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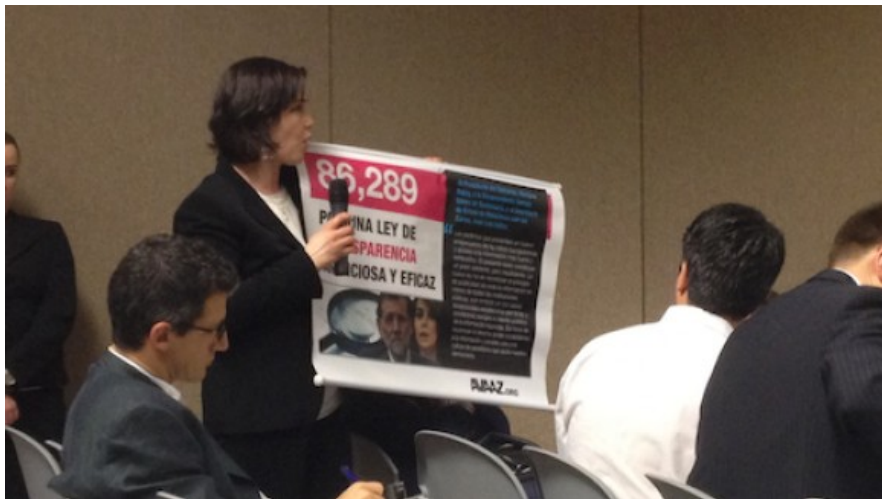
OBAMA 2012

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Still a Long Way to Go for Spain's First Transparency Law

BY ANTONELLA NAPOLITANO | Monday, April 23 2012



Helen Darbshire presents the Access Info and Avaaz petition. Photo by Tuderechoasaber

It seems like [a transparency law](#) in Spain has still a long way to go.

Last Wednesday, the Spanish government presented a draft freedom of information law at [the Open Government Partnership conference in Brasilia](#), but faced strong criticism coming from civil society and NGOs, voiced by human rights NGO Access Info.

For the first time in Spain, the law will create specific rules for information access and transparency. Activists, though, argue that the draft is not strong enough and does not meet international standards, as it fails to recognize access as a fundamental right and gives a restrictive definition of the information that can be accessed.

[Helen Darbshire](#), Access Info's executive director, presented [an Avaaz petition](#) to José Luis Ayllón, Secretariat of State for Relations with the Parliament, calling for a law that gives wider access to public administration's information. Access Info and Avaaz [gathered 86,000 signatures](#) in less than a week.

Ayllón declared that some of the citizens' suggestions will be incorporated in the final text, as the draft was [opened to public consultation](#) right before the OGP conference (the consultation ended on April 10.) In 15 days the draft received more than 80,000 visits and 3,600 comments, a result that was [praised by Deputy Prime Minister Soraya Sáenz de Santamaría](#). Comments were not included in the draft presented at the conference, though.

[Coalicion Pro Acceso](#), a group of 55 organizations advocating for freedom of access in Spain, recently

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NEWS BRIEFS

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OBAMA ADMINISTRATION LOOKING TO AWARD PRIZE MONEY FOR IDEAS ON PREVENTING MASS ATROCITIES

The Obama administration on Monday issued a call to the public to come up with creative ideas for tracking and preventing mass genocide and other atrocities in countries across the globe. [GO](#)

COMING UP THURSDAY: PD+ CALL WITH CHRIS SOGHOIAN ON ONLINE PRIVACY

"If Chris Soghoian points out a technology-related privacy problem, then it should probably be taken seriously," Marcia Hofmann, a senior staff attorney at San Francisco-based Electronic Frontier Foundation, recently told Wired magazine. "Nobody else is doing what Chris does—at least not at his level."

Indeed, that's why this [Thursday's PD+ call with Chris Soghoian](#) on how to protect your privacy online should be really eye-opening.

[GO](#)

OBAMA: NETWORK DISRUPTION IN SYRIA, IRAN, FACILITATES HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSE

In [an executive order](#) signed Sunday and released by the White House on Monday as President Barack Obama spoke at the U.S. Holocaust Memorial in Washington, D.C., the president called for financial restrictions on entities involved in the disruption, monitoring, or tracking of computers and networks by the Syrian or Iranian governments. The order would block property in the U.S. owned by people involved firsthand in network tracking and disruption, as well as people who provided technology, finances or expertise. It calls out Syrian and Iranian Internet service providers by name, but may be inclusive enough to [cause problems](#) for the Swedish telecommunications supplier Ericsson, which has [supplied Syrian telecommunications firm Syriatel](#), said the Electronic Freedom Foundation's Jillian C. York. [GO](#)

friday >

published an [analysis](#) of the draft that says the law is limited in scope and highlights a lack of sanctions and safeguards — to protect whistleblowers, for example.

