

**UN HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL**

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



# SOCOMUN XXVI

UN Human Rights Council (UNHRC)

Rights to Privacy in the Digital Age

Hello delegates, my name is Karli Campbell 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. I have grown to love MUN as it has helped me understand many of the challenges facing the world today and has helped with my communication skills. Aside from MUN, I am involved in Cross Country and Track & Field where I compete as a miler and pole vaulter. I am also involved in a few clubs on campus including the Eagles for CHOC club where I am on the executive board for leadership.

A note from our legal:

Hello, my name is Anisha Atwal, and I will be your legal at SOCOMUN this year! I am now a junior at SMCHS, and this is my third year being in MUN. I have attended the MUN conferences at UC Berkeley and more.

Hi my name is Haley Calaiacovo and I will be your secretary at SOCOMUN. I am currently a Junior 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 third year of MUN. I am so looking forward to meeting all of you and hearing your ideas at SOCOMUN.

As this is a first conference for many of this year’s delegates, my hope is that you too learn to improve your communication skills through the multiple speeches you will be giving and through caucus. I believe that if you dedicate your time and energy to this conference, that you will be amazed by what you can accomplish and that you take away a greater understanding for pressing issues around the world. As we begin debate, delegates will be given opportunities to give speeches regarding their solutions on the topic of Rights to Privacy in the Digital Age. Throughout the speech process, delegates can motion for moderated or unmoderated caucuses where they can discuss their solutions in depth with other delegates and begin to form resolutions. It is important that each delegate fully understands their county’s policy regarding Rights to Privacy in the Digital Age, as well as understanding the topic itself. If you have any questions, please email me at [socomununhrc@gmail.com](mailto:socomununhrc@gmail.com) . I look forward to hearing all your wonderful solutions in committee!

**Background:**

The past decades have been noted as a time for tremendous growth and advancement in the technological world. With advances in social media, cell phones, WI-FI, and online streaming, people’s lives around the world are changing as communication and information-sharing has become easily accessible. This new technology has allowed individuals to amplify their voices to help expose abuses of technology and offer the promise of improved enjoyment of human rights. At the same time, this innovative technology is also vulnerable to electronic surveillance and interception. Vulnerable surveillance threatens the individual rights of users. These threats are to privacy and to the freedom of expression and association.

When an individual has privacy, they can withhold information about themselves and choose what information they want to express and when they want to express it. However, the digital age has allowed others to infringe upon our privacy from the second we log-on to the Internet. Every time you like or dislike a photo, search for something, or watch a video, the Internet gathers this information and finds “Videos you might like”. Multiple apps and websites ask you a series of questions about yourself when signing up like how old you are and when your birthday is. Not only are you freely handing this information out to this website, but the second you click “I agree to Terms & Services”, this information is spread like wildfire across the cloud and there is no way to retrieve it.

As stated by a Tibetan human rights activist to the Toronto-based research group Citizen Lab, “Technology is this funny thing where it’s a lifeline, and then… maybe it’s your ticket to jail.” Director of Global Affairs, Eileen Donahoe, shares everyday examples of how digital technologies play a role in undermining human rights including “prime ministers banning Twitter in Turkey; a death sentence for a posting on Facebook in Iran; bulk electronic surveillance of American citizens by the NSA; a court ruling on the right to be forgotten in Google searches in Europe; or a requirement that Internet users supply real names to service providers in China” (Donahoe 2014).

**Possible Solutions:**

When considering viable solutions, the Dias encourages you to take your knowledge from your research on this topic and develop new and creative solutions. Show us your creativity and that you can think outside of the box. Be unique and have fun with it! Creative and unique solutions will also allow you to stand out from your other delegates. Also, do not stress about funding for your solutions or other delegates solutions as funding will not be an issue since any solutions approved by the committee will be assumed to receive full funding from the UN. The following informational paragraphs are examples of practical solutions that we hope you will consider and build upon on top of the solutions you will be creating.

