

TECHNOLOGY FOR HUMAN RIGHTS RESEARCH & PROTOTYPE DEVELOPMENT

preliminary user research

Over the course of several months, Benetech's Human Rights Program conducted individual interviews with dozens of partners in the human rights field. Our staff engaged field workers, larger international organization staff, academics, journalists, researchers, trainers, and intermediaries, from a wide range of countries and regions. The goal of these interviews was to understand current technology use, institutional processes, and major gaps that exist in their daily workflows.

user research synthesis

After conducting these interviews, Benetech documented core quotes, ideals, values, concerns, and expressed needs from each conversation. Common trends surfaced, and we plotted interview data points on frameworks to find clusters of activity. From these groupings of traits we created several different archetypical users or “personae.” These personae are meant to serve as representative stand-in users to assist during ideation and prototype development.

④

DIY

③

QUICK
RESULTS

③

COLLABORATION

②

DATA

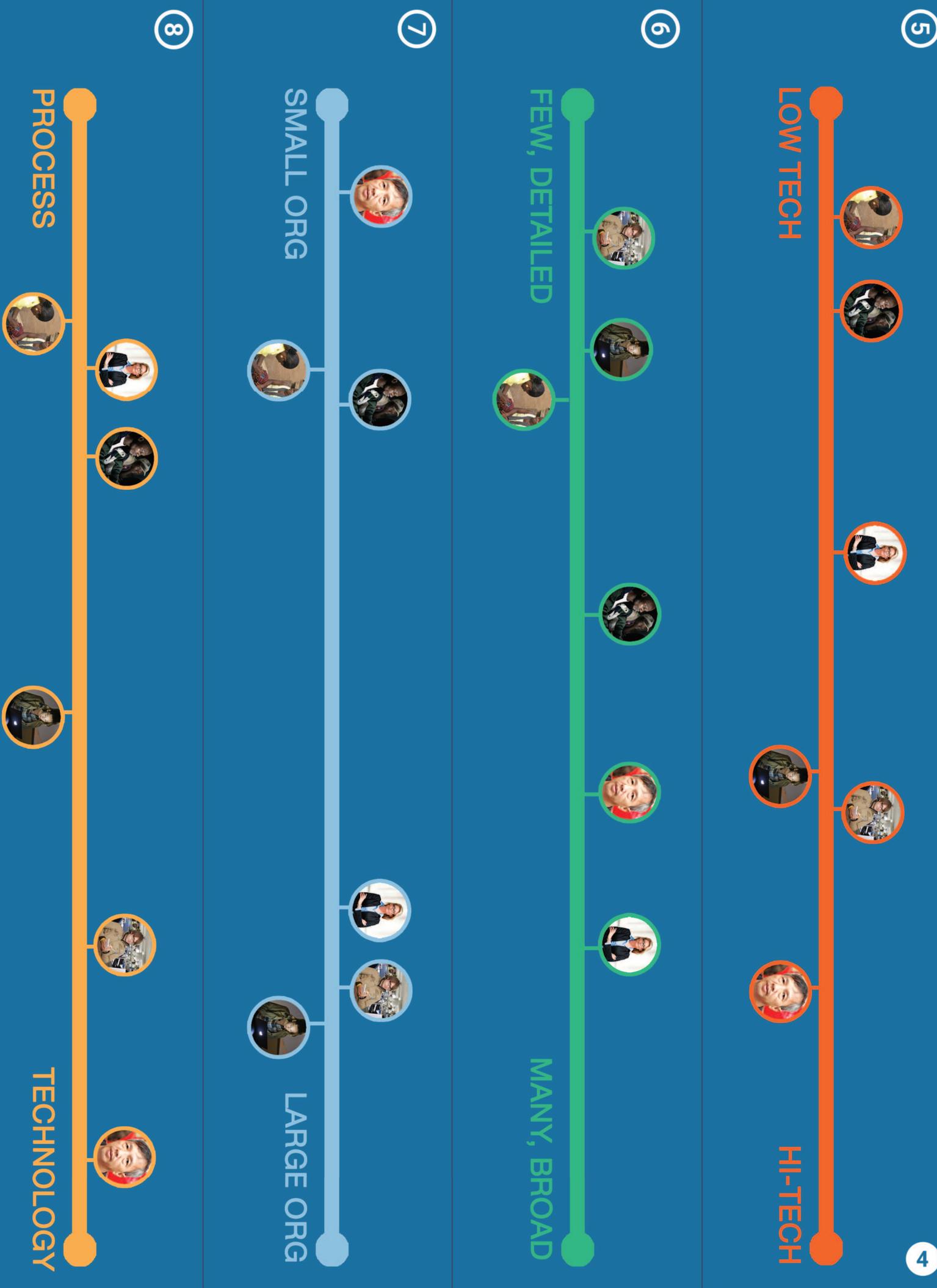
ANECDOTE

①

SECURE

TRANSPARENT

LONG TERM
EFFORT



Suspicious Sang: Underground Activist

“Censorship only bothers people, most don’t understand the potential...”

