



RightsCon

B R U S S E L S

OUTCOMES REPORT

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Opening ceremonies

Evening networking reception

From left to right: Brett Solomon, Andrei Soldatov, Alaa Abd El-Fattah, Marietje Schaake, Mitchell Baker, and Julie Owono

Chinmayi Arun

Jan Philipp Albrecht



Introducing RightsCon Brussels

1518
PARTICIPANTS

105
COUNTRIES

250
SESSIONS

Access Now is proud to present the outcomes report on the sixth event of our annual summit series, RightsCon Brussels (rightscon.org), from March 29 to 31, 2017.

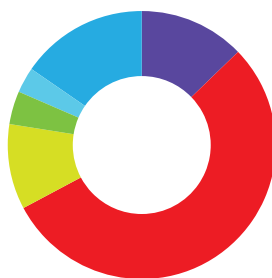
As the world's leading event on human rights in the digital age, RightsCon brought the global human rights community to the heart of European politics and policymaking. Decisions made in Brussels affect not just the European Union and its member states, but are increasingly consequential for policies, frameworks, and best-practices worldwide. Europe is a standard setter, and home to nearly 750 million people. It is a place where our digital rights are both protected and abused, where democratic principles are being weakened and, at the same time, remain a beacon of hope for many.

RightsCon Brussels brought together more than 1,500 experts from 105 countries around the world and across diverse geographic and stakeholder lines to produce measurable outcomes on the most pressing and emerging issues threatening human rights in the digital age.



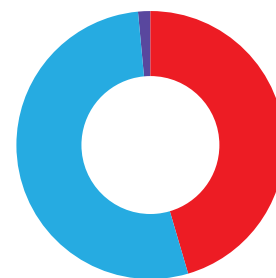
Participants by Region

- Asia Pacific: **6.5%**
- Latin America: **5.3%**
- CIS: **2.6%**
- Europe: **50.3%**
- North America: **27.9%**
- MENA and Sub-Saharan Africa: **7.4%**



Participants by Stakeholder

- Academic: **12.7%**
- Civil Society: **54.8%**
- Government and intergovernmental: **10.2%**
- Independent: **3.5%**
- Media and Press: **3.1%**
- Private Sector: **15.7%**



Participants by Gender Group

- Self-identified as female: **45.4%**
- Self-identified as Male: **53.1%**
- Self-identified as non-binary: **1.5%**

Program Tracks and Session Highlights

RightsCon Brussels was organized around three full days of programming, with more than 250 unique sessions organized into 21 Programme Tracks. Below are a few highlights.



TRACK 01

The #KeepItOn Summit: Fighting shutdowns and network disruptions

Everything We Know About Internet Shutdowns [Access Now](#)

Government-ordered internet shutdowns nearly tripled in number between 2015 and 2016, harming human rights and economies worldwide. This session offered a crash course in internet shutdowns with a global perspective, mapping out their causes and impacts; emerging trends; hotspots; new research on circumvention and economics; and who is fighting back to stop them. The session ended by explaining exactly how a shutdown occurs, mapping out the key stakeholders involved in the process.

Multilateral Approaches to Network Disruptions [Freedom Online Coalition](#)

While more than 25 government ordered internet shutdowns last year, other governments and bodies such as the UN and African Union are pushing back. This session brought together members of the Freedom Online Coalition, a collection of 30 governments supporting free expression, as well as key officials at the UN, to discuss internet shutdowns.

TRACK 02

Freedom of Expression: WTF now?

Towards a Pan-African Commitment to Freedom of Expression Online

[Paradigm Initiative Nigeria](#)

This session addressed the problem of incessant clampdowns on bloggers in Africa. It is fast becoming a blight to Africa's civilization that physical abuse of rights is gradually transmuting to the online space. Bloggers and online press practitioners from different regions of the continent are being continuously harassed by state actors to suppress free press and expression.

Free Expression, Technology, and Political Change [Access Now](#)

Recent years have seen rapid technological change — from “disruptive” apps to advances in medicine and transportation — bringing opportunities and challenges. Societies have grappled with these changes in different ways, by opening their arms to marginalized communities, or separating themselves through populist politics.



TRACK 03

Algorithmic Accountability and Transparency:
 Shining a light in the black box

Algorithms, Memory, and Oblivion in Latin America
[Derechos Digitales](#)

During the harsher periods of Latin American authoritarianism, lack of complete and truthful information was the rule. With little or no information about grave violations of human rights, justice became hard to accomplish. Understandably, one of the most prominent arguments against the right to be forgotten in the Latin American region appeals to a “right to memory” or a “right to truth.”

At the same time, however, people in Latin America have become more involved in an economy of information where personal data is processed by powerful actors with their own technologies. The threat to the right to privacy created by surveillance, big data gathering, and profiling by both public and private players has become one of the most important subjects of our time. In this context, algorithms are the ultimate definers of our online personality, with authoritarian practices ever-present to take advantage of them under secrecy and without accountability.

(How) Can Algorithms Be Human Rights-Compliant?
[Human Rights Centre, University of Essex](#)

Data-driven algorithms have become widespread in our daily lives, ubiquitous in both minor and major decisions that others make about us. Given the broad uptake of algorithmic decision-making across both the public and private sector, from policing to healthcare, this session explored whether and how algorithms can be human rights-compliant. This topical issue required a multi-disciplinary perspective, and the session drew on experts with a diverse expertise to converge human rights principles with technological solutions.

TRACK 04

Neutral Networks and Maximum Connectivity:
 The non-discrimination of the internet

Net Neutrality Planet: What’s Next in the Global Fight for an Open Internet
[epicenter.works](#)

Access is a precondition for taking part in almost every aspect of modern life. This panel brought together stakeholders to explore their different perspectives on the state of the internet. The discussion looked at efforts to keep the internet open to all ideas and speakers — in the face of new threats to openness across the globe — even as we continue pushing for universal access. It explored: how to keep the internet a free and open platform while connecting the unconnected; the relationship between competition, infrastructure investment, and information monopolies in democracies; and what the US election and EU developments can tell us about the outlook for net neutrality going forward.

