, users can set up a local encryption key (non-recoverable if you forget it) that is never sent to Acronis for each backup set. Acronis' data centers are protected from a physical security standpoint and can continue operating in the event of a power loss for 48 hours. [Acronis' privacy policy](#) states that it collects personal information you provide (contact and payment information) and your usage data (server logs and device information). This data is used to maintain your account, contact you, and improve and tailor its services. Acronis says it shares this data with vendors and resellers and will give this information to law enforcement officials provided there is a legal basis. For reference, Acronis is based in Burlington, Massachusetts, in the US.

Recommendation: Periodically check your backup by downloading some files to ensure it is working correctly. Store a copy of critical files to Google Drive or Dropbox cloud service for redundancy and immediate backup. It's also a good idea to periodically create a local backup. This will prevent you from having to wait for a complete re-install and get you back up and going faster.

It isn't helpful for daily backups or in the case of total loss or up-to-the-minute file recovery.

Similar Tools: Backblaze, SpiderOak One Backup, iCloud (Mac only), Carbonite, Google Drive, DropBox, OneDrive

Staff Communication

Why might you need this?

In a remote workplace, quick communication is vital. Slack allows you to have one-off conversations with coworkers without having to send an email or text their phone. It also allows you to send a notification to multiple people without sending a bunch of emails. It can also foster community by facilitating those water cooler conversations via social channels and direct messaging.

Slack

Website: <https://slack.com/>

Non-profit Discount: Free for qualifying non-profits with up to 250 members, 85% discount for organizations above that size: <https://slack.com/help/articles/204368833-Apply-for-the-Slack-for-Nonprofits-discount>

Compatibility: Mac, Windows, Linux, iOS, Android

Created: 2014

Purpose: Communicate with staff, partners, funders, or vendors in channels or via direct messages

Pros:

- Slack Huddles
- Cross-platform compatibility
- Easy to use and highly customizable
- Widely used in the progressive community
- Can be fun!

Support: <https://slack.com/help> OnlineHelp Center, webinars

Security: <https://slack.com/trust/security>

Recommendation: Apply for the free non-profit upgrade. To foster a sense of community in an online workspace, create channels for sharing anything from recipes to playlists to vacation photos. Set up integrations with Google Calendar, so people know when you're in a meeting, or OOO and Google Drive to make sharing documents easier. You can even start a FreshDesk support ticket or a Zoom meeting right from Slack.

Integrations: 2.4k integrations including Google Suite, 1Password, Asana, Zoom, FreshDesk, Dropbox, Calendly

Similar Tools: Microsoft Teams, RocketChat, Discord, Google Hangouts

Writing Support

Why might you need this?

Editing software helps make your writing clearer and more professional. It also checks for bias, tone, and misspelled words.

Grammarly

Website: <https://app.grammarly.com/>

Purpose: Spelling and grammar checks on everything you write everywhere, including emails, Google Docs, Microsoft Office, Websites, and more

Cost: <https://www.grammarly.com/plans>

Non-profit Discount: <https://www.grammarly.com/nonprofits-ngos>

Integrations: Microsoft Office, Chrome Extension

Created: 2015

Pros:

- Provides reports of weekly word usage, including the most common grammar fixes from the week and how to learn and avoid them in the future.
- Tone detection

Support: Articles, Support Requests

Security: <https://www.grammarly.com/security>

Similar Tools: Linguix, ProWritingAid

Recommendation: The free plan is sufficient for most users, but users who write a lot for large audiences, such as communications staff, may want the premium plan.

Other Writing Resources

Conscious Style Guide - first website devoted to conscious language. Its mission is to help us think critically about using language- including words, portrayals, framing, and representation- to empower instead of limit.

Website: <https://consciousstyleguide.com/>

Text Analytics

Why might you need this?

Use it to analyze open-ended text and verbatim responses to turn them into actionable insights.

Fathom

Website: <https://www.fathomthat.ai/>

Purpose: Platform to understand any community in their own words. Text analytics solution that delivers customization and context adaptability. Reduce qualitative analysis time by 75%, while enhancing the quality and actionability of findings.

Cost: \$399/month or \$299/month for non-profits. Includes first 5000 text responses, with no monthly minimums and unlimited users. Additional text tokens are priced based on volume. Free trial available.

Contact: Tovah Paglaro tovah@fathomthat.ai

Created: Founded by Tovah Paglaro and Michiah Prull in 2023

Pros:

- Understand the why not just the what: Quantitative data fails to provide clarity into the why driving individuals' preferences, beliefs, and behavior

- Identify emerging trends
- Find insights you didn't know to look for: it is impossible to get a comprehensive understanding of perception and experience through quantitative questions that require the researcher to create an incomplete list of options based on prior assumptions

Security: <https://www.fathomthat.ai/privacy-policy>

Scheduling

Why might you need this?

Finding a meeting time that works for multiple people is challenging, and doing this over email or DM can be time-consuming. Online schedulers allow the person (or persons) you're meeting with to pick a time that works best for them, based on your calendar.

Calendly

Website: <https://calendly.com/>

Cost: <https://calendly.com/pricing>

Created: 2013

Purpose: Individual and team scheduling options

Non-profit Discount: Special pricing to qualified non-profit organizations is available. Contact customer support specialists for details: support@calendly.com

Integrations: Google Calendar, Zoom, Zapier, Chrome & Firefox Extensions

Pros:

- Black-owned business
- Group Scheduling
- Multiple types of scheduling

Support: Resource Library, Help Center, Video Tutorials, Support Chat

Security: <https://calendly.com/security>

Recommendation: Try the 14-day free trial and then try out the free version for another week. If you miss the paid features, the premium account should meet most of your team's needs. If you go with a paid version, have one person on your staff or team set up an initial account and add the others so that you can have event types that coordinate with all of your calendars. Make sure your availability is set to only when you want to have a meeting. Integrating with Zoom and Google Calendar allows for seamless scheduling.

Similar Tools: Fantastical, MixMax

41

Online Signature Collection

DocuSign

Website: <https://www.docusign.com/>

Cost: starts at \$10/month <https://www.docusign.com/plans-and-pricing>

Non-profit Discount: Eligible non-profits can save 30% on annual DocuSign plans: <https://go.docusign.com/cobranded/4/impact/>

Created: 2003

Purpose: DocuSign eSignature accelerates agreements, eliminates manual tasks, and makes it easy to connect with the tools and systems you're already using.

Pros:

- Eliminates manual tasks such as printing of documents, physical signatures, and scanning back of completed forms
- Sign from anywhere, your computer or mobile device via the app
- Relatively easy to use
- Instant status availability- always know where your agreement is in the signing process.
- Ability to create custom fields so you can collect and track the most important information to you or your organization.
- Highly secure, DocuSign meets some of the most stringent US, EU, and global security standards, and uses the strongest data encryption technologies available

Support: Resource Center, Webinars

Security: <https://support.docusign.com/s/articles/Legal-FAQ/trust>

Integrations: 350+ integrations

Recommendation: If you're going to use DocuSign, we recommend reaching out to them directly to get a contract designed to fit the needs of your organization. Ask about non-profit and volume-based discounts.

Similar Tools: AdobeSign, HelloSign

42

PDF Editor

Why might you need this?

Worth the cost if you often have to fill out, edit, or create PDFs. We suggest the annual subscription to get a discounted rate.

Adobe DC Pro

Website: <https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/features.html>

Cost: \$12.99/month with annual subscription

Non-profit Discount: <https://helpx.adobe.com/enterprise/using/non-profit.html>

Individual Discount: techsoup.org/adobe-acrobat-pro-dc-1-year-individual-discounted

Created: 1993

Purpose: Edit, Create, Convert, and Sign PDFs

Pros:

- Save on printing costs: paper, ink, and printer
- Edit and split PDFs with ease
- Create forms and collect signatures
- Multiple features available

Integrations: Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive, and other Adobe products

Support: User Guide, Tutorials, Chat Support

Security: <https://www.adobe.com/trust/security.html>

Similar Tools: Mac Preview, Nitro Pro, PDF Expert

43

URL Shortener

Why might you need this?

<https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/your-business-needs-a-url-shortener>

TL;dr: URL shorteners generate links that are easier to share. They let small businesses track marketing campaigns and other incoming traffic.

