

THE
CENTRE
FOR

internet
& society



About CIS

The Centre for Internet and Society (CIS) is a non-profit research organization that works on policy issues relating to freedom of expression, privacy, accessibility for persons with disabilities, access to knowledge and IPR reform, and openness (including open government, FOSS, open standards, etc.), and engages in academic research on digital natives and digital humanities.

Accessibility

CIS provides feedback and inputs to the Government of India on an ongoing basis to promote ICT accessibility in various policy initiatives like the draft electronic accessibility policy and the Copyright Act, etc. CIS is also doing two projects. One is to create a national resource kit of state-wise laws, policies and programmes for persons with disabilities and another is to develop a screen reader and text-to-speech synthesizer for Indian languages.

Major Publications

- [Accessibility of Government Websites in India: A Report](#)
- [Web Accessibility Policy Making: An International Perspective](#)
- [Universal Service for Persons with Disabilities: A Global Survey of Policy Interventions and Good Practices](#)
- [e-Accessibility Policy Handbook for Persons with Disabilities](#)

Access to Knowledge & Openness

CIS is doing a project to support and develop the growth of Indic language communities through community collaborations and partnerships. CIS is also conducting research upon the noteworthy opportunities of the new types of digital media devices, content and services as available in China and India. CIS participates in meetings at the WIPO SCCR from a public interest perspective, and also provides inputs to the Indian government on amendments to the Copyright Act and Copyright Rules. CIS further promotes openness including open government data, open standards, open access, and free/libre/open source software through its Openness programme.

Major Publications

- [Critical Point of View: A Wikipedia Reader](#)
- [Open Government Data Study](#)
- [Opening Government: A Guide to Best Practice in Transparency, Accountability and Civic Engagement](#)
- [The Online Video Environment in India - A Survey Report](#)
- [Good Practices Handbook](#)
- [Environmental Scan Report](#)
- [Local Researcher's Methodology Guide](#)

Reports

- [Consumers International IP Watchlist — India Reports: 2009, 2011 and 2012](#)
- [The 2010 Special 301 Report Is More of the Same, Slightly Less ShriII](#)
- [Indic Language Wikipedias — Statistical Report — 2012](#)

Peer Review / Journal Articles

- [Exceptions and Limitations in Indian Copyright Law for Education: An Assessment](#)
- [Of Jesters, Clowns and Pranksters: YouTube and the Condition of Collaborative Authorship](#)
- [Exhaustion: Imports, Exports and the Doctrine of First Sale in Indian Copyright Law](#)

Film

- [People are Knowledge – Experimenting with Oral Citations on Wikipedia](#)

Internet Governance

CIS is doing a project on examining the indicators of female economic empowerment in the IT industry in India. CIS is also doing a project on facilitating the implementation of activities related to surveillance and freedom of speech and expression. Further, CIS provides policy briefs on section 66 A of IT Act, Intermediary Guidelines Rules, Guidelines for Cyber Cafe Rules, Electronic Service Delivery Rules, etc., to the Government of India.

Key Research

- Google Policy Fellowship: [Intermediary Liability in India: Chilling Effects on Free Speech Expression on the Internet](#)
- Research with Privacy International: [Banking, Telecommunications, Consumer Protection, IT Act, Limitations, Internet Protocol, Media, Sexual Minorities, and UID.](#)
- Open Letters on UID: [SCOSTA standard, Centralized Database, Biometrics, Budget, Operational Design, Transactions, and Deduplication](#)
- Peer Reviewed: [Material Cyborgs; Asserted Boundaries](#) (European Journal of English Studies, Volume 12, Issue 2, 2008), and [Internet and Society in Asia: Challenges and Next Steps](#) (Inter-Asia Cultural Studies, Volume 11, Number 1, March 2010)
- Prominent Blog Posts: [Analysing Latest List of Blocked Sites](#) (Communalism & Rioting Edition), [Breaking Down Section 66A of the IT Act, Draft Human DNA Profiling Bill \(April 2012\): High Level Concerns, A Comparison of Indian Legislation to Draft International Principles on Surveillance of Communications, CIS Welcomes Standing Committee Report on IT Rules](#)
- Recent Submissions: [Comments on Electronic Service Delivery Rules, Cyber Cafe Rules and Reasonable Security Practices and Procedures and Sensitive Personal Data or Information Rules](#)

Knowledge Repository on Internet Access

CIS is developing an online repository covering topics surrounding the Internet, its principles and values, and how it shapes the society. CIS is also organising a week-long residential institute as part of this project. Blog posts, files, videos, etc., will be published on the [Internet Institute website](#) as well as mirrored on the [CIS website](#).

Telecom

CIS has been actively involved in promoting access and accessibility of telecommunications services and resources. Our interventions include providing inputs to ongoing policy discussions and consultation papers published by the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India, preparing specific reports such as a report on Unlicensed Spectrum, preparing a report on the accessibility of mobile phones for persons with disabilities and working with the Universal Service Obligation Fund to include funding projects for persons with disabilities in its mandate. One of our directors has prepared reports on ICT and mobile accessibility in the capacity of ITU expert and a distinguished fellow at our Centre writes a monthly column in the Business Standard on telecommunications issues.

