



RightsCon

SOUTHEAST ASIA

OUTCOMES REPORT

May 2015

SPOTLIGHT



Photo: Kiri Delena



Photo: Aj Molina



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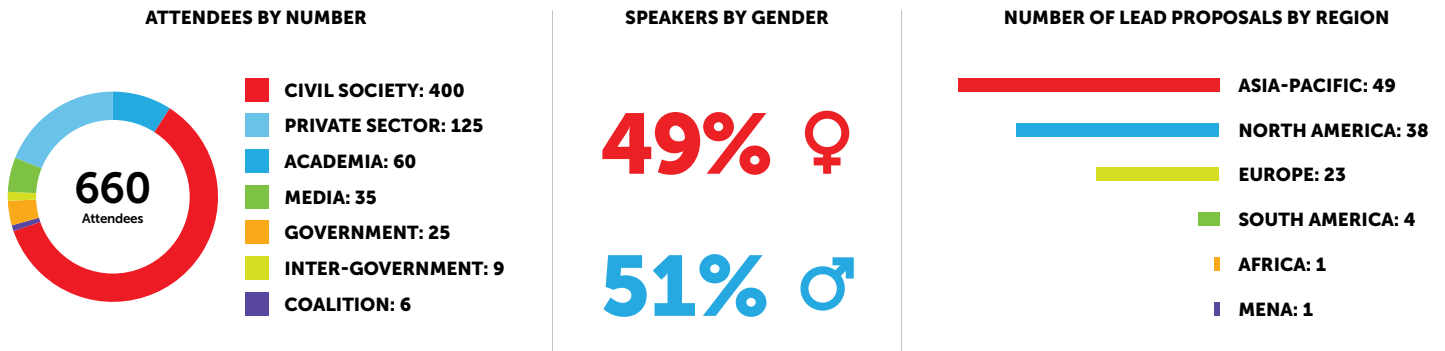
Overview

660 Attendees **56** Countries **100+** Sessions



From Singapore to Malaysia, Myanmar to Hong Kong, Southeast Asia’s 600 million people are coming online rapidly, and its businesses and activists are making innovative uses of emerging and online technologies to develop their economies and champion human rights. However, many in the region encounter censorship, surveillance, and attacks on their basic rights, online and off.

Southeast Asia is a key front in the battle for digital rights and internet freedom. This is why Access convened the 4th event in our RightsCon Summit series in Manila on March 24-25th this year. Since we held the first RightsCon Silicon Valley in 2011, the conference has moved to a different region every other year, in coordination with local partners. For RightsCon Southeast Asia, we partnered with EngageMedia and the Foundation for Media Alternatives. This conference welcomed 660 individuals from 56 countries representing all stakeholder groups: 60% in attendance were from civil society, while 25% came from the private sector; the other 15% were a mix of academics, government officials, and technologists.



RightsCon Southeast Asia featured interactive and participant-driven sessions that explored the following themes:

- ▶ Protecting rights online in the age of surveillance
- ▶ Technology and infrastructure interdependence and development
- ▶ Digital rights and economic development
- ▶ Freedom of information and open data
- ▶ Tech solutions for human rights challenges
- ▶ Limiting and measuring risk in the information and communications technology (ICT) sector

Despite the wide scope of topics, every session had a single mandate: producing #outcomes. A simple question was posed. How would each engagement, from headlining sessions to hallway encounters, create real-world change? The answers reveal a world of new partnerships, tech solutions, and policy positions.

BREAKING SILOS



Photo: Aj Molina

→ ICANN / IANA

Panelists recognized the need to increase participation and develop trust in the transition process between Internet Corporation for Assigned Names and Numbers (ICANN) and the Internet Assigned Numbers Authority (IANA), as well as to explain in plain language the relevance of the transition to a broader audience.

→ Village Facebook

Intensive, long-term training in the use of social media is needed to effectively mobilize communities to advocate for sustainable development. Tech-savvy students need financial support and training to develop skills and participate in the economy of the future.

→ Cyber Sex(y): Sexual Speech, Privacy and Freedom of Expression

Privacy and security are reinforcing rights, and sacrificing one for the other is a false trade-off. For activists in the sexuality rights community in particular, privacy is a necessary premise to ensure safety and autonomy, online and offline.

→ Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Intersex (LGBTI)

Several sessions addressed the intersection of LGBTI communities, human rights, and technology. We found that there's a great need to build an LGBTI culture in the tech space, in particular by defining or redefining norms and identities, and building links between and among communities. The internet should be perceived not as a tool, but a political, public space, where individuals can and should be able to exercise rights such as the freedom of sexual expression.