Sang is constantly covering his footprints, both in the real world and digitally. Sang attempts to collect and distill information about the abuses of Human Rights in his home country of China. While he resides in one of the most digitally connected regions in the world, the suspected monitoring by the government means Sang and his organization must quickly build technical expertise. While his organization is aware of the proper security protocols, Sang worries even searching and downloading these technologies is enough to raise red flags. When his organization does find successful workflows, they hesitate to share these learnings with other organizations as to not draw attention.

Goals:

- Store data securely long enough to get out of country
- Obtain government data and media reports
- Find information that is not propaganda
- Aggregate reports against the government
- Build teams large enough to accomplish goals
- Don't build team large enough to warrant govt. attention

Needs:

- Access to native, secure software. Must “feel” Chinese.
- Security tools that are invisible in use and obtainment
- Methods of securely moving data over borders
- Protection for family and friends from intimidation
- Reduction in learning curves when changing technologies
- Backing up physical data to protect from destruction



SECURITY HOLE | SURVEILLANCE | VIGILANT | ANTIDEFAMATION| PIRATED SOFTWARE
TECH SAVVY | RAISING A CASE | PHYSICAL SECURITY | COMMUNICATION | LOST EVIDENCE

Felicity Fieldworker : Hands-On Activist

"Concerned about security for victims, also for me..."

Felicity began volunteering with her organization after growing tired of hearing about human rights violations experienced by her friends and families. Felicity was given a donated device by her organization for data collection. Her relationship with technology is fickle, as she often finds herself struggling with low battery and low connectivity. Felicity largely investigates rumors in her neighborhood and the local media, attempting to verify and document possible human rights abuses. As rumors spread, Felicity often finds herself competing with local police to collect information as securely as possible. Felicity often falls back to traditional data collection methods when frustrated or feels like she is intruding.

Goals:

- Collect data within context
- Don't let capture medium affect trust or relationship
- Investigate rumors and find truths
- Analyze behavioral changes to judge impact
- Create safe spaces for physical and digital interactions

Needs:

- Access to information early to gather accurate accounts
- Reliable connectivity and communication channels
- Collection of witnesses to corroborate rumors
- More reliable and user friendly technology
- Easy methods to increase secure data storage
- Overcome language, literacy, and cultural barriers in collection
- Availability to ask for additional resources in response to need
- Establish connections to reduce feelings of ostracization.



FICKLE WITH TECH | COMPETE WITH POLICE | STREAM OF LIFE | TECH INTRUDES ON POVERTY
AUTONOMY | TRACKING BEHAVIORS | SAFETY | SECURITY | LOW RESOURCE | RUMORS

Headquarters Harrison : Activist Manager

“Challenges are beyond us and within us...”

Harrison works tirelessly to do the greatest good with the limited resources he has available to his organization. Harrison is always trying to grow the organization's capacity by establishing protocols to assist in training towards advocacy. Harrison's goal is to use the limited resources to make social services available to those in need, collect data on injustices committed, and share that data with police and government forces to hopefully spur policy changes. The environment for funding is tight, and as such there is a perceived pressure to show quantitative improvements brought about as a result of his organization. Harrison tries to keep his activists and sources as secure as possible, but is limited by available funds and technology.

Goals:

- Help as many people as possible
- Continue to gather resources to expand impact
- Build capacity through training and pedagogy
- Demonstrate impact to funders
- Keep his associates and sources safe
- Build impactful relationships to drive change

Needs:

- More resources; money, people, and technology
- Reliable connectivity and communication channels
- Quick, iterative methods of building capacity
- Trusted relationships for social service provision
- Acknowledgement of success, demonstrable value
- Face time with governing officials to advance causes



**TRAINING THE TRAINER | CAPACITY BUILDING | SECURE STORAGE | SOCIAL SERVICE REFERRALS
LOW RESOURCES | PEDAGOGY | MONITORING AND EVALUATION | TERRITORIAL WITH DATA**

Narrative Nancy : NGO Manager

“Helping small teams with big mandates..”

