



**A Digital Common Good**

Overview of The Matrix.org Foundation's  
Membership Program

April 2023

# What is Matrix?

# Matrix Manifesto

We believe:

- People should have **full control** over their own communication.
- People should **not be locked** into centralised communication silos, but instead be free to pick who they choose to host their communication, without limiting who they can reach.
- The ability to **converse securely and privately** is a basic human right.
- Communication should be available to everyone as a **free and open**, unencumbered, standard and global network.

# The world has changed.

[matrix]

- Users are realising the risks of centralised communication services:
  - Algorithmically addictive content
  - Disinformation
  - Autocratic moderation
  - Surveillance capitalism
  - Data breaches
  - Fragmented communication
  - Stagnated innovation

CAMBRIDGE ANALYTICA AND  
OUR LIVES INSIDE THE  
SURVEILLANCE MACHINE

The New York Times

*Twitter to Ban Accounts That Promote  
Rival Social Media*

Forbes

WhatsApp Is Pushing Ahead  
With Its Controversial Privacy  
Update Despite User Backlash

Featured Article

**Inside Matrix, the protocol that  
might finally make messaging apps  
interoperable**

After years of walled gardens, cross-pollination could be in  
sight

**How did Uber's Slack breach  
lead to leakage of database  
credentials?**

# The world has changed.

[matrix]

- Even the regulators have realised the risks of centralisation:
  - The EU Digital Markets Act mandates that “gatekeeper” communication services must interoperate together.
  - If only there was an open communication layer that could link them together...

## Europe Prepares to Rewrite the Rules of the Internet

The Digital Markets Act will force Big Tech platforms to break open their walled gardens in 2023, says the EU's new ambassador to Silicon Valley.

## FINANCIAL TIMES

EU to unveil landmark legislation to tackle market power of Big Tech



**Matrix is a network for secure,  
decentralised real-time communication.**



Interoperable VoIP

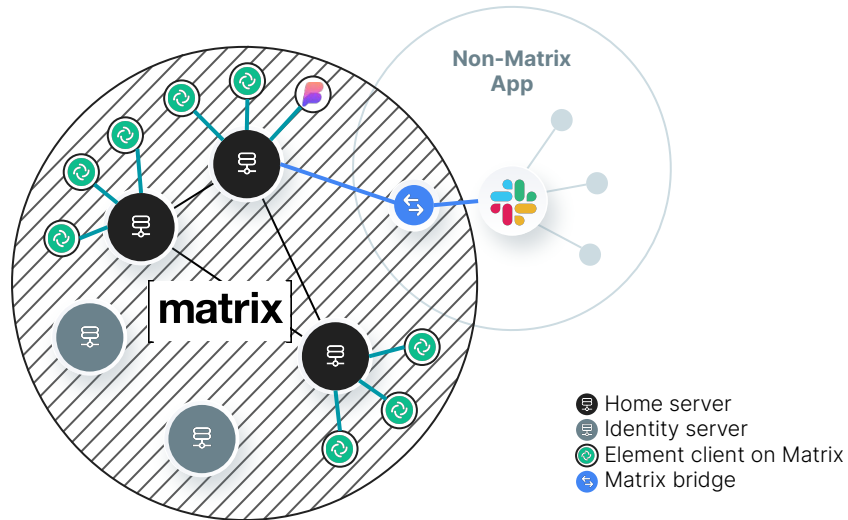


Interoperable chat

# [matrix]

## The missing comms layer of the open Web.

Open source project for secure, **decentralised** communication. Created in 2014. Governed by The Matrix.org Foundation C.I.C.