OTT Services: Leveling the Field for Digital Rights
[Access Now](#)

Multiple proposals around the world, especially in Latin America, Southeast Asia, and Sub-Saharan Africa, aimed at regulating so called “Over the Top”(OTT) services bring questions and challenges in relation to the future of the internet as we know it. Regulatory agencies and lawmakers are debating whether to regulate internet services in the same manner as telecommunications services for licensing or to give birth to new approaches that reflect the particularities of the principles upon which the internet is based.

In the middle of this discussion is the internet and its basic principles and features. Certain regulatory decisions risk curbing the free and open internet and the principles of permissionless innovation and neutrality that contributed to its expansion. Other regulatory approaches, however, aim to protect privacy and data protection of people regardless of what services they’re using. This session discussed the needs, proposals, and digital rights implications of this debate and the options to protect the rights-enabling nature of the internet.

TRACK 05

Business and Human Rights:
Transparency, accountability, and remedy

Sanctions and Human Rights: What We Can Learn From Iran and Cuba

ASL19

A complicated history of restrictions imposed by the US and other governments has left a set of legal, economic, and cultural barriers to tech sector engagement with both Cuba and Iran. The barriers — whether perceived or real — result in limited access to products, apps, and services essential to securely accessing the open internet. In short, sanctions interfere with digital rights and leave people more at risk. Are these restrictions permissible in the digital age? Can sanctions be smartened? What’s the relationship between sanctions and export controls? Should the regimes be flipped completely to more effectively target threats?

The session allowed participants to ask — or tell — stakeholders with experience in government, the private sector, and civil society how we can all push for open access.

Corporate Sponsorship of NGOs and Conferences: Ethics and Independence

Privacy Surgeon

More and more, companies are increasing their relationships with civil liberties and advocacy groups as it represents an opportunity to improve their human rights awareness. Under growing financial difficulties, civil society organisations are looking for diverse source of revenues which means that this relationship sometimes involves donation or fundings from companies. Similarly, privacy conferences — indeed many human rights events — rely on the sponsorship of corporations. Such funding can provide a stable financial base that reduces costs and allows flexibility to reduce entry prices and provide support for participants. There are, however, ethical issues to be considered. This session examined the best ways for industry and NGOs to work together, explored the dynamics of corporate sponsorship and fundings, and sought to understand how corporations can co-exist with events that are naturally independent.

TRACK 06

The Truth Is Out There:
Fake news and grappling with a “post-truth” narrative

Resisting Content Regulation in the Post-Truth World: How to Fix Fake News and the Algorithmic Curation of Social Media

University of Amsterdam / Center for Internet & Society (Bangalore)

Recently, The Economist argued that we now live in a “post-truth” world, where public opinion is shaped not by objective facts, but rather by appeals to emotion or personal beliefs. Social media is believed to play a key role in this process which, it is argued, is detrimental to democracy. In the aftermath of the 2016 US presidential election, Facebook has faced extensive criticism for the circulation of “fake news” on its wires. Many have called for measures, including curation and fact-checking, which arguably go in the direction of “content policing” on social media.

This session promoted an inclusive discussion on the phenomenon of fake news, bubbles, algorithmic curation, and the future of information sharing on social media platforms, in the context of the ongoing debate on internet governance in the age of platformisation of the web.

Connect. Engage. Mobilise: Reaching a Mass Audience and Effecting Change Through Digital Platforms

Psiphon

This session focused on reaching and engaging people around the world, both within the organisation’s own community and, perhaps more importantly, outside of it with representatives from ARTICLE 19, Index on Censorship, Psiphon, and other organizations for whom mobilisation and civic engagement are crucial. The session looked at real-world examples of outreach and engagement, what strategies their organisations have used to widen their audience, and the role traditional media outlets.

TRACK 07

Empowering At-Risk Communities:
LGBTQ, children, refugees, and women

Money, Data, and Surveillance: How Gender Bias Affects Your Privacy

The Bachchao Project

This session discussed how India’s currency crisis (also referred to as “demonetisation”) has affected women and undermined their privacy in new and unprecedented ways, and in the absence of regulation or policy covering the new digital transaction “regime.” This session also talked about the general idea of how the flow of digital money, as opposed to hard cash, makes women and gender minorities more prone to surveillance and vulnerable to breaches of privacy.

Children’s Right’s Online: Privacy and Freedom of Expression
UNICEF

As more children around the world spend more time on the internet, in more ways, it becomes more essential to appreciate what children’s rights mean in a digital world. While there is now a well-established public imperative to protect children from harm, abuse and violence online, there has been comparatively little consideration of how to

empower children as active digital rights-holders. At the same time, the rapidly expanding power and reach of the ICT sector have thrust communications and technology companies into key policy debates around the risks and opportunities children encounter online.

This raises particular challenges, including: How do we ensure greater respect for children’s privacy, both empowering children to protect their personal information and preventing unwarranted intrusions? How can children best exercise their civil rights online, including their right to freedom of expression?

A roundtable discussion on these issues provided companies, governments, and civil society organisations a chance to explore rights not usually considered in the context of children and the Internet. UNICEF presented research on children’s use and experience of the internet, developed through the Global Kids Online project launched by the UNICEF Office of Research - Innocenti, the London School of Economics, and EU Kids Online. Discussion then aimed to assess whether existing laws and standards adequately address children’s full range of rights, needs, and vulnerabilities, and to consider the roles and responsibilities of business.



TRACK 08

Trade Agreements and Ownership: Copyright, liability, and trade wars

Keeping up with the GAFAs: Competition Policy and Internet Openness

Mozilla

The internet is increasingly populated by vertically integrated silos of content, applications, and services. And sometimes these combinations offer compelling benefits for internet users. But the internet’s superpower is enabling new innovation from individuals, entrepreneurs, and startups that build on the existing awesomeness, without having to recreate it. If today’s titans are allowed to be gatekeepers for tomorrow’s disruptors, we risk losing what makes the internet special. Competition law and policy aren’t (yet) built to handle this context — anywhere, including in the US and Europe. This session described what it would mean to update competition frameworks for technology to make them more suitable for the internet era.

