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2017 has been an eventful year for us at CCG, bringing with it many opportunities and challenges. We write to you to wish you the very best for 2018, to thank you for your support, and to share with you the work that we have done over 2017.

We have tried to work on making our research more accessible, using infographics to share our research and working more with the media. We have also continued to share our analysis and comments on contemporary developments through our blog. For example, the section on case tracking below lists our detailed daily coverage of the landmark case on privacy (Puttaswamy vs Union of India). You can also read, in the section on research and policy, our submissions in response to the consultation paper on privacy, security and ownership of data in the telecom sector issued by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India (which we have further broken down in a series of blog posts to enable others to access our work easily).

Over the year, we have worked with various organisations to build a shared platform to discuss human rights in cyberspace, in the form of a collaborative series of events called the Delhi Tech Talks. Delhi Tech Talks has covered subjects like Aadhaar and national databases, the state of digital rights in India, and the interlinkages between human rights and cybersecurity. It has brought together organisations such as the Centre for Internet and Society, India, Digital Empowerment Foundation, HasGeek, Internet Democracy Project, IT for Change, SFLC.in (Software Freedom Law Centre, India), the Internet Freedom Foundation, and MediaNama.

We have participated in multiple UN Special Rapporteurs’ consultations, exciting new international work on artificial intelligence and several large international events, including RightsCon, the WSIS forum, and the Internet Governance Forum. We have also continued our tracking of incidents of internet shutdowns in the country, and our updation of the Freedom on the Net tracker.

A snapshot of output that reflects our work and engagement with the legal, policy, and academic fraternity, and the public, over this past year can be found below. We thank you for your support and welcome your feedback about how we can do better.

Infographic showing the history of the recognition of the right to privacy by the Indian Supreme Court.

Comparative research on biometric identity systems in Commonwealth countries, published in infographic form in ‘Are countries with a poor democratic record more likely to mandate an Aadhaar-like ID?’.

Memorandum entitled “Wassenaar Woes: Impact of the Failed Negotiations on Cybersecurity Technology on India”

(Draft) Paper on Information Technology Act, 2000 and the Data Protection Rules

Working Paper on Search Neutrality in the United States and the EU


Submission to the Open Consultation of the ITU Council Working Group on International Internet related Public Policy Issues, on The Developmental Aspects of the Internet.

Submission to the Open Consultation of the Working Group on Enhanced Cooperation.

Submission in response to the Call for Submissions on Online Violence Against Women by the Special Rapporteur on violence against women.

Submission to the consultation paper on Privacy, Security and Ownership of the Data in the Telecom Sector issued by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India. We have also published a series of blog posts breaking down some of these comments, available here.


Keynotes and Lectures


Lecture at the Second Law and Liberty Conference with the theme, ‘Perspectives on Liberty in a Digitised India’, organised by the Centre for Civil Society, at the National Law School of India University (NLSIU), on November 24, 2017.

Lecture on ‘Reading the Right to Privacy’, at Ashoka University, on October 12, 2017.

Presentation on the significance of the Supreme Court’s judgment in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India and its implications, at the 6th Asian Privacy Scholars Network International Conference, in Hong Kong, in September, 2017.

Lecture on the Right to Privacy as part of coursework on Constitutional Law at National Law University, Delhi, on August 25, 2017.


Lecture on Internet Policy Principles at the Asia Pacific School on Internet Governance at Bangkok, held between July 24-28, 2017.
Lecture on ‘Online Harmful Speech’ at the International School of Law and Technology, Brazil, held between July 17 – 21, 2017.


Conversation on mapping India's cyber security policies, with Matthew Shears, of Global Partners Digital: Podcast on “Cyber policy on the ground”
Memberships and Affiliations

Institutional Affiliations:

- Member, Global Network of Interdisciplinary Internet and Society Research Centers.
- Academic Member, International Telecommunications Union.
- Member (Academic Constituency), Global Network Initiative.
- Member, EQUALS Research Group
- Member, Noncommercial Users Constituency of the Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers.
- Member, Internet Society, Delhi Chapter.