Bit.ly

Website: <https://bitly.com/>

Cost: Free base use with upgrades starting at \$8/month <https://bitly.com/pages/pricing>

Non-profit Discount: No

Compatibility: Web

Created: 2008

Purpose: Share links as neat, short URLs and measure where the clicks came from

Pros:

- The free version is robust
- Customizable link ending
- Can create QR Codes
- Allows users to track engagement for URL

Support: Self-help Desk

Security: <https://support.bitly.com/hc/en-us/categories/360001889251-SSO-Security>

Similar Tools: Rebrandly, TinyURL

Graphic Design

Canva

Website: canva.com

Cost: canva.com/pricing

Non-profit Discount: You can apply for free Canva Pro: [Canva for Non-Profits](#)

Created: 2011

Purpose: You can use it to design engaging posters, posts, and presentations for your social media, marketing, and educational purposes.

Pros:

- You can still create engaging designs with the free version-- no purchase is required
- The interface is easy to navigate and people with little to no design experience can create
- Numerous templates that are made to scale for the purpose you intend to use them for
- Has Brand Kit features to ensure all your designs are using the same colors and elements (Canva Premium)
- Many fonts and colors are available
- Ability to upload your own images or use theirs

Support: ‘Learn’ section with tutorials, blogs, and courses; Help Center with multiple subjects. Ability to submit questions through a contact form

Security: Password-protected

Integrations: Can integrate with Facebook and Instagram to post your creations and schedule posting (versus having to download your image and upload separately into each tool)

Recommendation: The additional access to elements, photos, and features is worth the price for your organization even if you can’t get it free as a non-profit.

Premade Social Media Graphics

Into Action

Website: <https://www.intoactionlab.com/>

Content Library: <https://library.into-action.us>

2023 Into Action Lab Cultural Calendar: <https://www.intoactionlab.com/2023-cultural-calendar>

Purpose: Into Action is a content library and a movement of designers, illustrators, animators and artists building cultural momentum around civic engagement and the issues affecting our country and world.

Cost: Free

Security: Email addresses are stored for contact purposes and never re-sold to any third parties

Contact: Join their Slack: <https://www.intoactionlab.com/slack>; National Organizing Manager, Kiley Staufenbeil kiley@taskforce.us

Integrations: Tenor, Giphy

Similar Tools: Giphy, Tenor, Imgflip

Task Manager

Asana

Website: <https://asana.com/>

Cost: <https://asana.com/pricing>

Non-profit Discount: Not for political or advocacy organizations. 50% off annually for Premium or Business subscriptions: <https://www.techsoup.org/asana-details>

Integrations: <https://asana.com/apps?category=all-apps> Notably: Slack, Tableau, Microsoft Office 365, Gmail, Chrome Extension, Freshdesk, Mobile app, Dropbox, GitHub

Created: 2011

Purpose: Manage team projects and tasks

Pros:

- Free Version: automated reminders for tasks; project templates available; easily track project progress; log, review, and report out on completed tasks
- Paid Version: create dependencies and relationships between tasks and projects; multiple views to suit different style preferences; public-facing forms to submit requests and tasks

Support: User Guide, Asana Academy Courses & Webinars, Forum, Support Articles

Security: <https://asana.com/guide/help/faq/security>

Recommendation: The free version works great for small teams. Larger teams, remote teams, and those with many concurrent projects may benefit from Asana Premium.

Similar Tools: Trello, EverNote, AirTable, Todoist

***Personal* Task Managers:** Things 3 (Mac), ToDoist (web/Mac/iOS/Android/Windows)

Data Reporting & Visualisation

Why might you need this?

To create data visualizations, such as charts, graphs, or maps. Most people can comprehend data better in a visual format, rather than just numbers on a spreadsheet.

Tableau

Website: <https://www.tableau.com/>

Cost: <https://buy.tableau.com/en-us/>

Non-profit Discount: <https://www.techsoup.org/tableau> (only open to organizations with annual operating budgets of \$5 million or less)

Integrations: Text files, Excel spreadsheets, Google Sheets, Microsoft Access, SQL, etc. Created: 2003

Purpose: Software for creating data visualizations, such as charts, graphs, and maps Pros:

- Very powerful
- Easy to use
- The graphics are very nice
- You don't need to know how to write SQL queries (but it's helpful if you do)
- Free 2-week trial

Support: Knowledge Base, Live Training, Recorded Webinars, Consulting, FAQ

Security: https://help.tableau.com/current/server/en-us/security_data.htm

Recommendation: A 2-year individual license for \$58 Tableau Desktop (through TechSoup) can't be beaten (if your non-profit qualifies). It offers the same full functionality as other versions of Tableau.

Similar Tools: Periscope, Google Looker Studio

46

Data Entry Vendor

Why might you need this?

You have collected information on paper at events or in the field and don't have any staff or volunteers available to enter that data for you.

Blue Prism

Website: <https://www.blueprism.com/>

Contact: <https://www.blueprism.com/contact/?prev=https%3A//www.blueprism.com/customers/for-our-customers/>

Cost: Custom, free trial available: <https://www.blueprism.com/free-trial/>

Non-profit Discount: Contact Sales

Created: 2011, Acquired by SS&C Chorus in 2021

Purpose: Platform for reading, enriching, and delivering data from paper.

Pros:

- Great for automating the data entry process of any program
- Uses AI to assist in the reading and digitization of on-paper handwriting
- Customer UI has a lot of functionality and even allows you to compare templates and overlay documents and templates to find pain points or just to compare

Security: <https://www.blueprism.com/blue-prism-security/>

Support: Knowledge base, Tutorials, FAQs, Customer Support Representative

Similar Tools: There are many data entry vendors available, but State Voices only has experience with this one.

47

DIGITAL SECURITY & PRIVACY

Virtual Private Network

Why might you need this?

<https://cdt.org/insights/techsplanations-part-5-virtual-private-networks/>

Tldr: Providing protection and encryption of your internet traffic, including IP address masking. However, VPN only disguises your traffic to some third parties. A VPN will not stop services like Google or Amazon from recognizing you and VPNs cannot stop invasive data fingerprinting or web tracking technologies. VPN is one of the essential tools you can use for digital privacy.

TunnelBear

Website: <https://www.tunnelbear.com>

Purpose: TunnelBear is a VPN service that encrypts your internet traffic and routes it through a server in another location. This can help to protect your privacy and security online, and it can also be used to unblock websites and streaming services that are restricted in your region.

Cost: TunnelBear offers a free version that gives you 500 MB of data per month. Paid plans start at \$9.99 per month for 1 device and go up to \$49.99 per month for 5 devices.

Contact:

Created: Created in 2011 by Gabriel Weinberg and Ryan O'Connor.

Pros:

- User-friendly interface that makes it easy to get started.
- Strong encryption and a no-logs policy to protect your privacy.
- Offers a free version that gives you 500 MB of data per month.

Integrations: Integrates with a number of popular services, including Google Chrome, Firefox, and Opera. It also integrates with a number of password managers, such as LastPass and 1Password

Support: 24/7 live chat support, email

Security: <https://www.tunnelbear.com/privacy-policy>

Similar Tools: Proton, Mullvad, NordVPN

Two Factor Authentication

Why might you need this?

Two-factor authentication prevents your account from being taken over by a password breach because it requires both your password and a one-time code to log in. It's more secure than SMS authentication because with SMS authentication there is a risk of your text message being intercepted.

48

Authy

Website: <https://authy.com/>

Cost: Free

Compatibility: iOS or Android

Created: 2012

Similar Tools: Google Authenticator

Personal Data Removal Service

Why might you need this?

Your personal information such as name, address, family relationships, email, and phone number are available via data brokers on the internet. Data Removal Services remove these listings.

DeleteMe

Website: joindeleteme.com

Cost: joindeleteme.com/privacy-protection-plans

Non-profit Discount: N/A

Compatibility: Web

Created: 2011

Purpose: Remove personal information from the internet to protect you against identity theft or harassment.

Pros:

- Does the work for you so you don't have to request from each site individually
- Continuously scans for new information
- Offers a free guide to remove data yourself

Support: HelpDesk, Phone, Email

Security: joindeleteme.com/help/kb/trust-the-deleteme-team

Similar Tools: Data Broker List, Reputation Defender

49

Password Manager

Why might you need this?

