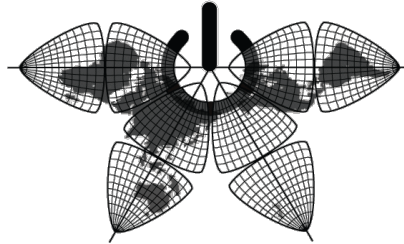Terms of Reference
Project Manager: Responsible Data Program

Position Title: Project Manager
Organization: the engine room
Contract Type: Freelance, full time equivalent
Contract Length: 1 year, with opportunity for extension, beginning early 2015
Location: Anywhere
Salary: Competitive, based on experience

Summary

The engine room is a young, quickly growing distributed team working to support the safe and efficient use of technology in advocacy. We are seeking a project manager for the Responsible Data Program, which addresses the ethical, privacy and security risks surrounding data-driven advocacy. The ideal candidate will be an experienced and passionate leader with experience managing projects and implementing projects in a country setting, with demonstrated skills of collaboration, community development, team building, articulating responsible data challenges, and supporting civil society to use technology effectively. The project manager will be responsible for pursuing the program's goals in three main areas: advocacy and awareness raising; direct support to advocacy initiatives; and research and resource development. The position will also include administrative, budgetary, and fundraising responsibility. The Responsible Data Program will strengthen and develop the work of the Responsible Data Forum (https://responsibledata.io).

Background

Activists and advocates are using data and technology to address a variety of obstacles and with varying degrees of success. The new opportunities of data also imply new risks, however, and failing to use data and technology responsibly can result in real harm to projects, relationships and beneficiaries. This includes potential harms that have been

traditionally addressed within the context of digital security and information security, but also challenges more deeply embedded in information strategies, relationships with local communities and the ways in which information can be adapted and repurposed outside of project activities. As more groups turn towards novel tools to accomplish their aims, there is an increasing awareness about the responsible data risks posed by new technologies, but little understanding about how to mitigate those risks.

The Responsible Data Program seeks to address the challenges faced by activists and organizations using data and technology in advocacy. This is related to – but very distinct from – the societal questions about ethics, data and security posed by big data and new media. The engine room works directly with advocates and the challenges they face, supporting groups who recognize these challenges, and raising awareness among projects that are facing responsible data challenges but don't know it.

To date, the Responsible Data Program has been implemented through the Responsible Data Forum (https://responsibledata.io), as well as ad hoc, direct support activities. The Responsible Data Forum (a series of collaborative events organized together with Amnesty International, Aspiration, the engine room, Greenhost, HURIDOCS, Privacy International, School of Data, and Ushahidi) will continue to play a central role in the larger program, grounding and facilitating other activities.

Position Description

The project manager will be responsible for developing the Responsible Data Program and helping the program to achieve its strategic objectives. This will involve coordinating a diverse array of activities, from coordinating events, to managing strategic partnerships, contributing to public and private discussions, advocating for more responsible data practices in international fora, and coordinating and executing trainings and organizational support activities. The RDP program manager will also have administrative responsibility for the program, including budget management, reporting, and fundraising, but will not have any direct supervisory responsibility.

Because responsible data practices are central to the engine room's mandate to promote safe and effective use of data and technology in advocacy in general, the Responsible Data Program is closely linked to all other engine room activities. As such, the RDP program manager will work closely with other engine room team members to identify and capitalize on opportunities for collaboration and integration across program areas.

The RDP program manager will be a key member of a dynamic distributed team. S/he will work remotely, but closely, with a group of dedicated colleagues in a fun and fast paced working environment. The work itself will involve grappling with impossible dilemmas, applying nebulous theoretical frameworks to messy real-life situations, and at the end of the day, working to help people do tremendously important and inspiring work in very inspiring ways. It will be a demanding, and highly rewarding position.

Responsibilities

- Advocacy and awareness-raising
  - plan and implement thematic and "big tent" Responsible Data Forums to address priority issues and continue developing the responsible data community
  - coordinate with RDF partners to agree on common strategies and priorities
  - plan and implement online events, such as hangouts and webinars, to address key responsible data issues
  - work with the engine room's community catalyst to nurture and support the emerging community of advocates and support actors concerned with improving responsible data practices
  - follow relevant discussions online and in academic literature, contributing to those discussions as appropriate
  - attend conferences and other events to present and discuss responsible data
  - work with partners and donors to support their responsible data advocacy strategies
  - regularly produce blog posts and other online content that documents RDP lessons learned

- Direct support to advocacy initiatives
  - identify and liaise with engine room partners and other advocacy initiatives facing responsible data challenges to identify opportunities for direct support
  - maintain a loose network of relevant experts who are able to provide direct support to advocacy initiatives on a consultancy basis
  - organize bilateral support delivery
  - plan and implement direct support workshops and clinics for advocacy initiatives

- Research and resource development
  - Maintain familiarity with contemporary research and relevant methodologies
  - Plan and manage research projects
  - Facilitate the production of research outputs and resources (tools, checklists, guides) on the basis of program activities

- Management
  - lead the development and implementation strategic work plans in collaboration with team
  - coordinate project reporting
  - manage project budget
  - support and lead fundraising efforts as appropriate
  - fundraise

Requirements

- Great communication and writing skills in English; a second language preferred but not required

- Experience working with advocacy initiatives in sensitive or high-pressure contexts is strongly preferred

- Some familiarity with ongoing debates surrounding ethics and data

- Strong familiarity with basic research and data collection methodologies is required

- Some familiarity with statistical methods is preferred

- Demonstrated ability to manage multiple activity streams and groups of teams

- Demonstrated ability to work effectively remotely, using and adapting to various online tools to coordinate and manage activities

- Familiarity with open source and security tools, and proven ability to identify and adopt new and appropriate tools

- Demonstrated ability to manage budgets

- Dependable and detail-oriented

- Sense of humour required