
PRIVACY NEWS

Welcome!

Welcome to the first edition of our newsletter!



[PDX Privacy](#), which was founded in May of 2017 by Chris Bushick, is a group of volunteers in the Portland Metro Area who are interested in privacy-related issues and advocate in favor of personal privacy, government transparency, and digital rights. We've given public testimony and have written a [letter](#) supporting Portland's efforts to ensure a privacy focus within City agencies and have also promoted a citywide ban on the use of facial recognition technology. Portland's recently enacted ban is noteworthy because, unlike all previous facial recognition bans in the US, it takes the additional step of banning use by private entities in places of public accommodation.

Portland skyline

Photo credit: Chris
Bushick

To organize and coordinate with other like-minded groups, we joined the [Electronic Frontier Foundation's](#) grassroots network, the [Electronic Frontier Alliance](#). Membership in the EFA gives us the opportunity to learn from other groups doing similar work while sharing our own knowledge and experience. Combining efforts, we can work together to secure privacy protections in cities and towns across the nation.

In May of this year, we filed paperwork with the State of Oregon, registering as a nonprofit corporation with the intent of qualifying for 501(c)3 status.

Privacy Education

June was a busy month for training!

We held our first-ever privacy workshop! The three-part event took place on June 14th, 21st, and 28th in conjunction with [Portland's Techno-Activism 3rd Mondays \(TA3M\)](#) and was led by AJ Rice.

Session One focused on 'What the Internet Knows about Us' and covered the various ways our personal information is gathered and shared, oftentimes without our knowledge or consent. Session Two discussed "Why Privacy Matters" —

even if you don't have anything to hide! Finally, Session Three addressed the question "What can we do about privacy?". All three parts included a guided hands-on portion, where attendees could apply the lessons from the session to understand how surveillance impacts them personally and how to increase their own privacy.

If you missed any parts of the workshop, the videos will be available on our [website](#) soon. We'll also include related links to information where you can dig further into the material. We look forward to engaging with our community more as we provide additional resources for privacy-related education and action.

Also in June, we conducted a surveillance-related training session in partnership with the [Senior Studies Institute \(SSI\)](#). SSI is a volunteer-run non-profit organization affiliated with [Portland Community College](#) that provides educational presentations for older adults. The session covered widespread data collection and surveillance technologies, and the impact these technologies have on individuals (even those who feel they have nothing to hide) and on society as a whole.

On September 15th, we'll be presenting a talk on "Why Privacy Matters" and participating in a panel discussion at "[Fire and Fury, throwing a monkey wrench at Big Tech!](#)". This all-day event is hosted by [Ethics in Tech](#) and looks at a variety of tech-related topics and their impact on communities, employees, and the environment. For more information, visit [the event website](#).



"Bellevue University Classroom" by sgtgary is licensed under CC BY-ND 2.0

In November, we'll return to PCC's Senior Studies Institute for a talk about privacy and cybersecurity.

Coalitions

In the past few months, we've combined efforts with several other organizations throughout the country to call for bans on the use of facial recognition and other surveillance technology, to ban eProctoring software, and to urge Apple to scrap their plans to weaken digital privacy and security in their next software update.

Here are some coalitions we joined:

March 30th, 2021

S.T.O.P. - Ban the Scan

<https://www.stopspying.org/ban-the-scan-letter>

This effort to ban the use of facial recognition technology (FRT) began as a partnership between [Amnesty International](#) and the [Surveillance Technology Oversight Project](#) (S.T.O.P.) and grew into a coalition of thirty-five organizations including PDX Privacy. The campaign to "Ban the Scan" is initially centered in New York City with plans to expand to other cities.

We continue to work with S.T.O.P. and other partners in promoting a slate of privacy protections in New York as part of The [Privacy NY](#) Coalition.

Related links:

Amnesty International - Ban the Scan: <https://banthescan.amnesty.org/>

S.T.O.P. - Ban the Scan: <https://www.stopspying.org/ban-the-scan>

April 13, 2021

Fight for the Future – open letter to ban private use of facial recognition technology

<https://www.fightforthefuture.org/news/2021-04-13-open-letter-banning-government-use-of-facial/>

We joined [Fight for the Future](#) and twenty-four other organizations in an open letter calling for a ban of private use of facial recognition technologies

June 15, 2021

EFF open letter to PayPal and Venmo

<https://www.eff.org/document/letter-paypal-and-venmo-eff-and-others>

In this open letter to PayPal and Venmo, we joined the [Electronic Frontier Foundation](#) and twenty other organizations in calling for these companies to publish regular transparency reports, to provide meaningful notice to users before closing accounts, and to offer a timely and meaningful appeals process.