Culture to the People! Adapting Copyright to the XXI Century

European Digital Rights (EDRi)

While technology makes easier to access information, cultural monopolies are successfully maintaining the status quo and the same labor relationships with authors and citizens as the pre-internet era. While new ways to disseminate music and video appear, the right balance between them and the fair remuneration for authors has not been found yet, making some authors sceptical towards the internet world. This session brought together activists and artists that actively work on access to culture and copyright.



TRACK 09

Privacy and Data Protection:
 New rules and practices for a data planet

EU-US Privacy Shield: A Zero in Hero's Clothing?

[Center for Democracy and Technology \(CDT\)](#)

This session discussed the relationship between the EU-US Privacy Shield and the re-authorization of US legislation used to surveil Europeans and others outside of the United States. Panelists explored whether a straight re-authorization of Section 702 of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act (FISA) in December 2017 would threaten the Privacy Shield agreement by exposing Europeans' communications to broad, unchecked surveillance by the US government. This session also suggested ways that activists from Europe can engage on reform of US surveillance under Section 702 that targets them.

Privacy for Everyone: Using Libraries to Promote Digital Privacy

[International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions](#)

The library as a learning space is widely acknowledged, and since public libraries first appeared they have filled the role of community educators and information providers. Countless people had their first contact with a computer in a library and libraries often provide training for using ICTs, which is an important step to close the digital divide. The skillset ICT and internet users possess is often referred to as digital literacy — i.e. knowledge of how to navigate in a digital environment.

An important component in digital literacy is knowledge about personal data and privacy concerns in the digital environment. This session brought together people from within and outside the library field to show examples of how digital privacy can be taught to the average internet user. The session also demonstrated solutions for professionals who provide library services as well as library users themselves, and suggestions for how civil society can engage with libraries to promote a better understanding of digital privacy.

TRACK 10

Digital Security and Encryption:
 Protecting us, our content, and our networks

Breaking Encryption: An Increasingly Heated but Static Debate With No End or Resolution In Sight. Where Should / Must It Go Next?

[Vodafone](#)

Encryption is at the centre of one of the most complex and controversial debates in the history of the global

telecommunications and technology industries. For many, encryption is a sacrosanct component of data security that also underpins an individual's ability to seek and share information and opinions freely online. However, there is also widespread belief that the technologies that protect the public simultaneously enable individuals — such as criminals and terrorists — intent on causing public harm, to hide in plain sight.

Views are increasingly polarised and impassioned with many believing that fundamental principles are at stake. Yet the debate seems to have made little visible progress beyond being an argument about the benefits (in terms of privacy) and the challenges (in terms of security). This session addressed the question: where does the debate on encryption need to go next in order to find a workable resolution? To get to the root of this question, the session stimulated a thorough and stretching debate between government, business, and civil society around encryption, privacy, and safety.

Secure UX: How Design Methodologies Build Safer Online Communities

[Meedan, Access Now](#)

This session addressed one of the most debatable issues in the design of many digital products, platforms, and services: the longstanding usability v.s. security conundrum. It focused on the important role of user research in the design process to create tools that are useful to end users, and best practices to conduct user research.



TRACK 11

Borders and Boundaries:
Jurisdiction, sovereignty, & legal landscapes

Will Google Forget You in LatAm and Southeast Europe?

Fundación Datos Protegidos

This session focused on the application of the RTBF in Latin America and South East Europe. Although these two regions are outside of the European Union, and therefore not directly bound by the Costeja decision, there have already been several RTBF cases against Google. However, there are no unified rules, and many cases have been decided arbitrarily and in procedures very different from the one used in the EU. This session focused on discussing and coming up with unified criteria that should be put in place.

The Long Arm of the Law: Extraterritoriality of Data Protection and Risks to Freedom of Expression

CETYS

This roundtable explored the limits of data protection enforcement, particularly when exercised over content hosted or published in different jurisdictions, in order to be respectful of freedom of expression. Participants from Argentina, Korea, the UK, and elsewhere reported how international data transfers are conducted in their jurisdictions, and what type of powers are granted over the data and the recipients of such data through transfer agreements to local authorities. This session identified preliminary recommendations in order to prevent international data transfers from becoming a mechanism of censorship.

TRACK 12

Show and Tell:
Skills building and knowledge seminars

Meet the Funders: An OTR Q&A with Donors

US Department of State

As the internet freedom space has evolved, so too have the donors supporting this work. This OTR Q&A session was an opportunity for current and potential grantees to meet with a variety of donors to ask questions, raise concerns, and learn more about their funding priorities and processes.

How to Talk So Companies Will Listen, and Listen So Companies Will Talk: Doing Company Advocacy and Research

Ranking Digital Rights

It's now a well-established fact that ICT companies have major power over users' ability to enjoy and exercise their human rights online as well as "in real

life." As a result, more and more civil society actors are researching the inner workings of companies and developing advocacy campaigns to influence them. However, researchers often face obstacles including lack of corporate transparency, legal issues, and difficulty developing a collaborative relationship with companies, and the strategies that have served us well in engaging with government actors don't always translate to working with the private sector. Other company officials may be familiar with transparency as a tool to fight corruption, but do not see the connection between transparency, human rights, and the business operations of an ICT company, even though these issues are well-understood at other levels of the same company. In this session, seasoned researchers and advocates discussed how they use various tools to understand what's going on inside companies, and shared their insights on to conduct company-oriented advocacy in a way that company representatives will actually engage with.

TRACK 13

Stop the Hate:
Countering violent extremism and responding to hate speech

Harnessing the Power of Digital Technology to Counter the Proliferation of Online Hate

Global Affairs Canada

What can we do to counter the proliferation of online hate? What digital tools can be adopted to counter online hate? What can we do to protect and empower the targets of online hate?

