

Introduction to Tor & Onion Services



Before we begin...

- Do you use Tor?
 - If not, why?
 - If yes, do you have questions or concerns?
- What do you know about Onion Services?

Table of contents

1. Introduction to Tor
2. Tor ecosystem of tools
3. Introduction to Onion Services
4. “Deep/Dark” Web?
5. Hands-on activities
6. Latest developments

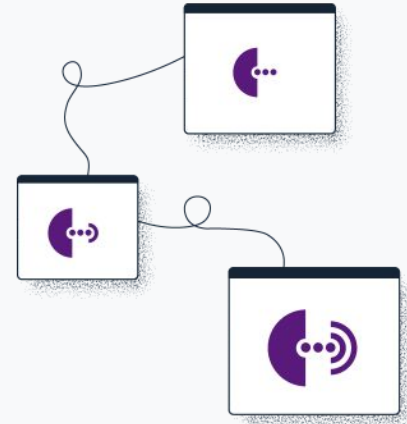
Introduction to Tor

What is Tor?

- It's Tor (not capitalized).
- The goal is to have a way to use the internet with as much privacy as possible:
 - a. by routing traffic through multiple servers; and
 - b. by encrypting it each step of the way.
- Hence the term “onion routing”.
- Tor provides anonymity, mitigating against surveillance and censorship.

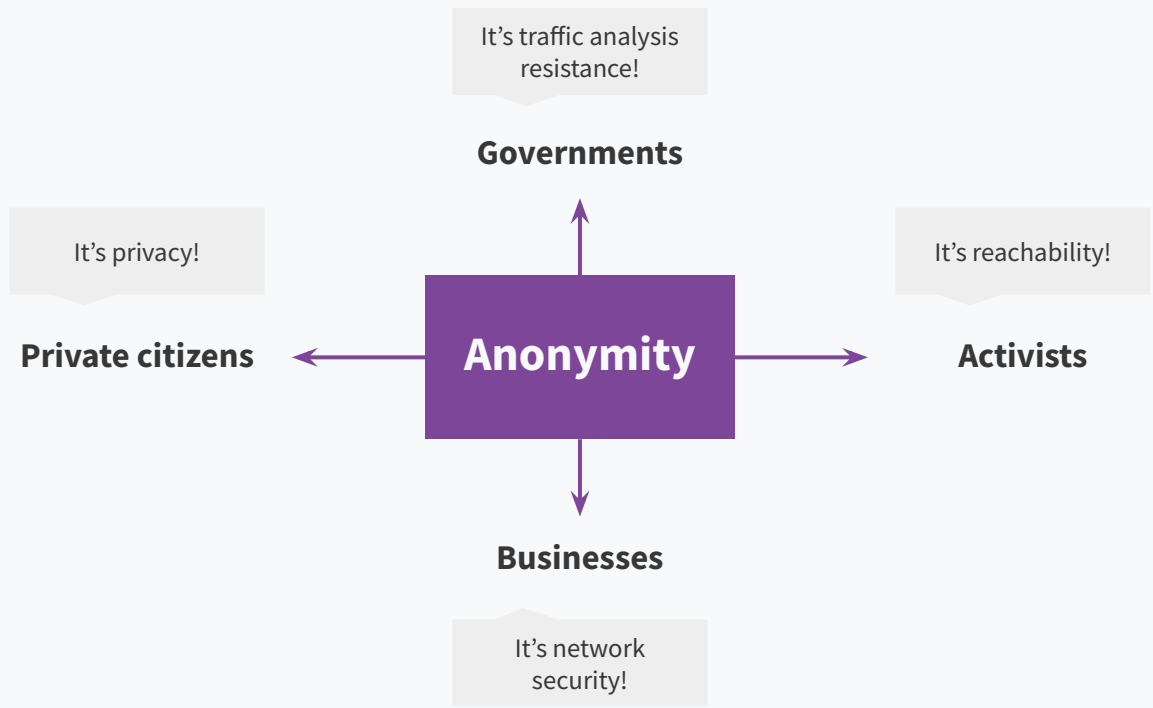
Different ways of defining Tor

- Tor ⇒ free software created at NRL starting 2001/2.
- Tor ⇒ an open network of ~9,500 nodes – anyone can join!
- Tor ⇒ a browser that connects you to the Tor network.
- Tor ⇒ a US non-profit formed in 2006.
- Tor ⇒ a community of volunteers, researchers, developers, trainers, advocates from all over the world.



“We kill people based
on metadata”





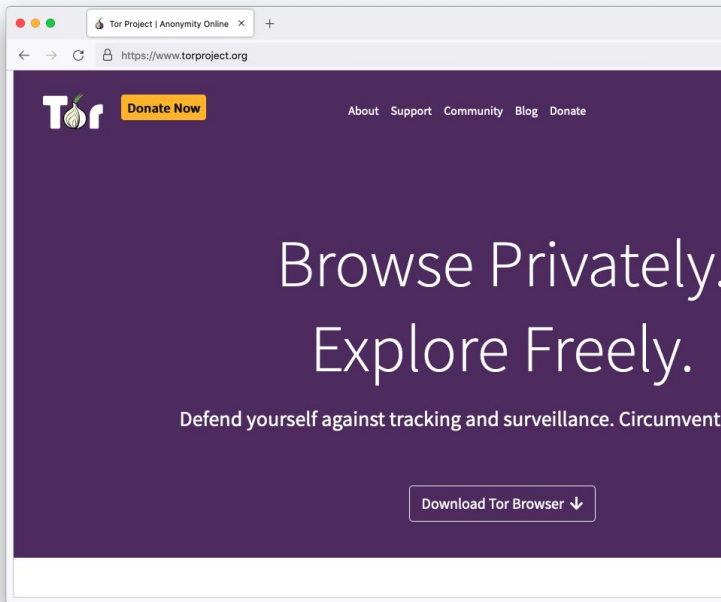
Two sides of the same coin

- Censorship and surveillance go hand-in-hand.
- In order to **block** access to an online service, censors need to **spot** when users want to access said service.
- Anonymity grants protection from surveillance and censorship.



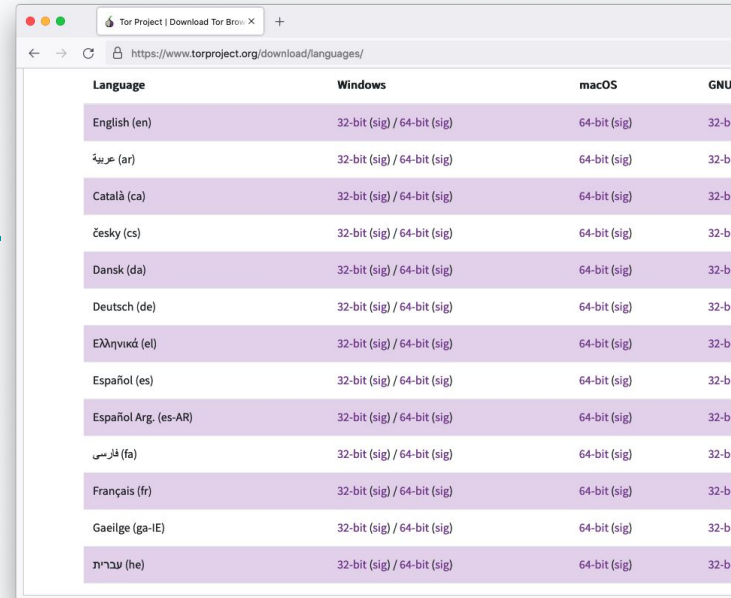
What is Tor Browser?

- Just like any other browser (Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Yandex) except it does not expose traffic.
- Traffic is encrypted and bounces through three random volunteer-run nodes called **relays**.
- When using Tor Browser, we don't know who you are or what you're visiting.



Multilingual Browser

- Tor Browser is available in **many languages**:
<https://www.torproject.org/download/languages/>
- Tor Browser manual is a user-friendly guide for novice users and is also multilingual:
<https://tb-manual.torproject.org/>



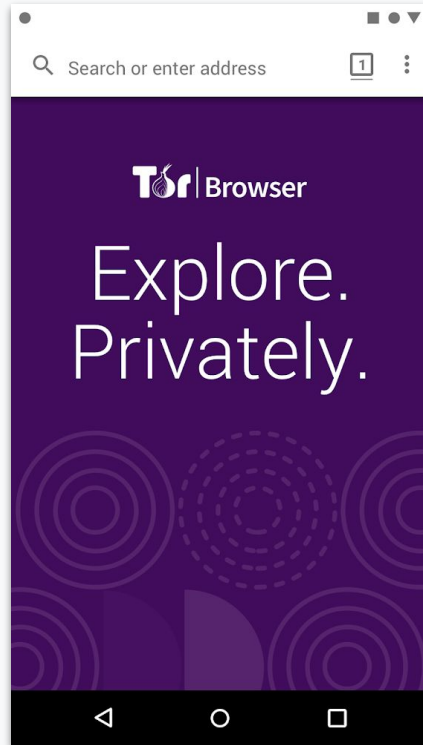
The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Tor Project's download page for various languages. The table lists the following languages and their corresponding system architectures:

Language	Windows	macOS	GNU
English (en)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
عربية (ar)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
Català (ca)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
česky (cs)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
Dansk (da)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
Deutsch (de)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
Ελληνικά (el)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
Español (es)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
Español Arg. (es-AR)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
فارسی (fa)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
Français (fr)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
Gaeilge (ga-IE)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b
עברית (he)	32-bit (sig) / 64-bit (sig)	64-bit (sig)	32-b