Major Publications

- [Unlicensed Spectrum Policy Brief for the Government of India](#)
- [Open Spectrum for Development India Case Study](#)

Digital Natives

Digital Natives with a Cause? examines the changing landscape of social change and political participation in light of the role that young people play through digital and Internet technologies, in emerging information societies. Consolidating knowledge from Asia, Africa and Latin America, it builds a global network of knowledge partners who critically engage with discourse on youth, technology and social change, and look at alternative practices and ideas in the Global South:.

Major Publications

- [Digital Natives with a Cause? Report](#)
- [Digital Natives with a Cause? Thinkathon: Position Papers](#)
- [Digital AlterNatives with a Cause?](#)

Peer Review

- [Between the Stirrup and the Ground: Relocating Digital Activism](#)

Researchers at Work

CIS firmly believes that in order to understand the contemporary concerns in the field of Internet and Society, it is necessary to produce local and contextual accounts of the interaction between the internet and socio-cultural and geo-political structures. With a prime focus on 'The Histories of the Internet and India' for its first two years, the programme has produced documentations on the transactions and negotiations, relationships and correlations that the emergence of internet technologies has resulted in, specifically in the South.

Monographs

- [Re:Wiring Bodies](#)
- [Archives and Access](#)
- [Porn: Law, Video & Technology](#)
- [The Last Cultural Mile](#)
- [Internet, Society and Space in Indian Cities](#)

Our Funding

CIS's donors' names and amount of the grants they've provided are mentioned below in an effort to be absolutely transparent.

Name of the Donor	Project Funded	Amount in Indian Rupees
Rural India Supporting Trust (Hans Foundation), USA	National Resource Kit of Laws, Policies and Programmes for Persons with Disabilities	INR 54,83,200 (split across 2 years)
Rural India Supporting Trust (Hans Foundation), USA	Developing a Screen Reader and Text-to-Speech Synthesizer	INR 85,16,000 (split across 2 years)
Kusuma Trust, UK	Accessibility Programme	INR 14,00,000 (split across 3 years)
Wikimedia Foundation, UK	Access to Knowledge (Wikipedia) project	INR 2,60,00,000 (split across 2 years)
Kusuma Trust, UK	Access to Knowledge and Openness Programme	INR 46,50,000 (split across 3 years)
Privacy International, UK	Surveillance and Freedom Project	INR 2,13,997 (split across 3 years)
Kusuma Trust, UK	Internet Governance Programme	INR 19,00,000 (split across 3 years)
Ford Foundation, USA	Internet Studies (and earlier Telecom Knowledge Repository)	INR 95,61,152 (split across 2 years)
Kusuma Trust, UK	Telecom Programme	INR 19,00,000 (split across 3 years)

Board Members

The Board of CIS consists of five members who bring a wealth of experience in many different fields such as accessibility, access to knowledge, openness, internet governance and telecom.

Our Board Members

- Lawrence Liang: Lawrence is the chairman of the board. He is a keen follower of the open source movement in software and has been working on ways to translate the open source ideas into the cultural domain.
- Prof. Subbiah Arunachalam: Prof. Arunachalam worked as a teacher of information science at Indian National Science Documentation Centre, as a development researcher at M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and at IIT, Madras. He has been on the editorial boards of six international refereed journals.
- Jayna Kothari: Jayna is one of the founder members of CLPR. She has taught in University Law College and at the National Law School of India University in Bangalore. She is presently a partner at Ashira Law Firm and practices in the High Court of Karnataka.
- Kavita Philip: Kavita is an Associate Professor at UC Irvine's Program in Women's Studies. She has written in journals such as Cultural Studies, Postmodern Culture, NMediaC, Radical History Review, and Environment and History. She is also the co-author in books like Civilising Natures, Tactical Biopolitics, Homeland Securities, Multiple Contentions, etc.
- Prof. Vibodh Parthasarathi: Prof. Vibodh teaches in the Jamia Millia Islamia University in Delhi. He maintains a multidisciplinary interest in media and development policy, business history of creative industries, and governance of media infrastructure. He is the co-editor of the critically acclaimed tri-series on Communication Process published by Sage.