This session kicked off with input from a cross section of perspectives to stimulate a discussion of how technology can be leveraged to counter online hate, what role various actors (government, private sector, civil society) can and should play, and what measures social media platforms and digital publishers/ platform owners could adopt to help alleviate the problem. By the end of the session, a number of digital best practices and identifies recommendations for future collaboration had been short listed.

Fighting Words: Firsthand Lessons from Former Extremists
Anti-Defamation League & CETYS

This session gave a glimpse into the inner workings of extremist groups. Through discussion with former leaders, recruiters, and spokespersons from these groups, the session explored how extremists employ modern technology and social media to spread their message and recruit new members.

In the session, each speaker told her personal story, from her initial involvement in extremist groups to her movement away from the ideology. Though the stories involve different religions, ideologies, and target audiences, similar themes emerged: the persuasive power of empathy and engagement, and the role of modern technology in both spreading extremism and combating it.

After a Q&A, the session concluded with a “mini-hackathon.” This audience brainstorming session applied the lessons learned from the speakers to propose new tools and initiatives to combat the spread of online hate, violence, and extremism. The panelists and the moderator will take these ideas and develop them into potential tools, program proposals, or policy initiatives.



TRACK 14

Global Journalism:
Bloggers, encryption, & media development

Journalism is Not a Crime... Except When It Is
[Committee to Protect Journalists](#)

Journalism is not a crime. But increasingly it is being treated as such. This session brought together activists, experts and journalists to discuss how cybercrime laws, anti-terrorism and anti-extremism policies, and hate speech regulations are being used to restrict legitimate speech and journalism online with specific focus on Africa, the Middle East, South Asia, Iran, and Turkey.

Live-Streaming for Human Rights: Potential and Pitfalls
[WITNESS](#)

Live-streaming is surging in popularity, driven by the increasing accessibility of platforms such as Facebook Live and Periscope. The use of live-streaming for activism, mobilisation, and to document violations

of human rights has also grown. But it’s not all good news. Despite the significant human rights value of these streams, activists deal with streams being taken down arbitrarily by companies or being censored by governments, and corporations grapple with how to manage real-time graphic content. What’s more, streams can be surveilled by governments or other parties, and if not done properly can even accidentally incriminate or endanger subjects.

This session explored these challenges, using case studies from #NoDAPL, to #BLM and police misconduct in the USA, to Brazil protests and favela-based activism, with the goal of beginning to outline best practices for companies and for live-streamers. This session also covered innovations and opportunities in live-streaming, and current technological, tactical, corporate and governmental blocks to successful live-streaming in the public interest. This session wrapped with discussion around how to better enable the power of live-streaming for free expression, while protecting privacy and minimising censorship.

TRACK 15

States in Cyberspace:
Government hacking, mass surveillance, and citizen rights

When is it Ethical to Evade Law Enforcement Surveillance?
[Private Internet Access](#)

Lawful isn’t ethical and ethical isn’t lawful; they are two different concepts. This session examined the stances of law enforcement, people from mass surveillance agencies, and liberty defenders to highlight the crucial contrast.

Bad Bears: State-Sponsored Hacking in Russia
[Vision of Tomorrow](#)

The session discussed the recent waves of digital attacks against activists, journalists, researchers, and other politically sensitive targets attributed to agents of the Russian government. Both domestic and international actors have faced such attacks, ranging from the US Democratic National Convention to anti-corruption activists in Russia to those investigating Kremlin’s involvement in the war in Ukraine. Methods used by the hackers have often been strikingly similar prompting a single source. In other cases, the attackers used mobile phone operators to take over activists’ instant messengers accounts, which raised concerns over security of SMS verification. Such attacks have often resulted in disruption of civic and journalistic activities, publication of confidential information, and even direct meddling in voting procedures.

Participants shared the first-hand information about the attacks from some of their targets and discussed how the IT community, companies, governments, and users can deal with this growing threat. The discussion included ideas for improvement of security of email and instant messaging services as well as cooperation and information sharing among likely targets and information security specialists.

TRACK 16

Health, Environment, Land, and Labor: The digitisation of our world

Bath Bombs and Smartphones: Responsible Product Sourcing in the Digital Age

Lush, Fairphone

From electricity-guzzling server farms to tablets powered by Congolese conflict minerals, the choices of producers, vendors, and consumers in the digital age can have drastic environmental and human rights impacts. In this session, leading companies discussed how they source their products and scrutinised their supply chains to protect human rights. Due diligence and public reporting help companies to avoid contributing to serious abuses abroad, and demonstrate to stakeholders — including investors, consumers and local communities — their commitments to sourcing responsibly and sustainably.

Mapping Land Rights: Using Technology to Protect the Living Forest With The Sarayaku Community of Ecuador

Center for Justice and International Law

Digital technologies are powerful tools that can be used in the process of supporting the self-determination of indigenous peoples. Among those tools, mapping applications are playing a critical role in the face of growing incursions by mining, logging, and petroleum companies. In the case of the Sarayaku community — one of the oldest and most traditional Kichwa settlements in Ecuador’s Amazon - mapping applications can help publicise the progressive parceling off of their land and surrounding rainforest areas by the Ecuadorian government to national and foreign oil companies.

In this session, members from the Center for Justice and International Law and the Sarayaku community presented a digital Storymap that shows and narrates where the the rightful claim the Sarayaku community has to the land, as well as the spiritual, cultural, social, and agricultural significance of their territory, and the risk posed by extractivist activities to the Sarayaku’s way of life. The first part of the workshop served as an opportunity to showcase how this tool served as a key platform for compiling evidence in the continued

litigation of the Sarayaku case before the Inter-American Court of Human Rights. The second half of the workshop served as an open space for discussion around the question on how technology can best be leveraged to defend the rights of indigenous groups and what are some of the best practices indigenous rights & environmental defenders can use when using digital technologies to advance human rights.