One possible solution to support the rights to privacy in the digital age is to create a universal law that determines what is infringing upon individual rights. At the next UN meeting, the attending nations can come to a consensus and determine appropriate and inappropriate uses of the internet and which actions will be punished. This law will grant new forms of privacy for individuals and prevent government agencies and the Internet from being able to track their information. From there the UNHRC can create a mandate holder which would be “dedicated to fleshing out the implications of digital communications technology for the right to privacy and help articulate how to adhere to the rule of law and ensure protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms in the digital environment” (Donahoe 2014). To gain support for this new law, the UNHRC can generate support through human rights activists and defenders around the world. We will inform these human rights activists and defenders of this new law which will give them a comfort in knowing they are free to say what they want and go where they wish without being tracked. Their voices can be our primary tool in spreading word of new law.

Furthermore, to prevent this issue from worsening, public awareness needs to be spread to individuals of all nations. People need to understand the risks they are taking when placing their personal information on the Internet. In the United States alone, 15 million citizens have had their identities stolen from personal information placed on the Internet. An additional 85 million Americans put their identities at risk from the information they share on the Internet. Seeing these alarming statistics, public awareness of these dangers must be spread. Citizens need to learn to be cautious about what information they put and where they put it. This can be done by: 1) being cautions of what you share; 2) changing privacy settings; 3) reading privacy policies begore agreeing to the terms & services; 4) deleting Internet cookies.

**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 stance does your country take in digital privacy? Is your country’s government heavily involved in tracking its citizens and what they post on the Internet?
2. Has your country taken any actions regarding showing support for or against privacy for your citizens?
3. What are some of the major changes in personal privacy that have occurred since the creation of the World Web more than 30 years ago?
4. There are laws regarding personal privacy in multiple nations, however are these laws adequate regarding digital privacy on the Internet, or are revisions needed?
5. If revisions are need, what would these include to determine whether infringement of privacy has occurred on the Internet?
6. Depending on where you are, laws on what you say and post vary, so how can you ensure that you will not go to jail for saying the wrong thing on the Internet when in different regions?
7. What are the down sides of having the government uninvolved in the information being put on the internet?
8. If governments are no longer involved in tracking individuals through the Internet, could this affect government agencies from finding criminal activity?
9. What can the United Nations or other government forces do to create equal privacy among all nations while still pleasing the individuals considering different religious and personal values?

Works Cited

1. Brumis, Alyssa M. "The Right to Privacy in a Digital Age: Reinterpreting the Concept of Personal Privacy." *Inquiries Journal*. Inquiries Journal, 01 Sept. 2016. Web. 21 Apr. 2017[. <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/articles/1450/the-right-to-privacy-in-a-digital-age-reinterpreting-the-concept-of-personal-privacy>.](file:///C:\Users\remmellj\Downloads\.%20%3chttp:\www.inquiriesjournal.com\articles\1450\the-right-to-privacy-in-a-digital-age-reinterpreting-the-concept-of-personal-privacy%3e)

**Summary:** This source restates the history of the right to privacy in a digital age as well as provides lots of background information. It goes on to express how the internet reinvents the concept of personal privacy, inadequate legal standards in a digital age, the importance of consistent digital privacy laws, and an overall Legal Analysis.

**Assessment:** This is a very useful source. It is both objective and bias. There are parts where the author expresses their opinion on whether privacy violations are adequate in an Internet environment. There are also many useful facts that help the reader to expand their knowledge on the topic.

**Reflection:** This source would be very useful in the background aspect of your research. It is very thorough in explaining the facts and also poses some questions that can get your mind thinking in terms of possible solutions.