Executive Director’s Affiliations:

- Faculty Associate, Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University.
- Member, Executive Committee, Global Network of Interdisciplinary Internet and Society Research Centers.
- Member, Steering Committee, Digital Asia Hub.
- Member, Internet and Jurisdiction’s Academic Observatory.
- Member, Press Freedom Committee, UNESCO, New Delhi.
- Committee Member, Asia Privacy Scholars’ Network.
- Advisory Committee, Global Symposium on Artificial Intelligence and Inclusion.
Tighten the provisions to prevent the law from being subverted by the powerful, as a part of ‘Talk Point: Is it democratic to have harsh criminal law over civil remedies against defamation?’, in The Print, October 11, 2017

Informational privacy, the next challenge, in The Frontline, September 15, 2017

The Implications of India’s Right to Privacy Decision, for the Council for Foreign Relations, September 13, 2017

Discussion on the Right to Privacy judgment on 94.3 FM Radio One with RJ Chris, on September 6, 2017.

The Right To Privacy And How It Will Play Out In Our Lives, for The Huffington Post, August 30, 2017

Bridging the Deep Digital Divide in India, in Free Speech Debate, August 30, 2017

Data privacy: Great idea, but there’s room for the State to step in, in The new Indian Express, August 25, 2017

Supreme Court verdict on privacy can further the rights of women, sexual minorities in India, in The Firstpost, August 25, 2017

Supreme Court verdict on Right To Privacy: What legal experts say, in The Times of India, August 25, 2017

A Judgement for the Ages, in The Hindu, August 3, 2017

NDTV Prime Unboxed: The Ultimate Tech Buying Guide – The Blue Whale’s Deadly Dive (Part I, II), August 2017 [TV panel discussion on mental health, youth, and online spaces]

Explainer: Aadhaar is vulnerable to identity theft because of its design and the way it is used, in Scroll.in, April 2, 2017
High-Level Meeting on a National Security Curriculum, at the National Law University Delhi, on December 1, 2017.

High-level Panel and Academic Writing Sprint, at the National Law University, Delhi, on November 3, 2017.


Training Programme on Cyber Policing with the Bureau of Police Research and Development for law enforcement officials, at the National Law University, Delhi, on April 26, 2017.

Workshop on Research Methods for Internet Policy in South and Southeast Asia, with the Internet Policy Observatory (IPO) at the Annenberg School for Communication, University of Pennsylvania, Centre for Internet and Society, and Digital Asia Hub, between April 10-14, 2017.

Second Orientation Programme on Cyber Laws and Digital Evidence, with the Delhi Judicial Academy, at the Delhi Judicial Academy, for Officers from Delhi Higher Judicial and Delhi Judicial Service, between March 24-25, 2017.

Summer School on Online Hate Speech, at the National Law University Delhi, between March 14-21, 2017. The Summer School was organised by the Centre, as well as the Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society at Harvard University and the Hans Bredow Institute, University of Hamburg in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Communication at the University of Hamburg and the Global Network of Internet and Society Research Centers, between March 14-21, 2017.

First Orientation Programme on Cyber Laws and Digital Evidence, with the Delhi Judicial Academy, at the Delhi Judicial Academy, for Officers from Delhi Higher Judicial and Delhi Judicial Service, between March 3-4, 2017.
Knowledge-sharing: Engagement, Dissemination, and Outreach

Events Organised

#DelhiTechTalks Series: Over the past year, the Centre has organised a series of events, along with other organisations working in the areas of technology law and policy. These events are open to the public and aim to provide collaborating organisations with a platform to discuss and raise awareness on contemporary issues in the field.

- The first edition of #DelhiTechTalks was organised in collaboration with the Internet Freedom Foundation and was held on March 24th, 2017. The event focused on 'The State of Digital Rights in India' and celebrated the second anniversary of the Supreme Court’s landmark judgment in Shreya Singhal vs Union of India.