TRACK 17

Tech, Democracy, and Digital Inclusion: An internet for all?

Towards the Web Women Want: How Can We Bring Together Gender and ICT Policy Advocacy?

Web Foundation

The digital gender divide in access is real, and getting worse. A 2015 Web Foundation study in poor urban communities in 10 countries found that not only are women in these communities 50% less likely to be online than men, they are 30-50% less likely to use the web to access information related to their rights or to speak out online. As a result, women are relegated to being passive consumers, not co-creators of the web.

A follow up 2016 study to assess measures taken by governments towards gender equality online found dire neglect of gender considerations across policies and programmes related to women’s access, affordability, digital skills, relevant content and services, and online safety.

The same study found five priority areas for action: Rights, Education, Access, Content, and Targets (REACT). With this framework, this session held an engaging discussion based on the facts, plans, and actions of various interest groups to assess, among other things, whether governments, legislators, private sector players, and civil society organisations are doing enough to support women in creating a web that they want, and deserve.

The Erosion of Democracy: Impacts on Society and Civil Society

Access Now

The recent years have brought significant setback in the general trajectory of the world including the trending erosion of democracy in Europe, the US, and elsewhere. Politicians and citizens of Western democratic countries have turned a blind eye to what has been happening in Central and Eastern Europe and elsewhere in peace or in war. It took the election of Donald Trump for the world to wake up, if at all. Governments of “illiberal” or “managed” democracies have effectively destroyed checks and balances, democratic institutions, and human rights. One element of these efforts is to

discredit or eliminate civil society and replace them with loyal groups. Ironically enough, the critical and independent NGOs are considered “fake.” The panel included activists from all around the world, some having lived and worked in repressive environments for years and others for whom this is a new reality. They explored challenges and best practices for how to keep up the fight and to win battle after battle for their own existence and for the values and people they represent.

TRACK 18

**Looking After the Internet:
Governance, institutions, and internet measurement**

Taking Forward the Multi-Stakeholder Debate

UNESCO

This session introduced UNESCO’s global mapping of research into the debates and good practices of “multi-stakeholderism,” outputting a publication within the UNESCO Internet Freedom series. This project will impact in a context where references to “multi-stakeholder” participation in decisions that impact the internet are ubiquitous. But many actors understand this in different ways, and real application is still the exception rather than the rule. For their part, UNESCO’s 195 Member States have formally endorsed the concept of “Internet Universality” which calls for the respect of four principles in relation to decision-making about internet-related issues. Summarised in the acronym ROAM, the four principles are: Human-Rights, Openness, Accessibility, and Multi-stakeholder participation. This project will strengthen the Multi-stakeholder principle, enriching the way that UNESCO can use its status and networks to promote knowledge and uptake of this practice.

This session included Goran Marby (President and CEO, ICANN), Frank La Rue (Assistant Director General, UNESCO), Anriette Esterhuysen (Executive Director, Association for Progressive Communications), Joe McNamee (Executive Director, European Digital Rights), and Kees van Baar (Human Rights Ambassador, The Netherlands Ministry of Foreign Affairs).

Is Digital Civility a Unicorn of the Modern Internet?

Microsoft

Were you unfriended on Facebook during a recent election because you expressed a viewpoint that did not sit well with others? Were you so put off by the words and actions of a colleague that you unfollowed them on Twitter? Has the level of discourse online stooped to such new lows that you found yourself losing trust in others, stressed out, or even not sleeping well? If you answered yes, you can take some comfort — you are

not alone. New preliminary research indicates that millions of people around the world, including teens, have suffered some sort of negative experience online and that has led them to be less trusting of people online.

This session looked at the results of this research, and asked some tough questions. Is digital civility achievable? What can we do to reverse these trends? Is it possible to hit the reset button and reexamine how we treat others and are treated online? If so — how? What approaches work best for various age groups? Conversely — What should we not do?

TRACK 19

**Digital Rights:
Past, global, future**

**Human Rights’ Next Frontier: How to Fight
Criminalisation of Online Activism**

Bahrain Center for Human Rights

The session focused on online security and various methods and technologies used to suppress freedom of expression in the digital realm, using the ongoing repression of digital rights in Bahrain as a case study. It also examined the role of the EU and EU Member States in supporting the right to free online expression in GCC countries. The debate shed light on methods used by authoritarian regimes to suppress freedom of expression and criminalise online activism and, at the same time, explored possibilities for closer cooperation among policy makers, experts, and activists.

**Rough Road Ahead: What the US and EU Elections Mean
for Human Rights**

EFF

During this fireside chat, panelists discussed the emerging environments in the US, the EU, and globally and how they impact human rights including areas like encryption, domestic and foreign surveillance, freedom of expression, and network neutrality. The speakers highlighted key challenges to human rights and the imperative of developing a robust human rights narrative in order to uphold our shared values and build fair and open societies. In discussing the difficulties, they also pointed forward to possible solutions and areas for engagement.

TRACK 20

The Frontier of Tech:
Smart cities, biometrics, and the internet of everything

Beyond Dystopia: The Future of Human Rights Technology

Carnegie Mellon University

The past five years have significantly shaped the discourse around human rights technology. What has been learned and confirmed after the Snowden revelation of mass and unchecked surveillance by nation-states and corporations has necessarily forced attention of global civil society on the dire effects of surveillance and the need to counter them. The state of surveillance has also put most conversations on the future of human rights in the direction of a dystopian future where technology is increasingly used for control rather than liberation.

This session discussed and proposed alternative visions for the future, where technologists, academics, and activists propose the use of technology for the advancement of human rights practice, from advocacy and research to education and documentation.

Cities of the Future, Data of the Present: Protecting Privacy and Fostering Development

INTERNETLAB & Future of Privacy Forum

From “smart cities” to the “sharing economy,” we have been witnessing a movement of technology platforms being intertwined with urban planning, one which promises to use data to spark civic innovation, drive inclusivity, and make communities more efficient, livable, and equitable. At the same time, advances in re-identification science, data marketplaces, and Big Data analytics mean that cities and their partners must set careful safeguards for the collection, use, sharing, and disposal of personal data.

