

About the Ranking Digital Rights Corporate Accountability Index

Ranking Digital Rights (RDR) produces a Corporate Accountability Index that ranks the world's most powerful internet, mobile, and telecommunications companies on their public commitments and disclosed policies affecting users' freedom of expression and privacy. The Index is a standard-setting tool aimed at encouraging companies to abide by international human rights principles and standards for safeguarding freedom of expression and privacy.

The standards the Index uses to evaluate companies build on more than a decade of work by the human rights, privacy, and security communities. These standards include the U.N. Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights,[4] which affirm that while governments have a duty to protect human rights, companies have a responsibility to respect human rights. The Index also builds on the Global Network Initiative principles[5] and implementation guidelines,[6] which address ICT companies' specific responsibilities towards freedom of expression and privacy in the face of government demands to restrict content or hand over user information. The Index further draws on a body of emerging global standards and norms around data protection, security, and access to information. The Index data and analysis inform the work of human rights advocates, policymakers, and responsible investors, and are used by companies to improve their own policies and practices.

In 2015, RDR launched its inaugural Index, which ranked 16 internet and telecommunications companies. For the 2017 Index, RDR expanded the ranking to 22 companies, which included all of the companies ranked in 2015 plus an additional six companies. In addition to internet and telecommunications companies, RDR added new types of services, including those that produce software and devices that we call "mobile ecosystems," and made further revisions to the methodology.[7] The 2018 Index applies the same methodology to evaluate the same 22 companies as in the 2017 Index.[8] This enabled us to produce comparative analyses of each company's performance and to track overall trends.



Footnotes

[4] "Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights" (United Nations, 2011), http://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/GuidingPrinciplesBusinessHR_EN.pdf.

[5] "Principles," Global Network Initiative, accessed February 27, 2017, <https://globalnetworkinitiative.org/principles/index.php>.

[6] "Implementation Guidelines," Global Network Initiative, accessed February 28, 2017, <http://globalnetworkinitiative.org/implementationguidelines/index.php>.

[7] "RDR Launches 2017 Corporate Accountability Index Research Cycle," Ranking Digital Rights,

September 15, 2016, <https://rankingdigitalrights.org/2016/09/15/rdr-launches-2017-research/>.

[8] “2018 Companies,” Ranking Digital Rights, <https://rankingdigitalrights.org/2018-companies/>.