- The second edition of #DelhiTechTalks was organised in collaboration with the Internet Democracy Project, HasGeek, the Centre for Internet and Society, Digital Empowerment Foundation and SFLC.in (Software Freedom Law Centre, India) and was held on June 23rd, 2017. This edition of #DelhiTechTalks was held days after the Supreme Court upheld the requirement to link Aadhaar numbers with Permanent Account Numbers (PAN), and income tax filings, and focused on 'Aadhaar and National Databases: A discussion on data protection, privacy and citizenship'.

- The third edition of #DelhiTechTalks was held on Day 1 of the Digital Citizen Summit organised by the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), on September 21, 2017. The focus of this edition was on 'Digital Rights and the Citizen: A discussion on the state of digital rights, access and inclusion'. This edition was organised in collaboration with the Internet Democracy Project, HasGeek, the Centre for Internet and Society, Digital Empowerment Foundation and SFLC.in (Software Freedom Law Centre, India).
racy Project, HasGeek, the Centre for Internet and Society, Digital Empowerment Foundation, SFLC.in (Software Freedom Law Centre, India) and IT for Change.

- The fourth edition of #DelhiTechTalks was organised on November 21, 2017, in the run up to the Global Conference on Cyber Space, 2017 and focused on ‘Embedding Human Rights in India’s Cybersecurity Laws and Policies’. This edition was organised in collaboration with Centre for Internet and Society, India, Digital Empowerment Foundation, HasGeek, Internet Democracy Project, IT for Change, and SFLC.in (Software Freedom Law Centre, India), along with media partner MediaNama.

Panel entitled “Selective persecution and the mob: Hate and religion online” with the Association for Progressive Communications at the Internet Governance Forum 2017, at Geneva, on December 19, 2017.


Panel entitled ‘A rights-based approach to cybersecurity: A pipe dream or a critical means to a secure and stable internet?’ convened by the Association for Progressive Communications, Centre for Communications Governance at National Law University Delhi, Centre for Internet and Society, Derechos Digitales, Citizen Lab, Global Partners Digital, Internet Society, UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, and Privacy International at the Internet Governance Forum 2017, at Geneva, on December 17, 2017.

Conversation over dinner, in collaboration with the Centre for Internet and Society, to discuss online content and platform regulation, with the Global Network Initiative, for members of civil society and industry, in New Delhi, on December 8, 2017.

Led and participated in discussions on privacy in the context of the Supreme Court’s judgment in Justice K.S. Puttaswamy v. Union of India, organised by the student-led ‘Public Law and Policy Discussion Group’, in September and October, 2017.

Two discussions at the Digital Citizen Summit organised by the Digital Empowerment Foundation (DEF), on September 21-22, 2017. We were also members of the Working Group Committee that engaged in review and selection of proposed sessions and research papers for the summit. Details of the discussions that the Centre for Communication Governance organised are below:

- Discussion on ‘Right to Privacy and Data Protection: How do we reach larger audiences and make conversations more accessible’, in collaboration with the Internet Democracy Project, on September 22, 2017.


- Public symposium on Unpacking Hate Speech: Comparative Approaches to Hate Speech Law at the India Habitat Centre, on March 17, 2017.

Discussion on ‘Between the Possible and the Probable: Artificial Affect/Intelligence’, lead by Professor Nishant Shah, at the National Law University, Delhi, on February 17, 2017.


Participated in a panel entitled ‘Governance Models for Data Protection in India’, at the Centre for Internet and Society’s Privacy Workshop, organised in New Delhi, on December 9, 2017.


Participated in a panel entitled ‘Cybersecurity and freedom of expression on the net - Strategies for new alliances and cooperation’ at conference titled ‘Power Shifts: Media Freedom and the Internet” organised by the Friedrich Naumann Foundation for Freedom in cooperation with the Forum for Media in Development in Berlin, from November 15-17, 2017.

