Mobilizon v2, now matured, like a good French wine

Mobilizon is our answer to the question: « How can we make it so that Climate Walks and demonstrations are not organized on Facebook? » This tool allows you to create groups, pages and events, without having to offer your data, update your status, tag your friends, share your photos…

« Frama is not just… »

Each week of Fall 2021, we want to present you the diversity of what Framasoft does. As these actions are funded by your donations (66% tax-free for French tax-payers), you can find a complete summary, in the form of cards to click and flip, on the website Support Framasoft.

➡️ Read this series of articles (FR, Oct – Dec 2021)

First, you will need to find where to register on Mobilizon. We do host Mobilizon.fr, but it is restricted to French speaking users (otherwise we wouldn’t be able to moderate). But we’ve got you covered: we propose a selection of other Mobilizon hosters on Mobilizon.org.

Come again: what is Mobilizon?

Mobilizon is first and foremost a software, that web-hosters can install on a server, in order to create a platform, a Mobilizon web site. This Mobilizon web site can federate and thus synchronize its data with other Mobilizon web sites.

Imagine if Facebook were a network with several entry points, like emails. You would have the choice to sign up with this or
that Facebook provider (just like you have the choice of your email provider). You’d choose such hoster because you feel you can trust them with your data, or to enforce a fair moderation. However, your Facebook provider would give you access to as many events and groups in the network as possible, because it would federate with the other hosts (just as you can receive emails from anyone, regardless of their provider).

That’s what Mobilizon is: a federated tool to publish your events, your pages, your information... and to focus on organizing your group.

Discover Mobilizon on the official website Join Mobilizon
Illustration : David Revoy (CC BY)
One year of updates from your feedbacks

It’s been a little over a year since we published the first version (v1) of Mobilizon. Let’s admit that proposing a tool to organize and gather your group in the midst of confinements and curfews was not such a smart idea!

Yet Mobilizon is a promising software, with more than 75 public hosts (we’re calling them instances) and an already international scope. It must be said that for the past year, we have been updating the software to provide you with much needed features.

Last March, we released version 1.1, which added a history of activities, the ability to display events by geographic proximity and access to RSS feeds (to subscribe to news feeds and not miss anything).

In late June, we released version 1.2, which includes a notification system (useful for informing participants of your event), and a clear improvement of the interface (more pleasant on mobile).

In mid-August, we released version 1.3 of Mobilizon. It allows a better management of groups, whose administrators or moderators can edit events or blog posts. Moreover, you can now add many metadata to events: accessibility level, Twitter account, live stream address…

Finally, we worked in partnership with Koena Connect (a French accessibility company) to improve the accessibility of Mobilizon. Koena Connect provided a direct feedback channel to the persons who find accessibility issues with our software.
Mobilizon v2, a tool designed to serve you

Since this summer, we have been working hard (with our team of ONE paid developer who devotes 75% of his time to the project) to implement features inspired by your comments and requests.

From now on, it is possible for one of your Mobilizon profiles to follow the public activities of a group without having to join. You will have these events on your « My Events » page (now with a new filter system to display events). They will also appear on your home page and in your emails notifications (that you can turn off), as soon as this group publishes a public event.
People who organize events can now export a list of attendants, for example to check who has signed up and who comes. This list is downloadable in the most common formats (csv, odf, pdf), and for now only contains the names of profiles who have clicked « Participate » (and messages from anonymous accounts). But this is the beginning of a work that could be expanded, depending on your expectations.

Mobilizon v2 solves a real headache (and it was one to develop :p!): dealing with time zones. Now, if you organize an event in London, the time of your event will be associated with the British time zone by default.
Mobilizon will then convert the time for people who want to register from France, by displaying the time of the event on Paris time, for example. For this, Mobilizon looks at the time zone declared by your web browser (and you can control this setting in your account). This also allows Mobilizon to send you « the event starts in an hour » reminder emails at the right time, i.e.: yours (what a pleasure!)

A lot of work has been done to correctly display right to left languages; we had to adapt the interface itself. The tricky part was to adapt to « bidirectional » cases, where two languages with different reading directions are mixed, for example Mobilizon’s interface in French and an event described in Arabic.
You have asked for it (a lot), and it is even more relevant in times of pandemic, you now have the possibility to define an event as online, without geographical location. We’ve also added a new filter to the Mobilizon search, so you can see only « online » events among your results.

About the search engine, it is now possible to search among past events, just to find the ones that you liked.

We have implemented an automatic detection of the language of the events. When you write your event title and description, Mobilizon will assign a language to it. This allows for better accessibility for people who use a screen reader, but also improves on displaying the time of your event in its social media preview.
Finally, there are many, many tweaks that may seem small but are life changing. We worked on the emails look, on the cards presenting events or groups, and improved on the public view of groups (the alternative to Facebook « pages »). We also made progress in digital accessibility thanks to our exchanges with Koena.

Mobilizon can now easily run on ARM machines, which will facilitate self-hosting on nanocomputers (like Raspberry Pi) or with Yunohost, for example.
Join the Mobilizon Community

Mobilizon is still in the early stages of its life, with a very motivated community. There are lively discussions in our Matrix Room! The contributors who translate Mobilizon are amazingly efficient (thanks and lots of datalove to them!)

We don’t know exactly yet how we’ll improve on Mobilizon in 2022. Our intuitions tell us that we will have to work on making this solution better known to the people it could appeal to.

One way to manage it would be to improve content discovery (events, groups, their public page, the public articles of these groups) notably by working on search tools, filters, and so on.

But nothing is decided yet and we are eager to hear your
feedback (on our forum or our Matrix lounge, for example) to know what direction to give to Mobilizon.

Illustration : David Revoy (CC BY)

As soon as we have a clearer roadmap proposal, we’ll be sure to let you know in the Mobilizon newsletter (so be sure to sign up here).

By coincidence, today the documentary Disappear – Under the Radar of Algorithms is released by ArteTV. Directed by Marc Meillassoux, this documentary features a performer trying to escape from the clutches of Facebook, and Mobilizon seems to play an important role in it...
Mobilizon is financed thanks to your donations

We remind you that this v2 of Mobilizon has been financed on our 2021 budget, so directly thanks to the donations of the people who support Framasoft. Indeed, Framasoft is a not-for-profit organization financed at 93% by your donations.

Because Framasoft is recognized as being of general interest by French authorities, donations to our association are tax deductible for French taxpayers. Thus, a donation of 100 € to Framasoft is, after deduction of income tax, 34 €.

We have explained, in this series of articles in French on the Framablog, all the actions that are financed by a donation to Framasoft. They are summarized in a set of (multilingual !) cards to click, flip and color on our support Framasoft page.

Thank you in advance for visiting and sharing this page. For those of you who can, please consider giving colors to our actions by making a donation to Framasoft.

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This is Rôse, the Mobilizon mascot. Click on the image to read a photo novel that shows you a guided tour of Mobilizon. 

illustration: David Revoy (CC-By)

Helpful links

- Mobilizon official website
- Our French speaking instance Mobilizon.fr
- Discover the federation on Mobilizon.org
- See the source code of Mobilizon
- Support Framasoft