**UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

TOPIC: **RIGHTS tO PRIVACY IN THE DIGITAL AGE**



# SOCOMUN XXVII



UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

Rights to Privacy in the Digital Age

Hello delegates, my name is Hailey Brown and I will be your chair this year at SOCOMUN! I am a senior at Santa Margarita Catholic High School and this is my fourth year involved in MUN. MUN has given me the opportunity to learn public speaking skills and formulate my own opinions on international current and past events. I have attended 15 conferences and traveled to represent my school at UCSB and UPENN. I am also involved in the swim team, National Honor Society, MUN Leadership Board, and National Charity League. I hope you are each able to take a piece of new knowledge and the confidence to develop and share your own opinions away from this conference.

We will begin our committee with debate. Delegates will give their speeches on solutions they have developed for rights to privacy in the digital age. The Dias will encourage delegates to motion for a caucus, during which delegates can move around the room to share and further develop solutions. Resolution groups will also be formed throughout caucuses, so it is of the upmost importance to understand your country’s policy on this topic. If necessary, the Dias will suggest the motion for a moderated caucus to get through the speaker’s list and exhaust all comments. I am looking forward hearing your take on Rights to Privacy in the Digital Age and please do not hesitate to contact me at: [socomununhrc@gmail.com](mailto:socomununhrc@gmail.com)

A Note from our Legal:

Hi my name is Haley Calaiacovo and I will be your legal at SOCOMUN. I am currently a senior at Santa Margarita Catholic High School. I swim competitively at my Club, Novaquatics, and Swim Varsity here at Santa Margarita. I participate in Advanced Women’s Chorus and am in my fourth year of MUN. I am looking forward to meeting all of you and hearing your ideas at SOCOMUN.

A Note from our Secretary:   
 Hello delegates, my name is Leila Moussavi and I will be your secretary at SOCOMUN. I’m a sophomore at Santa Margarita and this is my second year in MUN. I enjoy going to conferences and tackling worldwide issues. Outside of MUN I participate in archery, volleyball, and soccer. I’m eager to hear your ideas and am looking forward to the conference.

**Background:**

The digital age, otherwise known as the past 30 years since the World Web was created, is credited with the growth of technology worldwide. Progress has been made in fields of science, medicine, and education with this innovation. People can post, like, and save memories with not only their community but the rest of the world. There are options to turn off location and turn on privacy mode, however, many people do not realize this does not keep personal information out of reach. Companies assure their users they do not reveal their private information but fail to mention third parties such as the search engine and web provider who also obtain your information.

Clicking “I agree to Terms & Services” automatically sends each detail you filled out to every data collector in the cloud. There is no way to undo this agreement and the information is forever accessible. Scammers will be able to set up email, bank, and credit card accounts with the information found just by signing up for well-known social media sites such as Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat, and Twitter. The following is made public knowledge: birthday, age, height, weight, profile pictures, likes, dislikes, criminal record, and any other information offered.

While some people continue to search unknowing that their search history is saved, many argue that storing their information is an infringement on their rights. Harry Lewis, a computer major at Harvard, confirms alarming privacy concerns of the public. He is able to choose a house on Google Earth, search the address in Zillow (a house pricing website), and then Zillow is able to not only provide the projected price but the number of beds, bathrooms, and price the current owner paid for that house. Similarly, Latanya Sweeney has proved the privacy system inefficient. “The main reason privacy is a growing problem is that disk storage is so cheap,” (Latanya Sweeney) making it simple to save thousands of people’s information. Latanya Sweeney can identify someone 87% of the time with knowledge of only their birth date and zip code, if they are under 30 she can even name their social security number. “We are entering a situation where a huge number of people could tell me just their date of birth and hometown, and I can predict their SSN. Why is this a problem? Because in order to apply for a credit card, the key things I need are your name, your date of birth, your address, and your SSN. Who is the population at risk? Young people on Facebook,” (Latanya Sweeney).

On November 21, 2016 the United Nations General Assembly’s Third Committee adopted a resolution on the right to privacy in the digital age. They recognize that every country has the right to their own policies but highly encourages members to apply the policy in any way they can. The United Nations recommends that all digital privacy issues are taken up with the international human rights law and if found guilty, sanctions may be placed. The resolution also proposes prevention and protection against these human rights violations while calling on countries to create their own sanctions and laws. The United Nations strongly believes that this privacy should be protected and otherwise can violate human rights regarding: political, social, economic, religious, and culture subjects. Lastly, the resolution advises the Human Rights Council holds expert workshops to put together a report for the UN High Commissioner on Human Rights. This Commissioner in the future will place sanctions on countries that do not cooperate with privacy laws.

**Possible Solutions:**

When considering applicable solutions, the Dias strongly urges you to develop your own innovative and original solutions using your research on this topic. Don’t be afraid to test out new ideas! Unique and thought-out solutions will make you stand out from your fellow delegates. Funding for both yours and other delegate’s solutions is not an issue as all solutions approved by the committee will receive assumed funding from the United Nations. Below are some possible solutions that we encourage you to develop further on top of your own solutions you will create.