Photo: Mon Paet

One World, One Internet: ICANN & the IANA Transition



Cyber Sex(y): Sexual Speech, Privacy, and Freedom of Expression

BUILDING BRIDGES

→ Tech Highlights

THE UMBRELLA APP was presented as a concept in the Demo Room at RightsCon Silicon Valley 2014. In the past year, it has notably gone from an idea to a workable prototype which should be useful in the field in May 2015.

THE OPENBTS PROGRAM, an open source software project that looks to substitute legacy mobile networks and proprietary software with an open internet protocol and a flexible software architecture, was presented twice. The project’s leaders expressed excitement about the opportunity to showcase their pluggable VPN to global experts.

BENETECH MADE CONNECTIONS WITH SECONDMUSE during the Demo Room activities, to discuss incorporating their needfinding framework into a new development project, ensuring that usability for people across the globe remains a priority of Benetech’s many human rights-focused activities.

→ Asia Regional Cooperation and Community Network Strengthening

Participants stressed their interest in sharing more information across countries and sub-regions in Asia – and seeing whether that can drive further collaborative efforts. A working group has been set up to design an experimental regional platform for internet rights issues in Asia, comprised of five organizations and open to additional volunteers. There will be additional events in the next few months that could help facilitate these conversations, including the Asia-Pacific Regional Internet Governance Forum (IGF).

→ Global Net Neutrality Coalition and Net Neutrality Dynamic Coalition

The Global Net Neutrality Coalition (GNN) and Net Neutrality Dynamic Coalition (NNDC) agreed to move forward together with groundbreaking research and a mapping project that will, for the first time, document existing and future Net Neutrality laws and rules, as well as give global advocates tools to challenge violations of Net Neutrality. The Global Coalition also added more than a dozen new members, including several from the Philippines.

→ Myanmar Rights and Development

Offline issues, such as land rights and tech education, are the primary focus of efforts to extend access to local networks and strengthen economic development. Outreach on the ground, and corporate support, are crucial to helping Myanmar achieve increased connectivity and security.

Field assessments show that community consultations save time and money for companies entering new markets. To reach key stakeholders, traditional communications methods like pamphletting and in-person consultations are necessary.

For their part, digital security experts must look beyond the banking and financial sectors, to extend privacy protection and digital security awareness across all of society.



Rebecca MacKinnon, Director of Ranking Digital Rights Project, New America Foundation

→ Internet and Jurisdiction

Representatives from civil society and internet companies must discuss ways to ensure that terms of service are in line with human rights principles. In particular, the terms of service should be in compliance with the newly launched Manila Principles on Intermediary Liability.

WHAT PARTICIPANTS ARE SAYING

“RightsCon was great. Incredibly substantive, fascinating people doing amazing things. Thanks for making it such a worthwhile trip.”

David Kaye, Special Rapporteur, UN

“As compared to other conferences, RightsCon had really focused and substantive sessions, and the best part was that almost all the sessions enabled audience participation and interaction between panelists and members of the audience, which usually doesn’t happen.”

Fariha Aziz, Director, Bolo Bhi

“Thank you for organizing such a terrific and successful RightsCon this year. I realize there are many other Access teammates who worked tirelessly to prepare for this conference — an earnest thanks to the entire Access organization for working on so many of the causes that Twitter also finds crucial.”

Eugene Yi, Public Policy for East Asia, Twitter

“The Demo Room at RightsCon has really evolved into a valuable, key fixture of the event. As implementers approaching the broader intersection of technology and human rights from different angles, the Demo Room serves a crucial purpose — exposing attendees to new and different implementations of mission-driven technology development, breaking silos and encouraging fruitful collaborations.”

Nicolas Sera-Leyva, LevelUp Internews

“RightsCon 2015 was a great opportunity for reconnecting, regrouping, and planning future actions with activists from all across the globe, and specifically from Latin America. In a crucial moment for privacy, Net Neutrality, and freedom of expression, RightsCon fosters a network for critical thinking and moving forward our digital rights.”

Marianne Diaz Hernandez, Venezuela

“The common reaction was ‘damn, I wish I had gone to RightsCon too!’”

Duy Hoang, Spokesperson, Viet Tan

“I agree on this RightsCon being a great success. I heard that over and over. Congratulations to the entire Access team (and partners) for putting together something of such great substance. I think you’ll have planted the seeds for so many fruitful relationships.”

Michael Samway, founder of The Yahoo Business & Human Rights Program and professor at Georgetown

“Thank you for an incredible conference! I was at the one last year — which was also fantastic — but this one far exceeded my expectations. This has become one of only two “must attend” conferences on my agenda, and I look forward to next year.”

Anonymous

“It was indeed a pleasure to be a part of RightsCon, now two years in a row, and to provide support for it. I know from my colleagues, that both events were exceptional opportunities from the content and discussions to the networking opportunities.”

