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How this Cambridge group will help Mozilla give its users anonymity on the web

Nov 12, 2014, 12:51pm EST | UPDATED: Nov 12, 2014, 1:19pm EST



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Courtesy photo/Tor Project

Andrew Lewman, the executive director of the Tor Project in Cambridge, says the group will work with Mozilla to make web browsing more private and secure.

The Mozilla Foundation, the nonprofit organization that makes the popular Firefox web browser, said this week it teamed up with a Cambridge group, the [Tor Project](#), to offer people a more anonymous web browsing experience.

Over the next few months, those who download Firefox as their web browser might notice something a little different. According to [Andrew Lewman](#), executive director of the open source privacy network

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Tor Project, the partnership will offer consumers the option to keep their identity, location and data away from government monitors and hackers.



The project with Mozilla is a first for the Tor Project — a nonprofit funded by the U.S. Department of State Bureau of Democracy, Human Rights, and Labor and the Ford Foundation, among others — and will mean more protections for users of Firefox and Thunderbird, a free, open-source email application created by Mozilla. Mozilla, which is also working on the project with the [Center for Democracy and Technology](#), has called the privacy initiative Polaris.

Lewman said Tor has 30 full-time employees, six of which are located in a tiny office in Cambridge's Central Square. The project has "a few hundred" development volunteers with about 6,000 "relay volunteers," who help to keep the network secure and private.

The Tor Project has been operating since 2003. The group created its first private browser in 2005, said Lewman. That browser has been downloaded about 150 million times in the last year, Lewman said.

Below is a conversation I had with Lewman over email about the project:

Can you tell me about the Tor Project's involvement in Polaris? What does this latest news mean?

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