A password manager can generate passwords, save them for later, and securely share passwords with coworkers.

1Password

Website: <https://1password.com/>

Cost: starts at \$2.99/month with annual subscription <https://1password.com/business-pricing>

Non-profit Discount: up to 50% on team plans; In order to access the discount, first sign your team up, then contact the sales team with proof of non-profit status

Compatibility: Mac, Windows, iOS, Android

Created: 2005

Purpose: Generate random, secure passwords, share passwords securely, as well as autofill them in your web browser

Pros:

- Create strong, randomly generated unique passwords
- Share passwords securely with staff or a team
- Receive alerts for compromised websites and vulnerable passwords
- 2-factor authentication
- Secure document storage

Support: HelpDesk, KnowledgeBase, Forums, Email

Security: <https://1password.com/security/>

Similar Tools: LastPass, BitWarden, NordPass, Dashlane

Browser Add-Ons

You'll want to install privacy and ad-blocking extensions for your web browser. These can prevent your browser (and computer by extension) from being exploited or downloading viruses via malicious code. Additionally, we recommend some new privacy configurations below.

Major browsers now offer native support for an HTTPS only mode- that makes your browser default to the secure version of a website, protecting your information from interception by a third party. You no longer need an add-on for that. Learn how to set up HTTPS by default in your browser: <https://www.eff.org/https-everywhere/set-https-default-your-browser>

UBlock Origin

<https://ublockorigin.com/>

An ad-blocker stops intrusive ads from taking over your browser or even preventing you from seeing content on a website. Not all websites, particularly news sites, may require you to disable it to access their website. Use it, especially for unfamiliar sites.

Privacy Badger

<https://privacybadger.org/>

Similar to an Ad-blocker, Privacy Badger blocks advertisements, but its primary function is to prevent malicious code from taking over your computer. It also blocks cross-site tracking.

Ghostery

<https://www.ghostery.com/>

Similar to tracking prevention, Ghostery allows you the ability to view trackers and block them, at four configurable levels.

DuckDuckGo

<https://duckduckgo.com/app>

Chrome specific, it offers a built-in private search engine, tracker blocker, ability to enforce encryption, and gives an overview of a website privacy features.

Unshorten.link

<https://unshorten.link/>

Sometimes malicious attempts can hide behind a shortened URL, opening doors for scammers to redirect you to possible phishing, other malicious websites, or malware installs. This browser extension will expand the URL and let you know information about the website it is directing to.

51

FREE DOWNLOADS

52

Archiving & Compression

Why might you need this?

Creating compressed files that take up less space on your hard drive, and opening compressed files

Windows: 7-Zip <https://7-zip.org/>

Mac: Archive Utility included in Mac OS

Digital Scanner/PDF Creator

Why might you need this?

This is a mobile application to scan documents using your phone camera. This allows you to create a digital copy of a paper document without having to use a physical scanner.

Adobe Scan: <https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/mobile/scanner-app.html>

PDF Reader

Why might you need this?

PDF is a popular document format. To view a PDF, you need a PDF Reader app.

Adobe Acrobat Reader: <https://www.adobe.com/acrobat/pdf-reader.html>

Screenshots

Why might you need this?

This application takes a picture of your screen. This can be useful for creating documentation, or for troubleshooting.

Windows: Snip and Sketch built into OS. Depending on your hardware, you may use the Windows Logo Key + PrtScn button as a shortcut for print screen. If your device does not have the PrtScn button, you may use Fn + Windows logo key + Space Bar to take a screenshot

Mac: Screenshot built into OS. To capture the entire screen press Shift-Command-3; to capture a portion of the screen Press Shift-Command-4.

Screen Recorder

Why might you need this?

Record your desktop is helpful for recording training or for bug reporting.

Windows: Built into OS <https://www.tomsguide.com/how-to/how-to-screen-record-on-windows-11>

Mac: Built into OS <https://support.apple.com/en-us/HT208721>

Text Editor

Why might you need this?

Text editors are useful for cleaning up and standardizing messy data

Windows: Notepad ++

Website: <https://notepad-plus-plus.org/downloads/>

Mac: TextMate

Website: <https://macromates.com/>

RECOMMENDED TECH

In this section, we recommend various hardware options, give detailed specifications for the best internet connection, and explain the different operating systems you might consider when choosing your devices.

Hardware

Laptops

Recommended Specifications:

- **HDD/Storage:** 1TB SSD
- **Processor:** 6 cores, 3.50 GHz or more (Intel Core i7 processors or newer)
- **RAM/Memory:** 16 GB
- **Screen Size:** 15" – 17" (dependent on how often you travel or bring your laptop to and from an office, as well as which size works best for your vision and ease of use)
- **Ports:** USB-C (3.0 or higher), HDMI, Ethernet
- **Programs to Install:** Microsoft 365 Business Standard or Personal/Family, Google Chrome as your browser, Windows Defender (Windows only) or another antivirus, AdBlock or uBlock Origin (Note: Macs come with Pages, Numbers, Keynote preinstalled- all files there can be saved in Microsoft Office formats; additionally you can use free Google Sheets, Google Docs and Google Slides that also work well with both Mac and PC)

How to choose between Mac and PC:

When navigating the ever-evolving landscape of technology, making the right choice can be similar to selecting the optimal programming language for your project. Go with what you are most comfortable and familiar with. It is hard to switch from one to the other after you've continuously used one for a while. Therefore, it's paramount to weigh your options before committing to a digital path. If you're standing at the crossroads of a decision, consider a few crucial factors: cost, compatibility with your software arsenal and peripherals (ranging from external mice and keyboards to monitors and docking stations), processing speed, storage capacity, device durability, and the potential for future upgrades.

Windows is a versatile operating system with a wide range of software available, making it a popular choice for developers and businesses. Windows embraces change more frequently, with substantial updates gracing the stage biannually. That is a stark contrast to Apple's annual software cycle.

54

On the opposite end, Apple who is behind the MacOS is renowned for its meticulous craftsmanship and disciplined release cycles. Each Apple product adheres to a consistent design philosophy ensuring unique connectivity between devices within the ecosystem. In contrast, a multitude of manufacturers can produce Windows-based PCs, each with its unique specifications. This distinction provides Macs with user-friendly stability while granting Windows systems the flexibility to tinker and customize. However, the latter demands a deeper understanding of software development and hardware upgrades.

Apple's robust support network can easily troubleshoot any issues that might surface while it's a bit more difficult to find PC support for a particular laptop due to the variety of different manufacturers.

In terms of hardware, Macs boast fast speeds, although they may not have the most powerful graphics chips commonly found in Windows-based alternatives. Notably, it is notoriously difficult to upgrade Macs. This means the Mac specifications you choose on day one are likely permanent unlike with Windows-based devices where further device upgrades are much more common post-purchase. However, for those seeking a dependable computer without delving into hardware intricacies, Macs assure a smooth sailing experience.

In the end, whether you lean towards Windows' open horizon or Mac's curated realm, remember that the journey is as much about the destination as the tools that get you there.

2023/24 Recommendations

Top Choice

PC: Dell Inspiron 15

<https://www.dell.com/en-us/shop/laptops/12th-gen-intel/spd/inspiron-15-3520-laptop/>

- 15.6" Non-Touch
- Intel Core i7 12th Gen
- 16GB Memory
- 1TB SSD
- Windows 11 Home
- 720p at 30fps HD camera

Upgrade

PC: Dell XPS 15 Plus Laptop

<https://www.dell.com/en-us/shop/cty/pdp/spd/xps-15-9530-laptop/usexcpto9530rp101>

- 15.6" OLED touchscreen
- Intel® Core™ i7 13th Gen
- 32 GB Memory
- 2 TB SSD
- Windows 11 Pro
- 720p at 30 fps HD

Top Choice

Mac: Apple MacBook Air

<https://www.apple.com/shop/buy-mac/macbook-air/15-inch-m2>

- Apple M2 chip with 8-core CPU, 8-core GPU, 16-core Neural Engine
- 16GB unified memory
- 1TB SSD storage
- Liquid Retina display with True Tone
- 1080p FaceTime HD camera
- Magic Keyboard with Touch ID
- Two Thunderbolt / USB 4 ports, MagSafe 3 charging port

Chromebook

While Chromebooks continue to carve a niche for themselves with their budget-friendly price tags and progressively enhanced hardware capabilities, we wouldn't recommend substituting either a Windows or Mac laptop for a Chromebook. Diverging from Windows and macOS, Google's Chrome OS is rooted in the foundation of the Chrome browser, it is marked by an emphasis on web-centric applications and cost-effectiveness. These devices tend to be more affordable when compared to their Windows-based PC and MacBook counterparts. This cost advantage comes from their lean hardware demands. While this can be an option for personal use, we do not recommend this as a laptop replacement.

