

CLEIMUN19

“Collaboration in a Polarized World: Hope for the Future?”

A Research Report

COMMITTEE: Human Rights Council

QUESTION OF: The Question of the Right to Privacy with the Advance of Technology.

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Introduction & Background

In the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Article 12 states: “No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honour and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.” This idea seemed very simple at the time the declaration was written back in 1948, however the rise of technology and information processing systems has made the idea of privacy a lot more convoluted.

Information technology refers to the systems that automatically store and distribute data, usually for the use of identity verification. However there have been a lot of problems that arise from this. For example, in February of 2017, the credit company Equifax fell victim to a massive hack, and the information of nearly half of the US population was stolen. The link below to the Washington Post article about the scandal discusses the topic in more detail. There can be serious dangers in putting one’s information online, as it can never be guaranteed to be completely safe at all times. There have also been cases where authorities have used online information to catch criminals, where otherwise they would never have been able to, the question for this topic is

whether or not these instances constitute a violation of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Questions to Consider

1. How much responsibility can be placed on the individual vs. the company for putting their information into these systems?
 2. Is it the responsibility of the UN or of individual nations to step in to regulate or intervene?
 3. In what ways will limiting or changing the amount of information needed on the internet affect online interactions? (not just personal interactions, but between companies, or between an individual and a company, etc.)
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Past Efforts To Solve This Problem

There have been few UN resolutions pertaining to this issue. There was a resolution signed by the General Assembly back in 2016, as a reaction to the actions taken by Edward Snowden, who released documents revealing that the US government was spying on its own people. While it was a start, it only called upon nations to start respecting privacy with the rise of information technology. It took very little action to ensure the privacy of individuals online, pertaining to information technology systems. This resolution, to which the link for it is also below, seems to be one of the only ones addressing this issue.

Possible Solutions

There are several approaches that could be taken to solve this problem, depending on the perspective of the country that you as a delegate are representing. It is very important to remember that this issue pertains to the Universal Declaration of Human rights, and whether or not the rises in information technology does or will lead to a violation of these rights. Then the next question that needs to be asked as a delegate is where the blame lies for either the lack of proper security, or the use of information in general. Whether the blame lies on the companies for not having the proper security, the governments of nations for not regulating as much up until this point, or even the individual for putting their own information online in the first place. This will shape how you, representing your country, will form your draft resolution and general position on this topic. You as a delegate, might have to cast aside your own personal beliefs, depending on the views of the country you are representing, which is important for debate, it is important to check that your position agrees with your country's views, not if the country you are representing agrees with your personal beliefs. Countries that have very strict access to the internet, or limited access to the internet will probably be in favor of limiting the amount of information that needs to be given to these information technology systems. On the other hand, countries that use the internet frequently might be more in favor of cracking down on information security on the side of the companies that own the information technology in the first place, as well as regulating that the information can be used for by the companies.

Links for Reference

[Universal Declaration of Human Rights](#)

[Washington Post Article on the Equifax Scandal](#)

[Stanford Explorative Paper on Information Technology and Privacy](#)

[GA 2016 Resolution on Privacy](#)

[Edward Snowden's story](#)