



martus

A Global Human Rights Reporting System

Martus is the Greek word for witness

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The Problem

Right now, human rights violators operate with relative impunity, safe in the knowledge that they will never be held accountable for most abuses. Some cases draw immediate attention from the media or international NGOs, but most receive little notice, and even those that do rarely result in action, let alone justice.

This is not acceptable. If we are to create a truly just world, human rights violators must be held accountable. The most powerful weapon against rights abuse is the truth, accurately captured, safeguarded and quickly communicated to people who can use it to make a difference. Today, however, the records of grassroots groups are too easily lost, confiscated or destroyed.

How can we make sure records of abuse are both protected and easily accessible? The human rights community urgently needs a tool that will:

- Protect information from loss, theft or destruction.
- Ensure that records from social justice groups are preserved, allowing researchers to better assess the scope and scale of violations and to build a case of patterns of abuses based on information from more witnesses.
- Provide grassroots groups with power over their own information, allowing them to decide what to make public and what should be kept securely private.
- Enable activists, prosecutors, press and the public to have direct access to the voices of those affected by human rights violations.

Martus is the answer.

How Martus Works

Martus provides advocates with the information technology tool they need to help reduce the abuse of human rights.



Violations, Case by Case

Groups across the social justice sector continue to fight the abuse of human rights – including repression and even genocide – in regions the world over. In addition, advocates need tools to fight other violations, including child abuse, domestic violence, hate crimes, and environmental abuses.



Incident Reporting

Every single instance of the abuse of human and environmental rights, no matter what type of abuse or where it happens, should be reported and added to the international body of knowledge by advocacy organizations around the world.

Why? The most important tool for use in stopping patterns of abuse, large or small, is information.

Martus provides an easy way to store testimonies and information as bulletins with both private and public components, to save those bulletins in encrypted form, and to securely back them up to a remote server when convenient.

The adoption and deployment of Martus will ensure that the re

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Information Storage and Retrieval

When the time comes to bring perpetrators of human rights abuse to justice, too often key information about their crimes has been lost.

The broad deployment and use of tools like Martus will guarantee that this information is safe and available. A series of back-up servers will support a globally accessible knowledge base of bulletins on the Internet that will be free from tampering or destruction.

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Informed Advocacy

With violation information preserved and accessible, large-scale patterns of abuse or single incidents can be easily mapped. Multiple testimonies can be gathered. And prosecutions can be reinforced by verified data from a trusted source, helping bring formerly untouchable criminals to justice.

The Martus Amplifier will support this need by allowing groups to publish the public components of each bulletin on the Internet, where they will be available for inspection, analysis and advocacy.

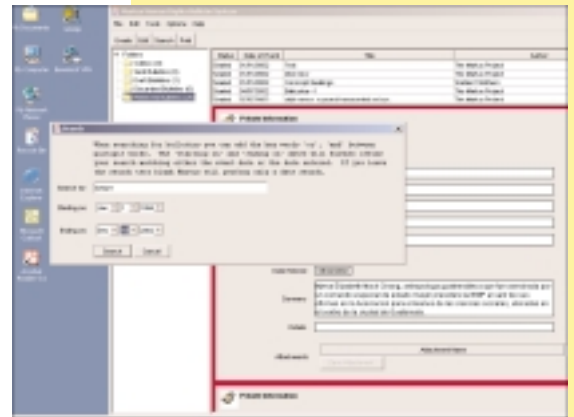
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The Solution – Martus

Martus is the answer to this serious problem, enabling the human rights and social justice community to maximize the value of critical information about past and ongoing violations. Designed in close consultation with Dr. Patrick Ball of the American Association for the Advancement of Science, one of the world's leading statisticians of human rights violations, Martus addresses the four critical requirements for software protecting the records of grassroots human rights groups:

USABLE. The software is as easy to use as email, can run on an inexpensive computer and does not require a constant connection to the Internet.



SECURE. Records are encrypted, stored securely at a remote site, backed up to multiple locations and protected by a unique password.

SEARCHABLE. Specific violations and identifying details can be searched by groups or outside researchers granted access to the records.

TRANSPARENT. The software is open source – any group can examine the code and make an informed decision about using Martus.

Martus is a Benetech initiative. For more information, visit www.martus.org.

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