View our press release here:

<https://www.pdxprivacy.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/06/paypal-venmo-press-release-061521.pdf>

July 6, 2021

Fight for the Future campaign to ban eProctoring

<https://www.baneproctoring.com/>

A number of colleges and universities around the country have started using online proctoring software, and the pandemic has only increased usage. These intrusive software applications grant wide access to student computers, collect student biometric data, and use unregulated, unproven algorithms to determine whether students are cheating or not.

July 14, 2021

Fight for the Future campaign to ban facial recognition use in stores

<https://www.banfacialrecognition.com/stores/>

We joined Fight for the Future and thirty-three other organizations in calling for retailers to not use facial recognition technology in their stores. People should not have their faces scanned or have their faceprints stored or sold just because they walk into a store or work there.

July 27, 2021

Joint open letter by civil society organizations and independent experts calling on states to implement an immediate moratorium on the sale, transfer and use of surveillance technology

<https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/doc10/4516/2021/en>

Alarmed by the [Pegasus Project revelations](#) that NSO Group's spyware has been used to facilitate human rights violations around the world on a massive scale, we joined 145 other civil society organizations and 28 independent experts worldwide to call on states to

implement an immediate moratorium on the sale, transfer and use of surveillance technology.

August 19, 2021

CDT open letter to Apple

<https://cdt.org/press/in-letter-to-apple-ceo-90-organizations-urge-tim-cook-to-scrap-plans-to-weaken-digital-privacy-and-security/>

In this open letter to Apple, we joined the Center for Democracy and Technology and over 90 other organizations urging Tim Cook to Scrap Apple's plans to weaken digital privacy and security.

Upcoming events

September 13 | 6 pm - 7 pm PT

Protest at the Portland Apple Store

<https://actionnetwork.org/events/protest-apples-spy-phone-portland-or/>

Fight for the Future organizing a day of protests across the country against Apple's plan to put spyware on its devices. The Portland event will take place at the Apple Store at 450 SW Yamhill St in Portland.

September 15 | 9 am - 5 pm PT

Fire and Fury: Throwing a Monkey Wrench at Big Tech

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/fire-and-fury-throwing-a-monkey-wrench-at-big-tech-tickets-166595602933>

Ethics in Technology is hosting this all-day event featuring activist and community leaders discussing current, pressing matters as they relate to surveillance, war, and peace. At this event, AJ Rice will give a privacy-related talk and participate in a panel discussion.

September 16 | 5 pm PT

EFF's Pioneer Awards

<https://www.eff.org/PAC-register>

The Pioneer Awards are given annually to recognize leaders who are extending freedom and innovation on the electronic frontier. This year's virtual ceremony will honor Kade Crockford, Pam Dixon, and Matt Mitchell.

Learn more about the event here:

<https://www.eff.org/press/releases/aclu-advocate-reining-government-use-face-surveillance-champion-privacy-rights>

September 21 | 10 am - 5 pm ET

EPIC symposium on AI regulation

https://epic.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_iNaT2LgrT2Sf8tuehEb9DQ

This free webinar brings together many industry Artificial Intelligence (AI) experts as panelists and speakers to discuss regulation of AI.

Take action

[Fight for the Future](#) currently has two privacy-related campaigns that individuals can join. The first aims to ban eProctoring, the use of apps that monitor video footage of students taking tests remotely. While the ability to take tests remotely during a global pandemic is definitely worthwhile, these particular apps are unregulated and put student privacy at risk.

The second campaign calls on retailers to not use facial recognition on their customers or workers.

To learn more about these campaigns and to sign onto the efforts, visit the websites below:

- Fight for the Future – eProctoring
<https://www.baneproctoring.com/>
- Fight for the Future – ban facial recognition in stores
<https://www.banfacialrecognition.com/stores/>

Get Involved!

Interested in privacy-related issues and government transparency? Or perhaps digital rights? Join us, and work towards establishing privacy rights in PDX!

We have a general meeting on the first Thursday of each month at 5 pm. We also have several sub-groups whose work is focused on particular areas such as education,

surveillance, transparency, research, outreach, and policy. Since the pandemic started, we've been meeting online but hope to be able to meet in person again soon.

There are several ways to get involved. To attend our meetings or get more information, send an email to get_involved@pdxprivacy.org, and we'll find ways to combine your interests with our mission. You can also sign up to receive email [alerts](#) when there are privacy matters where you can take action, or join the conversation in our [discussion](#) list.

We look forward to getting to know you!