

THE RESEARCH UNIVERSITY PRESS

International
Computational Law Journal

VOLUME 2 / ISSUE 5 / CURATED SOURCE EDITION

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MIT Computational Law Report · Originally published 2021-03-26

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MIT Computational Law Report • Media

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Published on: May 14, 2021

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Idea Flow - Episode 2

Nearly half the world’s population lacks a home title or any other way to prove where they live. This simple fact has immense repercussions. In Puerto Rico, 60% of FEMA housing assistance claims were rejected after Hurricane Maria, primarily because applicants couldn't provide home titles. In Colombia, millions cannot return to homes taken by the FARC, because they cannot prove they had once occupied those homes. And in India, land disputes clog 25% of all court cases because neither party has the documents to prove their residency.

And yet, as our social and economic lives move online, we generate a wealth of data that reveals important things about us. When we use services like Google Maps, Facebook, Amazon and Lyft, we generate a rich tapestry of evidence about where we go, what we purchase, whom we interact with.

A critical question emerges: can citizens be empowered to harness their own trove of digital evidence to prove where they live, and access the services they have been locked out of?

This session will examine the role that digital credentials and data trails can play in helping populations who lack formal property documents prove where they live and access the benefits tied to home ownership and occupancy. In particular, we will focus on the use case of helping disaster victims prove to FEMA that they are the rightful occupants of their homes, allowing them to qualify for home rebuilding aid. Together we will examine the most relevant data types and sources for proving where one lives, and discuss how disaster victims can collect, store and transmit this data in a secure and trustworthy manner.