Tor Browser on Android

Developed by the Tor Project

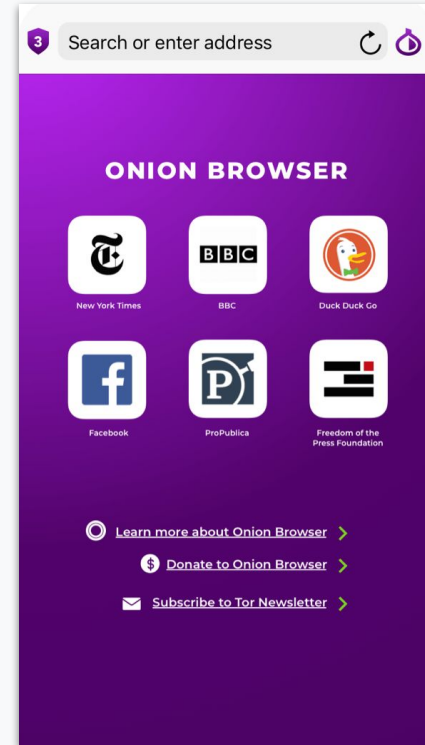
<https://www.torproject.org/download/>



Onion Browser on iOS

Developed by the Guardian Project

<https://onionbrowser.com/>



Connecting through HTTP

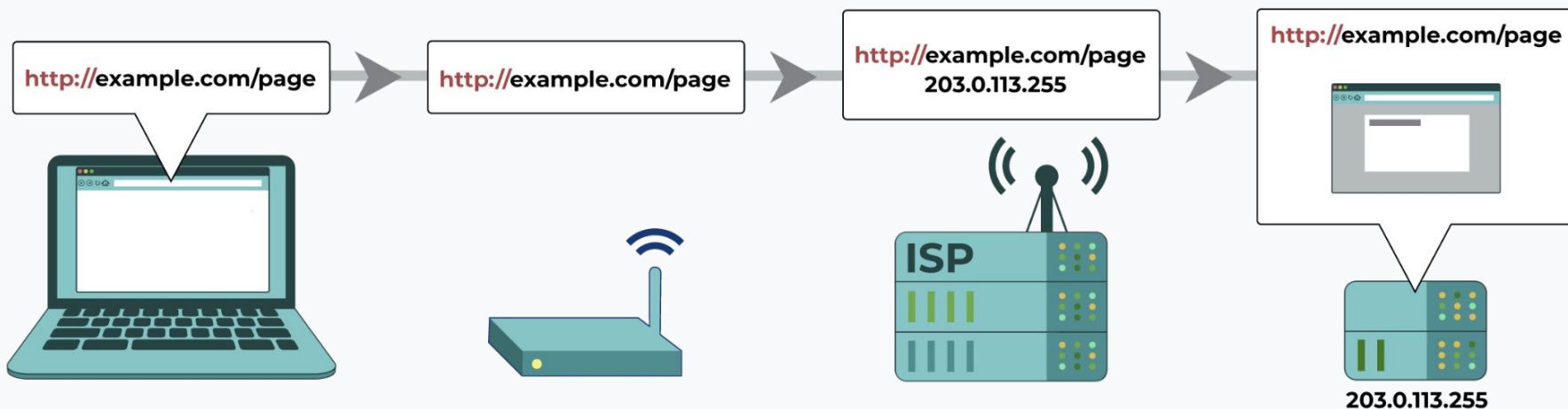


Image source: eff.org

Connecting through HTTPS

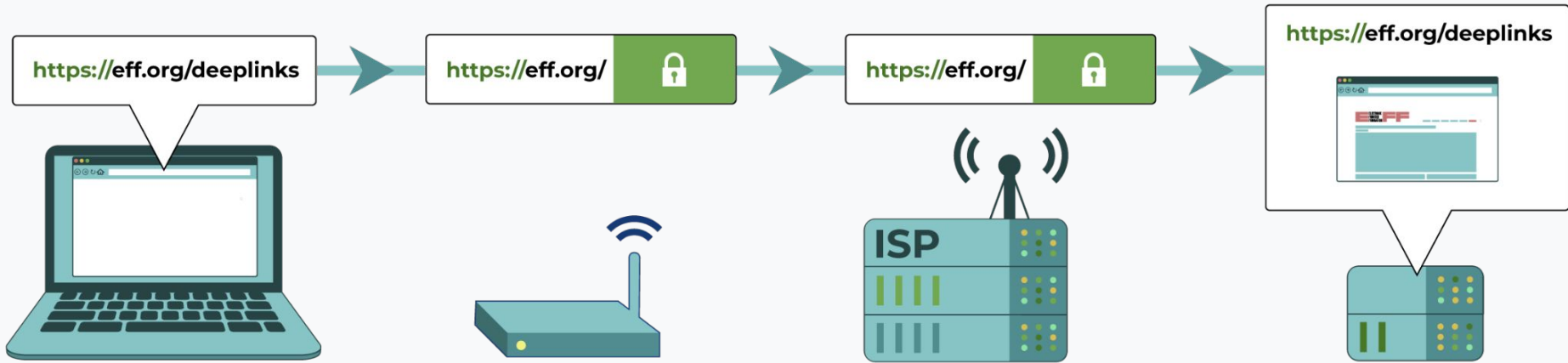


Image source: eff.org

Connecting through VPN

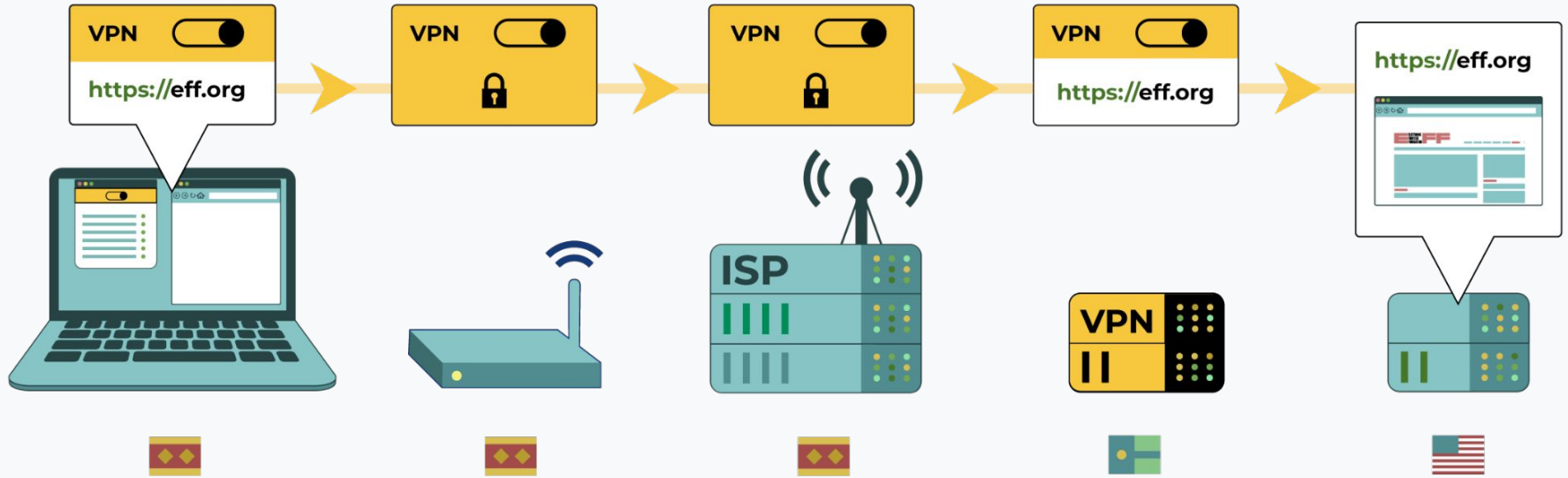


Image source: eff.org

Connecting through Tor

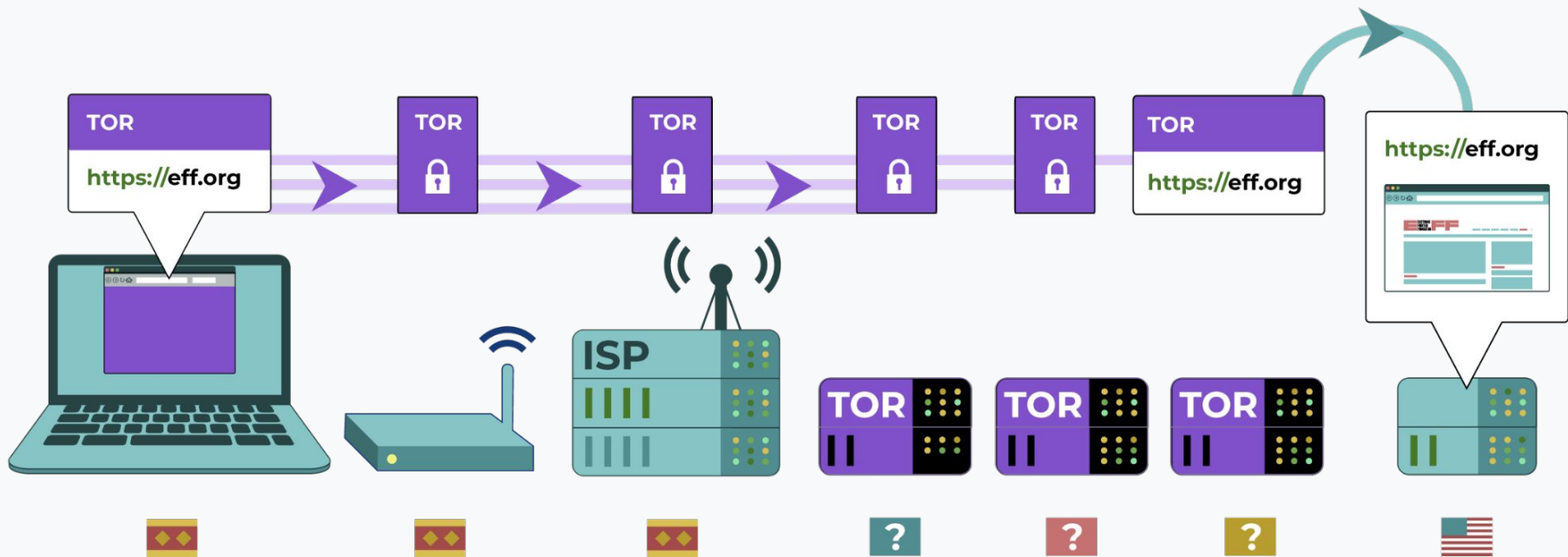
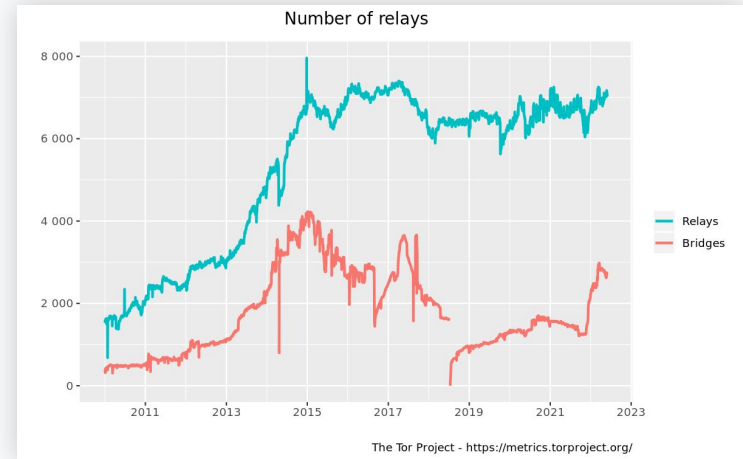


Image source: eff.org

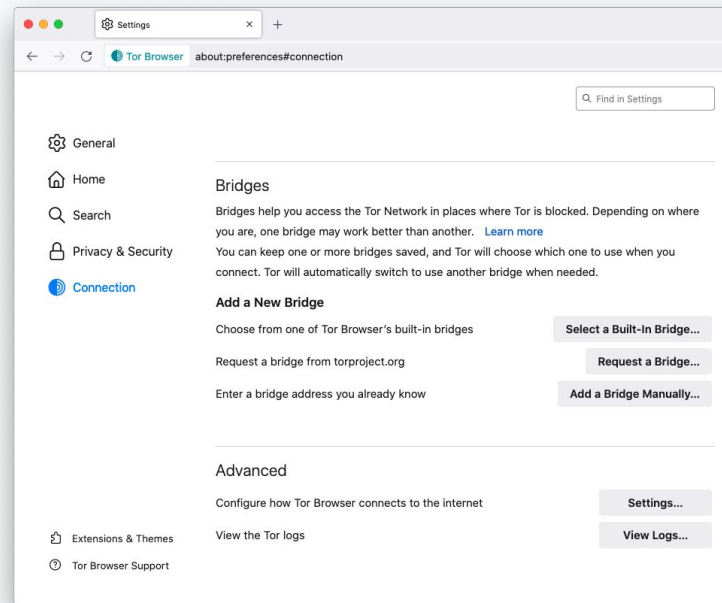
A growing network of relays

- Tor relays and bridges are run by volunteers from around the world, including individuals, NGOs, and companies.
- They form the backbone of the Tor network.
- Today we count: 7000+ relays and 2660+ bridges.



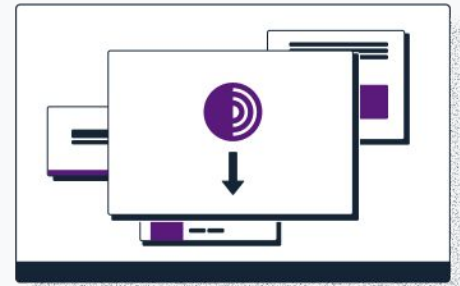
Bypassing censorship of the Tor network

- Direct access to Tor may be blocked by some Internet Service Providers and governments.
- Tor Browser includes circumvention tools for getting around these blocks called **bridges**.
- Bridges are **relays that are private** and harder to block: <https://bridges.torproject.org/>



Bypassing censorship of torproject.org

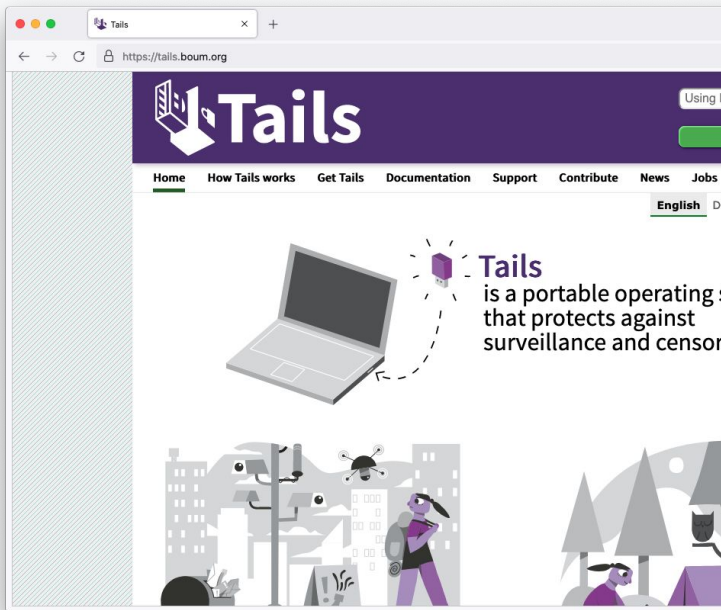
- Tor Project website could be blocked on your network.
- Multiple circumvention methods:
 - Mirror websites to download Tor Browser;
 - Emailing GetTor to receive browser bundle via email
- gettor@torproject.org.