Participated in a panel entitled ‘Areas for Research, Education, and Interface Building’, at the Global Symposium on Artificial Intelligence and Inclusion, organised by the Global Network of Internet and Society Centres, held at Rio de Janeiro, between November 8-10, 2017.

Participated in a panel entitled ‘Recommendations and Action Points for Promoting the Safety of Journalists’, as part of UNESCO’s event for the International Day to End Impunity For Crimes Against Journalists, on November 2, 2017.

Participated in panels on ‘State of the Internet in Asia’ & ‘Religion, Minorities & Hate Online’, at the Regional Consultation on the State of Freedoms of Assembly, Association, Expression and Religion on the Internet in Asia, organized by Association for Progressive Communications, Bytes for All, FORUM-ASIA and Global Partners Digital, between October 4-6, 2017.

Participated in a panel entitled ‘Asian traditions of privacy; regional commonalities and differences’, at a workshop held as part of a series of conferences organised by the UN Special Rapporteur on Privacy, called ‘Privacy,

Participated in a panel at the inaugural session of the Digital Citizen Summit, on 'Access, Rights & Privacy', organised by the Digital Empowerment Foundation on September 21-22, 2017.

Participated in a panel entitled 'Blockchains and the Role of Differential Privacy' at the #NAMAprivacy conference, organised by MediaNama, held at the India Habitat Centre, New Delhi, on September 6, 2017.

Led panel discussion on Privacy Laws at National Law University, Delhi, on September 1, 2017.

Participated in a panel entitled 'Data Localization and Barriers to Cross-Border Data Flows' organised by the University of Zurich at the World Summit for Information Society on June 12, 2017, in Geneva.

Participated in the High-Level Track Facilitation at the World Summit for Information Society (WSIS), between June 12-16, 2017 in Geneva.

Participated in a panel entitled ‘Cyber Conflict and International Law’ at a workshop titled, ‘Geopolitics of Cyberspace: Creating Space for India’, conducted by the Institute for Defence Studies and Analysis (IDSA), on May 24, 2017.


Participated in a panel entitled ‘How Effective are Mobile Apps for Women’s Safety?’, organised by the Centre for Internet and Society, India.

Participated in a panel entitled ‘Walking the Cyber Talk: How Successful have we been in Building a Global, Multistakeholder Culture of Cybersecurity’, organised by the Freedom Online Coalition at RightsCon, held in Brussels, on March 30, 2017.

Participated in a panel entitled ‘Confronting Online Hate Speech: Identification and Strategies’ at RightsCon Brussels, on March 29, 2017.


Policy pop-up talk at the Cyber Initiative Grantee convening by the Hewlett Foundation in Austin, Texas from Jan 8-10, 2017.
The Supreme Court of India has heard several civil liberties and digital rights cases in 2017. Its landmark judgment recognising the right to privacy as a fundamental right has received wide coverage. This judgment was the result of a still-pending case questioning the constitutional validity of the Indian government’s national biometric identity project - Aadhaar.

The Supreme Court has however also been hearing several cases dealing with online platform and content regulation, as well as challenges on the privacy and data protection problems posed by platforms such as Whatsapp.

We have published round ups of our writing and analysis on the right to privacy judgment mentioned above, here, and the platform / content regulation cases here. CCG has also been reporting regularly on updates from the Supreme Court in all these cases, and our posts are listed below in chronological order:


**The Supreme Court Hears Sabu Mathew George v. Union of India – Another Blow for Intermediary Liability,** February 16, 2017.

**Update from the Supreme Court hearing in the WhatsApp-Facebook Data Sharing Case,** April 6, 2017.

**Supreme Court hears the WhatsApp-Facebook Data Sharing Case,** April 18, 2017.

**Linking PAN with Aadhaar – Update from the Supreme Court Hearing (Day – I),** April 27, 2017.

**Linking PAN with Aadhaar – Update from the Supreme Court Hearing (Day – II),** April 27, 2017.

Linking PAN with Aadhaar – Update from the Supreme Court Hearing (Day – IV), May 3, 2017.

