

Break Free from Big Tech NOW!

Kollapscamp 2026
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Trigger Warning

*This presentation may cause
overwhelm or disturbance*



Agenda



- Break Free from What?
- Why now, why me, why?
- Obstacles
- Break Free to What?
- Migration Pathway
- Recommended alternatives
- Hands-on
- Resources

After one hour we'll have a break no matter what 😊🧘

[illegible]

And many others...



Why? (1)



- Worldwide instability, especially in the US (civilizational collapse is happening now in front of our eyes) → precautionary principle & agency
 - Excessive dependence on (US-based) Big Tech
 - Complexity is too high
 - The risk of staying and hope for the best is simply too great
 - If things go wrong, you'll lose everything as a private individual, at work, with your business, your volunteer work, etc...



Why? (2)



- **Enshittification** (book by Cory Doctorow)
 - Monopoly position of Big Tech (anti-trust law)
 - Lock-in
 - Ever worsening price-quality ratio
 - Privacy violations
 - Unbridled surveillance
- Big Tech is the driving force behind the rise of **End Times Fascism** (new book by Naomi Klein & Astra Taylor)
 - Activists and certain (minority) groups have already been kicked out by Big Tech (pro-palestine, trans, queer)



Why? (3)



- **Artificial Intelligence (AI):** Big Tech is going all-in on AI which requires unfathomable amounts of electricity, water, land, wealth and our personal data which is then to be used by authoritarian regimes based on surveillance & oppression
- Too many problems: low quality (intentional), racism, social phobias, truth control, mass lay-offs, lack of interpretability, human rights, environment, resources, safety, wars, AI bubble



Obstacles



- Lock-in: Groups (e.g. friends, your family app, Facebook support groups)
- Compatibility
- Export of existing data not always possible (please note: expect this to get worse)
- Fear of the unknown (including strong resistance to change)
- Accessibility of alternatives is, at best, mediocre. Usability of alternatives needs to be improved greatly
- It's (a lot of) work and it's not always easy to find a good alternative, plus technical things scare people of



Break Free to What?



- Switch to European alternatives. Characteristics to look for:
 - EU-based (or Switzerland), hosted as close as possible. Consider self-hosted
 - Open source
 - Encryption
 - Uncentralized / peer-to-peer / decentralized / federated
 - As green as possible
- How will your alternatives still work for you during a long-term emergency (societal collapse)?
- A paper-based system is also a system (possible back-up)

Consider decommissioning and to not replace certain apps or applications 😬😬



Migration Pathway



- First things first (What would be really disastrous to lose?)
 - Email & messaging
 - Files & storage
 - Office applications
 - For organizations: applications essential for your business process
- In parallel: find solutions for all you other apps, applications and platforms

Yes, I know this might be time consuming and not always be easy or even possible!



Alternatives



- Email
- Messaging
- Storage
- Office
- Browser / Search
- Social Media
- AI
- Internet Down
- Miscellaneous

Visit <https://european-alternatives.eu/> to get started



Email



- Gmail, Outlook, Live, iCloud, Hotmail, ...
- Alternatives:
 - **Proton Mail** (proton.me)
 - **Posteo** (posteo.de)
 - **Tuta Mail** (tuta.com)
 - **Mailbox.org**
- You may consider self-hosting (not very easy)



Messaging



- Whatsapp, Telegram, iMessage
- Alternative: **Signal** (do it if you haven't already)
 - There are already more people on it than you think. Move as many app groups over as possible.
 - But... Signal also has its issues (management, AWS, Chat Control)
- There aren't many good alternatives right now:
 - **Element/Matrix** → good for topic related groups, but only federated
 - **Threema** → expensive and still centralized
- But... consider Reticulum apps: **Ratspeak, Sideband, Meshchat**



Storage



- Hosted **Nextcloud** (many providers). You may consider self-hosting
- **pCloud** (pcloud.com, make sure you select eu)
- **Filen** ? (German-based, filen.io)



Office



- MS Office, Google Docs, Apple iWork
 - Word, Excel, Powerpoint, Pages, Numbers, Keynote
- Alternatives:
 - **LibreOffice** (application on your computer) or Collabora (online like Google Docs, can be part of Nextcloud)
 - **Cryptpad** (online): <https://cryptpad.fr/>
 - **Proton Docs** (like Google Docs, but still in development)
 - Not: OnlyOffice



Browser / Search



- Edge, Chrome, Firefox, Brave
 - Bing, Copilot, Google Search, Startpage
- Alternatives:
 - Browser: **LibreWolf**, **Vivaldi**, **Tor**
 - Search: **Ecosia** or Kagi (paid US-based service...)
- Consider VPN



Social Media



- Facebook, Instagram, TikTok, X, Threads
 - Also: Bluesky (Eurosky)
- Alternatives:
 - Facebook, X, Threads, Bluesky → **Mastodon** (Fediverse)
 - Instagram → **Pixelfed** (Fediverse)
 - TikTok → **Loops** (Fediverse)
- Tip: make Mastodon your primary platform and automatically cross-post from there (maybe use Fedica). This ensures that whenever you cannot access other social media, you already have an alternative with an audience.



AI



- ChatGPT, Claude, Grok, Gemini, Copilot, ...
- Alternatives:
 - No AI (!) → energy consumption, all your data/information will be used elsewhere, many examples of mistakes & deception
 - Local AI
 - Proton Lumo



Internet Down



- What now?
 - **Meshcore** (<https://meshcore.io/>)
 - Messaging using LoRa (long range radio) devices
 - **Reticulum** (<https://reticulum.network/>)
 - The internet redesigned:
 - Uncentralized (no hierarchy)
 - Fully encrypted
 - Mesh networking using any network (wifi, bluetooth, TCP, LoRa, paper-based, etc)
 - Not yet mature, but very promising



Miscellaneous



- Windows/Mac OS → Linux Ubuntu (many flavors)
- Maps → OpenStreetMap, OsmAnd
- Smartphone → Volla, Fairphone, Murena, Jolla
- Adobe Illustrator → Inkscape
- Music → Deezer
- Credit card → maybe not necessary anymore?

Anything else?



Hands-on (Mastodon)



- Download Mastodon app
- Create account (mastodon.social, troet.cafe or other)
- Follow @kollapscamp@troet.cafe & @haikomeelis@mastodon.nl



Hands-on (Reticulum)



- **Reticulum**

- Download Ratspeak @ ratspeak.org
- Create identity
- Connect network
 - Network
 - + Internet/TCP





Resources



- Europese alternatieven: <https://european-alternatives.eu/>
- Switch recipees: <https://di.day/>
- Remove accounts: <https://justdeleteme.xyz/>
- Books:
 - Enshittification (Cory Doctorow)
 - End Times Fascism (Naomi Klein & Astra Taylor)



QUESTIONS?

Break Free from Big Tech NOW!

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