Nancy wants to help various Human Rights groups share stories about their experiences and needs. Empowering these groups with training, equipment, and storytelling methodology allows activists to contextualize their data and drive advocacy for their cause. Nancy's organization also collects citizen-generated media in an attempt to produce reports that bridge several groups and causes. Nancy has built her own processes over time to utilize open information and connections to corroborate and verify found media. Nancy struggles to maintain trust with partners on the ground, ensuring ethical use of their data and promising advocacy.

Goals:

- Help activists tell their story in a compelling manner
- Instill trust that her actions move towards advocacy
- Demonstrate that she's not just collecting stories'
- Help to train and build process within partner organizations
- Ensure responsible data sharing and protection of partners
- Sustainability

Needs:

- Organizing relevant data across contexts and causes
- Method to demonstrate impact of reports over time
- Maintain safety of citizen reporters
- Corroborate open-source data with other sources of truth
- Maintaining security when dealing with non-secure/non-tech orgs
- Partners understanding technology, political science, and economics



CORROBORATE | ONE PERSON, ONE BROADCASTER | NOT “JUST COLLECTING STORIES”
CONTEXTUALIZE DATA | BUILDING TRUST | VERIFICATION | SAFETY | PROCESS OVER TECH

Vincent Verification : Journalist

“In Human Rights there are no secrets, many lies...”

Vincent and his fellow journalists spend their days scrolling through social media, tracing down the day's top stories. When it comes to human rights reporting, Vincent knows that time is of the essence. As stories pick up steam, more and more tweets, pictures, and videos pour in across many different channels. How can Vincent collect this data and verify the accuracy of the source? How can Vincent gather consent from the source when they may desire anonymity or when media is removed from the internet? How can Vincent's research process move 'beyond the search bar' and transcend different mediums and languages?

Goals:

- Separate wheat from chaff on social media
- Understand who is a true witness vs. false witness
- Maintain meaning across mediums and languages
- Use open information in a responsible manner
- Maintain control of important media that may be lost
- Verify actors and environment in evidence
- Sustainability

Needs:

- Ways to understand original source of a social media story
- Proving social media reports happened where they claim to have
- 'Kevin Bacon' game of who to trust
- Word of mouth validity needs standardization and contextualization
- Ways to quickly corroborate data across languages and mediums
- Understanding of intended consent model for original data
- Access analog data from low resource environments



6 DEGREES OF SEPARATION | CREDIBILITY | TRUTH FADES OVER TIME | CONSENT | SAFETY
LOST IN TRANSLATION | DIGITAL WILDFIRES | SOCIAL MEDIA AS SENSOR | VERIFICATION

Chain of Custody Cheryl : Lawyer

“Don’t confuse intelligence and evidence...”

Cheryl worries about how to collect media in an evidentiary way. What makes social media and video stand up in a tribunal? Will those standards change over the 30 years leading up to a potential trial? How can we verify and preserve media securely and ethically? The legal system is on the trailing edge of technology, need to build understanding of new media within the system. Needs to get as close to the original data as possible, any modifications or attached analysis may bias the data. Has a very strict protocol for storing and organizing evidence in accordance with disclosure and jurisdictional requirements.

Goals:

- Build successful cases for tribunals
- Quickly surface the highest quality evidence
- Staying up to date with the latest trends in media creation
- Maintaining a clear chain of custody for relevant media
- Make social media and video understandable for the court

Needs:

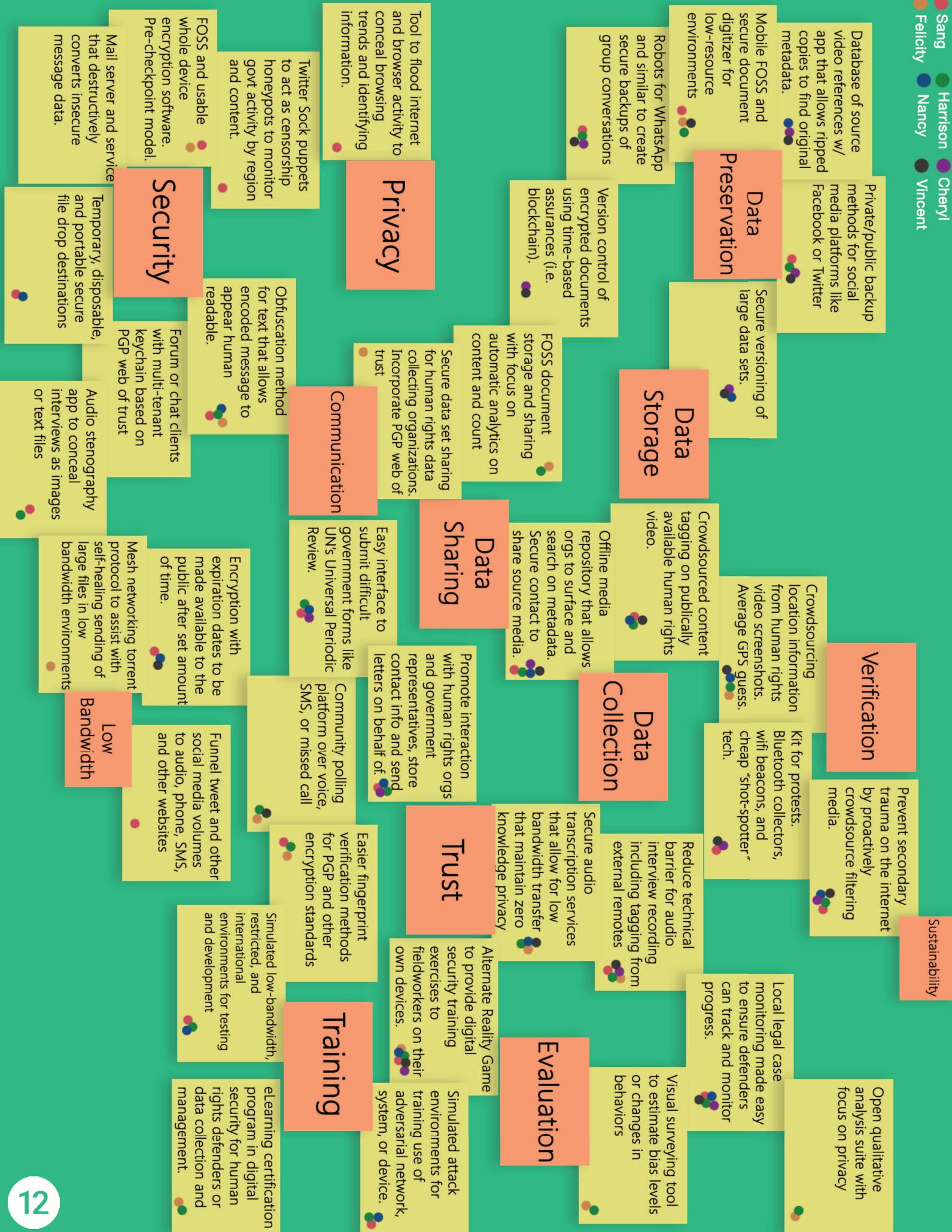
- Ways to move through large amounts of media quickly
- Clear way to understand chain of custody
- Understanding of source of data as well as collector of data
- Preservation of media and context over potentially decades
- Access analog data from low resource environments



ACCURACY | CHAIN OF CUSTODY | NO ANALYSIS | ORIGINAL SOURCES | VERIFICATION
TRUSTED PARTNERS | METADATA | DISCLOSURE | JURISDICTION | PRESERVATION

brainstorming and ideation

Following the development of user goals, needs, and personae we began to engage in the generation of prospective ideas. We sought to answer questions of "how might we..." to solve primary concerns and gaps that surfaced during research and synthesis. During this phase we worked internally as well as with key external partners to generate ideas and further shape the ideas we had already. We sorted dozens of ideas by feasibility, possible impact, and need to ensure we were reaching as many of our user personae as possible.



early prototype development

After surfacing the most impactful opportunities, we began the development of documentation and video demonstrations of some of these top ideas. We have begun to circulate these materials to our partners and previous interview subjects in order to get their initial feedback. Our goal is to continue to incorporate changes that evolve our ideas, and also use our current materials as possible sources of further idea generation.

Documentation and videos can be found at:

<https://benetech.box.com/HumanRightsPrototypes>

<https://goo.gl/bPfz6m>

① Human Rights Media Repository

search trends about contact

Police checkpoint

search

tags: LGBT rights Iraq, police violence, Baghdad, map area, rainbow flag, police car, 314, Iraqi flag

2012 2013 2014

submit



(A) info organization: LGBT rights Iraq video title: Police checkpoint Baghdad category: Police violence media info DURATION: 4:55 DATE OF CAPTURE: March 2013 TIME OF CAPTURE: 13:00 location contact tags: Jumpshot, Execution, Imprisonment, ISIS Flag, Fire, Checkpoint, Tank, Child Soldier, Assault Rifle

(B) info organization: LGBT rights Iraq video title: Traffic incident May category: Extrajudicial killing media info DURATION: 2:18 DATE OF CAPTURE: May 2013 location contact tags: Traffic, child, Handcuffs, sirens

Human rights organizations protect video collections gathered from partners and activists in their region. Often, these videos are unique records of human rights abuses and live exclusively in these private collections to protect the safety of those involved or prevent removal from public servers. This media sits invisible to other human rights defenders and prevents momentum

from building between organizations with similar causes. We propose a platform that allows uploaders to add and share manual, automatic, and crowdsourced metadata to their media. Uploaders can attach time-coded content tags, censored thumbnails or video clips, and supporting verification documents. Users may search for specific videos, or set up alerts and filters for trending content or regions. Build-in secure communications will allow requests for media transfers to occur within the established vetting process of the organizations involved.