Last week, the Organization for Security and Co-operation in Europe also [published a report](#) that welcomed the creation of the draft but criticized several of its provisions. OSCE pushed for the draft law to recognize access to information as a fundamental right, widen the scope of the law to include judicial bodies, and to guarantee the independence of its oversight body.

The OSCE recommendations were not accepted by Secretariat Ayllón, who recently defined some of the criticism as “unfair, wrong and absurd,” the right-leaning newspaper [El Mundo reported](#). Ayllón also declared that the observations of the organization show a lack of knowledge of the Spanish law and cannot fit in Spain’s constitutional frame.

The draft will be discussed by the Spanish Parliament where it could be improved, Ayllón said in Brasilia.

Although the Spanish government does not appear to be accepting criticism about the transparency law, officials do seem available to discuss it. Access Info was invited to be part of [a working group created by the government](#) to discuss the law. The full list of participants has yet to be released.

Spain’s page on the OGP website reads that definitive approval of the text is expected before the end of 2012.

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HOUSE INTELLIGENCE COMMITTEE AIDE BLASTS ELECTRONIC FRONTIER FOUNDATION FOR A CAMPAIGN OF "FALSE" INFORMATION

A top House Intelligence Committee aide working on cybersecurity legislation headed toward the House floor blasted the Electronic Frontier Foundation as “irresponsible” for comparing the legislation at hand to the controversial Stop Online Piracy Act that had the web community up in arms in January. [GO](#)

USING GOOGLE MAPS? YOU MAY BE LOOKING AT A HOME-MADE MAP

Google Earth is now using 45 maps from the [Public Laboratory for Open Technology and Science](#), the group announced in an e-mail. The Public Laboratory is a community which develops and applies open-source tools to environmental exploration and investigation. This includes what they call “grassroots mapping” — using relatively low-cost tools like helium balloons and Flip cameras to create satellite imagery independent of big institutions or the government, which made a high-profile appearance along the Gulf Coast after the 2010 Deepwater Horizon oil spill. [GO](#)

HIPSTER SENATORS LIKED #KONY2012 BEFORE IT WAS COOL

Several U.S. Senators [have put together a video](#) discussing their support for the U.S.-backed effort to catch Ugandan warlord Joseph Kony. Billed as a “Message from the United States Senate,” the video, hosted by Senator Chris Coons’ (D-Del.) YouTube account, is a response to newfound interest in Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord’s Resistance Army, a group which has been wreaking havoc in central Africa for decades. The nonprofit Invisible Children famously stirred this pot in March [with an extended web video](#) calling on people to take to the streets on April 20, putting up posters and stencils in their towns to call attention to Kony and build political pressure for his arrest. The effort “hasn’t gone unnoticed,” Coons says. [GO](#)

IN CASE YOU BLINKED IN THE LAST TWO HOURS, HERE’S WHY ROMNEY, OBAMA, AND COOKIES HAVE ANYTHING IN COMMON

Regularly coordinating a new line of attack every day [goes back at least as far as the George H.W. Bush-Michael Dukakis campaign](#) of 1988. This year, though, the battle over the message of the day moves so fast as to cause whiplash for anyone who tries to look too closely. Although any political observer is likely able to point to many examples over the past year, it seems like the speed with which these things spin into and out of public view has been steadily increasing. [GO](#)

WORTH WATCHING:
PARISER,
VAIDHYANATHAN,
MOROZOV AND
WEISBERG ON WHETHER
THE INTERNET IS
CLOSING OUR MINDS



They say that anyone who knows what's good for him will avoid arguing on the Internet.

But what of arguing *about* the Internet?

That's what four net-centric thinkers — MoveOn.org board president Eli Pariser, "Googlization of Everything" author Siva Vaidhyanathan, Slate's Jacob Weisberg and "Net Delusion" author Evgeny Morozov — did Tuesday at an Oxford-style debate organized by [Intelligence Squared U.S.](#) and held here in New York. At issue: "When it Comes to Politics, The Internet is Closing Our Minds."

Pariser — author of "The Filter Bubble: What the Internet is Hiding From You" — and Vaidhyanathan argued in favor and won by moving 25 percent of attendees over to their position.

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