As cities and companies harness more data than ever, how can we assess the risks and opportunities of new technologies and data flows while preserving individual privacy and building public trust? And how can developing countries, for whom technology has been praised as the quick path to development, navigate between initiatives that could save money and modernise public administration but that may come with a significant cost of privacy?

In this session, a diverse group of experts explored two case studies at the intersection of smart city technologies, privacy and data protection, and global development. First, they looked at the city of São Paulo’s recent efforts to regulate and gather valuable urban planning information from Uber, and how they reflect on the use of data both by the public and the private

sector in smart cities. Second, they examined emerging frameworks for cities to balance their commitments to open data initiatives and public records laws, which help foster transparent government but may expose personal information, against their commitments to protecting individual privacy.

DEMOROOM

The Demo Room:
A mosaic of tech demos, talks, workshops, and tools

Step Into Our Lab: Human Rights Technology Prototypes Workshop

Benetech

This session convened small groups of participants around human rights technology prototypes currently under development. Prototypes are aimed at facilitating work of human rights defenders and may address needs such as human rights documentation, election monitoring, open source investigation, digital security training, improved authentication, and open access to law.

Participants gave focus group style feedback to prepared questions designed to stimulate conversation on the idea behind each prototype. Benetech staff facilitated group explorations of the prototypes and discussion of feedback.

Community ISPs: Building Alternative Networks

Article19 South America

This session was a workshop on how to plan and build a community ISP. The initiative comes from the previous work made by ARTIGO 19 Brasil along with partners on workshops that helps communities to build their own internet service provider. The idea of a community ISP comes from the observation that the current connectivity model in Brazil is based on individualist and consumerist relations that weaken the power of the user over its connection, increasing the decision power of big commercial ISPs over the types of access to the internet, causing great impact on the freedom of expression of users who can’t get a decent internet connection or no connection at all. The community ISP arises as an option to communities to hire their internet connection as a group capable of managing their own network and share the connection as they want.

The session introduced the concept of community ISPs, illustrating the main benefits and challenges that they provide, including legal and juridical aspects. Second was a presentation on the equipments needed for the building of a community internet provider.

Diversity

At RightsCon, we are committed to the principles of diversity and inclusion.

Whether it's stakeholder diversity, regional diversity, gender diversity, or diversity of thought, our highest priority is to ensure a truly inclusive program and community.

Our program, which featured 256 sessions and 550+ speakers, included sessions that introduced, spotlighted, or focused on human rights issues specific to Argentina, Bahrain, Brazil, Hungary, India, Iran, Malaysia, Nigeria, Pakistan, Russia, Vietnam, the UK, and more.

Every effort was made to ensure each session had a diverse set of speakers, with particular attention paid to encouraging gender parity. Community members reacted very positively to the gender-diverse programming throughout the event.



We are equally proud to share that our community has continued to grow year over year, becoming even more diverse.

The total number of participants grew from 1,122 in RightsCon Silicon Valley to 1,518 in RightsCon Brussels.

Engagement from governments and intergovernmental bodies grew to 10% in RightsCon Brussels, with engagement from civil society, the private sector, and academia staying strong at 55%, 16%, and 13% respectively. Engagement from the media and independents increased to 6%.

Participation from RightsCon Brussels stakeholders from the European and CIS regions increased significantly, growing from 12% in Silicon Valley to 51% in Brussels. While participation from the Americas decreased, with North America falling from 64% to 30% and Latin America from 7% to 5%, participation from the Asia Pacific and MENA & Sub-Saharan Africa regions increased to 7% each. Overall, an additional 25 countries were represented this year, so that the total number of countries represented grew from 80 countries at RightsCon Silicon Valley to 105 at RightsCon Brussels.

RightsCon Brussels continued the conference's strong track record on gender parity and representation. This year, recognising that many in our community are not comfortable or do not identify with the gender binary, we encouraged conference participants to share with us their gender identity in their own words. Of those conference participants who shared their gender identity with us, 1.5% identified as non-binary, 45.4% identified as female, and 53.1% identified as male (compared to 55% last year).

Launches and Outcomes



30 Governments Speak Out Against Shutdowns

Thirty governments of the Freedom Online Coalition (FOC) declared their commitment to fight internet shutdowns in an important Joint Statement on State Sponsored Network Disruptions at RightsCon Brussels. The FOC includes member countries as diverse as France, Tunisia, Ghana, the United States, and Australia.

In the statement, the FOC expressed “deep concern,” and called “on all governments to end such violations of the rights to freedom of expression and of peaceful assembly.” It explained that “disruptions undermine the economic benefits of the internet and disrupt access to essential services such as health care,” citing two influential studies by the Brookings Institution and the Global Network Initiative, the former of which found that shutdowns had drained \$2.4 billion from the global economy.

The statement then encouraged all governments who are concerned about the growing trend of state-sponsored network disruptions to adopt or implement a list of measures, or good practices, as appropriate.

Ranking Digital Rights Launches Second Corporate Accountability Index

Ranking Digital Rights (RDR) launched the release of its second Corporate Accountability Index in Europe at RightsCon Brussels. The Index evaluates 22 internet,

mobile, and telecommunications companies on commitments, policies, and practices affecting users’ freedom of expression and privacy.

The inaugural Index, released in late 2015, analyzed 16 leading ICT companies. Although each company had at least one area in which it performed well, the picture as a whole was discouraging. With the launch of the 2017 Index, RightsCon attendees found out which companies made an effort to improve their performance in 2016, and on what issues — and where performance remains especially problematic.

In addition to an updated methodology, which includes new indicators focused on key issues such as network shutdowns and data breaches, the 2017 Index also includes six new companies. Two of these, Apple and Samsung, are included as part of a new category of companies that make mobile devices and software programs, referred to as “mobile ecosystems.”