Linking PAN with Aadhaar – Updates from the Supreme Court (Day V), May 3, 2017.


Linking PAN with Aadhaar – Update from the Supreme Court Hearing (Day – VI), May 4, 2017.

Supreme Court Hears Fresh Challenge to Aadhaar, May 10, 2017.

(Updates from the SCOI) WhatsApp-Facebook Data Sharing (Day – I): From Content to Metadata, May 16, 2017.


No Interim Relief in Petition Seeking Stay on Mandatory Aadhaar – For Now, June 27, 2017.


SC Constitution Bench on Aadhaar and the fundamental right to privacy – How we got here, July 20, 2017.


Report on Day 3 of the Supreme Court 9 Judge Constitution Bench on the Fundamental Right to Privacy (Part I) (Part II), held on July 26, 2017.


Report on Day 5 of the Supreme Court Constitution Bench on the Fundamental Right to Privacy, held on August 1, 2017.

Report on Day 6 of the Supreme Court 9 Judge Bench on the Constitutional Right to Privacy (Part I) (Part II), held on August 2, 2017.

An update on Sabu Mathew George vs. Union of India, September 5, 2017.

Update on the Aadhaar hearing held on October 30, 2017.

Update on the Aadhaar hearing held on November 27, 2017.

Update from the Supreme Court – Aadhaar linking and Sabu Mathew George vs. Union of India, December 13, 2017.

Free Speech, Content Regulation and Intermediary Liability

Intermediaries v. Copyright Holders: The Delhi High Court Wants to Protect Both
Censorship & certification - Outlining the CBFC's role under law
Reviewing the Law Commission's latest Hate Speech recommendations
How (not) to get away with murder: Reviewing Facebook's live streaming guidelines
Streaming platforms and self-censorship: An Indian perspective
'When the Empire SLAPPs Back': On Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation
The Supreme Court’s Free Speech To-Do List

Privacy, Data Protection and Surveillance

Supreme Court considers installation of CCTV units in courts – but will it regulate what happens next?
Decoding Privacy Policies – WhatsApp
Delhi HC hears the the Right to be Forgotten Case
Two Takes on the Right to be Forgotten
Is Your Aadhaar Number Confidential?
Decoding Privacy Policies – Uber
'My Data, My Rules': On the Right to Data Portability
CCG on the Privacy Judgment
CCG’s recommendations to the TRAI Consultation Paper on Privacy, Security and Ownership of Data in the Telecom Sector – Part I
CCG’s recommendations to the TRAI Consultation Paper on Privacy, Security and Ownership of Data in the Telecom Sector – Part II
CCG’s recommendations to the TRAI Consultation Paper on Privacy, Security and Ownership of Data in the Telecom Sector – Part III
Cybersecurity

BRICS and Cybersecurity Policy: Studying the UN GGE
Evaluating the Risks of the Internet of Things
Evaluating the Risks of the Internet of Things- II
Implications of the US-India Cyber Relationship Framework
The India-US Cyber Partnership and Why Does it Matter?
Protecting Critical Information Infrastructures in India
Gaps in the Protection of Critical Information Infrastructures in India
Telangana’s Cybersecurity Framework: Part I of II
Telangana’s Cybersecurity Framework: Part II of II
Tracking Cybercrime through the National Crime Records Bureau’s “Crime in India” Report, 2015
WhatsApp Encryption: To Ban or Not to Ban
Encryption in India: The Way Forward
Encryption- Backdoors or Trapdoors?
Law Enforcement Initiatives Towards Tackling Cyber Crime in India
Innovative Reporting and Policing to Curb Cyber Crime
Cybersecurity in the Financial Sector: An Overview
Digital Wallet Security: Is there a framework?
Budapest Convention on Cybercrime: An Overview
Cyber Vandalism – Not an Act of War
Tallinn Manual 1.0 – A Primer
The road ahead for norms in cyberspace: Moving forward from Tallinn 2.0
Academic Writing Sprint Paper 1: Cyber for Growth and Inclusion
Academic Writing Sprint Paper 2: Cyber for Diplomacy
The road ahead for norms in cyberspace: Moving forward from Tallinn 2.0

