



On May 31st and June 1st, 2012 over 400 people from over 30 countries gathered for the Rio de Janeiro Human Rights and Technology Conference (RightsCon: Rio). This first of its kind event in Latin America brought together activists, government officials, corporate executives, and leaders from the technology field to discuss some of the most important issues today at the intersection of human rights and new technologies.

From the panels and keynotes; to side events by [the Guardian Project](#), the [SecDev Foundation](#), and the [New America Foundation's Open Internet Tools Project](#); to the conversations in the hallway, RightsCon: Rio significantly advanced the debate on human rights online in Latin America and beyond.

RightsCon: Rio played host to an impressive group of thought leaders including corporate and government representatives, civil society, frontline activists, members of the media, technologists, and academics, facilitating meaningful conversations on how companies and governments can better respect, protect, and remedy human rights online, in policy and in practice.

Our conversations brought some of the most pressing digital rights challenges and opportunities to the fore, including: the increasing moves by governments to enable pervasive surveillance; internet filtering by judicial fiat, particularly through criminal defamation laws; the hidden dangers of copyright enforcement provisions in free trade agreements; the importance of baking human rights into the code of new technologies, pointing to the need to bring technologists and engineers more fully into the digital rights conversation; and the perennial question of how to bridge the digital divide.

View the full program of the event [here](#) and the liveblog [here](#).

This multistakeholder forum highlighted the increasingly important role the region is playing in internet policymaking. Yet, the fact that digital rights activists tend to be siloed by country and by issue area was repeatedly highlighted as a challenge -- RightsCon: Rio brought many of them together and face-to-face with the companies that own the products and platforms they use everyday. Indeed, given the differing levels of debate around the world over digital rights, the conference was an important opportunity for participants to come together, discuss best practices and case studies, share techniques and policy arguments, identify points of synergy, and develop an agenda for extending and defending digital rights in the region and beyond.

RightsCon: Rio further featured the launch of several initiatives and projects, including:

- [The Access Tech Innovation Prize](#), a new initiative that will award \$100,000 across five categories to individuals, organizations or networks that have the best actionable ideas of how to use information technology to promote and enable human rights and/or deliver a social good outcome.
- [HowSecureAml.org](#), a new site providing a free method by which individuals can self-determine threats from their online actions and inquire into the precautions they can take to secure their behavior. This public launch of this site will likely happen in July.
- [The Access Anonymizing Router](#), an implementation of Tor for domestic router



hardware. It is built on OpenWRT and can provide both a transparent entry point to Tor anonymizing network for local users, as well as contributing to the Tor network as a relay or bridge node.

- [Freenet?](#) a collaborative documentary film project about the future of freedom on the internet. It aims to raise awareness of internet policy issues through the production and exchange of audiovisual content amongst those most affected by changes in internet policies: internet users.
- [Access' campaign to the International Telecommunication Union](#) (ITU): calling upon the ITU and its members states to release their preparatory documents; recognize the role of the user, and reject any proposals that might centralize control of the internet.

The conversations we had at RightsCon: Rio were not the beginning of the discussion, nor do they represent the end. Rather, RightsCon: Rio was an important step forward for digital rights in a region where many countries are in the midst of crafting internet regulation, often for the first time. As we return home, we hope these conversations and new relationships will help you to take the next step in our continuing efforts to defend and extend human rights online.

We'd love to hear what you thought of the event, including any key takeaways or new partnerships, as we write the RightsCon: Rio outcome document. Please email us at: conference@accessnow.org.

Thank you for joining us in Rio de Janeiro.

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