115M+  
Addressable users

100K+  
Deployments

Thousands  
of projects on the protocol

48K+  
GitHub stars on core projects

4,957+  
Contributors

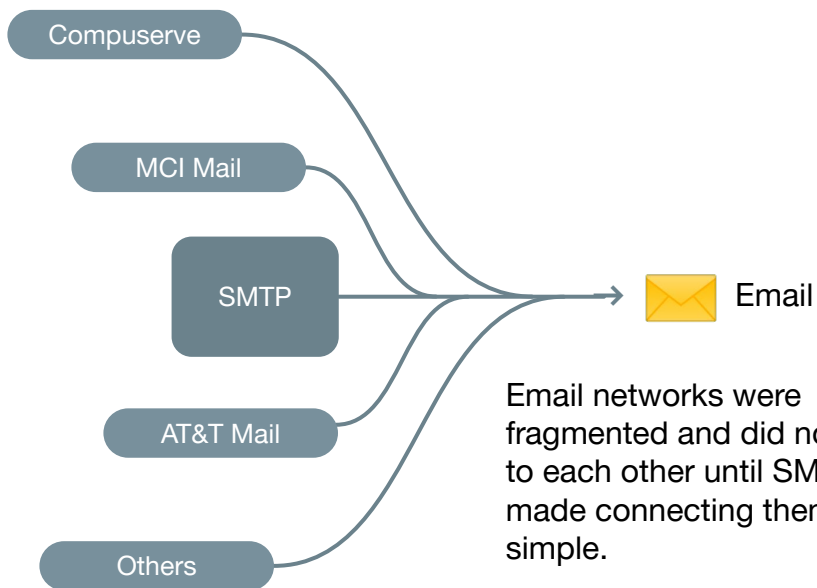
30+  
programming languages

### Used by...

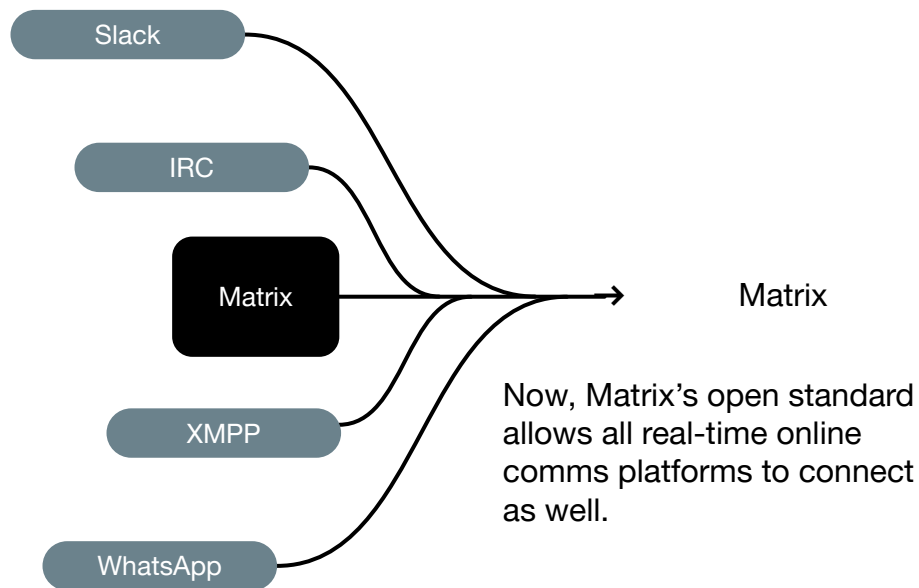


# Matrix learns from the lessons of Email

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Email networks were fragmented and did not talk to each other until SMTP made connecting them simple.



Now, Matrix's open standard allows all real-time online comms platforms to connect as well.





5 years from now, everyone will  
communicate via Matrix.

Matrix will replace the phone network and email.

# What people say about Matrix

**“I believe it to be the most promising existing platform for public, internet-scale group communication.”**

- Graydon Hoare, creator of the Rust Programming Language

**“I have seen the future of distributed collaboration and it is Matrix.”**

- Miguel de Icaza, creator of GNOME and .NET foundation director

**“You can prepare for the new Matrix world by adapting your code to use [spec.matrix.org](https://spec.matrix.org)”**

- Sir Tim Berners-Lee, creator of the Web

**“I am very excited about Matrix — creating a robust, secure, open protocol that can bring all flavors of instant messaging and collaboration together, in the way that the web or email has its foundation layer.”**