Computer Monitors

Recommended Specifications:

- 24 inches or larger
- 1080p
- Energy Star Certified, Includes Warranty
- HDMI and USB and Thunderbolt
- Built-in speaker, microphone, and webcam
- Consider a Swivel Base

Why might you need this?

Maybe your laptop screen is too small, or you need 2 screens when you are working. This can stay in your office and be attached to your laptop as needed.

2023/24 Recommendations

Top Choice

27 inch: Asus ProArt Display PA278CV

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08LCPY1TR>

Why: fully adjustable stand, USB-C charging, Mac compatible, HDMI, DisplayPort in/out, USB-A

Budget-Friendly Option

27 inch: ViewSonic VA2756-MHD 27

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07BV3W5XJ?th=1>

Upgrade

30 inch: Dell UltraSharp 30 USB-C Hub Monitor - U3023E

<https://www.dell.com/en-us/shop/dell-ultrasharp-30-usb-c-hub-monitor-u3023e/apd/210-bdsn/monitors-monitor-accessories>

Webcams

Recommended Specifications:

- 1080p
- HD Video
- USB connection
- 360-degree swivel (if desired) Built-in Microphone (if desired)
- Ring Light (if desired)

Why might you need this?

If your laptop and/or monitor don't have a built-in webcam or their webcam is broken, then you will likely need this for video calls and meetings or training that require video.

2023/24 Recommendation

Logitech C920e 1080 HD

<https://www.amazon.com/Logitech-Mic-Enabled-Certified-Microsoft-Compatible>

Specs:

- AutoFocus
- Lighting and Color Controls
- Stereo Microphone and Privacy Cover
- Compatibility: PC, Mac, Chromebook

Docking Stations

Recommended Specifications:

- Compatible with Windows and Mac
- Multiple USB ports and HDMI connection
- SD card reader

Why might you need this?

This allows a laptop to function as a desktop computer, with connections for a monitor, keyboard, mouse, printer, etc.

2023/24 Recommendation

Belkin Thunderbolt 3 Dock Core

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08438H4GM>

Specs:

- Windows and Mac OS
- USB-C Power Delivery, USB-A, HDMI 2.0, Gigabit Ethernet
- DisplayPort 1.4
- 3.5mm Audio in/out

Headphones

Recommended Specifications:

- Bluetooth calling

Why might you need this?

You are on a lot of calls and video meetings and your audio isn't great on your phone or computer.

2023/24 Recommendations

Top Choice

Sony WH-1000XM4 Wireless

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08MVG24M>

Specs:

- Industry-Leading Noise-Cancelling
- Over-Ear Headphones
- Alexa built-in

Top Choice

AirPods Pro (2nd generation)

<https://www.apple.com/shop/product/MTJV3AM/A/airpods-pro>

Specs:

- Adaptive personalized spatial audio with dynamic head tracking
- Active noise cancellation and transparency mode
- Dust, sweat, and water resistant

Budget-Friendly Option

Anker Soundcore Life Q20 Hybrid Active Noise Canceling Headphones: \$59.99

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07NM3RSRQ>

Specs:

- Noise-canceling
- Up to 40 hours of non-stop use

Internet Connectivity Recommendations

A good internet speed is generally anything above 25 Mps which would allow you to surf the web, check emails, and stream. However, we recommend at least 50 Mbps for multiple device connectivity, data intense traffic, and HD streaming. Speedy downloads of large files, 4k video streaming, and gaming on multiple devices would work best with at least 100 Mbps. If there are multiple members of the household relying on stable internet connectivity (3-5 users) plans with 200 to 400 Mbps might be worth the extra money for running a home office.

2023/24 Recommendations

Google Nest WiFi Pro Mesh System

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0BCQSYZB>

- Covers up to 2,200 sq. ft. (reported up to 6,600) and up to 200 connected devices
- Wi-Fi 6E tri-band
- Integrates with various smart devices, and manage remotely using the Google Home mobile app
- Supports Gigabit Internet Speeds

Wifi Recommendations:

If you encounter Wi-Fi dead zones or poor signal strength in your home or office, a Wi-Fi mesh system can dramatically improve your coverage by providing a strong Wi-Fi signal in multiple locations.

- A Wi-Fi mesh system is essentially a router that connects directly to your modem. Instead of being a single device, however, the mesh consists of a number of different “nodes” that you can place throughout your home or office.
- The number of nodes you use will depend on the size of your home or office, but most systems usually come with two or three out-of-the-box.
- The nodes are all part of a single wireless network that you connect your various devices to, so it’s like having wireless routers placed throughout your home or office.
- The mesh systems start at around \$100 for one that can cover a couple of thousand square feet and top out at around \$1,000 for up to 10,000 square feet of coverage.
- Some popular makers of Wi-Fi mesh systems include Eero, Linksys, Netgear, Asus, and Google.
- Amazon and Best Buy are great places to shop for a mesh router. Your internet service provider may also sell them.

Upgrade your internet package

Check with your current provider to make sure you have the best internet package available because faster speeds are becoming increasingly available.

- Make sure that you have their most up-to-date equipment; find out if there would be a cost for this new router, etc., or if they would be covered under your current contract.
- If you are going to be charged a rental fee, it might be more economical to purchase your own equipment. You'll want to check with your internet provider for a list of compatible devices.
- If your equipment is out of date, you may not be getting the full bandwidth you're paying for.
- You can compare providers here if there are multiple service providers in your area: <https://www.reviews.org/internet-service/best-internet-service-providers/>

HotSpot

Find out from your cell phone provider whether a hotspot is available on your cell phone plan. This will be necessary if your internet goes out at home and you don't have somewhere that you can go to access the internet or if you're traveling and no wifi is available.

<https://www.pcmag.com/how-to/how-to-turn-your-phone-into-a-wi-fi-hotspot>

OFFICE EQUIPMENT

Below you will find office equipment options that can meet the diverse needs of you, your employees, and your activists. We considered burnout and fatigue, accessibility needs, differences in body sizes and shapes, and budget when recommending products and solutions.

Office Chairs

Finding the ideal office chair goes beyond merely seeking comfort. The right materials can help keep you cool, and adjustability options can customize the chair to your unique body.

Recommended Specifications:

- Mesh back
- Adjustable seat height
- Adjustable seat width and depth
- Adjustable seat tilt
- Lumbar support
- Adjustable armrests (height adjustable at minimum, but pivot adjustable is a plus)
- Reclining mechanism
- Neck support (if needed)

Why does it matter what chair you sit in?

Lumbar and pelvic support promotes good posture and causes less muscle strain. Research suggests poor posture leads to poor concentration, headaches, and lower back pain. It can even lead to herniated disks.

2023/24 Recommendations

These are the most popular, highly recommended, and affordable chairs that provide the key elements of a good ergonomic chair.

Top Choice

Verve Chair

<https://www.branchfurniture.com/collections/office-chairs/products/verve-chair>

Specs:

- Six point adjustment
- Soft and breathable 3D knit back
- Low-profile, synchronous base mechanism
- 7 year warranty

Upgrade

If you spend a lot of time at your desk, consider investing in a quality desk chair. These chairs are widely praised for their design and durability and should last for 10 years or more.

Steelcase Gesture (Made in Michigan)

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B0160IF2JU>

Budget-Friendly Option

These aren't going to be as good as the recommended chairs, but do provide many of the elements of good ergonomics.

