

DIGITAL FELLOWSHIP 2021

The Centre for Communication Governance at National Law University, Delhi (CCG), is calling for applications for the DIGITAL (Digital Rights and Inclusive Technology for All) Fellowship, to be offered to successful candidates for a period of 10 months on a full-time basis. The Fellows will be placed in a civil society organisation/litigation chambers that engages in digital rights litigation, and will also develop related legal and policy research under the guidance of CCG.

About CCG

The Centre for Communication Governance at National Law University Delhi is the only academic research centre dedicated to working on information law and policy in India and is a leading centre on information policy in Asia.

CCG seeks to embed constitutional rights and good governance within information law and policy and examine the evolution of existing rights frameworks to accommodate new media and emerging technology. It aims to protect and expand the rights to dignity and equality, freedom of speech, right to assembly and association, and the right to privacy in the digital age, through rigorous academic research, policy intervention, capacity building, and litigation support.

The Centre routinely works with a range of international academic institutions and policy organisations. These include the Berkman Klein Center at Harvard University, the Programme in Comparative Media Law and Policy at the University of Oxford, the Center for Internet and Society at Stanford Law School, Hans Bredow Institute at the University of Hamburg and the Global Network of Interdisciplinary Internet & Society Research Centers. We regularly engage with government institutions and ministries such as the Law Commission of India, Ministry of Electronics & IT, Ministry of External Affairs, the Ministry of Law & Justice and the International Telecommunications Union. We work actively to provide the executive and judiciary with useful research in the course of their decision making on issues relating to civil liberties and technology.

About the Fellowship

With increasing internet penetration and the rapid increase of internet users in the country, digital rights have become a core focus within the ambit of the protection of civil liberties. In the last few years, there have been several important judicial pronouncements stemming from digital rights litigation, whether it was the landmark *Puttaswamy I* judgement upholding the fundamental right to privacy in the Indian Constitution, or the more recent *Anuradha Bhasin* judgement which clarified that the right to freedom of expression online was a fundamental right.

However, several vital questions relating to freedom of expression and privacy in the digital age are yet to be clarified by the courts. Currently, Indian courts are grappling with questions on intermediary liability, the legality of provisions in Indian laws enabling surveillance, website content blocking and internet shutdown orders, to name a few.

These cases and others like them will define India's digital rights landscape for at least the next decade, if not longer. However, digital rights litigation in India is currently facing significant challenges including resource constraints in terms of research and domain expertise, and also inadequate collaboration among the different lawyers engaged in cases in this space and civil society organisations working on these issues.

To address these issues and give further impetus to this essential work, CCG is excited to announce the DIGITAL Fellowship 2021.

The Fellowship has the following objectives –

- To support the development and advancement of digital rights by providing high quality legal and research support and effectively intervening in cases relating to digital rights, including freedom of expression and privacy.
- To engage in and produce legal and policy research around the theme of digital rights.
- To build an inclusive and mutually supportive digital rights and technology litigation community in India with a long term vision for shaping the development of law and policy in this domain in India.
- To establish a hub for collaboration between different stakeholders including civil society, advocates and technologists to support the development of digital rights in India.

The Fellowship Programme

The DIGITAL Fellowship 2021 is a 10-month, full-time Fellowship that will be awarded by a Selection Committee to **two Fellows**. These Fellows will be placed either in specific civil society organisations undertaking litigation around digital rights or litigation chambers that are involved in significant digital rights litigation.

The Selection Committee has a list of potential organisations and litigation chambers that the Fellows can be placed with. However, applicants for the Fellowship are welcome to suggest relevant organisations or litigation chambers they would be interested in working with in their application form. The final discretion on the placement of the Fellows with a host organisation remains with CCG and the Selection Committee.

The Fellowship will commence in January 2021. A monthly, non-negotiable stipend of INR 50,000 /- will be provided to each Fellow.

Roles and Responsibilities of the DIGITAL Fellows

- *Litigation research, drafting, and briefing*

Fellows will undertake extensive research, and draft petitions and other filings as required in cases on digital rights. Fellows will also be involved in briefing senior advocates/counselors who are leading arguments in courts in these cases.

- *Research and policy output*

The Fellows will also be required to carry out high impact policy-centric research and write briefs, reports, responses, blogs, articles and other documents that are relevant to and will support pending litigation.

- *Building a national network of digital rights stakeholders*

Through CCG, the Fellows will regularly convene lawyers and civil society organisations working on digital rights issues to enable an exchange of ideas and facilitate learnings from each other around litigation on digital rights. Building such a network of lawyers and organisations through such convenings will strengthen collaboration and strategy in the digital rights litigation domain.

Fellows will also establish and maintain a pan-India network of lawyers working on digital rights cases.

Eligibility

Applicants for the Fellowship must –

- Be born on or after January 1, 1988;
- Be registered with the Bar Council of India;
- Demonstrate a strong interest in and commitment to the development of digital rights;
- Have excellent legal writing, drafting and oral advocacy skills.

Preference will be given to applicants with a minimum of two years' experience in litigation.

CCG is an equal opportunity employer and strongly encourages persons from SC/ST backgrounds, minority religions, LGBTQI+ persons and persons with disability to apply.

Selection Process

Interested applicants must submit –

- A signed and completed DIGITAL Fellowship 2021 Application Form, available [here](#).
- The form has the following two essay questions, which applicants have to answer in a maximum of 5000 characters (including spaces):
 - a. List up to 5 cases you were directly involved with in your career, which in your opinion have been impactful. Give details of the cases including the judicial forum, outcome and impact, as well as your own role in achieving them. We encourage applicants to highlight experience in fundamental rights / digital rights litigation.
 - b. If granted the Fellowship, please clearly articulate your goals, their alignment with the Fellowship's objectives, and how you would go about achieving them. Please also specify how the Fellowship fits in with your broader professional goals.

Applicants should note that they **cannot save their work on the application form** and return to it later, so they may find it advisable to prepare their essays beforehand.

- A two-page Curriculum Vitae (CV);
- A writing sample (published or unpublished article, essay, blog) between 1000-2000 words on a topic related to the Fellowship.
- Names and contact details of two professional or academic referees who can be contacted for an oral or a short written reference (to be filled in the form).

Please combine the CV and writing samples in a single PDF file labelled as “Your name - DIGITAL Fellowship”. The PDF should be uploaded on the link provided in the application form.

Since we require applicants to upload their CV and writing sample, accessing the form requires a Google (Gmail) login. For applicants not having a Google (Gmail) account, we encourage them to create an account, following the quick and simple steps [here](#).

Deadline

All applications must be submitted by December 22, 2020, 11:59 PM IST.

We will contact only shortlisted candidates.