Participated in the first in-person meeting of the EQUALS research group, held in Macau, on December 5-6, 2017. The team also participated in a meeting of the EQUALS research group in Geneva, in July at the WSIS Forum.


Participated in ‘Pre-GCCS Civil Society Workshop’, organised by Global Partners Digital at the Andaz Hotel, New Delhi, from November 20-22, 2017.

Participated in roundtable discussion on ‘The Contours of Free Speech’, held at National Law University, New Delhi, on November 15, 2017.

Participated in Disaster Response Summit, organised by the National Disaster Management Authority and Facebook India, on November 9, 2017.

Participated in Multinational Cyber Security Forum hosted by Center for Cyber, Law and Policy and University of Haifa, in collaboration with the Hewlett Foundation Cyber Initiative in Jerusalem, between November 5-7, Jerusalem.

Participated in roundtable discussion on ‘Data Protection and Privacy’ in Delhi, conducted by the Indian Council for Research on International Economic Relations (ICRIER), on October 30, 2017.


Participated in the Internet Inclusion Luncheon Workshop, conducted by the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE), on 6 October, 2017.

Participated in a meeting of a working group of experts from civil society, organised by the office of the United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy and the European Project MAPPING – “Managing Alternatives for Privacy, Property and Internet Governance”, in Paris in September 2017.

Participated in a roundtable discussion on ‘Issues relating to social media, extremism and hate speech’, at ‘Securing Cyber Space’ at ITS Rio, held between July 14-15, 2017.

Participated in a workshop on harmful speech organised by the Berkman Klein and Shorenstein Centers at Harvard University, Boston, between June 27-30, 2017.

Participated in a roundtable on Predatory Pricing in the Telecom Sector, held at the National Institute of Public Finance & Policy (NIPFP), Delhi, on May 23, 2017.
Participated in a discussion on “Revisiting Aadhaar: Law, Tech and Beyond”, organised by SFLC.in, Digital Empowerment Foundation, and IT for Change, in Delhi on May 9, 2017.

Participated in the India Encryption Roundtable, conducted by BSA - The Software Alliance, held at the Taj Mahal Hotel, Delhi, on March 21, 2017.

Participated in open house session on ‘Fake News, Rumors & Online Content Regulation’, at the NAMA Policy Discussion, in Delhi, on February 22, 2017.

Participated in roundtable on ‘Tallinn Manual 2.0 and its Relevance for India’ conducted by Cyberlaws.net and Pavan Duggal Associates, at the India International Centre, Delhi, on February 16, 2017.

Participated in roundtable of experts on freedom of expression and religion, organised by the Association of Progressive Communications, in Bangkok, on February 20-21, 2017.

Here’s a peek into what’s lined up for us in the first few weeks of 2018!

- Comments to the Data Protection White Paper, for the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY)
- Paper on Child Sexual Exploitation Materials, for the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY)
- Paper on Non-Consensual Pornography, for the Ministry of Electronics and Information Technology (MEITY)
- Updates to our Shutdowns Tracker
- 11th Annual Oxford Price Media Law Moot Court Competition – South Asia Rounds (February 22nd-25th, 2018)
- Summer School on “Embedding Human Rights in Cybersecurity” organised with the Hans Bredow Institute, University of Hamburg and the Institute for Technology & Society of Rio, in collaboration with the UNESCO Chair on Freedom of Communication at the University of Hamburg and the Global Network of Internet and Society Research Centers (March 11-18, 2018)