1. DeMers, Jayson. "How Rare Is Internet Privacy in the Digital Age?" *The Huffington Post*. TheHuffingtonPost.com, 14 Aug. 2014. Web. 21 Apr. 2017. [<http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jayson-demers/how-rare-is-internet-priv\_b\_5676746.html>.](file:///C:\Users\remmellj\Downloads\%3chttp:\www.huffingtonpost.com\jayson-demers\how-rare-is-internet-priv_b_5676746.html%3e)

**Summary**: This article shares lots of information about how the Internet and governments infringe upon peoples’ privacy in the digital age. They further talk about a few solutions that help prevent the infringement of privacy. This article also talks about Businesses and large corporations can manipulate people’s emotions and feed.

**Assessment:** This article does have lots of bias in it, however it does express some great concerns about this issue and does provide concrete examples of how the Internet can track individuals.

**Reflection:** This would be a great article to use to further your argument if your country takes a stance where you would like to see more privacy in the digital age. It makes some great points on how the Internet manipulates our emotions and our feed. From reading this article I took away a greater understanding of how little privacy people really have on the Internet.

1. Donahoe, Eileen. "Human Rights in the Digital Age." *Human Rights Watch*. N.p., 06 May 2015. Web. 21 Apr. 2017[. <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/12/23/human-rights-digital-age>.](file:///C:\Users\remmellj\Downloads\.%20%3chttps:\www.hrw.org\news\2014\12\23\human-rights-digital-age%3e)

**Summary:** This is an awesome article written by Eileen Donahoe, Director of Global Affairs. She initially begins by stating multiple examples of how digital technologies play a role in undermining human rights. She then follows with three excellent ideas for solutions and how to expand upon it.

**Assessment:** This article is objective. It provides concrete examples on the little amount of rights people have in the digital age. Not only are these examples true, but they are also recent which creates a stronger argument. It also provides three really good ideas to form solutions off.

**Reflection:** This article would be great in two parts of your research: gathering background knowledge and forming ideas for possible solutions. Delegates can build a convincing argument based on the recent examples discussed by Eileen Donahoe. It also provides good starting blocks to form solutions off.

1. Douglas, Www.identitytheft.info Rob. "Identity Theft Statistics: 15 Million Victims a Year | Www.IdentityTheft.info." *Identity Theft and Scams*. N.p., n.d. Web. 22 Apr. 2017. [http://www.identitytheft.info/victims.aspx.](http://www.identitytheft.info/victims.aspx)

**Summary:** This article provides statistics on identity theft in the United States. It is based on a range of information gathered from both public and private resources.

**Assessment:** I would label this article as objective since it is providing statistical facts on the amount of identity theft that has occurred. There is no opinion in this article which makes it very useful and reliable.

**Reflection:** This is a good article to use since it is providing statistical facts. Other articles that also provide statistical facts would also be very beneficial to use as they can help the delegates build a very strong argument. I strongly encourage each delegate to use statistics to support their argument when in committee.

1. "The Right to Privacy in the Digital Age." *OHCHR | Right to Privacy in the Digital Age*. United Nations, n.d. Web. 21 Apr. 2017. [<http://www.ohchr.org/EN/Issues/DigitalAge/Pages/DigitalAgeIndex.aspx>.](file:///C:\Users\remmellj\Downloads\%3chttp:\www.ohchr.org\EN\Issues\DigitalAge\Pages\DigitalAgeIndex.aspx%3e)

**Summary:** This article is brought to us by the UNHRC. It provides a nice overview on the issue of the rights to privacy in the digital age. The article further discusses international legal framework, it includes a report of the high commissioner, contributions from stakeholders, an overview of the panel discussion on the right to privacy in the digital age, and special rapporteur on the right to privacy.

**Assessment:** this article is objective. It provides good explanations in the overview about how the modern technologies are affecting our privacy. This article also provides examples of resolutions passed by the UNHRC on the topic of Rights to privacy in a digital age.

**Reflection:** this is a very good article to learn of the actions taken by the UN and what is already in place today. By knowing what is already in place allows us to form ideas on how to better these solutions or create new ones that cover various aspects.