Applications that run on the Tor network

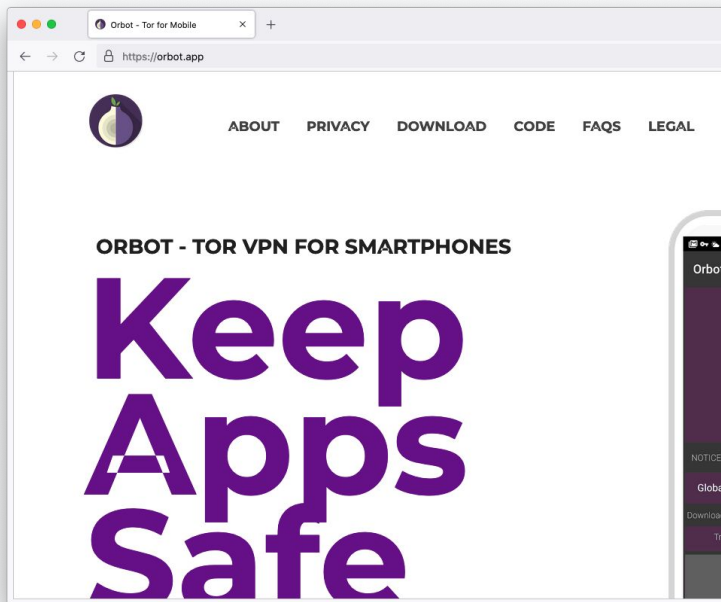
Operating system

- Tails is an operating system (like Windows and macOS) that can be run straight from a USB.
- Tails ⇒ The Amnestic Incognito Live System.
- Tails isolates all of your connection of all applications through Tor and comes with a set of secure applications.
- An independent project: <https://tails.boum.org/>



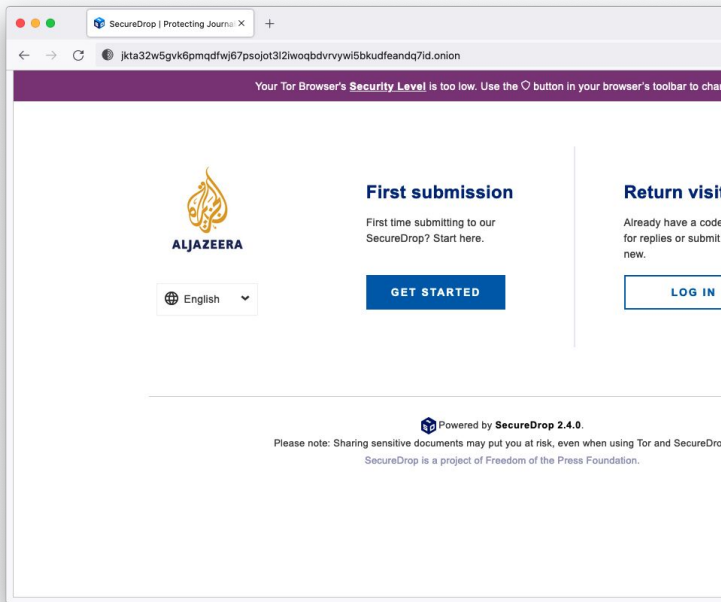
System-wide VPN

- Orbot routes mobile apps' traffic through Tor, you can select specifically which apps to run through Tor.
- Orbot is available on iOS and Android.
- Developed and maintained by the Guardian Project: <https://orbot.app/>



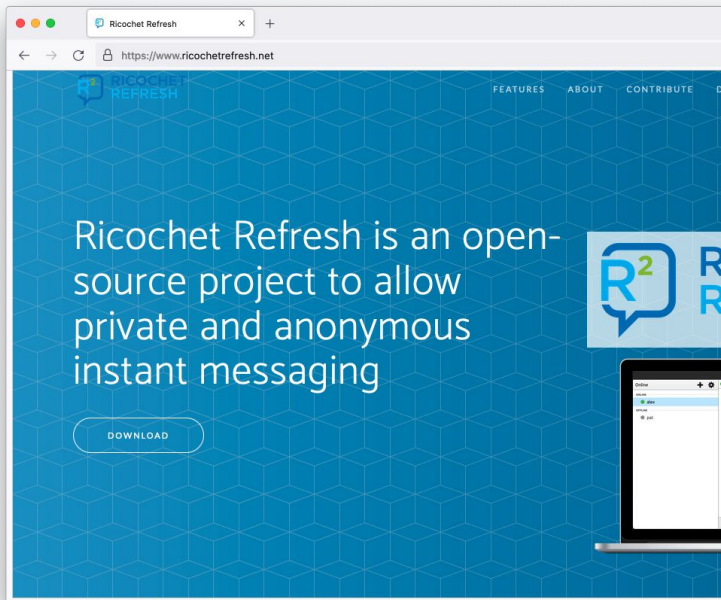
Secure whistleblowing

- [SecureDrop](#) and [GlobaLeaks](#) are tools for whistleblowers to communicate securely with journalists.
- Newsrooms around the world have set up their own whistleblowing platforms to receive leaks securely.



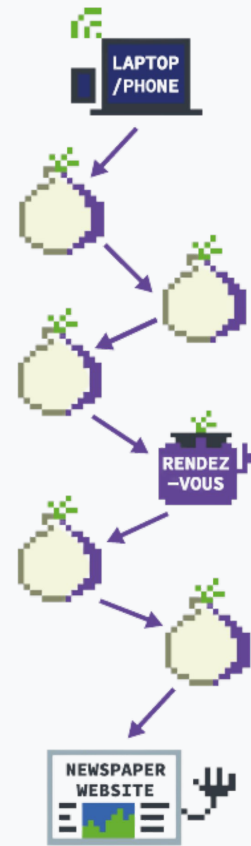
Anonymous peer-to-peer messaging

- Ricochet Refresh is an instant messenger that routes all messages through Tor.
- Nobody knows who you're talking to, or what you're talking about.
- Supported by Blueprint for Free Speech:
<https://www.blueprintforfreespeech.net/>



Introduction to Onion Services (.onion)

- Onion Services are online services that are only available through the Tor network.
- An Onion Service connects to a rendez-vous node/relay inside the Tor network; and the user wanting to connect to it does the same.
- As a user, you never leave the Tor network when visiting an Onion Service.
- Onion Services provide end-to-end encryption: both visitor and website use Tor (without HTTPS).



Visiting the Intercept's site on Tor Browser vs. visiting the Intercept's onion service

Site information for theintercept.com

Connection secure

Tor Circuit

- This browser
- Canada 198.50.238.128 **Guard**
- United Kingdom 54.36.166.86
- Canada 209.209.9.109, 2602:ffd5:1:222::1
- theintercept.com

Your **Guard** node may not change. [Learn more](#)

New Circuit for this Site

Site information for 27m3p2uv7igmj6kvd4ql3cct5h3sdwrsajovkkndeufumzyfhlfev4qd.onion

Connection secure

Tor Circuit

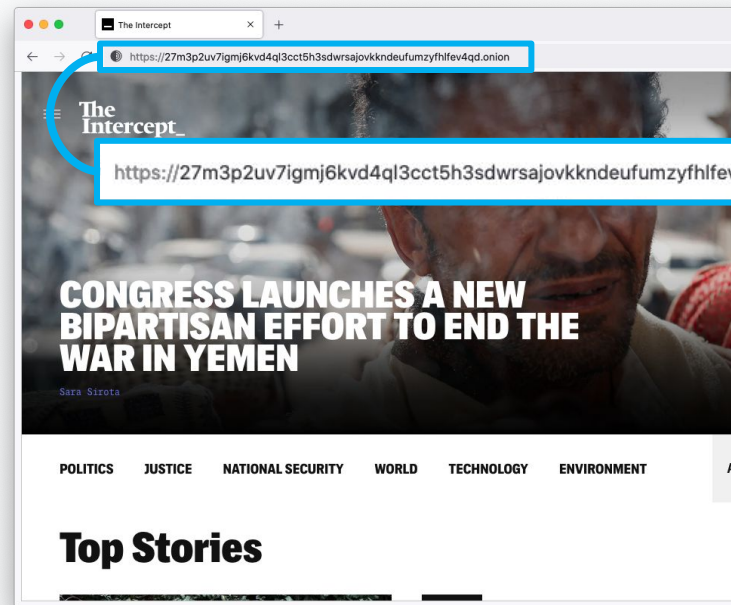
- This browser
- Canada 198.50.238.128 **Guard**
- Germany 89.58.4.238, 2a03:4000:5e:d48:946a:a4ff:fe2a:5f03
- Netherlands 5.255.97.133
- Relay
- Relay
- Relay
- 27m3p2u...fev4qd.onion

Your **Guard** node may not change. [Learn more](#)

New Circuit for this Site

.onion addresses

- Just like any other website, you need to know the address of an onion service in order to reach it.
- The .onion address is automatically generated, so there is no need to purchase a domain.
- An onion address is a string of 56 random letters and numbers followed by ".onion".



Censorship resistance

- Both location and IP address of an Onion Service are hidden, making it difficult to censor or identify who runs the service.
- This is why they used to be called “hidden services”.
- It's the **most censorship-resistant technology** available out there.

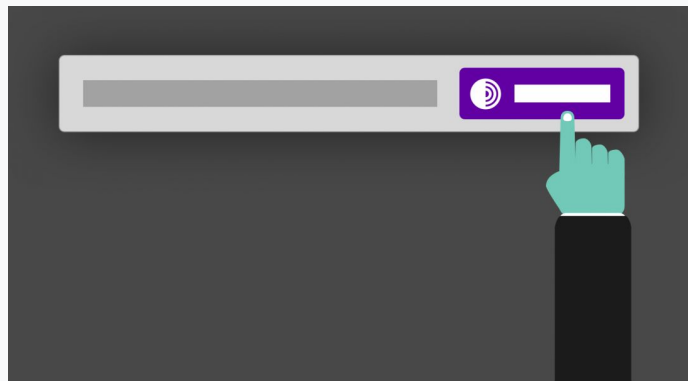


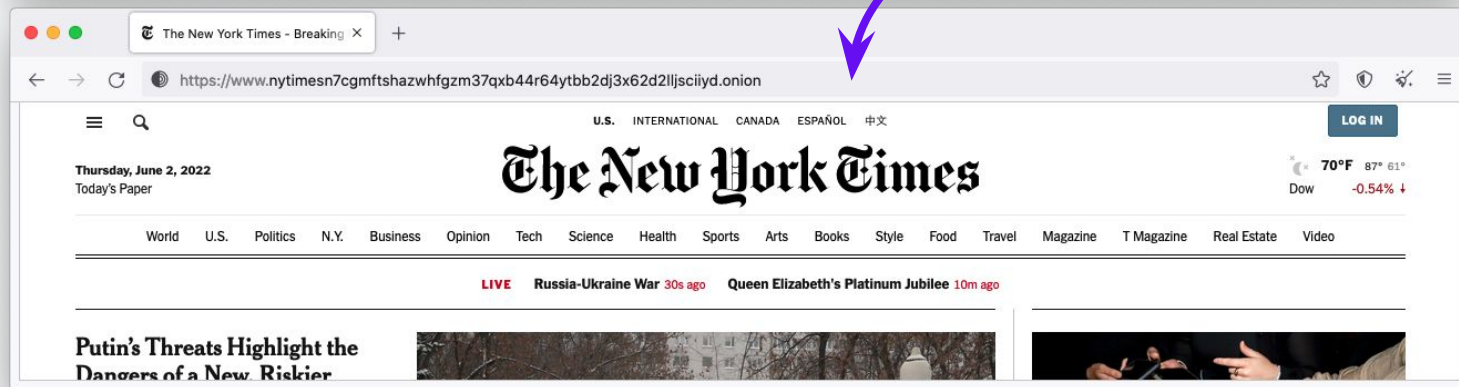
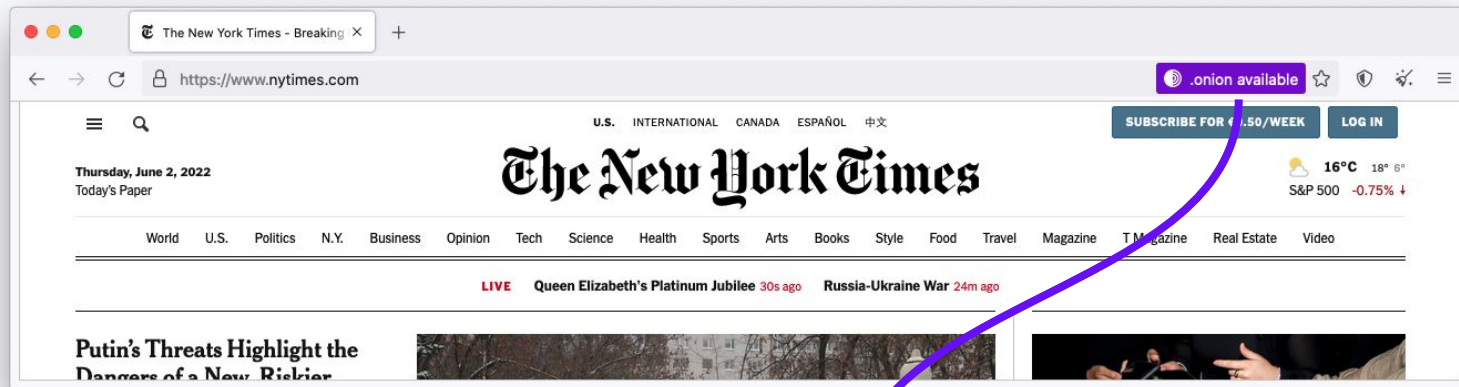
Decentralizing the web

- To deploy an Onion Service, you don't need a static or dedicated IP address nor need to purchase a domain and submit it for approval.
- For smaller websites like blogs, there's no need for expensive hardware.
- Deployment is easy: you don't need to forward ports or configure your modem.