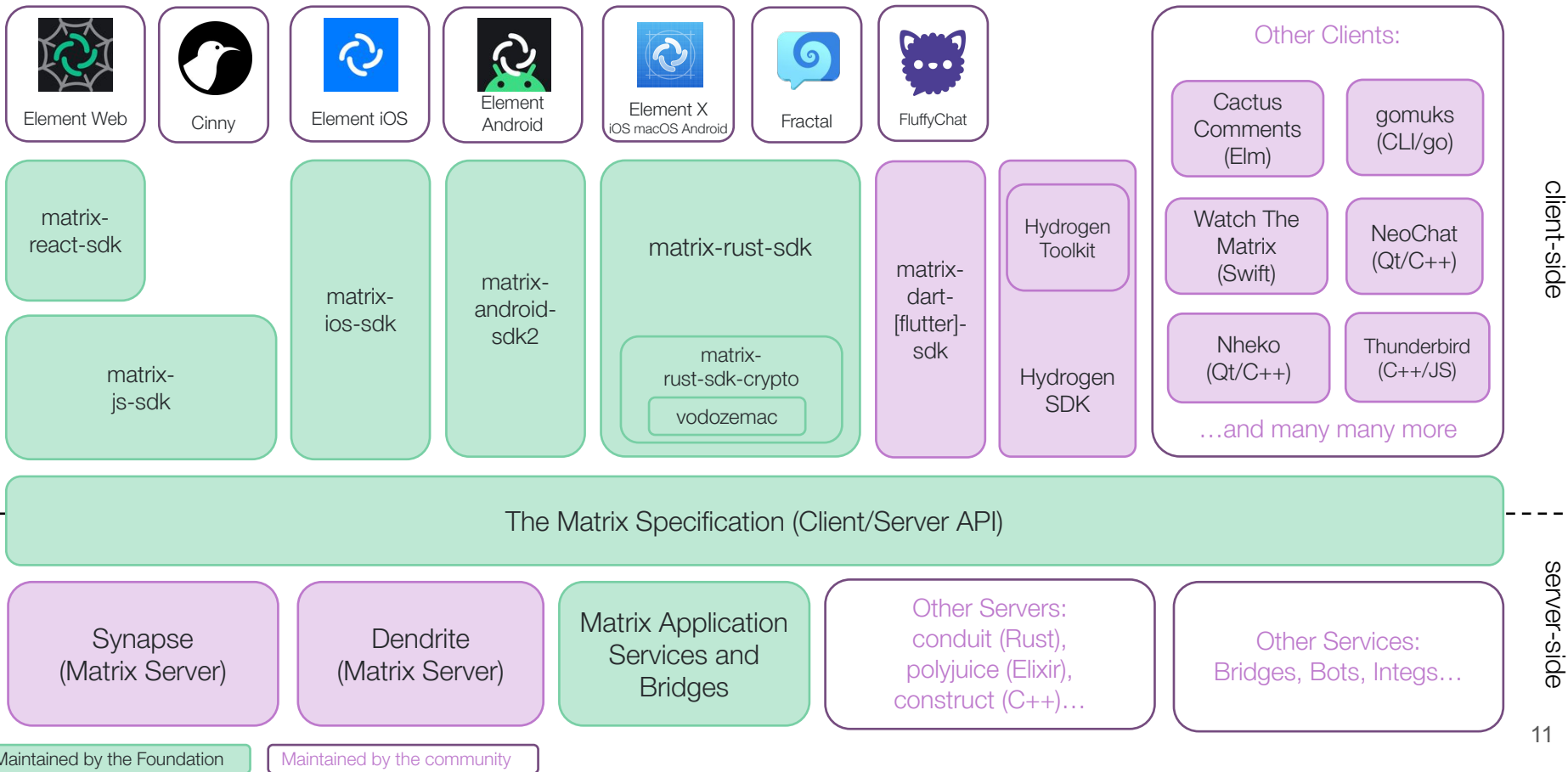
- Matt Mullenweg, founder of WordPress and Automattic

**“I am delighted and honored to say that we have one candidate that unambiguously meets our institutional and operational needs: we have decided to replace IRC with Matrix.”**

- Mike Hoyer, Mozilla

# Matrix Open Source Ecosystem

[matrix]





# The Matrix.org Foundation C.I.C.



- **UK non-profit company (C.I.C.)**
- **Neutral guardian of the Matrix standard, does not privilege any commercial vendor**
- **Releases all IP as unencumbered permissively-licensed open source software (ALv2)**
- **5 directors (“Guardians”)**
- **A Managing Director**
- **A Spec Core Team of subject matter experts that manage the specification**
- **A Governing Board made of various stakeholders (see dedicated section below)**
- **Responsible for growing Matrix as a public common good**

“The Matrix.org Foundation exists to act as a neutral custodian for Matrix and to nurture it as efficiently as possible as a single unfragmented standard, for the greater benefit of the whole ecosystem, not benefiting or privileging any single player or subset of players.”