Amazon Basics Low-Back, Upholstered Mesh, Adjustable, Swivel Computer Office Desk Chair

<https://www.amazon.com/AmazonBasics-Low-Back-Computer-Chair-Black/dp/B01D7P5BFS/?th=1>

Union & Scale™ Essentials Ergonomic Fabric Swivel Task Chair

https://www.staples.com/essentials-mesh-back-fabric-task-chair-black-un56947/product_24398920

62



Heating Pad

Why might you need this?

If you have back pain from sitting all day or tend to get cold in your office, this can help ease your muscles and keep you warm at the same time.

2023/24 Recommendation

PureRelief XL King Size Heating Pad

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01KVYTV86>

Standing Desk (Desk Riser)

Why might you need this?

<https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/the-truth-behind-standing-desks-2016092310264>

TL;dr: Evidence-based research suggests considering this for various health reasons.

Recommended Specifications:

- Height Adjustable
- Warranty
- Accommodates at minimum a monitor and laptop, with a tray accommodating keyboard and mouse.
- Supports 33 lbs or more (to accommodate monitor, keyboard, laptop)

2023/24 Recommendations

Top Choice

VariDesk Pro Plus 36 - Dual Monitor Standing Desk Converter

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B00JI6NCKK>

Budget-Friendly Option

VIVO Desk Converter, Height Adjustable Sit to Stand Riser, Dual Monitor and Laptop

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B075JYG2TB?th=1>

Sit to Stand Full Desk

Recommended Specifications:

- Electronic lever, though manual crank works fine too.
- Adjustable height that works for your individual stature. If you are on the taller end you may want to go with a taller model versus someone who's shorter.

2023/24 Recommendations

Top Choice

Vari Electric Sit And Standing Desk

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B089DMSZTN>

Budget-Friendly Option

FEZIBO Height Adjustable Electric Standing Desk

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08CBVGXZC>

Upgrade

Lander Desk

<https://www.imovr.com/lander-standing-desk-workstation.html>

Anti Fatigue Mat

Why might you need this?

It is a great compliment to a standing desk and can help reduce some of the negative effects of standing like joint soreness and fatigue.

2023/24 Recommendation

Gorilla Grip Anti Fatigue Standing Desk Mat

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B01B868D1M?th=1>

Blue Light Glasses

Why might you need this?

The association between blue light and various concerns, ranging from digital eye strain to potential blindness, has sparked a debate. Yet, studies suggest that extended exposure to blue light (like long hours in front of a computer) could potentially harm your retina — the deepest layer of your eye that transmits signals to your brain for visual processing. [Prevent Blindness](#), a non-profit dedicated to preserving vision health points out that preliminary research suggests that blue light can contribute to eye strain.

2023/24 Recommendation

Benicci blue light glasses

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B086C66SZ2>

Walking Pad

Why might you need this?

Under-desk treadmill, in other words- a walking pad can help you increase your daily mobility, especially if a large part of your day is spent sitting behind the desk. Additionally, this light exercise can help alleviate stress and improve cardiovascular health. A walking pad pairs well with our desk raiser and standing desk suggestions.

2023/24 Recommendation

Top Choice

Egofit Walker Pro/Plus

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B08YYR4N9G>

Budget-Friendly Option

Goplus Under Desk Treadmill

<https://www.amazon.com/dp/B07W7XQ9TN>

SupeRun Walking Pad, 2 in 1 Under Desk Treadmill

<https://www.amazon.com/Walking-Superun-Treadmill-Workstation-Capacity/dp/B0CBJSSVLX?th=1>

Upgrade

LifeSpan Fitness – Glowup Under Desk Walking Pad Treadmill

<https://www.amazon.com/LifeSpan-Fitness-Under-Walking-Treadmills/dp/B009QHLWUK?th=1>

Alternative Office Set-Ups

Treadmill desks are desks that offer an innovative workstation solution that allows you to keep up your mobility while saving space.

Why might you need this?

By combining a standing desk and a traditional treadmill into a single unit you can maximize space and simplicity.

2023/24 Recommendation

Top Choice

Exerpeutic 5000 ExerWork

<https://www.amazon.com/Exerpeutic-ExerWork-Treadmill-Adjustable-Capacity/dp/B07G2X84CJ>

Specs:

- Adjustable height supports different body shapes
- Accommodating max load
- Affordable dual-setup solution

Consideration:

- No sitting option

Upgrade

TR1000-Power Treadmill Desk

<https://www.lifespanfitness.com/products/tr1000-dt7-treadmill-desk>

Anti-Stress: Breathwork

Breathwork refers to breathing techniques that intentionally channel and focus on the breath. Functional and integrative medicine specialist [Melissa Young, MD](#), explains: “Breathwork helps us with focus and energy, which can lead to a better quality of life where there’s space for joy and fun,” Dr. Young adds. “If we’re constantly in a state of stress and tension, it’s very hard to find those important qualities in life.”

Why might you need this?

Research on breathwork suggests that potential benefits include alkalizing your blood PH, anti-inflammatory effect, elevating mood, and relieving anxiety.

Top Choice

Insight Timer–Meditate & Sleep

(Available as a free app on Google Play and App Store with in-app upgrade options for purchase)

Website: <https://insighttimer.com/>

Specs:

- Breathwork
- Meditation- the largest free library of guided meditations we found
- Sleep sounds and bedtime tales
- Yoga

Accessibility

26% of Americans have some kind of disability and BIPOC communities are consistently underserved and under-represented. Implementing accessibility technology will help us bridge that gap. It doesn't have to be complicated or expensive. A lot of the tools and resources featured here are free and open to anyone.

According to the [Detroit Disability Power](#): "...mainstream American culture tends to think about disability as an individual medical experience, we understand it more as a collective social, economic and relational experience. There are often medical aspects to people with disabilities experience, but for most people, social aspects, such as stigma, discrimination, and resulting isolation are far more impactful. For example, recent studies show that 19% of people with disabilities are employed, compared to 66% of non-disabled people. It is not that 80% of disabled people cannot work, but that it is harder to get past discrimination in the hiring process and to get the accommodations required to maintain employment (like accessible transportation or workspaces, ASL interpretation, etc.). The good news is that we can undo ableist structures that create this culture of oppression and replace them with a culture of revolutionary inclusion that doesn't just benefit disabled people, but everyone!"

Common Types of Accessibility Technology:

- Colorblindness friendly color schemes
- Accessible fonts & design
- Multiple modes of training material
- Screen-readers & screen enlargement tools
- Braille signage
- Sign language interpreters for in-person events
- Audio descriptions in videos
- Captioning for videos

Additional Resources

Detroit Disability Power's Social Justice Access Toolkit

<https://www.detroitdisabilitypower.org/social-justice-toolkit>

Job Accommodation Network

<https://askjan.org/toolkit/index.cfm>

Accessibility Resource List

docs.google.com/document/accessibility

Creating An Accessible Workplace

<https://www.themuse.com/advice/how-to-create-an-accessible-workplace>

Creating Accessible Documents

<https://aem.cast.org/create/creating-accessible-documents>

Creating Accessible Campaigns

<https://www.inclusivecampaigns.org/>

MEpedia

https://me-pedia.org/wiki/Welcome_to_MEpedia

MEpedia is a project founded by [The MEAction Network](#), powered by the patient community, and built by volunteers including patients, students, and researchers. It is a crowd-sourcing knowledge base on the history, science, and medicine of [ME](#), [CFS](#), and [related diseases](#).

Color Blindness

Why is this important?

Make your materials accessible to people with color blindness so it's easily discernible regardless of your ability to discern color.

Recommendations

Check to make sure your color scheme is differentiated enough to be clear regardless of color perception. Steer clear of color combinations such as green and red, or blue and yellow, as these can pose challenges for individuals with colorblindness. You can use a color contrast check, use patterns, symbols, proportions, and labels to make your graphics more clear and easy to understand. Additionally, remember to provide both an image description and alternative text for graphics and images to make sure colorblind and low-vision people can consume the content.

Color Contrast Checkers

- <https://webaim.org/resources/contrastchecker/>
- <http://colorsafe.co/>

Color-blind friendly color Schemes

- <https://jacksonlab.agronomy.wisc.edu/15-level-colorblind-friendly-palette/>
- <https://davidmathlogic.com/colorblind>

Dyslexia/Dysgraphia

Why is this important?