Internet Access to Affordable Medication Defended at RightsCon Brussels

Access to medicines and internet rights advocates came together to discuss the importance of, and threats to, online access to safe and affordable medication and push back against the pharmaceutical industry’s attempts to control what content and commerce is and is not permissible on the internet when it comes to medication sales.

The session, organised by Prescription Justice, included voices from Electronic Frontier Foundation, Knowledge Ecology International, Public Citizen, and Canadian International Pharmacy Association.

Following the session, participants began composing the working draft Statement of Brussels Principles for the Online Sale of Medication, one inspired by the belief that access to affordable medications is an essential component to the fundamental human right to health. In the coming year, these draft principles will be further developed and finalised to help guide the internet and public health community to best serve consumers.

Announcing Launch of Keepusonline.in in India

India remains one of the most egregious offenders of shutdowns, having lost nearly \$1 billion in 2016 as a result. Civil society groups in the country, including Internet Freedom Foundation, have since launched a campaign called Keepusonline.in to urge state governments to end the practice of shutting down the internet in India.

Improving the Internet of Things (and Sex Toys)

At "Let's Talk About Sex Toys," Ken Munro of Pen Test Partners was able to run code he had written to hack the Siime Eye, a vibrator with an embedded camera that can be controlled via an app on a smartphone, tablet, or computer, and subsequently take control of the device — in less than five minutes.

Following the demonstration, Access Now submitted a complaint against the product's manufacturer, Svakom, with the US Federal Trade Commission (FTC), alleging that the company engaged in unfair and deceptive trade practices by releasing the product with grossly inadequate security.

While Svakom had previously stopped producing and selling new devices, Svakom is now also considering a product recall and taking concrete steps to drastically improve the device and associated app's digital security.

Connecting Vulnerable Bloggers with Online Platforms

At "What's An Internet Shutdown Like? Experiences of Disruptions and How to Circumvent Them," an activist from the Georgian Institute for Development of Freedom of

Information shared his experiences with having Wordpress blocked throughout the country on government orders. Sitting in the audience was a staff member of Automattic, the company that owns Wordpress. The staff member explained that he had personally negotiated with the government of Georgia to stand up for free expression, and connected with the activist for future collaboration.

Who Owns What? Telco Ownership Database

With hundreds of leaders from the business and human rights communities assembled at RightsCon Brussels sharing their insights on pressing technology and public policy issues, Access Now soft launched a new project: Who Owns What? The WOW Telco Ownership Database.

The WOW Database is aimed at helping advocacy groups, investors, and regulators worldwide engage with telcos, making it easier to find information about which carriers and groups operate in countries that have experienced internet shutdowns due to government-ordered network disruptions.

The Outer Boundaries of Hacking Crypto

At "The Outer Boundaries of Hacking Crypto," the Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Development Cooperation, Digital Agenda and Telco in Belgium Alexander de Croo defended the use of encryption, and denounced the end of encryption as the end of private life.

Dynamic Coalition of Publicness

Dynamic Coalition of Publicness (a.k.a., "DC Pub") had its first meeting at RightsCon 2017 after it was certified as such by United Nations IGF in March, and at that meeting jointly drafted, with representatives from Europe, Asia, and South America, a Joint Letter of Concern on Right to be Forgotten which was then signed by many other participants of RightsCon which remains open for signature. The letter recognizes RTBF as an outgrowth of desire not to be discriminated against unreasonably for the past but emphasises the importance of people's right to information for any project to combat discrimination and oppression. Also, the letter points out the vacuity of "relevance" as the standard for operationalising RTBF and importantly notes that RTBF keeps targeted information only from online search in contravention of the human rights standard of this digital age: what is protected offline should be protected online as well.

RightsCon Day 0: Affiliated and Satellite Events



Iran Cyber Dialogue 2017

Convened as a pre-event for RightsCon Brussels, the Iran Cyber Dialogue is an annual event on technology and free expression that aims to develop multidisciplinary solutions to human rights challenges in Iran. Hosted by ASL19, this year's event was organised around themes and issues identified by the community. Some of this year's session outcomes are:

- **Censorship and circumvention:**
 - Identification of apps and tools to bypass internet censorship, as well as sustainability of these tools.
- **Cyber attacks and digital security:**
 - Shared updates on targeted attacks reported by the community and identified best practices for improving coordination among members.
- **Sanctions Overcompliance, Human Rights and Civil Society:**
 - Drafted a strategy to engage Members of the EU Parliament related to Iran's reintegration into the global economy and its human rights record.
- **Other sessions included:**
 - Iran's National Information Network
 - How the media can better support civil society goals
 - Lessons from China

Youth for Rights

This year, the inaugural Youth For Rights event took place at the Brussels Town Hall on 28th March 2017 as a satellite event of RightsCon 2017. Youth For Rights is an initiative to provide learning workshops for young people (aged

18-30), to educate and engage with them in policy and advocacy discussions about digital rights. The event was created to enable a participatory platform for knowledge and skills sharing among keynote speakers, organisers, and participants.

The event hosted 20 young leaders from around the world, each coming with their own interest and passion in human rights and digital policies. Attendees participated in various discussions and workshops, tackling leading issues that included: Data Protection & Privacy, Network Discrimination, Connectivity & Governance, Net Neutrality and Zero Rating, Human Rights, Trade & Business, Freedom of Expression, and #KeepItOn, the global campaign to fight internet shutdowns. Lastly, participants had first-hand training on advocacy skills to build capacity and represent youth voices at major global policy foras like RightsCon.

Tech and Foreign Policy - Bridging the Gap

An official pre-event organized by Member of European Parliament Marietje Schaake, Tech and Foreign Policy: Bridging the Gap was a set of panel discussions from some of the world's leading voices. The open internet is not limited by geographical borders, and new technologies have a clear impact on foreign policy: issues such as cybersecurity, internet governance, digital trade, and digital rights are becoming central to the work of any diplomat. Yet the worlds of foreign policy experts and technology experts can still seem disconnected.