One possible solution to the rights to privacy in the digital age is to establish a universal law that defines what is intruding on privacy. At the next UN meeting this definition can be decided on and necessary punishments to correspond to inappropriate uses of the internet can be debated as well. The law passed will give people the privacy they deserve and allow them to function in the digital age without feeling that their information will be released. The UNHRC will be dedicated to enforcing this law and will make changes as necessary as technology continues to grow and improve. Human rights courts will be activists for the right of the people regarding digital privacy and will be enforcing this law to protect people’s personal information.

Another possible solution to rights to privacy in the digital age is public awareness.100 million Americans are at risk for identity theft by placing their personal information online. Each year there are government databases and records that are stolen which puts these people’s privacy on the line. 7% of adults in the United States have been involved in some sort of identity theft which averages to a loss of $3,500 per person. The lack of digital privacy laws has led to 50 billion dollars stolen through online identity theft from leaked information. Therefore, in effort to protect citizens’ privacy in the digital age public awareness and education are needed. Education beginning in schools of what not to share on social media should be ingrained in the minds of the youth. Teachers can be required by law to read a privacy contract to students to teach them how to identify possible privacy invasions they would not otherwise agree to. To strengthen this understanding, both parents and children need to become aware of privacy settings and when/how to use them when purchasing any form of technology. Stores that sell technology should be required to offer information regarding digital privacy whether that be through an article, video, or explained in person. If more people are aware of where their information goes they will be less likely to share it in the first place. Lastly, promoting software such as MEGA and SpiderOak who work to encrypt documents to anyone who tries to open them besides the owner will be an efficient solution to those who want to feel protected online. The only way for information held on these servers to get out is if the owner of the folder shares the password.

Given these possible solutions the Dias strongly encourages delegates to develop these further in addition to creating their own. The more thought-out delegates’ solutions are the more likely they are to both stand out and solve each aspect of digital privacy. “But out of limitation comes creativity,” (Debbie Allen). Good Luck!

**Questions to Consider:**

The following questions are provided for you to consider as you research, but are not necessary to explicitly answer at the conference:

1. What position does your country take in digital privacy? Have they responded in a positive or negative way to your country’s citizens?
2. Do your citizens have the option to turn off location tracking on their devices? Does your government have the right to track them anyway without their consent?
3. Does your government control what your citizens see on the internet? If so, what do they restrict and why?
4. Are current laws on digital privacy sufficient enough? If not, what can you do to improve them?
5. How has the World Web changed privacy since its creation? Have religious and personal values been violated in efforts to advance the digital age?
6. What can the United Nations or other government forces do to keep digital privacy standards worldwide? Would your country suggest a long-term or short-term solution?
7. How does your country respond to citizens who break digital privacy laws? Do they plan on changing this response in the future?
8. What would occur if your government did not enforce laws regarding digital privacy? Are your citizens for or against the government being involved?
9. If governments no longer have access to tracking, will they have trouble locating criminal activity?

**Works Cited:**

1. Cole, David. “Is Privacy Obsolete?” *The Nation*, 29 June 2015, www.thenation.com/article/privacy-20-surveillance-digital-age/.

**Summary:** This article introduces evidence on how citizens’ privacy is being violated by businesses. It reasons how security is nonexistent and information is totally vulnerable on the internet.

**Assessment:** Although deeply biased, this article creates a strong argument for the fact that privacy is virtually nonexistent in today’s world.

**Reflection:** To sum up, a delegate could create a well-researched paper by using this biased article to complement their beliefs and create a convincing argument.

1. Lufkin, Bryan. “Future - The Reasons You Can't Be Anonymous Anymore.” *BBC*, BBC, 29May 2017, [www.bbc.com/future/story/20170529-the-reasons-you-can-never-](http://www.bbc.com/future/story/20170529-the-reasons-you-can-never-) be-anonymous-again.

**Summary:** BBC’s *Future – The Reasons You Can’t Be Anonymous Anymore* shares analysis on how seemingly anonymous internet users have a digitally-created online profile based on history and personal trends.

**Assessment:** This article takes a two-sided approach to the issue of eroding privacy and argues reasons of both positions. It also argues that a simple solution isn’t the fix to this complex issue and gives evidence on the difficulties in solving this problem.

**Reflection:** To summarize, this article is a useful tool for discovering both sides to this complicated issue. It’s a wonderful resource for delegates to include in a paper to introduce the opposing argument.

1. MacKinnon, Rebecca. “We're Losing Control of Our Digital Privacy.” *CNN*, Cable News Network, 29 Jan. 2012, [www.cnn.com/2012/01/26/opinion/mackinnon-sopa-](http://www.cnn.com/2012/01/26/opinion/mackinnon-sopa-) government-surveillance/index.html.

**Summary:** Arguing that privacy is becoming weaker in a rapidly growing technological world, CNN’s article gives insight into major violations that corporations have committed against users.

**Assessment:** This article is a perfect source for a bias approach to this debatable topic. It brings up topics that would be useful to have as a tool, as well as giving evidence to support the ideas that is shares.