1 in 5 people in the US is dyslexic. Dyslexia and Dysgraphia affect the way your brain processes text-based information. The principles of making text-based communication clearer will benefit everyone consuming your content.

Recommendations

Some simple accommodations are to use clear navigation and headings, keep text spacing wide, use accessible fonts, and make text bigger. Keep your layout consistent, make required fields clearly marked, and when possible, use symbols and icons in addition to text. Make sure to use both patterns and colors to represent data on a chart or graphic. Enlarged San Serif fonts are the easiest to read. Text to Speech tools can be helpful for some people with dyslexia.

Accessible Fonts

<https://pixelplex.io/blog/choosing-the-right-font-and-its-presentation/>

OpenDyslexic (Typeface designed against some common symptoms of dyslexia)

<https://opendyslexic.org/>

Dyslexie (Typeface designed against some common symptoms of dyslexia)

<https://dyslexiefont.com/>

Visual Impairment

Why is this important?

These are tools that make technology more accessible for people with visual impairments.

Recommendation

Follow Web Accessibility standards for websites and digital materials. Use audio descriptions and auditory prompts. For in-person accessibility, keep furniture in the same place, push in chairs at desks and tables, and if possible, use braille on office signage. Keep rubber bands on hand for differentiation for things like pens and water bottles.

Screen Reader

Text-to-speech allows people with visual impairments to navigate digital tools by converting content on the screen into audio.

Built-in Text to Voice Tools

Windows: Narrator

<https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/complete-guide-to-narrator>

Mac: Voice Over

<https://www.apple.com/accessibility/vision/>

Similar Tools:

NV Access: a free and open-source, portable screen reader for Microsoft Windows

Website: <https://www.nvaccess.org/download/>

High Contrast Interface

Windows: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/change-color-contrast-in-windows>

Mac: <https://support.apple.com/lv-lv/guide/mac-help/unac089/mac>

Step-by-step guide: <https://mcmw.abilitynet.org.uk/increase-the-contrast-macos-13-ventura>

Audio Descriptions

Why is this important?

Videos are less accessible to people with visual impairments. Audio descriptions help by literally describing what is happening on the screen. The simplest way to accomplish this is to build in descriptions. Instead of saying “click here” in a video, be specific about what action you’re performing on screen; for example, “click the Submit button.”

Additional Resources:

<https://accessibility.huit.harvard.edu/audio-description>

<https://www.w3.org/WAI/tutorials/images/decision-tree/>

<https://www.perkins.org/resource/how-write-alt-text-and-image-descriptions-instagram/>

Voice Recognition

Why might you need this?

Speech to Text makes text-based easier for those with visual impairment, learning disabilities, and people with mobility limitations as well.

Built-in Voice to Text

Windows: <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/use-voice-typing-to-talk-instead-of-type>

Mac: Dictation <https://support.apple.com/lv-lv/guide/mac-help/mh40584/mac>

Screen Enlargement

Why might you need this?

Screen magnification can help people with low vision read more clearly.

Windows: Magnifier <https://support.microsoft.com/en-us/windows/make-windows-easier-to-see>

Mac: Magnifier

<https://support.apple.com/lv-lv/guide/mac-help/mh40579/mac>

Hearing Impairment

Why is this important?

Visual communication is helpful for people who are deaf or hard of hearing. While captioning and sign language interpretation are very useful, low-tech options such as text messaging and simple pen and paperwork too if other resources aren’t available.

Video Captioning

Adding captions to videos is the simplest way to make spoken digital communication accessible. There are many types of captioning from automatic options to more advanced professional services. Captions offer advantages to individuals who are Deaf, hard of hearing, non-native speakers of the event's language, as well as those engaged in multitasking, such as caregiving. One of the most significant benefits of captioning arises when it generates a comprehensive transcript post-event, which can be shared or leveraged to enhance accessibility further. There are two types of captioning: Closed-captions and Open-captions. Closed captions are captions that can be toggled on or off while watching a program or media, whereas open captions are captions that are permanently integrated into the program or media.

Live Captioning

According to the [Detroit Disability Power](#) CART (Communications Access Realtime Translation) is captioning done in real-time by a human either in-person or remotely/online. The text can be displayed for a large audience in person or online, or privately for individuals needing the service. CART services can cost between \$60-\$200/hour.

Recommendation: Although CART can be expensive if organizations do not budget ahead of time, having a very accurate transcript of an auditory event is priceless. Human captioners can also ask for adjustments from the participants such as speaking slower, clearer, or louder.

Scheduling Tips: CART providers are typically arranged 1-2 weeks in advance. Provide a list of terms or materials ahead of time to CART providers so that they can program their machine to account for preferred terms as well as feel prepared to capture the content to the best of their abilities.

While it's always going to be better to have an interpreter or real-time translator, there are a number of tools that can fill in the gaps. Notably, Zoom has added a live transcript feature that provides real-time voice-activated closed captioning in meetings and webinars. The setting must be host-enabled. To support automated captioning for languages other than English, like Arabic, Chinese, Dutch, French, and more, install the [Zoom desktop client version 5.11.9 or higher](#). Additionally, Zoom has manual captions- for this type of captioning host assigns a participant to type out the captions themselves.

How to enable automated captions in Zoom: <https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/8158289360141-Enabling-automated-captions>

How to view and request captions in Zoom:

<https://support.zoom.us/hc/en-us/articles/4403492514829-Viewing-captions-in-a-meeting-or-webinar>

ASR (Automatic Speech Recognition)

Automated speech recognition software employs machine learning to generate real-time captions, with the accuracy of these captions dependent on factors such as internet connection quality, speaker proximity to the microphone, speaker clarity, and the features of the captioning program. Some cost-effective or free automated captioning alternatives are listed below.

Zoom companions (able to join meetings and take notes)

[Otter.ai](#)

[Fathom.video](#)

Live Captioning Initiative

<https://lc.midcamp.org/>

POTS

Why is this important?

Postural orthostatic tachycardia syndrome (POTS) is one of a group of disorders that have orthostatic intolerance (OI) as their primary symptom. OI is a condition in which an excessively reduced volume of blood returns to the heart after an individual stands up from a lying down position. The primary symptom of OI is lightheadedness or fainting. Although the cause of POTS is unclear, it often develops after a concussion or viral illness. Prior to the pandemic, there were an estimated 1 to 3 million Americans with the condition. But now, experts say that there may be at least 1 million or more new POTS patients likely as a result of COVID-19.

Recommendation

Your or your employees' needs might differ depending on how POTS manifests itself but nonetheless, certain mitigating measures are available.

- **Provide a sit-stand desk.** This will allow people with POTS to adjust their position throughout the day to help manage their symptoms.
- **Keep the office cool.** People with POTS may feel faint or lightheaded when they are hot, so it is important to keep the office cool.
- **Provide access to water.** People with POTS need to drink plenty of fluids to stay hydrated, so it is important to provide access to water in the office space.
- **Allow for frequent breaks.** People with POTS may need to take frequent breaks throughout the day to sit or lie down, so it is important to allow for this flexibility.
- **Consider providing a quiet space.** People with POTS may be sensitive to noise, so it is important to consider providing a quiet space in the office where they can go to rest or relax.
- **Be understanding and supportive.** It is important to be understanding and supportive of people with POTS. This means being flexible with their work schedule and understanding their needs.

71

Additionally, for those affected by the condition it might be helpful to have compression stockings that can help improve circulation and reduce symptoms. For a sudden onset of symptoms having a yoga mat in your office space for floor time can reduce the risk of falls. According to the [NCBI](#) high sodium intake is recommended for the treatment POTS so having a salty snack nearby can also be helpful for people who are affected by this.



TOOLS FOR DATA PRACTITIONERS

Versioning and Code Sharing

GitHub

Website: <https://github.com/>

Purpose: Managing and tracking changes to programming code, facilitating code collaboration, and sharing

Cost: Free for 501c3 organizations

Non-profit Discount: <https://support.github.com/contact/nonprofit>

Compatibility: Online, Desktop App for Mac, Windows

Created: 2008

Pros:

- Allows you to rollback changes to code
- Can control access and limit who can save code

Support: Online Community, Support Tickets

Security: SSL, 2FA, private code repositories

Recommendation: If your organization does any kind of software coding or code scripting, using a version control system is strongly recommended. This is a form of institutional knowledge sharing. Check out the shared repositories of other organizations.