# The Guardians of Matrix



**Prof. Jon Crowcroft FRS FREng**  
Marconi Professor of Communications  
Systems in the Computer Lab at the  
University of Cambridge, and the Turing  
Institute.



**Ross Schulman**  
Senior Fellow, Decentralization  
Electronic Frontier Foundation



**Matthew Hodgson**  
Tech co-founder of Matrix  
CEO/CTO Element



**Amandine Le Pape**  
Co-founder of Matrix  
COO Element



**Dr Jutta Steiner**  
CEO Parity Technologies Ltd  
Chief Security Auditor - Ethereum

# The Foundation

## Materialising the vision

**matrix**

### Governance & Stability

- Publishing the Matrix Specification
- Organising the Matrix Spec Core Team, responsible for reviewing and evolving the protocol.
- Writing ~50% of the Matrix Spec Change proposals.

### Preparing the future

- Developing next-generation end-to-end encryption implementations (MLS)
- Developing peer-to-peer Matrix implementations, avoiding the need for servers entirely
- Developing open source authentication mechanisms and integrations for Matrix (OIDC)
- Developing "beyond chat" Matrix apps e.g Third Room

- Developing client SDKs for Web, iOS, Android, Python, Rust to an extent, all the workforce coming from Element, same situation as Synapse
- Developing Matrix's end-to-end encryption implementations (libolm in C/C++ and vodozemac in Rust) same as above
- Developing and evolving additional core functionality in Matrix same as above
- ~~Developing open source integrations to other products~~
- Developing open source bridges to other platforms
  - OFTC, Discord, Slack?
- ~~Developing low bandwidth Matrix transports~~
- ~~Developing and hosting static Matrix room archives for the wider network (matrix-static and matrix-public-archive)~~ shelved because it caused outrage
- ~~Developing decentralised Video/VoIP conferencing servers on Matrix~~ purely Element
- ~~Developing decentralised Video/VoIP client components on Matrix~~ purely Element
- Developing integration test suites for Matrix compatibility testing: sytest: dead but still used; complement & complement crypto; trafflight: **unmaintained**
- ~~Developing a reference push notification server (signal)~~ absorbed by Element
- ~~Developing a reference identity directory server (sydent)~~ absorbed by Element
- Procuring and publishing independent public audits of Matrix's encryption and wider stack. Previous audit was billed to Element, but done on behalf of the Foundation

### Onboarding everyone

- Publishing the matrix.org website and blog
- Publishing the weekly "Matrix Live" video podcast
- Publishing the weekly "This Week In Matrix" news letter
- Organising regular meetups (e.g. "Open Tech Will Save Us")
- Promoting Matrix at open source conferences
- Running the matrix.org homeserver
- Running free public bridges to 3rd party platforms.
- Developing and hosting the matrix.to link redirect service
- Developing moderation tooling and applying it to matrix.org
- Publishing moderation reputation lists for the benefit of the wider community

# The Foundation's Work



## Governance & Stability

- Publishing the Matrix Specification
- Organising the Matrix Spec Core Team, responsible for reviewing and evolving the protocol.
- Writing ~50% of the Matrix Spec Change proposals.

## Preparing the future

- Developing next-generation end-to-end encryption implementations (MLS)
- Developing peer-to-peer Matrix implementations, avoiding the need for servers entirely
- Developing open source authentication mechanisms and integrations for Matrix (OIDC)
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## Materialising the vision

- Rust SDK (at risk of Element doing the same thing that they did with Synape & Dendrite)
- Encryption implementations
- Auditing those implementations (regularly?)
- Developing and hosting bridges to the popular platforms
  - IRC
  - Discord
  - Slack
- Developing integration test suites for Matrix compatibility testing: complement & complement crypto
- Procuring and publishing independent public audits of Matrix's encryption and wider stack