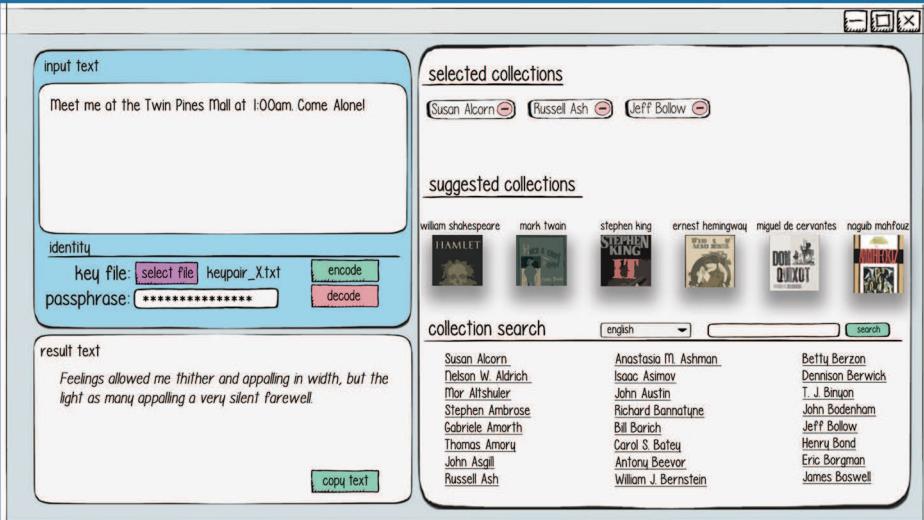
Digital Security Training ARGs ②

Digital Security training today revolves mostly around in-person trainings or relying upon members in your organization to read through one of the multitude of densely worded training guides. These methods aren't participatory, aren't taught within the context of day-to-day work, and quickly grow stale. In Artificial Reality Games (ARGs), participants are asked to investigate and complete tasks in a

The screenshot shows a digital interface for a Digital Security Training ARG. On the left, there's a sidebar with icons for users, groups, modules, and settings. Below that is a search bar and a list of users with their progress: Smith, Jane (3/5), Doe, John (7/10), and Jones, Jack (4/10). To the right, there are sections for 'Assigned' and 'Completed' tasks. Under 'Assigned', there are cards for 'secure chat' (assigned 12/10/2015) and 'secure calling' (assigned 12/16/2015). Under 'Completed', there are cards for 'phishing' (assigned 12/01/2015, completed 12/02/2015), 'HTTPS' (assigned 12/03/2015, completed 12/04/2015), and 'geotagged media' (assigned 12/10/2015, completed 12/10/2015). Each card has a 'more details' link at the bottom.

fictitious storyline through their real-world devices and interactions. We propose the development of interactive scenarios that test participants' preparedness on digital security content provided by Benetech and modules created by other development partners or tool creators.

③ "In Plain Sight" Text Obfuscation



Encryption use has become easier in recent history, still more often than not, encrypted communication tools require activists to move their entire network of contacts onto using a platform or app that may not have been designed for the context in which they operate. Often these are western tools with no historical trust, and sometimes the simple presence of encrypted traffic or traffic from known

encryption applications may be enough of a red flag to draw attention to activists. We propose a system that uses research algorithms to encode messages into different human-readable text. This new text can be shared freely on any platform that is used by the activists, blends into network traffic, and can still be decoded by trusted partners.

UPR Guided Submission ④

The UN's UPR remains an important opportunity for human rights organizations to offer summative data and findings to the UN council for review at the national level. While the intent of this report includes soliciting reports from a wide-array of voices, the current process for report submission is a substantial barrier for groups who want to get involved. Our platform can assist with guidelines on proper submission content as well as assisting with the minutia and regulations involved with report formatting and submission. By considerably lowering the barrier to entry, we can ensure more voices are in the conversation. This platform could be expanded to additional difficult forms or request submissions in the human rights space.