Similar Tools: GitLab, BitBucket, Azure DevOps

Software Code Editor

Why might you need this?

Code editors are specialized software designed to help software developers write programming code.

Visual Studio Code

Website: <https://code.visualstudio.com/>

Cost: Free

Compatibility: Mac, Windows

Created: 2015

Purpose: Editing source code

Pros:

- Most widely used code editor with numerous resources for support
- Very user-friendly for beginners
- Auto-suggests completion of code

73

Support: <https://code.visualstudio.com/learn>

Security: <https://privacy.microsoft.com/en-US/privacystatement>

Similar Tools: Sublime Text, PythonCharm

Command Line Tools

Why might you need this?

These are tools that do not have a graphic user interface (GUI) with buttons and windows. Command line utilities run in a text-based program called a “command line interface” (CLI). They are generally more powerful and faster than using an application. They can be used to do things that are difficult or impossible to do with a GUI application. Typically CLI utilities can automate tasks and can perform multiple tasks simultaneously.

Parsons

Why might you need this?

An API wrapper for Python to streamline integration of frequently used tools in the progressive community, such as NGPVAN, ActionNetwork, Twillio, AWS, and Civi.

Website: <https://www.parsonsproject.org>

Cost: Free

Compatibility: Mac, Windows

Created: 2019

Purpose: Reduce the amount of code necessary to use APIs for common tools

Pros:

- Free
- Actively Maintained
- Focused on and directed toward our typical work

Support: Live Training, Slack Channel, listserv, Github

Security: Parsons doesn’t retain or transmit any data.

Similar Tools: Individual tool APIs

PowerShell

Why might you need this?

A powerful administration tool for automating and managing tasks in the cloud and for a computer system.

Website: <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/powershell/>

Cost: Free

Compatibility: Windows, Mac

Created: 2006

Purpose: Automates common tasks and allows management of computer resources from the command line

Pros:

- Free
- Easy to install
- Well-maintained because it's distributed by Microsoft
- Wide user base so lots of resources exist

Support: <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/powershell/?view=powershell-7.2>

Security: <https://learn.microsoft.com/en-us/powershell/scripting/learn/security-features?view=powershell-7.3>

Similar Tools: Awk, Python, rsync

RStudio

Why might you need this?

R programming language is a useful tool for data scientists, analysts, and statisticians, especially those working in academic settings. R's ability to handle complex analyses such as machine learning, predictive analytics, GIS data, and more makes it a valuable asset for various data-related tasks. RStudio is an integrated development environment (IDE) for R and Python

Website: <https://posit.co/products/open-source/rstudio/>

Cost: Free

Compatibility: Windows, Mac, Linux

Created: 2011

Purpose: R is a system for statistical analysis and data visualization

Pros:

- Free
- Versatile
- Well-maintained
- Wide user-based so lots of resources exist

Support: <https://community.rstudio.com/>

Similar Tools: Python, Stata, SAS

Anaconda

Why might you need this?

Anaconda combines Python and R for data science, statistical analysis, machine learning, data processing, and predictive analytics. It includes many of the most popular and commonly used data analytics and coding packages such as Numpy, Scipy, and JupyterLab.

Website: <https://www.anaconda.com/>

Cost: Free

Compatibility: Windows, Mac, Linux

Created: 2012

Purpose: Data Analytics Development Environment

Pros:

- Free
- Easy to Use User Interface
- Comprehensive feature-set that makes getting started fast
- Compatibility with a lot of other applications.

Support: <https://anaconda.cloud/support-center>

Similar Tools: Python, R

For more information and resources on SQL, R, Python, and packages please refer to this guide:
Data Training Resources

DATA & TECHNOLOGY TRAININGS

State Voices Data Certification Program: VAN Track

Our Data Certification Program (DCP): VAN Track is recommended for people who wish to improve their knowledge of VAN and gain expertise using data to power their civic engagement work.

77

Through our Data Certification Program, we provide training to help organizers, advocates, activists, and more to grow in their ability to use data and digital tools to foster positive change in their communities.

Technology and data are often used to further oppress marginalized people, but we can use data to help free us. We can do this by investing in BIPOC organizers and their ideas about what digital tools and strategies we should explore while making sure technology, tools, training, and resources are in the hands of people experiencing oppression in society.

How to Sign Up: Sign up for the [State Voices Inside Voices](#) email list to be the first to know about future sessions of DCP: VAN.

Social Movement Technologies

SMT is a non-profit/NGO providing organizing strategy, training, and campaign support to build people power and win in the digital age.

How to Sign Up: State Voices sometimes qualifies for discounts when multiple people from the network sign up for SMT trainings, so if you're ever interested please contact someone at State Voices, or you can also sign up on your own via [SMT's website](#).

Re:Power

Re:Power is a team of organizers, strategists, and technologists dedicated to building transformative political power. They train leaders within communities to create change.

How to Sign Up: You can [visit their website](#) to learn more about the various live and online trainings they are hosting.

Generation Data

Generation Data is a non-profit that focuses on training the next generation of diverse leaders in the progressive, civic, and social impact data community. They offer both free and paid trainings for data practitioners.

How to Sign Up: [Visit their website](#) to find their current training opportunities and be added to their listserv.

Arena Academy

Arena Academy is training for current and aspiring civic engagement staff, with a focus on training women, people of color, and members of the LGBTQ+ community. Arena holds 2 -3 Academies each calendar year in person and online. Participants take part in an immersive five-day learning experience, selecting one of seven tracks: Campaign Management, Communications, Data, Digital, Finance, Organizing, or Organizing Director. Scholarships are available, and two-thirds of Arena Academy participants receive some form of scholarship

How to Sign Up: [Visit their website](#) to find current training opportunities.

DataCamp

In their own words: At DataCamp, we believe everyone deserves access to high-quality education and data skill development for a more secure future. As part of our mission to democratize data skills for everyone, we have always provided free, unlimited access to DataCamp for Classrooms for instructors and their students, serving more than 350,000 students around the world. We've also partnered with more than 120 non-profit organizations to give 25,000 free DataCamp subscriptions to communities that need them most.

As part of State Voices commitment to professional development for our network of data practitioners and professionals, we support our network using DataCamp as a laboratory space where important and practicable skills can be learned in as close to a live environment as possible. We support our practitioners learning with dedicated course and skill tracks alongside our in-house workgroups dedicated to sharing knowledge and troubleshooting the application of the knowledge learned here and elsewhere.

To sign up for DataCamp, [go here](#).



AI BEST PRACTICES

We understand that technological advances must be evaluated through an equity lens. Without this lens, white supremacy, racism, sexism, and other forms of discrimination could run unchecked. Therefore, we ask that state data staff keep this at the top of their minds when engaging with technology.

The technology market is being saturated with new advances in Artificial Intelligence and products showcasing these innovations. Artificial Intelligence (AI), Machine Learning (ML) and Large Language Models (LLM) solutions can offer great benefits for businesses and customers, such as improved efficiency, personalization, and innovation, they also pose significant risks to data privacy as they often rely on collecting, processing, and sharing large amounts of sensitive information. The [OWASP AI Security and Privacy Guide](#) offers practical tools and best practices for incorporating privacy measures into AI development. [Google's Secure AI Framework](#) prioritizes security practices tailored for AI systems, covering privacy, integrity, confidentiality, and availability aspects. These solutions could also expose our community to misinformation, as it measures our collective data against scores of data unchecked for bias and inaccuracies.

79

Some tools and websites that we bring forth in this Tech and Tools Guide use AI. One of the most widely used websites that we must note here is Grammarly. Grammarly's AI takes any content put into its system to train its AI for more accurate responses. But it is also important to note Grammarly does not own your work, they will, however, keep it stored for training purposes. We recommend that documents with confidential information not be put into Grammarly for the maximum safety of the organization and employees. When utilizing AI-enabled tools and services it is a best practice to be thorough regarding their data storage, ownership, and privacy policies before exposing any proprietary information.