## Onboarding everyone

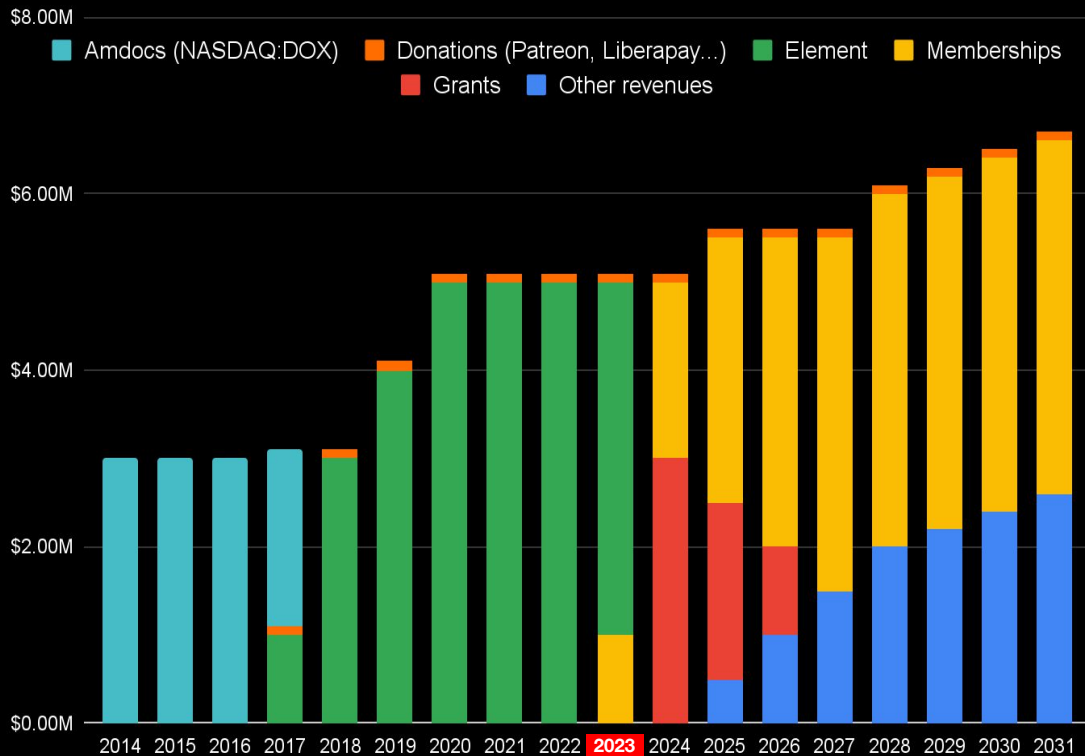
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# Foundation Funding



## Matrix.org Foundation Income Sources



⇒ To keep Matrix thriving and free, the Foundation needs significant income.

- **The Membership Program is aiming to be the largest revenue stream of the Foundation in the long term.**
- So far, Amdocs (who incubated Matrix) and Element (hiring the core team) shouldered most of the costs.
- Element cannot afford \$5M/y in this macro environment.
- Many large deployments go live without contributing neither code, resources nor funding.
- Other up revenue streams will progressively be set-up.
- Grants will provide a bridge whilst these new incomes reach the necessary levels.

# Membership Program

- **Why become a member?**

To support the Matrix project, share insights and guidance, and pool resources to make projects happen.

- **Who can become a member?**

Any person or organisation who wants to support and influence the project.

- **What does membership entail?**

An annual membership fee, the opportunity to sit on the Governing Board of the Foundation, marketing benefits, recommendation on the Spec Core team priorities, and more.

# Who will benefit from being a Member?

- **Organisations / individuals building on Matrix**
  - Needing an insurance the project is financially supported to be maintained and continue to evolve.
  - Wanting a front row seat on the decisions of the Foundation.
- **Organisations / individuals relying on Matrix**
  - Needing an insurance the project is financially supported to be maintained and continue to evolve.
  - Wanting a front row seat on the decisions of the Foundation.
- **Supporters of the mission wanting to ensure the project is maintained.**
- The Membership Program is governed by [Membership Agreements](#)