Distinguished Fellows

The following experts serve as [Distinguished Fellows](#) at CIS:

- Lawrence Liang: Lawrence is the chairman of the board. He is a keen follower of the open source movement in software and has been working on ways to translate the open source ideas into the cultural domain.
- Prof. Subbiah Arunachalam: Prof. Arunachalam worked as a teacher of information science at Indian National Science Documentation Centre, as a development researcher at M.S. Swaminathan Research Foundation and at IIT, Madras. He has been on the editorial boards of six international refereed journals.
- Rishab Aiyer Ghosh: Rishab is an Open Source Initiative board member, the managing editor of First Monday, a peer reviewed journal, and the program leader of FLOSS at UNU-MERIT. Rishab has worked as an editor at The Indian Technologist, an analytical newsletter on Indian media and as an analyst and newsletter contributor for US-based Paul Kagan Associates, and a weekly columnist on Internet society (Electric Dreams).
- Hans Varghese Mathews: Hans has been a research associate with the Indian Statistical Institute, and has written extensively on visual art for Frontline; he currently directs mathematical modelling for an analytics firm, and is a contributing editor to the online journal Phalanx.
- Shyam Ponappa: Shyam works in the areas of investment banking and management consulting, after beginning his career in banking. He has advised on public policy since 1990, primarily in telecommunications and is a regular columnist with the Business Standard.
- Tejaswini Niranjana: Tejaswini is presently a Senior Fellow at the Centre for the Study of Culture and Society, Bangalore and a visiting professor at Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She is an adviser to the 'Access to Knowledge' programme and will help in expansion of Indic language wikipedias and increasing the number of active editors through strategic partnerships with higher education institutions across India.

Fellows

The following experts serve as [Fellows](#) at CIS:

- Chinmayi Arun: Chinmayi is a professor at the National Law University in Delhi and was an assistant professor of law at the West Bengal National University of Juridical Sciences for over two years. She has developed and taught courses on regulatory theory, media regulation and Internet governance, during her time at NUJS.
- Malavika Jayaram: Malavika has an experience of more than 15 years as a lawyer with a specialization in information technology and intellectual property. Malavika worked in London for eight years with Allen & Overy and Citigroup. She is a partner in Jayaram & Jayaram, Bangalore managing a portfolio of work that has a strong focus on IT/IP and commercial work, especially with an international angle.
- Chanuka Wattegama: Chanuka is an independent policy researcher and consultant with expertise in telecom policy and regulations, ICT for Development, Development Economics, Disaster Risk Reduction and Development Evaluation. He had worked as a Senior Research Manager at LIRNEasia, an Asian think tank on policy and regulation and as a Program Specialist ICT4D at the United Nations Development Program.
- Selvam Velmurugan: Selvam is the founder of eMoksha.org, a non-partisan non-profit focused on enabling stronger democracies through increased citizen awareness and participation. Prior to founding eMoksha.org, Selvam was an internet technologist with more than 12 years of experience in building and managing distributed web-scale systems. During his 10-year stint at Amazon, he devised complex search indexing and querying algorithms, setup the Chennai Development Center, and managed critical platform components for Amazon Web Services.

Key Staff Members

The following are some of the [key team members](#) at the CIS office in Bangalore and Delhi:

- Sunil Abraham: Sunil is the Executive Director of CIS. He is a social entrepreneur and free software advocate. He founded Mahiti in 1998. Sunil was elected an Ashoka Fellow in 1999. to 'explore the democratic potential of the Internet' and was granted a Sarai FLOSS fellowship in 2003. Between June 2004 and June 2007, he managed the International Open Source Network, a project of the UNDP's Asia-Pacific Development Information Programme serving 42 countries in the Asia-Pacific region.
- Nishant Shah: Nishant is the Director-Research at CIS. He is a recipient of the Asia Scholarship Foundation's fellowship for comparative research at the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, Shanghai University, and is a regular columnist with the Sunday Eye, the national edition of Indian Express, Delhi, GQ India and DML Central.
- Vishnu Vardhan: Vishnu is the Programme Director-Access to Knowledge at CIS. He managed the Art, Crafts and Culture portfolio of the Sir Ratan Tata Trust and worked as a Research Coordinator at the Centre for Study of Culture and Society.
- Dr. U.B.Pavanaja: Dr. Pavanaja was a scientist at the Bhabha Atomic Research Centre, Mumbai, for about 15 years. He has to his credit many firsts, viz., Kannada website, Kannada online magazine, Indian language (Kannada) website to receive Golden Web Award, etc. Dr. Pavanaja is the Programme Officer, Indic Language Initiatives at CIS.
- Nirmita Narasimhan: Nirmita is a Policy Director at CIS and works on policy research and advocacy related to IP reform and technology access for persons with disabilities. In recognition of her work, she was awarded the National Award for Empowerment of Persons with Disabilities by the President of India.
- Pranesh Prakash: Pranesh is a Policy Director at CIS and works on policy research and advocacy around intersections of technology and law focusing on access to knowledge (primarily copyright reforms), promoting 'openness' (including open government data, open standards, open access, etc), freedom of expression, privacy, and internet governance. Pranesh was selected as an Internet Freedom Fellow in 2012.
- Nitika Tandon: Nitika is a Programme Manager for the Access to Knowledge team. She is a recipient of Dean's Fund Scholarship Program, Erasmus University and advises Wikimedia Foundation on the strategic direction of various programs.

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Thank You