

**Report: "Free and Open Source Software, Digital Rights, and Public Policy",
Organized by the Faculty of Law, Integral University in Collaboration with SFLC.in**

1 message

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In pursuit of enhancing students' awareness and skills under Criteria V of NAAC – Capacity Building and Skill Enhancement Initiatives, the Faculty of Law, Integral University hosted a highly insightful and impactful workshop in collaboration with Software Freedom Law Centre, India (SFLC.in) on 25th January 2025. The event was centred around the contemporary themes of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS), digital rights, data privacy, and the intersection of technology and public policy.

The workshop commenced at 10:30 a.m. in the Seminar Hall, Building-T, and witnessed the enthusiastic participation of over 180 students from various disciplines, along with faculty members. The event provided an excellent platform to sensitize students about the legal, ethical, and technological challenges in the digital ecosystem.

The highlight of the workshop was the keynote address by Mr. Syed Haroon, a prominent technologist, digital rights advocate, and speaker. Mr. Haroon's session was both eye-opening and deeply relevant, shedding light on the often-overlooked vulnerabilities we face in our digital lives.

He discussed:

- The shocking extent to which personal data is breached and leaked online, demonstrating tools like "Have I Been Pwned" where students could check whether their email addresses or mobile numbers had been compromised in global data breaches.
- How advertisements on websites and apps are often used as tools to monitor user activity, collect personal data, and build behavioral profiles without informed consent.
- The concept of data security keys and how encryption plays a crucial role in securing digital communication and storage.
- The critical importance of setting strong, unique passwords—emphasizing that weak or reused passwords are among the most common causes of data breaches. He advised using password managers, two-factor authentication (2FA), and avoiding predictable patterns or personal information in passwords.
- Practical tips on cyber hygiene, including recognizing phishing attacks, limiting digital footprints, and regularly updating security settings on devices and online platforms.

The team from SFLC.in continued the session with thought-provoking discussions on:

- The role of Free and Open Source Software (FOSS) in promoting digital transparency and innovation
- The importance of open standards and ethical technology in policy and governance
- The need for legally sound frameworks to protect digital rights and civil liberties
- SFLC.in's work in providing free legal aid to developers and tech activists, and its active role in policy advocacy

Highlights of the Workshop:

- Deep insights into the invisible surveillance and data collection mechanisms in everyday tech use
- Awareness of basic digital safety practices every internet user must follow
- Exposure to real-life examples of privacy violations, data exploitation, and technological overreach
- Motivation for students to explore careers and research at the intersection of law, technology, and policy

The workshop ended with a lively Q&A session, where students raised thoughtful questions about data protection laws in India, ethical tech development, and global movements for digital freedom.

The Faculty of Law extends heartfelt thanks to Mr. Syed Haroon and the SFLC.in team for their presence and expertise. Their knowledge and passion made the session not only educational but truly empowering for the students. The workshop successfully sparked awareness about digital citizenship, technological responsibility, and the urgent need for legal frameworks to protect rights in the digital age.



Regards

Prof. Naseem Ahmed Ph.D, NET, SET

Head / Dean, Faculty of Law |

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