# Membership Program Overview



Member Level	Governing Board Representation	Annual Contribution (see USD/GBP/EUR equivalents on next slide)	Other benefits
Platinum	Maximum 4	\$500k/y	Platinum supporter badge for their website or marketing. Big logo on the website (front page + sponsor page). Press release on sponsorship (once) Free sponsorship of the Matrix Annual Conference and a 60% discount on sponsorship of the other Matrix conferences Sponsored Matrix Live episode (on their use of Matrix) - 1/y Success story on the blog (1/y). Ability to post on the Matrix job board.
Gold	Maximum 3	\$200k/y	Gold supporter badge for their website or marketing. Medium logo on the website (sponsor page). Press release on sponsorship (once)? A 60% discount on sponsorship of our Matrix conferences Success story on the blog (1/y). Ability to post on the Matrix job board.
Silver	Maximum 2	Sliding: 3,000+ FTE: \$80k 1,000-2,999 FTE: \$50k 500-999 FTE: \$30k 100-499 FTE: \$10k 0-99 FTE: \$2k	Silver supporter badge for their website or marketing. Small logo on the sponsor page of the website. A 40% discount on sponsorship of our Matrix conferences Ability to post on the Matrix job board.

# Membership Program Overview



Member Level	Governing Board Representation	Annual Contribution (see USD/GBP/EUR equivalents on next slide)	Other benefits
Ecosystem	Maximum 3	\$0/y	
Associate	Maximum 2	\$0/y	
Individuals	Maximum 4	At least \$60/y	Supporter badge on Matrix (flair). Free ticket to the Matrix Annual Conference

# Membership Contributions

Membership Levels	USD	GBP	EUR
Platinum	\$500,000	£400,000.00	€450,000
Gold	\$200,000	£160,000.00	€180,000
Silver 3,000+	\$80,000	£64,000.00	€72,000
Silver 1,000-2,999	\$50,000	£40,000.00	€45,000
Silver 500-999	\$30,000	£24,000.00	€27,000
Silver 100-499	\$10,000	£8,000.00	€9,000
Silver 0-99	\$2,000	£1,600.00	€1,800
Individual	\$60	£48.00	€54
Ecosystem	\$0	£0.00	€0
Associate	\$0	£0.00	€0

**Governing Board**



## Role of the Governing Board

- Ensure that the day to day running of the Foundation is **fair, equitable and supports the overall balanced growth of the Matrix ecosystem** and its individual participants, without advantaging any specific players.
- Support the Guardians in their governance of the Foundation
- Advisory role under its delegated authority from the Guardians
- The Guardians shall be under no obligation to accept the Governing Board's recommendations.
- Governed by the [Terms of Reference](#)

# Mandate of the Governing Board

- Approving the Foundation's budget, based on the Managing Director (MD)'s recommendations;
- Approve spending of funds for major costs and grants, based on the MD's recommendations;
- Approval of commercial partners and relationships for the Foundation if >\$50,000 (as an individual contract or as a cumulative value with the same partner over the last 12 months)
- Approving initiatives and programs with a major impact on the brand and reputation of the Foundation, or which create a new revenue stream
  - E.g. setting up an accreditation process, setting up a grant system, organising a Matrix conference with a budget over \$10,000, setting up consulting or software development functions;
- Providing a review and endorsement on a prioritised list of Spec Core Team priorities.
  - No the authority to appoint or remove SCT members (only Guardians can)
- Providing post-meeting conclusions, recommendations and guidance on next steps to the Guardians.

# Members of the Governing Board

- Constituted of:
  - Nonprofit and community representatives
    - 4 Individual Members
    - 3 Ecosystem Members
    - 2 Associate Members
  - Funder representatives
    - 4 Platinum Members
    - 3 Gold Members
    - 2 Silver Members
  - Foundation representatives
    - Managing Director
    - 2 Spec Core Team Members
    - 3 Guardians
- Meeting twice a year
- Representatives are elected by their constituency group (Condorcet method)

# Election of the Governing Board

- One official election a year, renewing half the GB  
⇒ each rep is elected for 2 years.
  - Even years - Guardians, SCT, Platinum, Ecosystem
  - Odd years - Gold, Silver, Individual, Associate
- Each member can only put 1 candidate forward
- Possibility to add a by-election to replace leaving members
- Encouraging but not enforcing the fact the representative must rotate between all members (we're not forcing members to sit out)

# Conclusion

The Membership Program and Governing Board allow all community members to:

- Support the the Matrix protocol via the Foundation
- Be involved in the running of the Foundation
- Unlock a bigger potential to develop Matrix

**Get involved at [matrix.org/membership](https://matrix.org/membership)**

**Thank you**