Onion-Location

- **Onion-Location** is an HTTP header that websites can use to advertise their onion counterpart.
- If the website that you're visiting has an onion service, a purple suggestion pill will prompt at the URL bar saying ".onion available".
- When you click it, the website will be reloaded and redirected to its onion counterpart.





Popular Onion Services

The Intercept_

BBC

PROPUBICA

The New York Times

RiSEUP

facebook



brave

FREEDOM OF THE PRESS FOUNDATION

Privacy Matters.

FRONT LINE DEFENDERS

debian

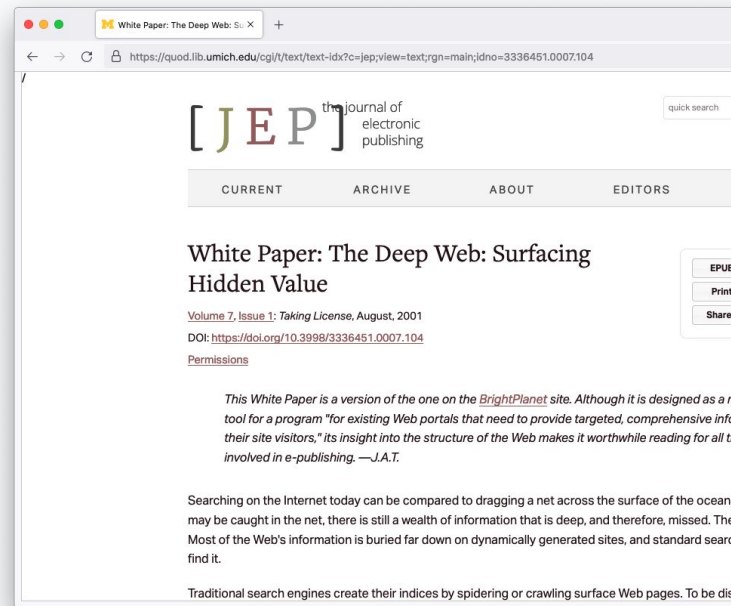
The many benefits of Onion Services

1. Enables freedom of press and censorship circumvention
2. Level up service privacy
3. Decentralization of the web
4. Network sustainability
5. Protection of sources, whistleblowers, and journalists
6. Opportunity to educate users about privacy by design
7. Metadata obfuscation and/or elimination

“Deep” / “Dark” Web?

What's actually the “deep” web?

- Refers to content on the World Wide Web that is not indexed by search engines, often hidden behind passwords, etc.
- American computer scientist Michael K. Bergman is linked to coining the expression, “the deep web”.




Important to note about the “dark web”

- The “dark web” is an illusion.
- The term used often to speak negatively about encryption, in the context of encouraging encryption backdoors.

deep dark web at DuckDuckGo × +

← → ↻ https://duckduckgo.com/?q=deep+dark+web&t=h_&iax=images&ia=images ☆ 🛡️ 🗹 ☰

 deep dark web 🔍

🔍 All [Images](#) 📺 Videos 📰 News 📍 Maps ⚙️ Settings

🔍 Finland ▾ Safe search: moderate ▾ Any time ▾ All sizes ▾ All colors ▾ All types ▾ All layouts ▾ All Licenses ▾

1600 × 1070

How to Access the Dark Web/Deep W...
thedarkweblinks.com

1200 × 795

The Dark Web & What You Need To Kn...
medium.com

1060 × 1151

My Journey to the D...
medium.com

1024 × 872

Welcome To The Beauty And...
thetreatreport.com

900 × 506

What Is The Difference Between Deep Web, Da...
fosbytes.com

1021 × 1000

Deep Dark Web Of The...
scottschober.com

1024 × 928

What is deep web, dark w...
medium.com

1080 × 2367

Qué son la darknet, la dark ...
qore.com

1080 × 2367

Deep Web / Dark ...
behance.net

1024 × 683

What Is The Surface Web,Deep Web &...
techdhee.in

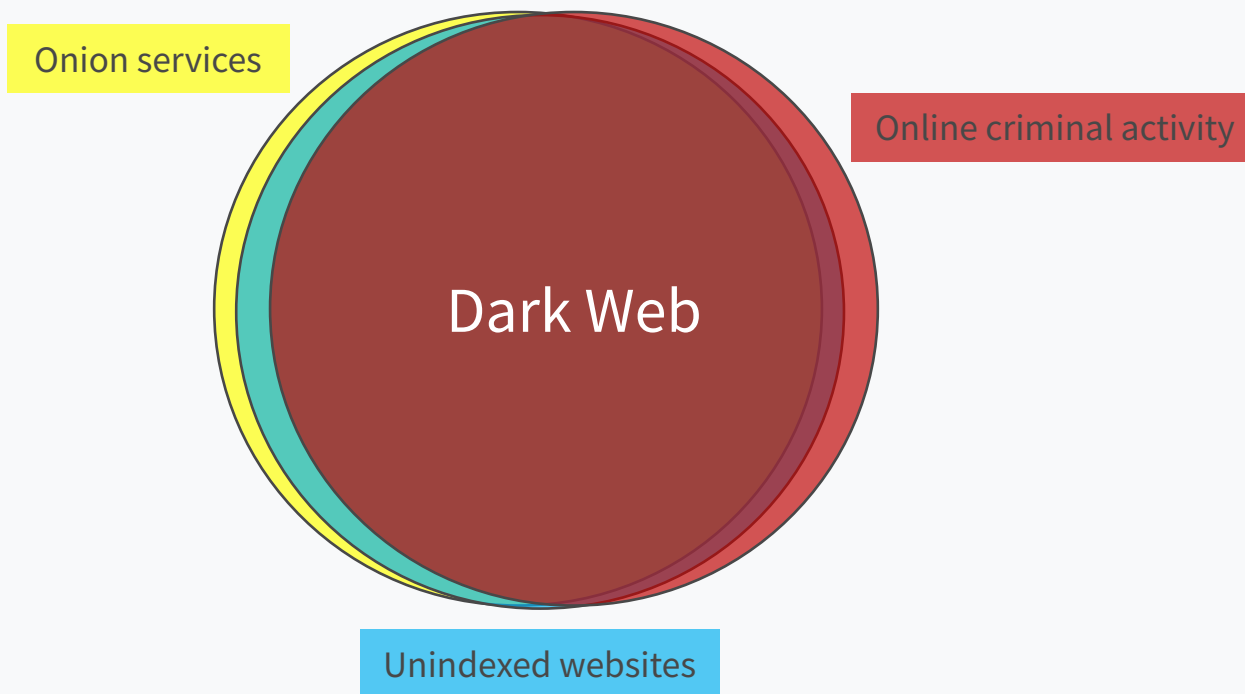
1171 × 830

How You Use The Share Feedback
deepwebintel.blogspot.com

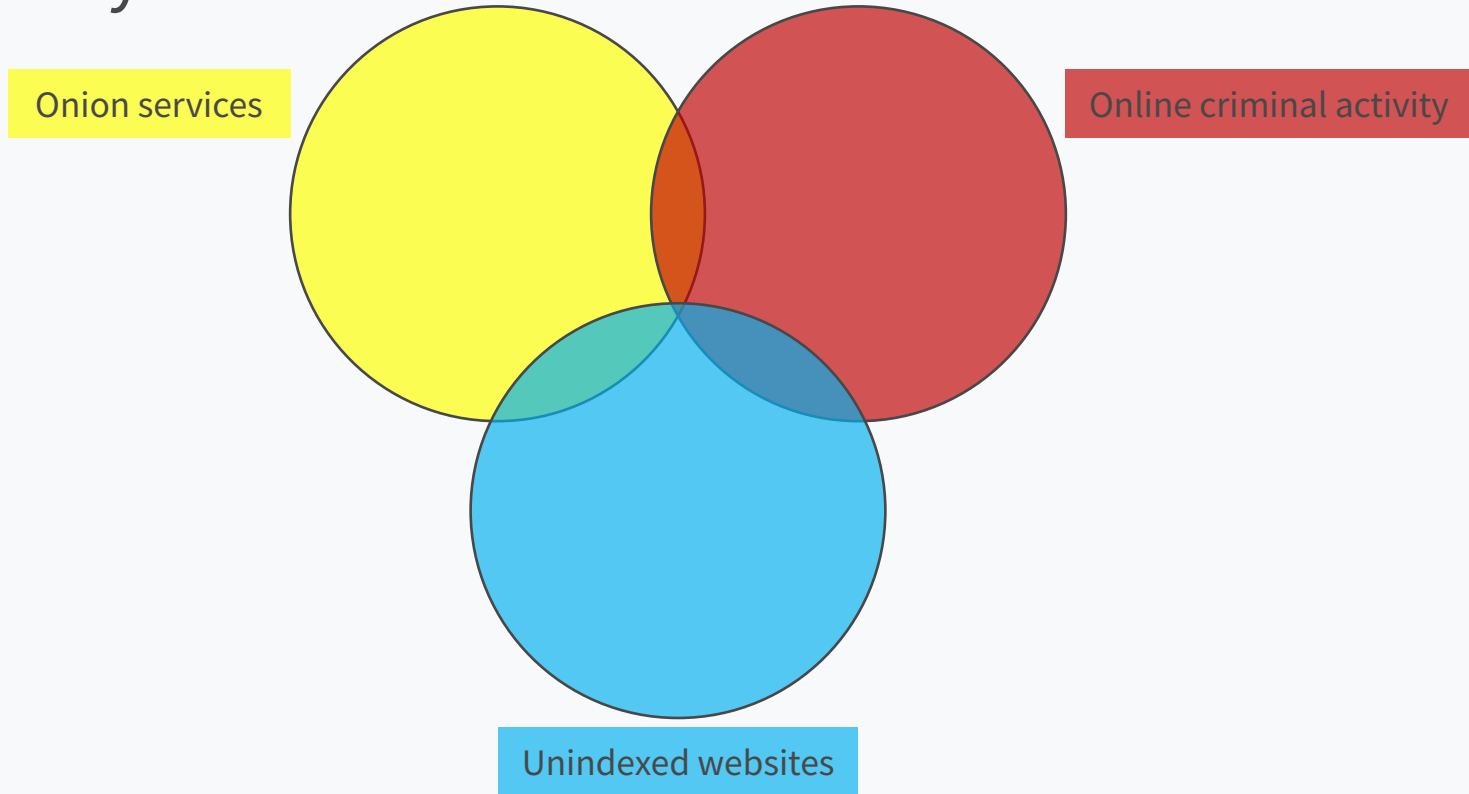
Iceberg analogies

- The web is usually represented as an elongated iceberg with ~90% of its body deep below water.
- This iceberg's orientation is unstable and won't be found in nature floating like this, it would only float on its side...
- More importantly, it's a false analogy of the web that doesn't serve any purpose other than spread misconceptions.