This event sought to bridge the gap between foreign policy experts and tech experts in order to inform a values-based digital foreign policy. Taking place at the European Parliament, it brought in key voices from government, civil society, intergovernmental, and the private sector.

Testimonials from the RightsCon Community



"RightsCon is the Davos of Digital Rights."

Matt Peacock
Group Director of Corporate Affairs at Vodafone Group

"Thanks for putting on another terrific gathering of star thinkers and do'ers from across the globe. So many good things happen at RightsCon itself and so many seeds are planted for noteworthy things to blossom in this space in the future."

Michael Samway
President at The Business and Human Rights Group

"After years' of promoting government transparency in Hong Kong, Hong Kong Transparency Report is planning to do more on corporate transparency, and the session, 'Strengthen the Effectiveness and Connectivity Between Corporations' and Civil Societies' Transparency Report' provided an touch base opportunity for me to make a conversation with the policy people from world's leading tech firms over the transparency issue, listening to them about their motivation, concerns and plans, which is helpful to inspire the plan of HKTR for the next stage.

During my research on how to adapt the RDR methodology for Chinese ICT companies in the last few months, I faced difficulties in reaching out the industry, and the session 'How to Talk So Companies Will Listen, and Listen So Companies Will Talk: Doing Company Advocacy and Research' allowed me to learn the experience and lessons from researchers and advocates from both developing and developed countries on communicating



with companies. I was also happy to provide a first hand information by sharing my experience in talking to Chinese and Hong Kong tech firms, which contributes to insights into the country's digital rights regime."

Benjamin Zhou
Hong Kong Transparency Report

"We are extremely grateful to have received support from Access Now in order to bring Eriberto Gualinga, videographer of the struggle of indigenous rights in Ecuador and member of the Kichwa People of Sarayaku, whom we represented before the Inter-American Court on Human Rights. Our session addressed the importance of using online mapping tools and satellite imagery to reclaim indigenous territories from the encroaching and destructive activities of extractive industries in Ecuador's rainforests; and generate greater understanding in specialised, legal, and non-legal audiences about the importance placed on land by the Sarayaku. Additionally, the opportunity to present before some of the leading tech innovators underscored the need to maintain the centrality of victims, human rights defenders, and all who are affected by pressing human rights violations, as core participants in the development of new technologies with the full understanding that, sometimes you just need the basics: a better internet connection. We hope to continue attending RightsCon, ensuring the participation

of these key groups and finding new and innovative ways to advance the defense of human rights through tech to change realities on the ground.”

Alex McAnarney
Communications Officer Center for Justice and International Law (CEJIL)

“GIC monitors freedom of expression (FoE) violations since 2005. Issues of human rights online, especially online free expression is closely linked to my Program ‘Supporting Media Development.’”

Our long-term objective is to increase our interaction with the international community for favorable legal and regulatory environment of FoE. I had an opportunity to build up network with international partners.

During UPR II Cycle Mongolia has received 8 recommendations regarding FoE including the Internet freedom. Thus, GIC has developed its Action Plan until 2019 to follow up the recommendations and continues its cooperation different stakeholders closely. In order to successfully implement the Action Plan, GIC staff should be equipped with proper skills and knowledge. And RightsCon is one of the important events of strengthening institutional capacity and expanding knowledge and skills on internet emerging issues.

Digital security is an important issue, on which we start to focus on and still lack experience. During the RightsCon, my skills on encryption issues, including encrypting emails were strengthened by the Access Now team, and I am able to conduct similar trainings for my staff and journalists.”

Ayushjav Tumurbaatar
Media Program Coordinator at Globe International Center (GIC) - Mongolia



“Thank you so much for allowing our panel and workshop to convene at RightsCon. The conference changed my life for a variety of reasons [...] The conference was amazing, motivating, kind of intimidating, and fun.”

This issue of people buying medications online because it’s too expensive locally is not well understood in the internet community of activists. The drug companies are fully engaged to extend their regulatory capture to the internet. I wrote an article about this to explain what’s happening and issued a call to action for the internet and medicines access rights communities to get together to talk about this. That call to action began at RightsCon.”

Gabriel Levitt
Vice President
PharmacyChecker.com

“Since LINE is still a six-year old company, it was indeed our first time to attend such a global event and exchange opinions with the expertise in the same field of interest. It has been truly inspiring 3-day experience, and what I thought the most important takeaway is that connecting with industry, academia and civil society is crucial for achieving rights protection not only for our own customers but also overall as the industry worldwide.”

Toru Niimi
Global Security and Privacy Program Manager at LINE Corp



Introducing RightsCon Toronto



RightsCon
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 BROUGHT TO YOU BY  **accessnow**

Access Now is thrilled to be bringing the global RightsCon community to Canada's largest city for RightsCon Toronto (Spring, 2018). Not only is Toronto a dynamic tech hub, it's also one of the world's most diverse places. The move to Toronto marked a departure from the event's traditional practice of rotating each year between San Francisco and a major international city.

As a power center for values of diversity, inclusion, and 'human connectivity,' Canada stands in stark contrast with recent global trends of isolationism, exclusion, and 'disconnection.' By moving RightsCon from San Francisco to Toronto, we're committing to creating a platform for the most pressing tech challenges to be solved — a platform with respect for diversity and inclusion at its foundation. That's why RightsCon is the world's leading summit on tech, society, and human rights.

The program at RightsCon Toronto 2018 will tackle leading and emergent issues, such as artificial intelligence, algorithmic accountability, smart cities, connectivity, encryption and cybersecurity, innovation and society, trade agreements and ownership, protection of journalism and freedom of expression, civic tech engagement, and much more.



Access Now defends and extends the digital rights of users at risk around the world. By combining innovative policy, global advocacy, and direct technical support, we fight for open and secure communications for all.

We are a team of 40, with local staff in 10 locations around the world. We maintain four legally incorporated entities — Belgium, Costa Rica, Tunisia, and the United States — with our tech, advocacy, policy, granting, and operations teams distributed across all regions.

Contact

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