First and foremost, prioritize your privacy and security. Ensure that you:

- Refrain from including personal, confidential, or internal information in any AI interactions. This includes local and state voter files and history, electoral data and other information provided by State Voices for civic engagement.
- Before diving into a new AI tool, take time to understand its privacy policies.
- Assume that interactions with AI tools may be stored on their respective servers and that data they might retain could include personal identifiers like names, emails, IP addresses, and even device details.

Second, understand the harms and potential misuse of AI. Remember:

- Be aware of the ways bad actors are poised to misuse AI to spread disinformation and skew search results and information access ahead of the next election.

- Recognize the threats posed by deepfakes, which can distort truths, harm reputations, and manipulate public perception.
- Know how generative AI can inadvertently perpetuate and reinforce biases, leading to skewed narratives and reinforcing harmful stereotypes.
- Ensure transparency and accuracy in AI-driven narratives to avoid overshadowing genuine human voices and causing a distorted public discourse.

Third, look for ways to address the ethical implications of your own AI use:

- Ensure AI outputs are fact-checked and are not perpetuating harmful biases.
- Integrate AI in ways that augment human efforts rather than replacing them.
- Clearly disclose any AI tool usage.
- Advocate that AI models are trained on diverse and representative data sets.

Lastly, optimize your engagement with AI using specific frameworks and prompts.

- Consider using AI tools to enhance the early stages of content creation.
- Employ structured frameworks for optimal interactions.
- Use specific prompts for tailored responses.
- To immediately enhance privacy on ChatGPT, navigate to Settings > data controls > chat history and training and disable the data storage toggle.

80

In addition to the above, ethical considerations have become paramount when it comes to the adoption and implementation of AI and ML. Ensuring responsible AI practices is crucial for safeguarding the interests and well-being of individuals and society as a whole. Some best practices include the following:

- **Privacy and security:** AI systems should be designed to protect the privacy and security of personal data. This includes using anonymized or pseudonymized data whenever possible and taking steps to prevent unauthorized access to or misuse of data.
- **Transparency and accountability:** AI systems should be transparent and accountable to users. This means that users should be able to understand how the system works and why it makes the decisions that it does. There should also be mechanisms in place to hold developers and users accountable for the decisions made by AI systems.
- **Fairness and non-discrimination:** AI systems should be designed to be fair and non-discriminatory. This means that they should not be biased against any particular group of people. Developers should carefully consider the potential for bias in their data and algorithms and take steps to mitigate it.
- **Human oversight:** AI systems should not be used to make decisions that have a significant impact on people's lives without human oversight. This means that there should always be a human in the loop who can review and approve decisions made by AI systems.
- **Responsible development and deployment:** AI systems should be developed and deployed in a responsible manner. This means that developers should consider the potential risks and benefits of AI systems and take steps to mitigate the risks. They should also consult with stakeholders and get their input on the development and deployment of AI systems.

These are just some of the ethical considerations that need to be taken into account when developing and using AI and ML systems. By following these best practices, we can help to ensure that AI is used responsibly and ethically.

AI systems can be biased due to the data sets they are trained on. These data sets are created by humans and can contain human biases that are then incorporated into the system. This can lead to unfair outcomes based on personal data. [Amazon, for example, had to discontinue use of a hiring algorithm](#) when they discovered that it discriminated unfairly against women. In addition to the above, here are some other specific things that can be done to address ethical concerns in AI and ML:

- **Use diverse and representative data:** This is important to prevent bias in AI systems.
- **Test for bias:** AI systems should be tested for bias before they are deployed.
- **Be transparent about how AI systems work:** Users should be able to understand how AI systems make decisions.
- **Give users control over their data:** Users should have the right to access and control their data.

By taking these steps, we can help to ensure that AI is used for good and not for harm.

81

In the U.S., despite several states and municipalities pursuing various forms of AI regulation, there has not been as dramatic a push for comprehensive national AI legislation as previous efforts to pass the American Data Privacy and Protection Act. One government initiative worth noting is [the White House's release of a "Blueprint for an AI Bill of Rights,"](#) which aims to "provide guidance whenever automated systems can meaningfully impact the public's rights, opportunities, or access to critical needs." Two key tenets of the document focus on the concepts of transparency ("this is what we are doing") and explainability ("this is how we do it"). In addition, the Data Privacy segment of the blueprint puts forth [four general "expectations" for automated systems:](#)

- Protect privacy by design and default.
- Protect the public from unchecked surveillance.
- Provide the public with mechanisms for appropriate and meaningful consent, access, and control over their data.
- Demonstrate that data privacy and user control are protected.

While this document is in no way legally binding, it at least affirms that the issue of AI and privacy is receiving serious consideration at the U.S. federal level.

Additional Resources

[Generative AI Guide - Disinfo Fed](#)

PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

This effort was a labor of love by the State Voices Data & Technology Department in collaboration with other State Voices staff with the aim of sharing their collective knowledge of the tech space as it currently exists. The entire department contributed to the 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 versions of State Voices' Non-profit Tech Guide.

82

Contributors and Editors and some of their personal preferences, which are not intended to constitute an endorsement, include:

ALEKS BUCKLEY, Digital Technology Manager

Favorites: Mandalorian Stew, Cottagecore, Calendly, Spoke, DataCamp, MacBook Air

What I'm Reading: [Spin Dictators: The Changing Face of Tyranny in the 21st Century](#) by Sergei Guriev and Daniel Treisman

ANGELA TOMBAZZI, Director of Data & Technology

Favorites: State Voices Dispatch, CTA PAD, OpenField, Freshdesk

What I'm Listening To: pop culture commentary podcasts

BRANDON JESSUP, Deputy Director of Data Analytics and Movement Technology

Favorites: M&M's, Notebooks, Sony Playstation, Scale model RCs and traveling for live events

What I'm Listening To: political commentary

AMY HARPER-SMITH, Senior Data & Technology Training Manager

Favorites: Peppermint Altoids, Trello, Daylio, Adobe Creative Cloud, Giphy

What I'm Listening To: [Barbie Official Playlist](#)

BILL FETTY, Deputy Director of Data & Digital Technology

Favorites: Travel, Data Visualizations, Mentorship, DataCamp, and Food.

What I'm Listening To: [Don't Worry by Frank Turner](#)

JIM NORTHMORE, Text Services Manager

Favorites: State Voices Dispatch, Python, R, CTA PAD, Slack

What I'm Listening To: [Tattoo by Loreen](#), anything [Green Day](#) on shuffle.

ARTURO GONZALES, Deputy Director of Data and Voter Registration

Favorites: Notion, Blocks

What I'm Listening To: [Jazz Classics Playlist](#), with a particular appreciation for “In A Sentimental Mood” by Duke Ellington & John Coltrane + “Dream A Little Dream Of Me” by Ella Fitzgerald & Louis Armstrong

ALEXANDRIA BRATTON, Senior Policy Manager

Favorites: Pilot Fine Point Pens & TUL Notebook

What I'm Reading: [Assistant to the Villain](#) by Hannah Nicole Maehrer & waiting on the sequel!

SILAS MUSICK, Deputy Director of Issue & Electoral Organizing

Favorites: Mobilize, Trello

What I'm Listening To: [Farm Small Farm Smart](#) podcast

IFEOLU CLAYTOR, Deputy Director of Issue and Electoral Organizing

Favorites: Slack, Dispatch/Spoke, Google Calendar

What I'm Listening To: [Pod Save the People Podcast](#)

ELIZABETH GROSSMAN, Deputy Director of Policy

Favorites: Slack, Spotify, [Bit.ly](#), water bottle

What I'm Listening To: [Javelin](#) by Sufjan Stevens

MARISSA LIEBLING, Director of Policy

Favorites: Slack, good ol' notebooks & pens, coffee

What I'm Listening To: [Come Back to Care](#) podcast, random Spotify indie mixes

PATRICIA PINCHINAT, Chief Talent Officer

Favorites: Travelling, reading, and learning how to create short-form content (TikTok)

What I'm Reading: [Black Cake](#) by Charmaine Wilkerson. A debut novel of how the inheritance of betrayals, secrets, memories, and even names can shape relationships and history.

ALEC SASLOW, Deputy Director of Communications

Favorites: AirPods, Slack, Bosu ball for standing desk

What I'm Listening To: [Hard Fork](#) podcast on politics and technology; [Deep Focus Playlist](#)



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