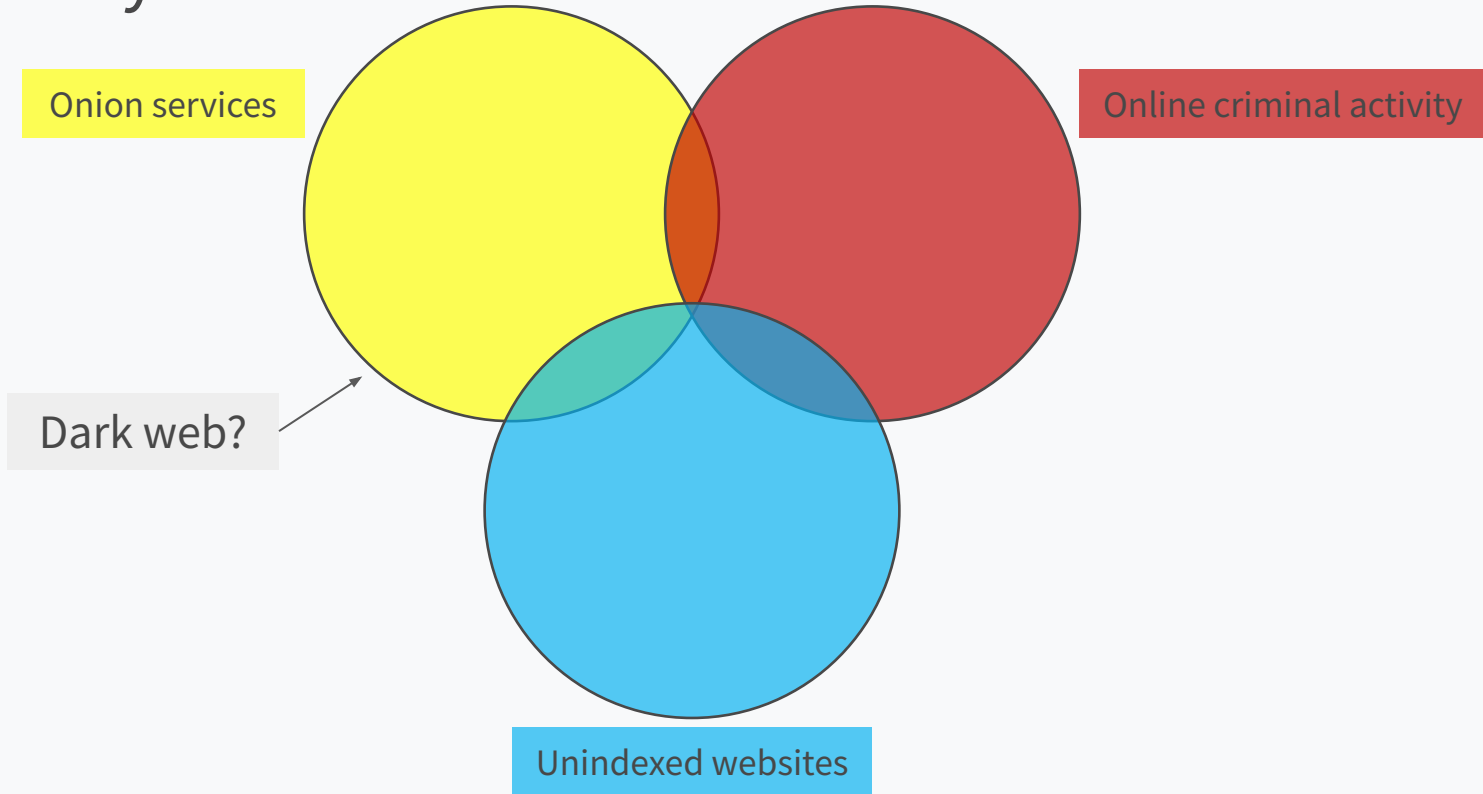
How the “Dark Web” is usually represented