C. Lynn McNair, Senior Director, Partnership Development, Internet Society

“I heard terrific things about RightsCon this year — I understand that APriGF even extended its workshop proposal deadline in the event that RightsCon conversations might be continued. Congrats!”

Susan Chalmers, Chalmers & Associates

“I thought this year’s conference was even more spectacular than the one last year. I look forward to participating in 2016!”

K. Alexa Koenig, JD, PhD. Executive Director and Lecturer in Law, Human Rights Center, University of California, Berkeley, School of Law

“It is an amazing conference, though it was my first time with the RightsCon. You all made a great job, the conference is an eye opener. Hope to see you all in the next event.”

Nilantha Ilangamuwa, Sri Lanka Guardian and Asian Human Rights Commission

“Big internet, telcom, security companies talking directly with human rights advocates is something I did not think was possible...”

Anonymous

LAUNCHES



Nica Dumlao, Internet Rights Program Coordinator, Foundation for Media Alternatives



Gabrielle Guilleman, Senior Legal Officer at ARTICLE 19 & Professor Park Kyung-sin, Founding Director, Open Net, Korea University Law School

→ Manila Principles on Intermediary Liability

The Manila Principles on Intermediary Liability are a set of best-practice guidelines for limiting the liability of internet intermediaries for third-party content, with the aim of promoting freedom of expression and innovation. The launch of the Manila Principles at RightsCon was the culmination of months of intensive work by civil society groups from around the world, including a two-day RightsCon satellite event.

→ Philippine Declaration on Internet Rights and Principles

The Foundation for Media Alternatives (FMA) is particularly excited to share local experiences in keeping the internet free and open, as they begin their own national effort to draft a Philippine Declaration on Internet Rights and Principles. Set to be launched in time for ICT month in June, the document will set out the dreams, hopes, and aspirations of what the Philippine internet should be.

→ Universal Implementation Guide for the International Principles on the Application of Human Rights to Communications Surveillance

This new Implementation Guide provides detail on how to apply the Principles in practice. It considers each stage of the process of a government application to access an individual's online information and gives examples and checklists for government agents, judges, and lawyers who are involved in processing applications to access user data.

→ Joint Statement on Transparency Reporting

More than 40 civil society organizations signed onto a Joint Statement calling for steps to make corporate transparency reports more useful for users, researchers, journalists, and

advocates. The statement makes concrete proposals to increase the granularity and specificity of reporting, identify the legal authorities underlying government requests, and ensure companies operate under best practices and uniform standards respecting rights.

→ Coalition Against Device Registration and Data Retention (CADRE)

Ten non-government organizations (NGOs) agreed to join forces against global laws and policies mandating data retention, device, and SIM registration, and other practices enabling surveillance. The groups will now build a platform to engage the coalition, share knowledge, and develop global actions, and invite civil society groups to join this coalition.

→ Report on the "Asia Pacific SME Cloud Computing Attractiveness Index 2015"

Asia Cloud Computing Association report on "The Asia Pacific SME Cloud Computing Attractiveness Index 2015" launched during a RightsCon panel on trade agreements. The Index intends to help small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) assess markets for cloud computing, and help policymakers target areas for improvement so as to accelerate adoption and development by SMEs.

→ The Announcement of Hatch Media Platform

Hatch connects users to a suite of tools and a growing community that can help leverage the power of narrative to increase reach, resources, and impact for social impact organizations.

RESPONSIBLE DATA



Alexa Koenig, Executive Director, Human Rights Center at UC Berkeley



Prosecutor v.s. Perpetrator X:
A Mock Debate on the Potential for
Using Technology for Truth



Khailee Ng, Managing Partner,
500 Startups. Founder, SAYS.com



Charles Mok, Legislative Council,
Hong Kong

→ Evidence Collection

Several sessions facilitated discussions on common standards to provide courts with reliable evidence while ensuring the security of the first responders documenting human rights violations.

→ The Responsible Data Forum

The Responsible Data Forum satellite event provided the impetus for new collaborations among more than 30 participants from all around the globe. Attendees agreed to help build tools and share resources that have already been found useful in other contexts (e.g. a risk assessment lifecycle approach for human rights documentation projects), and created the framework for more discussions on documenting human rights that people are already eagerly planning.

→ International Criminal Court NGO Guidelines Workshop

A energetic group of international legal experts and civil society groups across Southeast Asia committed to contributing to guidance that will make international criminal court prosecutions more effective through NGO participation. Session leaders solidified a network of local lawyers, community groups, and other experts that will help create guidelines counseling NGOs worldwide on how to document and preserve evidence for use in criminal trials.