**Reflection:** Briefly, CNN’s article is one that gives some background, prevalent problems, and relevant dates and people that would be a great tool to delegates that aspire to have a well-researched paper and are factual.

1. Shaw, Jonathan. “Exposed.” *Harvard Magazine*, 21 Oct. 2016, harvardmagazine.com/2009/09/privacy-erosion-in-internet-era.

**Summary:** Although a little long, “*Exposed”* provides real examples of privacy encounters in the modern world. It outlines pressing privacy problems and highlights causes for the lack of security of information.

**Assessment:** This article walks the reader through how privacy and new technology cooperate and gives evidence of ideas and problems that people have faced in the changing world. It discusses how technology has “forced people to rethink the public/private distinction” and brings up matters on how privacy is such a prevalent concern.

**Reflection:** Overall, this article is a wonderful source for examples to back-up a delegate’s argument or create a more convincing and well-researched paper. It provides problems such as privacy of fingerprints, social security number, and information.

1. “Teens, Social Media, and Privacy.” *Pew Research Center: Internet, Science & Tech*, 21 May 2013, www.pewinternet.org/2013/05/21/teens-social-media-and-privacy- 2/.

**Summary:** *Teens, Social Media, and Privacy* provides not only real statistics about privacy, but polls and information about the digital age. It focuses on statistics about teenage privacy when using social media and concern about privacy.

**Assessment:** Because teenagers are so susceptible to violations of their privacy, this source is relevant to this pressing issue. It gives reliable data that is useful for fast facts or an interesting hook in a delegate’s paper.

**Reflection:** In conclusion, this article is very insightful and providing. It acts as a resource for statistics that can prove useful in evidence for importance of a problem or simply creating a good hook for a speech.

1. “The Human Right to Privacy in the Digital Age.” *ACLU*, ACLU, [www.aclu.org/other/human-](http://www.aclu.org/other/human-)right-privacy-digital-age.

This website briefly explains what the rights to privacy in the digital age and how exactly the international population is being violated. It also states past UN action and proposes a plan for the UN to implement in order to protect individual’s rights to privacy. This article would be beneficial when writing about UN involvement and could provide insight on possible solutions to combat the issue.

1. “Right to Privacy in the Digital Age.” *Right to Privacy in the Digital Age*, United Nations HumanRights,[www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/DigitalAge/Pages/DigitalAgeIndex.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/DigitalAge/Pages/DigitalAgeIndex.aspx) Accessed 7 Apr. 2017.

This source provides information on the background of what rights to privacy in the digital age is. It provides helpful information on past UN action involved with the issue. This source is reliable and trustworthy.

1. Brumis, Alyssa M. “The Right to Privacy in a Digital Age: Reinterpreting the Concept of Personal Privacy.” Inquiries Journal, Inquiries Journal, 1 Sept. 2016, [www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1450/the-right-to-privacy-in-a-digital-age-](http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1450/the-right-to-privacy-in-a-digital-age-) reinterpreting-the-concept-of-personal-privacy. Accessed 7 Apr. 2017.

This source provides and abundance of information on rights to privacy in the digital age. It also provides information that gives you a different outlook on what the issue is and how it actually is affecting society. I highly recommend this article due to all the knowledge it provides.

1. “UN General Assembly Resolution on ‘Right to Privacy in the Digital Age.’” Business & Human Rights Resource Centre, United Nations, 5 Mar. 2014, businesshumanrights.org/en/un-general-assembly-resolution-on-right-to- privacy-in-the-digital-age. Accessed 7 Apr. 2017. <https://business-> humanrights.org/en/un-general-assembly-resolution-on-right-to-privacy-in-the- digital-age

This website provides multiple reports from the United Nations General assembly on “rights to privacy in the digital age”. It is very helpful for UN involvement and background information. And is obviously a trustworthy source as it is a UN site.

1. Staff, NPR/TED. “Protecting Privacy In The Digital Age: Mikko Hyppönen Answers Your Questions.” NPR, NPR,6Oct.2014,www.npr.org/2014/10/06/353492787/protecting-privacy-in-the- digital- age-mikko-hypp-nen-answers-your-questions. Accessed 7 Apr. 2017.

This article fills in on more background and provides helpful insight on possible solutions to the topic. It is a credible source and will offer aid when creating solutions.

1. Rotenberg, Marc. “PRESERVING PRIVACY IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY.” PRESERVING PRIVACY IN THE INFORMATION SOCIETY, Electronic PrivacyInformationCenter,www.unesco.org/webworld/infoethics\_2/eng/papers/pa per\_10.htm.Accessed 7 Apr. 2017.

I would highly recommend using this source when considering solutions because it provides a cornucopia of solutions. It would be extremely beneficial to read the solutions that it proposes and build off of them.

1. “New UN Resolution on the Right to Privacy in the Digital Age: Crucial and Timely.” *Internet Policy Review*, policyreview.info/articles/news/new-un- resolution-right-privacy-digital-age-crucial-and-timely/436.