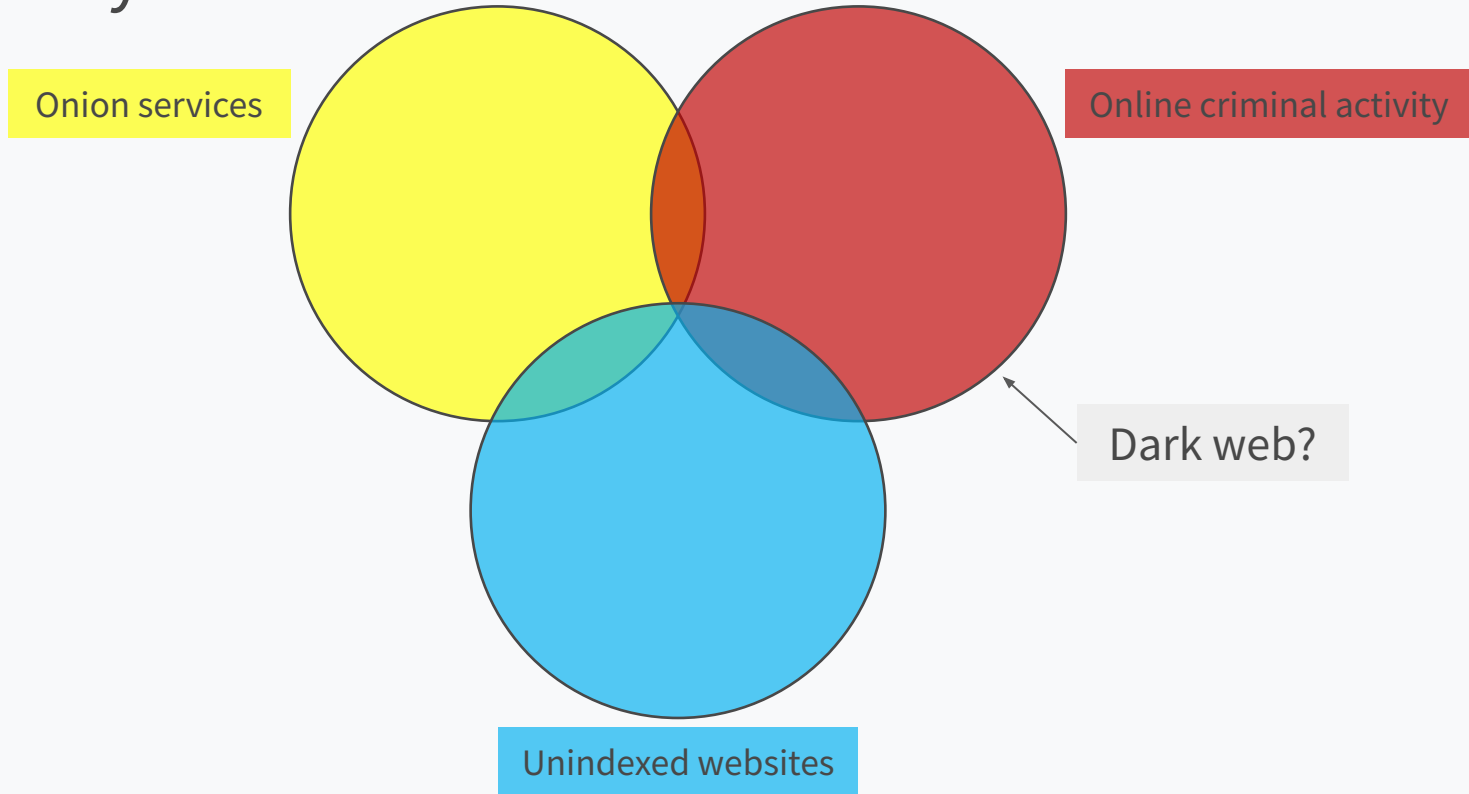
The reality



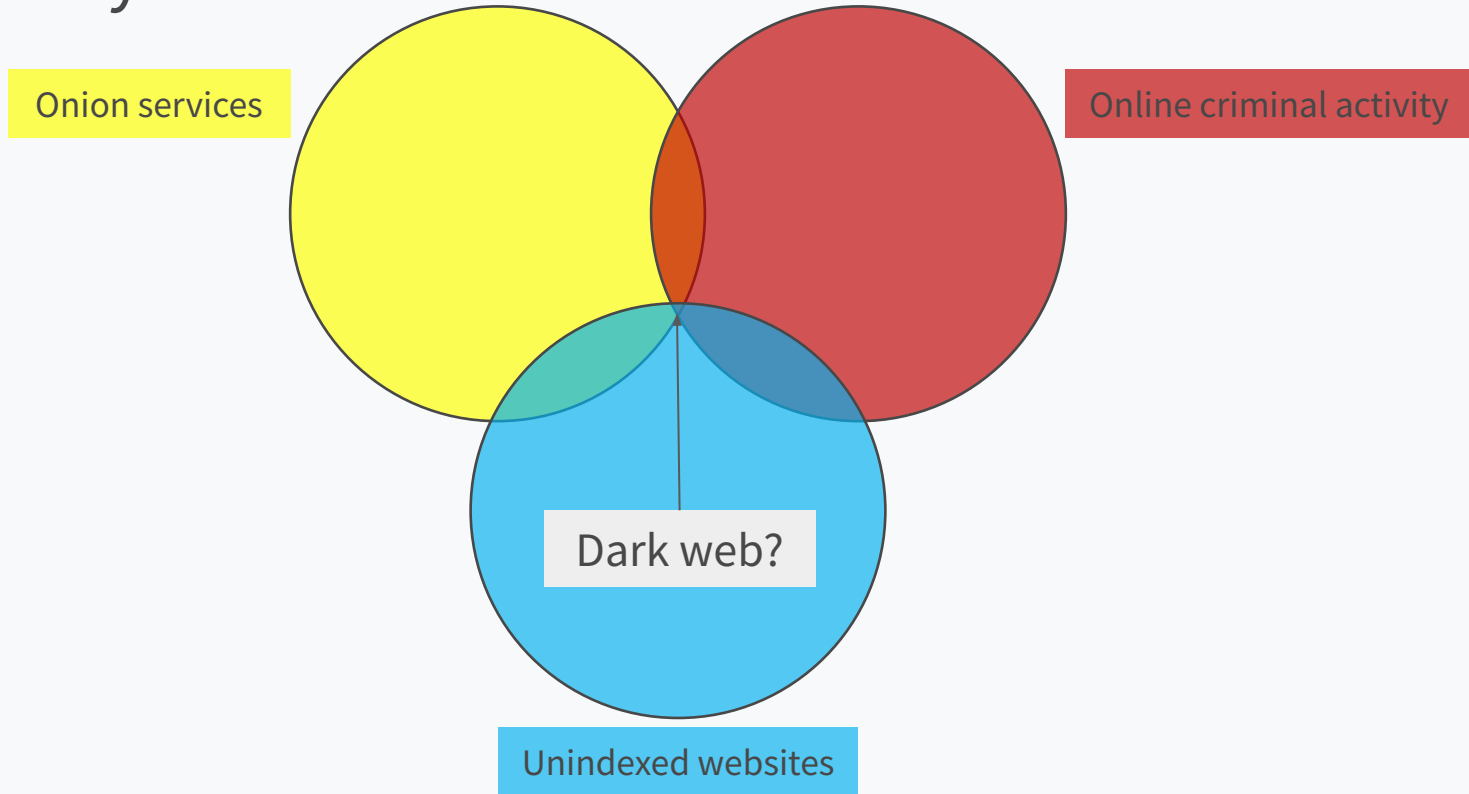
The reality



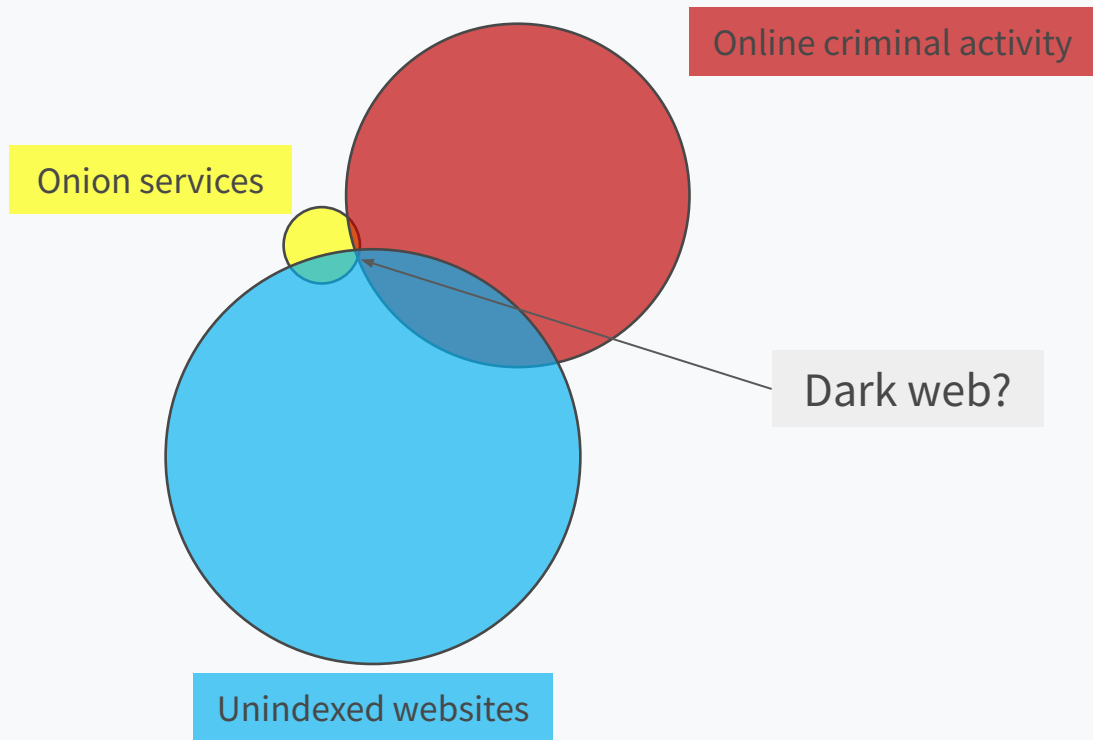
The reality



The reality



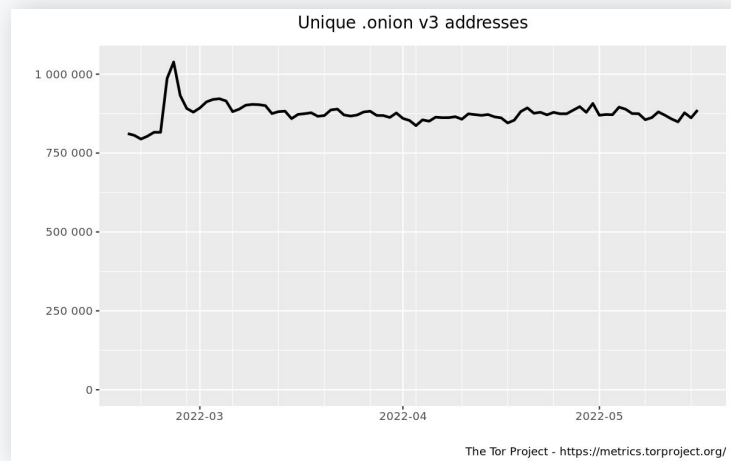
It's important to look at scale



Metrics on Onion Services

- Approximately ~886k Onion Services (v3).
- Relay bandwidth: ~750 Gbit/s.
- Onion Services traffic: ~9 Gbit/s.
- Onion services represent ~1.2% of Tor's traffic.
- Tor metrics portal:

<https://metrics.torproject.org/>



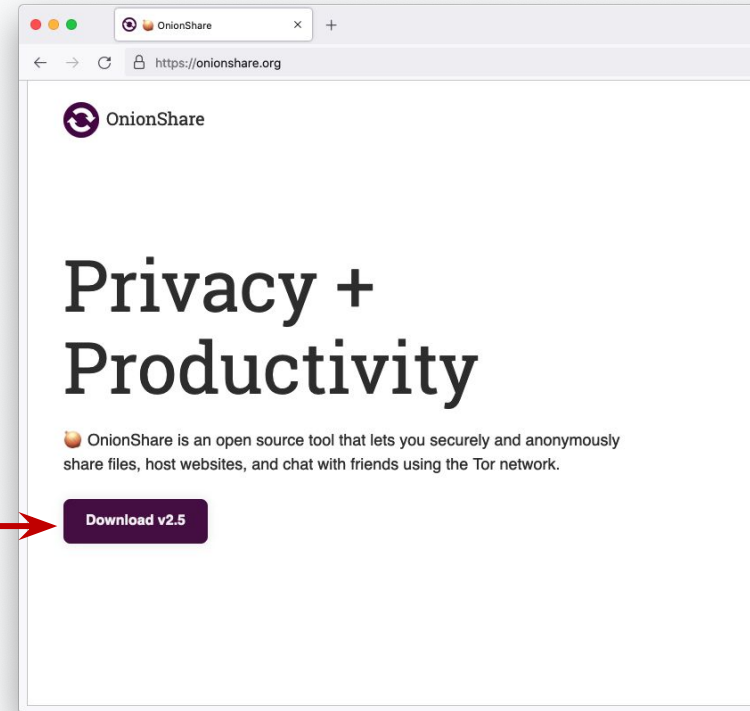
Activity 1: deploying an Onion Service

OnionShare

- OnionShare is an open source tool that allows secure and anonymous file sharing, website hosting, and chatting.
- All communication happens on the Tor network.
- Link: <https://onionshare.org/>

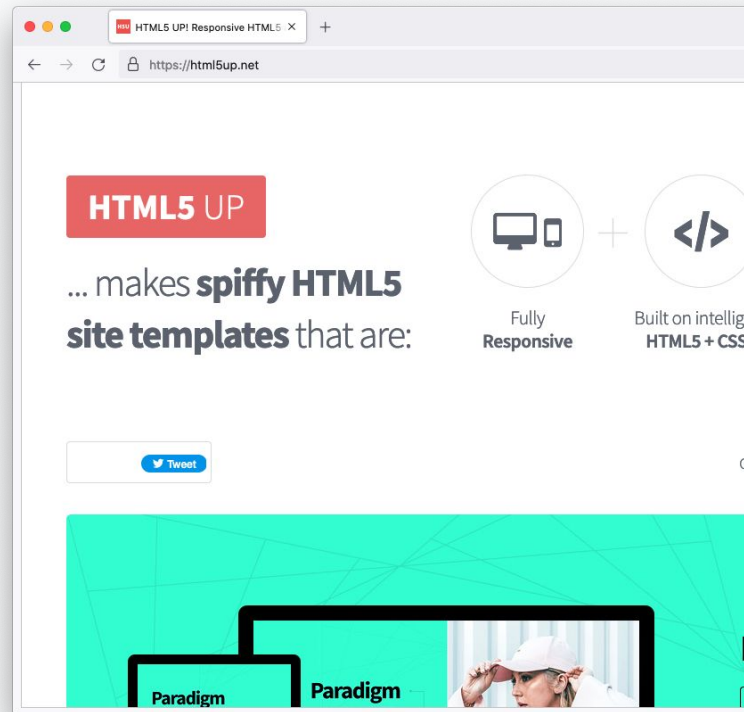
Step 1: Download OnionShare

- Available on: Windows, macOS, Linux.
- Link: <https://onionshare.org/>



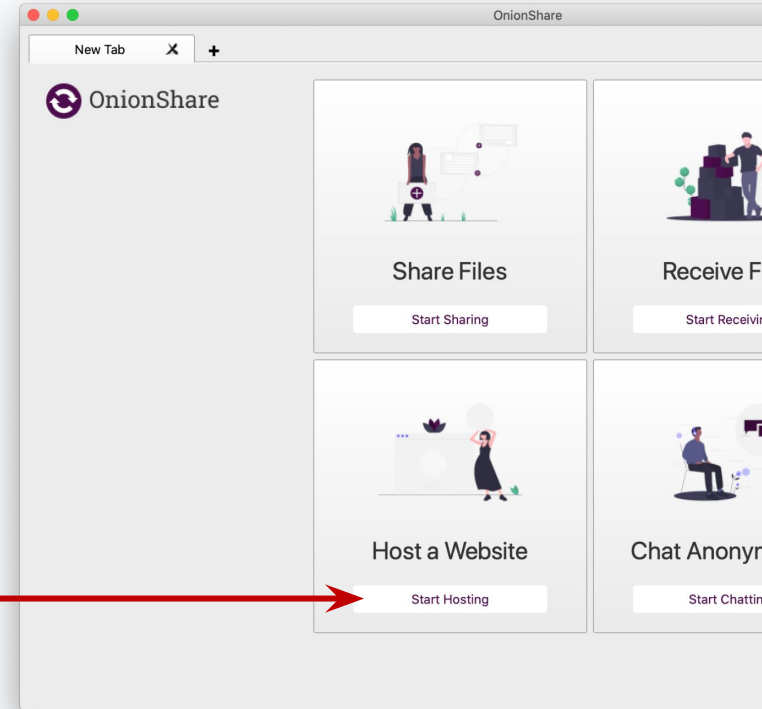
Step 2: Download a website template

- Choose any website template you can download and edit quickly.
- Suggested: any template from <https://html5up.net/>



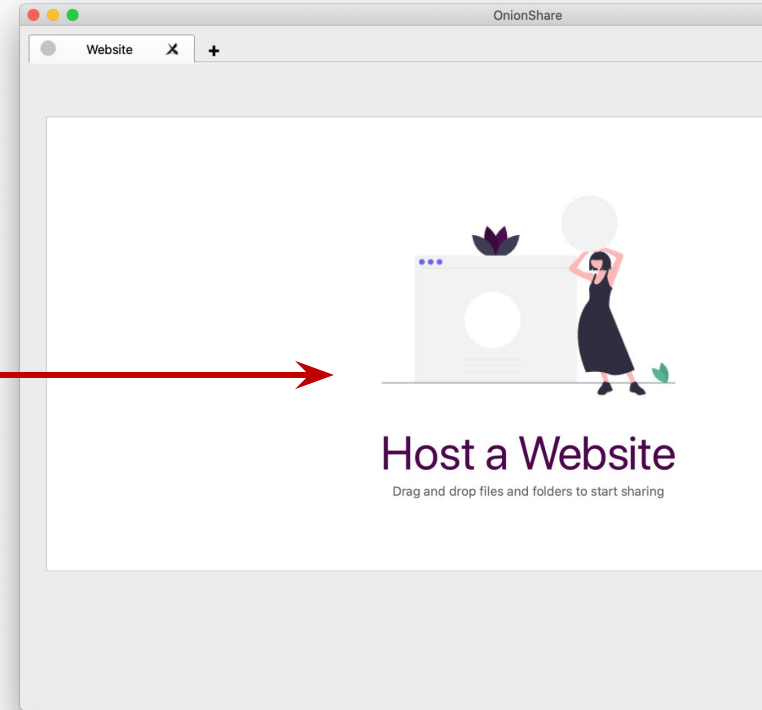
Step 3: Select “Host a Website”

- In the “Host a Website” section, click “Start Hosting”



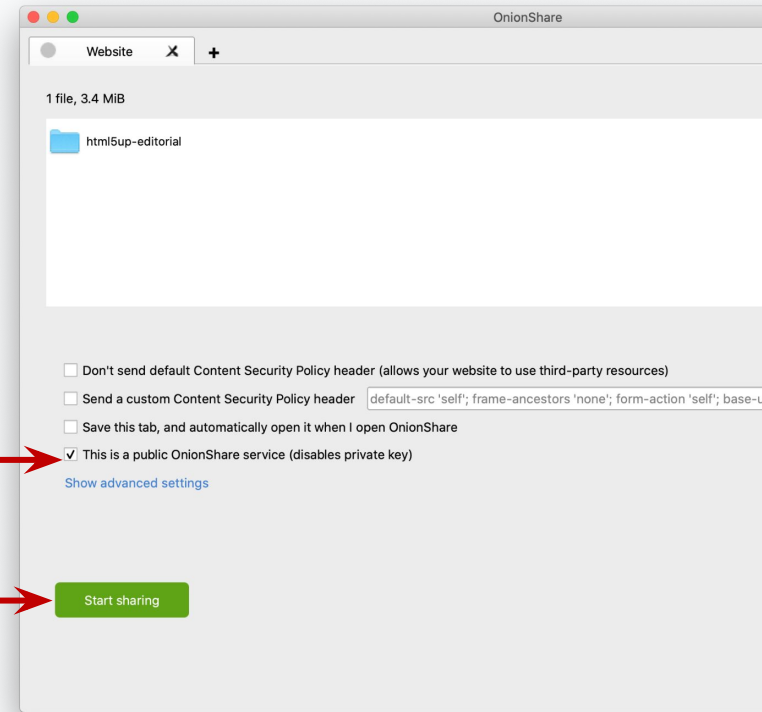
Step 4: Upload website template

- Drag and drop the website template folder into the section.