FASHIONING POLICY POSITIONS



Strength in Numbers: Transparency Reporting & the Search for Meaning



The 'Open Internet' v.s. Net Neutrality



David Kaye, Special Rapporteur, United Nations Human Rights Council & Peter Micek, Senior Policy Counsel, Access

→ Data Brokers

The hidden industry of data brokers — a shadow economy — collects, aggregates, and monitors virtually all our digital behavior for commercial purposes. Discussants explored how this industry operates in different regions of the world, from the United States to India to Singapore, and examined some of the risks associated with information sharing amongst companies and government agencies. Panelists agreed on the need for more transparency, oversight, and regulation of this industry, and flagged the substantial challenges to protecting privacy in light of these hidden actors.

→ The Open Internet vs Net Neutrality

The model of price differentiation that favors certain apps and services hand-picked by gatekeepers violates the principles of Net Neutrality, through “positive” discrimination. More study is needed to understand the full impact that zero-rated services have on local internet service providers, user choice, and innovation.

→ Spotlights on Surveillance

In many different sessions at RightsCon Southeast Asia, representatives from civil society shared creative methods for fighting intrusive government spying, from circumvention tools, to innovative legislation, to creative campaigning. Participants further collaborated to counter mass surveillance, launching an initiative to fight harmful data retention mandates and raising the profile of Asian voices that have been underrepresented in surveillance policy debates.

→ Strength in Numbers: Transparency Reporting

Participants from civil society, academia, and major internet firms called on governments to release “transparency reports” disclosing their requests for user data. Audience members pointed out that governments are not monoliths, but are rather composed of many different individuals and offices who could be allies in the fight against surveillance.

→ The New Universal Implementation Guide for the “Necessary and Proportionate” Principles Illuminates a Human Rights-based Pathway for a Government Application to Access an Individual’s Online Information

Advocates from across the spectrum agreed that rigorous research should be conducted on how mass surveillance is being carried out and how it impacts marginalized communities. Furthermore, participants acknowledged the need to bring to mainstream advocacy better awareness that some communities, such as the LGBTI community, are often targeted for persistent surveillance.

CRAFTING ADVOCACY STRATEGIES



Photo: Aj Molina

Anja Kovacs, Director, Internet Democracy Project

→ Ranking Digital Rights (RDR)

Activists, researchers, and company representatives from all over Asia joined Ranking Digital Rights to study its pilot study results. Organizers collected feedback on how the project’s global ranking for ICT companies on digital free expression and privacy criteria can help others who fight to defend digital rights. RDR left RightsCon excited about people’s enthusiasm to use its methodology and the data to be published later this year.

→ Hashtags, Memes, and More: Creative Communication Strategies for Advocacy

This popular workshop scrutinized well-known campaigns, such as #UmbrellaMovement and #BlackLivesMatter, to provide insights on messaging strategies. The diverse group of participants rapidly iterated, collaborated, and tested new ideas — censorship was a top concern — then refined the core message of the campaign. Strict time limits forced everyone to give honest feedback, quickly, which is good training for creativity at the ideation stage.

→ India and Intermediary Liability

A major Supreme Court decision in India coincided with RightsCon, finding that vague legal provisions that were used to criminalize expression online are unconstitutional, and that online content can be taken



Photo: Kiri Delena

Hashtags, Memes, and More: Creative Communication Strategies for Advocacy

down only through lawful court orders or by the government in limited cases. This suggests that public-interest campaigns driven by civil society and other internet stakeholders can spark reform, even if it takes time for the reform to be enacted.

→ UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy

During RightsCon, the UN Human Rights Council created the new role of Special Rapporteur on the Right to Privacy, the consensus result of intensive lobbying by civil society and governments. To be appointed in June 2015, this new expert office will investigate abuses, promote norms, and pressure states and companies to protect privacy, online and offline.

UN experts at RightsCon stressed how important civil society is to their work. Shadow reporting in the Universal Periodic Review process, for instance, propels states to make progress. But advocates must follow through the four-year cycle, because only continuous engagement, via multiple channels, produces outcomes at the UN.

CONCLUSION



The “best RightsCon ever,” according to many attendees, RightsCon Southeast Asia revealed and strengthened the bonds of civil society actors throughout the region, who showed stakeholders worldwide how to make technology work for users at risk. Gracious hosts from the Philippines filled the event with creative energy, ideas, and passion — for human rights, technology, and karaoke.

Thank you Southeast Asia!

See you at RightsCon Silicon Valley 2016, March 28-30.



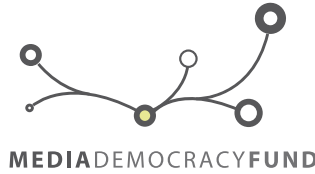
The RightsCon summit series is hosted by Access, an international NGO that defends and extends the digital rights of users at risk around the world. By combining innovative policy, user engagement, and direct technical support, we fight for open and secure communications for all.

For more information: www.rightscon.org | conference@accessnow.org | +1 888 414 0100

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