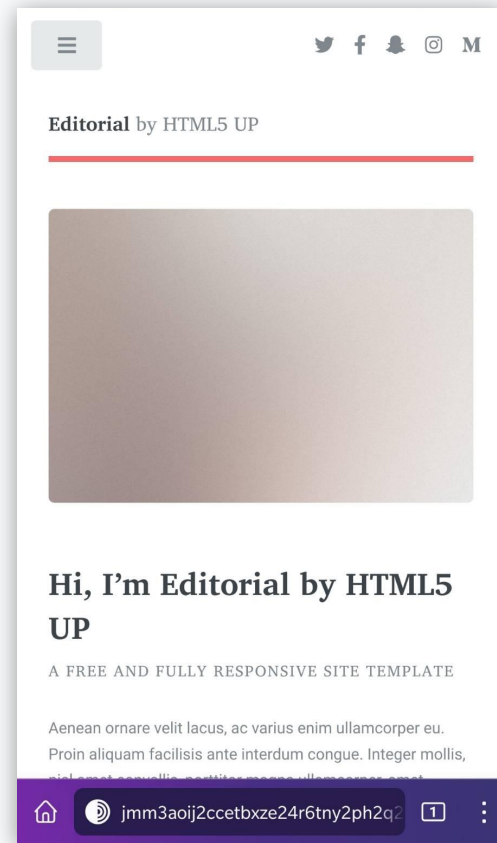
Step 5: Launch your Onion Service

- Select “This is a public OnionShare service”
- Click on “Start sharing”



Step 6: Share your .onion address!

- Your Onion Service is now live.
- Tip: you must keep your OnionShare window on your device open as long as you want people to be able to visit your site.



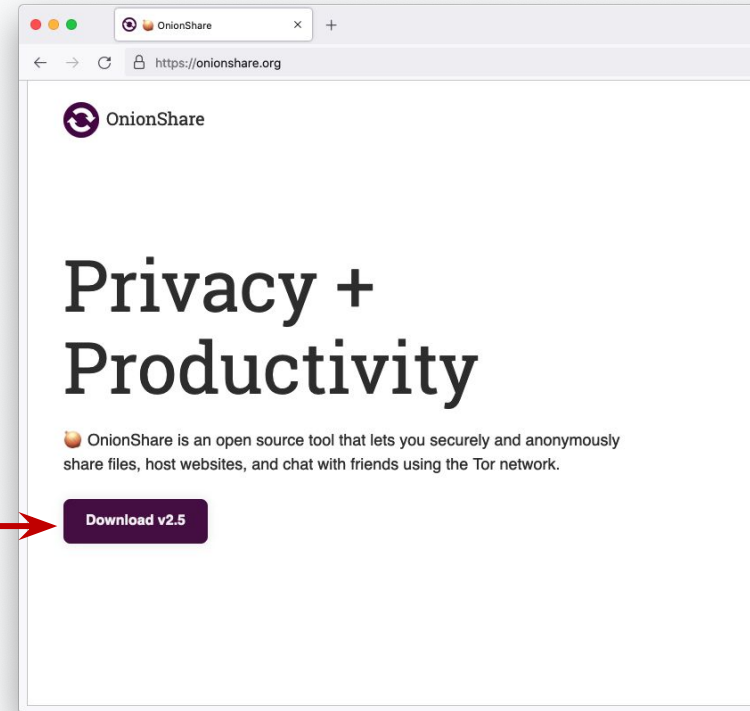
Activity 2: sharing files securely

OnionShare

- OnionShare is an open source tool that allows secure and anonymous file sharing, website hosting, and chatting.
- All communication happens on the Tor network.
- Link: <https://onionshare.org/>

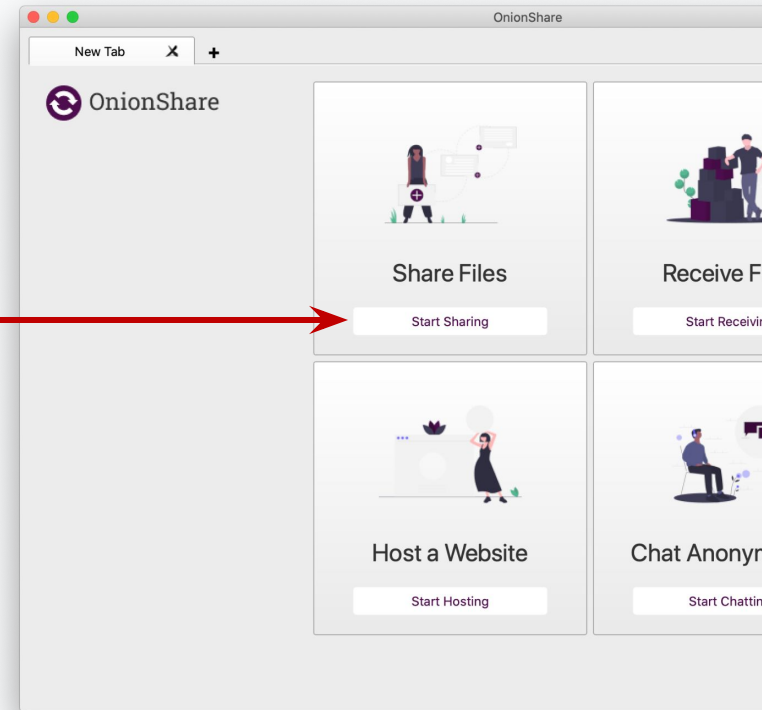
Step 1: Download OnionShare

- Available on: Windows, macOS, Linux.
- Link: <https://onionshare.org/>



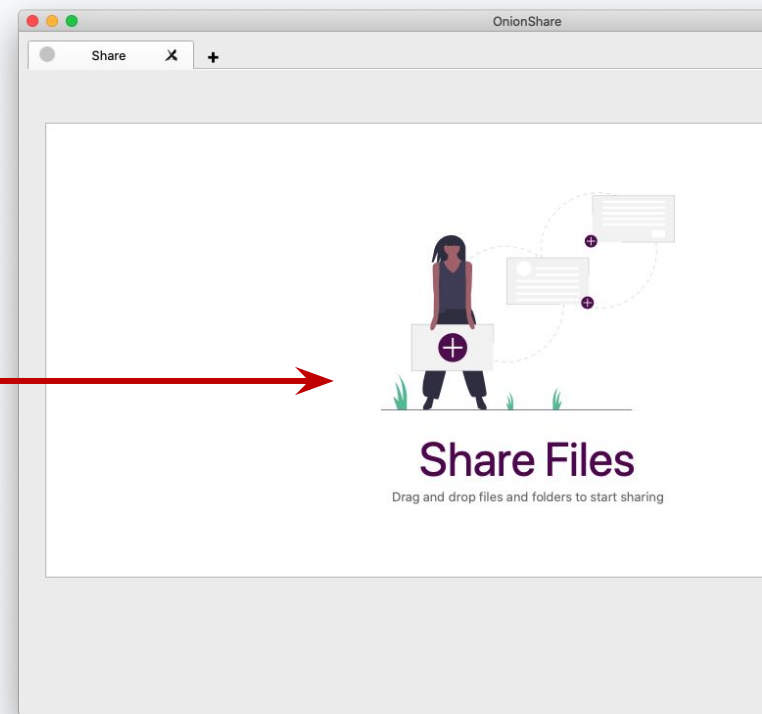
Step 2: Select “Share Files”

- In the “Share Files” section, click “Start Sharing”



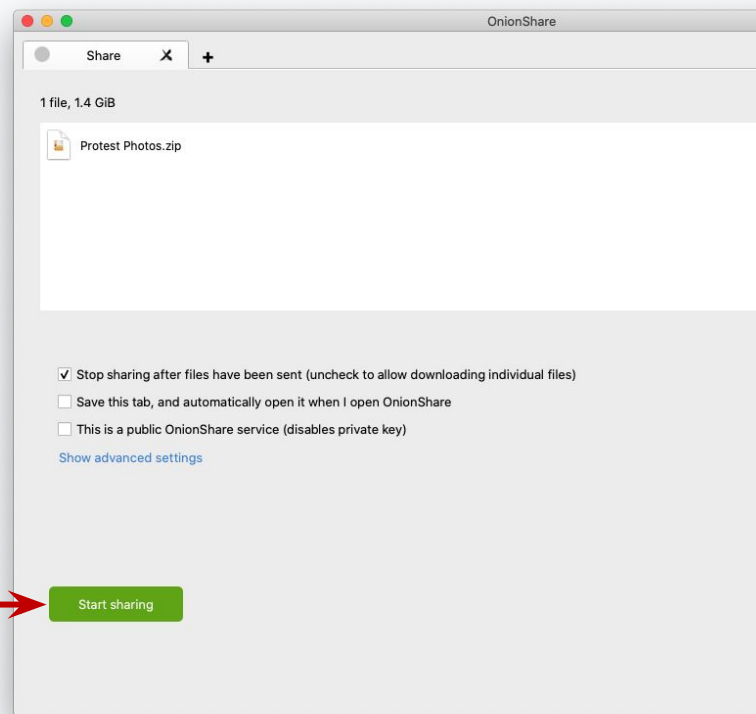
Step 3: Upload your file

- Drag and drop the file into the folder into the section.



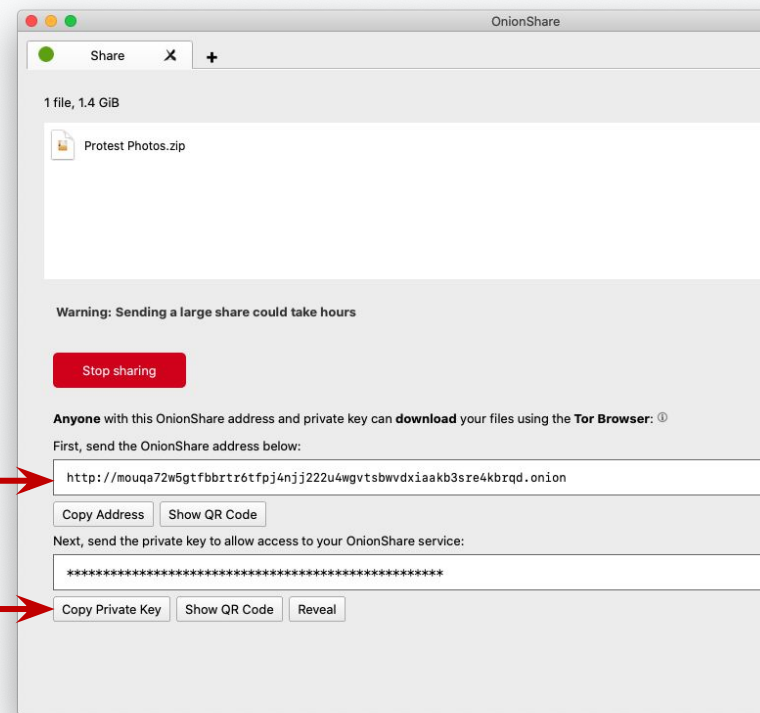
Step 4: Share your file

- Click on “Start Sharing”



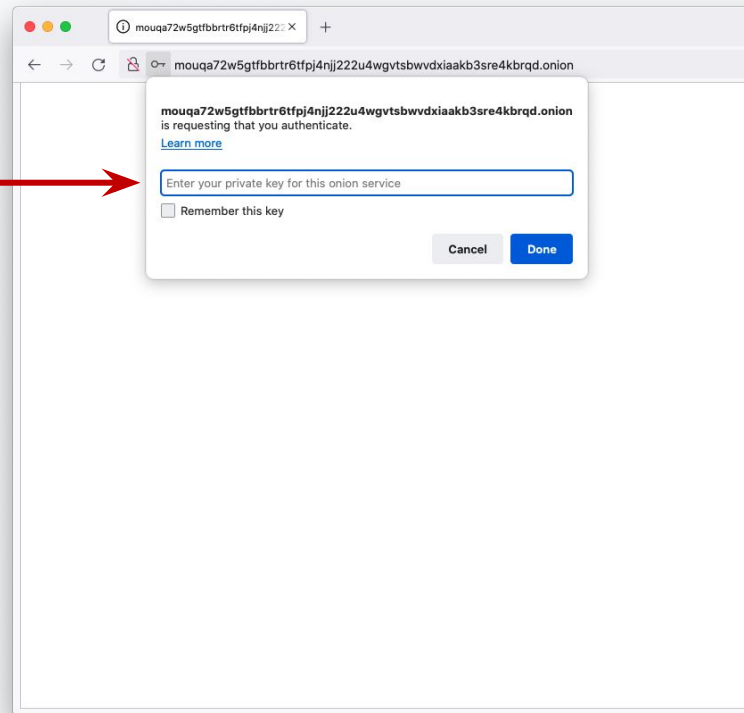
Step 5: Copy and share the address and key

- Copy the address and share it with the intended recipient (e.g. via email).
- Copy the private key and share it to the same recipient, preferably through a different channel (e.g. via instant messaging).



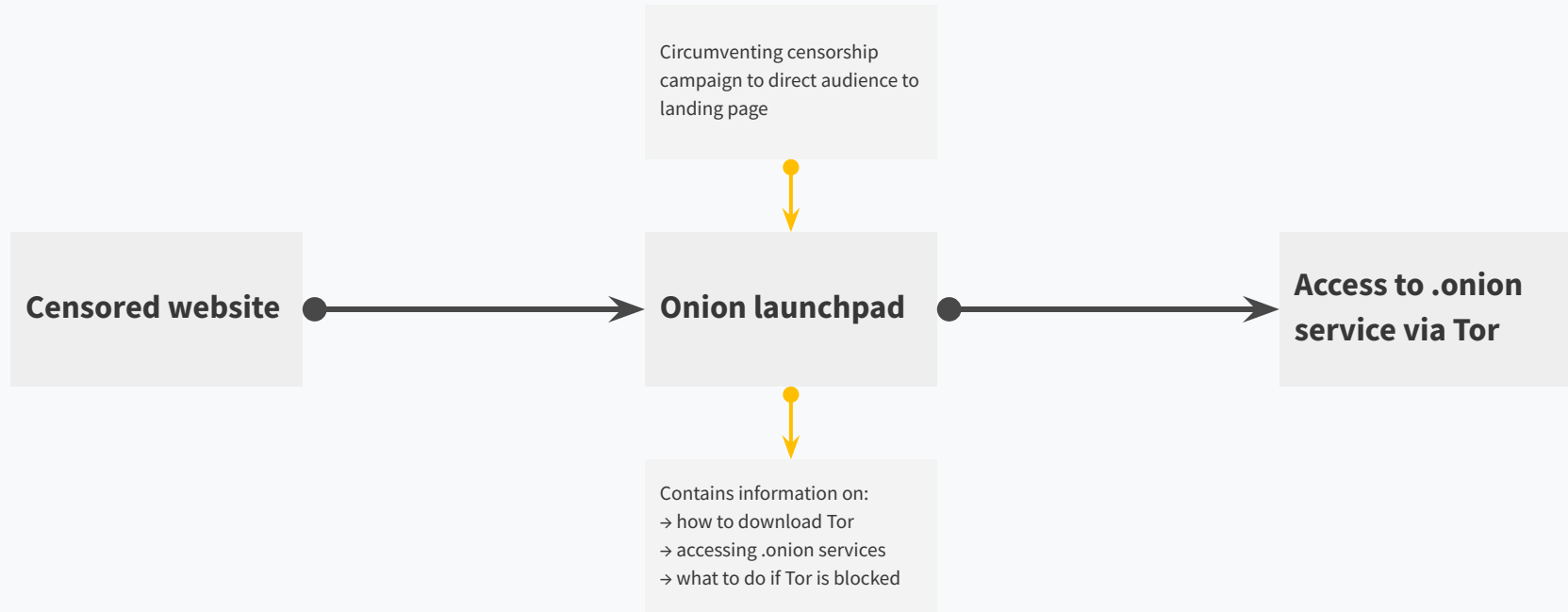
Step 6: Download through Tor Browser

- The recipient can download the file through Tor Browser by entering the address and key in the URL bar.
- Tip: you must keep your OnionShare window on your device open as long as you want people to download your file.



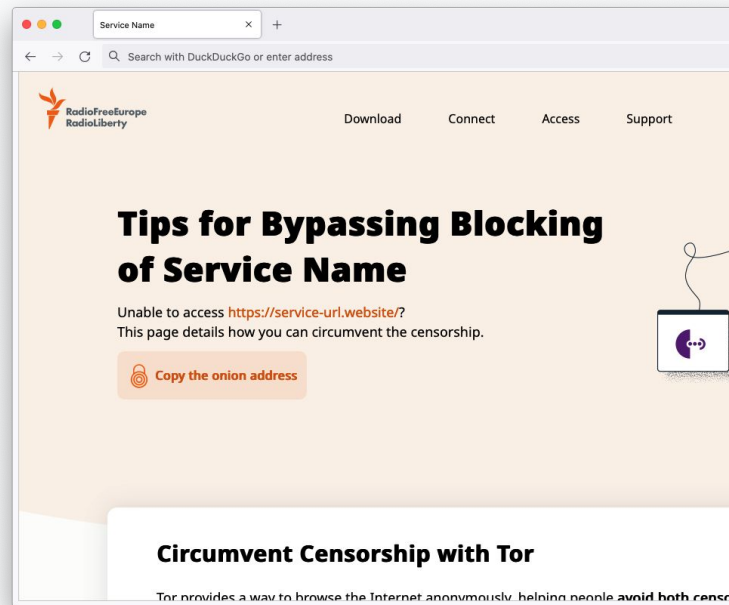
How the Tor Project can support you with Onion Servicing

Onion Service landing page



Onion Service landing page

- Landing page explains how to download and connect to Tor, and how to access the Onion Services.
- Content available in over 60 languages!
- Open source project that you can customize:
<https://gitlab.torproject.org/tpo/onion-services/sponsor123-landing-page>



Useful links

- Tor Project Forum: <https://forum.torproject.net/c/support/onion-services>
- Tor Browser Manual: <https://tb-manual.torproject.org>
- Support portal: <https://support.torproject.org/>
- Community team: <https://community.torproject.org/onion-services/>

Onionize your workflow



GROW YOUR ONION

GROW YOUR ONION

How to set up an onion service for your website on Debian based Operating System.

Note: The symbol # refers to running the code as root.

Get a working Tor

To configure Tor package repository enable the Torproject package repository by following these instructions:

1. Install apt-transport-https

To enable all package managers using the libapt-pkg library to access metadata and packages available in sources accessible over https (Hypertext Transfer Protocol Secure).

```
# apt install apt-transport-https
# add the following entries to /etc/apt/
# sources.list or a new file in /etc/apt/
```

Configure your Tor onion service
The next step is opening the config file of Tor (torrc) and doing the appropriate configurations to setup an onion service.
Depending on your operating system and setup, your tor configuration file can be at a different location or look different.

You will need to put the following two lines in your torrc file:

```
HiddenServiceDir /var/lib/tor/onion_service/
HiddenServicePort 80 127.0.0.1:80
```

Now save your torrc and restart Tor.

```
# sudo systemctl restart tor
```

If Tor starts up again, great. Otherwise, something is wrong. First look at your logfiles for hints.

Edit website configuration file

If you're running multiple onion sites on the same web server, remember to edit your web server virtual host file and add the onion address for each website.

... service works ... go to your ... named



https://community.torproject.org/onion-services/advanced/opsec/

onionshare.org

securedrop.org

IDENTIFY THE ONION



Onion icon
The tiny onion icon can help you to identify Onion services. Look for it in Tor Browser.

Onion address
An onion address is a string of 16 (and in V2 format, 18) mostly random letters and numbers, followed by ".onion". All traffic between Tor users and onion services is end-to-end encrypted, so you do not need to worry about connecting over HTTPS.

WHY USE ONIONS?

Decentralization
There's no central authority that approves or rejects onion services. The address of an onion service is automatically generated. Operators don't use the regular DNS infrastructure and do not need to purchase or register a domain name.

Metadata obfuscation or elimination
When you use the Tor network to browse the web, you are not sending any information by default of who you are or where you are connecting from. The Onion Services use the Tor network to eliminate information about where they are situated. Using them eliminates all metadata that may be associated with the service otherwise.

Network sustainability
Onion services don't use the same circuit path as regular Tor connections. The traffic generated by them doesn't leave the Tor network, and therefore, these onion circuits free up exit relay bandwidth for others. Besides that, when a service is available over onion, it adds diversity to the Tor network, it uses a different path to reach the network, avoiding exit

Freedom of press and censorship circumvention
Regular Tor connections already provide censorship circumvention, but only onion services can anonymize both parts of communication - users and provider -, creating a metadata free communication between the user of the service and the service itself.

Censorship technologies are being deployed by different actors, like governments and internet providers, worldwide to block access to free press and privacy tools.

To protect freedom of speech and freedom of opinion in censored spaces, major media organizations have made their websites available over onion services in the last few years.

That's the case of NY Times, ProPublica, Deutsche Welle, BBC, The Markup and other newsrooms.

Secret sources, whistleblowers, and journalists
Many journalists and media organizations use tools based on onion services to protect their sources. They use tools like SecureDrop, GlobalLeaks, or OnionShare.

Privacy users about privacy by design
... an excellent example of privacy by design ... secure and available

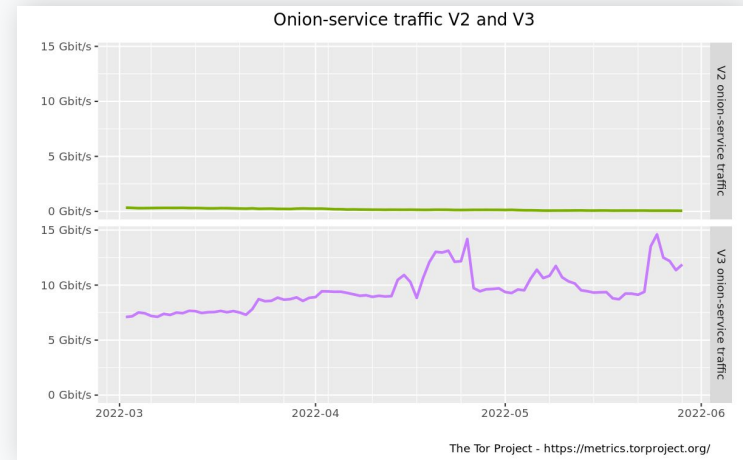


Latest developments

Version 3 of Onion Services

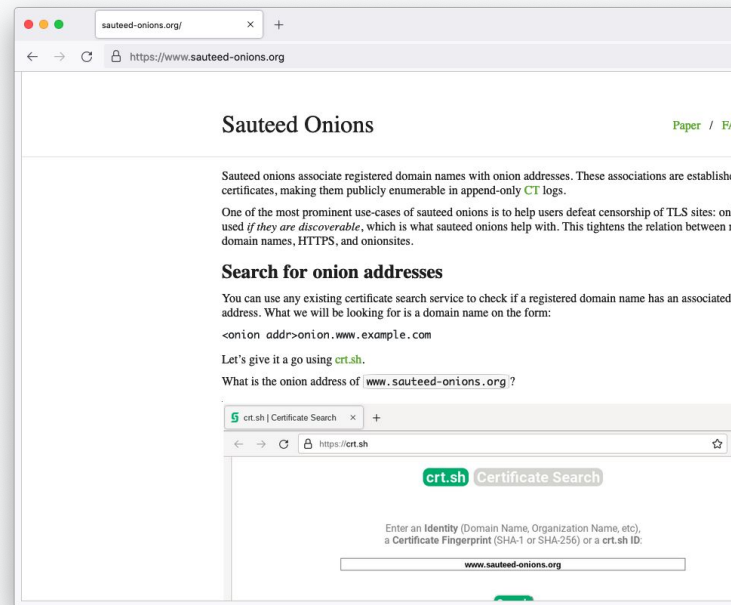
- Version 3 of Onion Services launched in 2018.
- Most Onion Service operators have migrated.
- More on version 2 deprecation:

[https://blog.torproject.org/
v2-deprecation-timeline/](https://blog.torproject.org/v2-deprecation-timeline/)



Sauteed Onions

- Sauteed onions improve transparency and discoverability of Onion Services.
- Sauteed onions associate registered domain names with onion addresses, via TLS certificates.
- “Sauteed” because when onions are cooked they become transparent!



Thank you!

