



Webinar by Xan Chacko: "Protection or Prohibition: The Awkward Reconciliation of Intellectual Property and Biodiversity Conservation"

SPEAKER

Xan Chacko

TC Beirne School of Law,
University of Queensland,
Australia



TECHNIS is pleased to invite you to a free webinar. TECHNIS webinars focus on IP and innovation examining recent legal, economic, managerial, ethical and policy issues related to technological innovation. Our approach is interdisciplinary and presentations are given by experts in different fields such as economics, law, management, STS, sociology, anthropology and philosophy. Webinar presentations last for 20min and are followed by a 40min discussion.

Please join us for a webinar on Tuesday the 5th of Nov. 2019 at **11:00 London time** i.e. 12:00 Brussels time, 13:00 Athens time. The speaker is **Xan Chacko**, TC Beirne School of Law, University of Queensland, Australia.

The title of the talk is "**Protection or Prohibition: The Awkward Reconciliation of Intellectual Property and Biodiversity Conservation**".

The moderator will be Dr. Andreas Panagopoulos.

DATE

Nov. the 5th, 2019
11:00 GMT to 12:00 GMT.

LOCATION

Event will be held online

The program we use to deliver webinars is called FreeConference. It is a browser based program and **it requires Google Chrome**. To join us just follow this link:

<https://hello.freeconference.com/conf/call/3011249>

You can run a Connection Test at:
<https://hello.freeconference.com/system/test>

This webinar is free and open to all.

To participate and for further information, please contact Dr. Andreas Panagopoulos [at least a day prior to the seminar](#).

Abstract: Scholarly attention to botanical movement during colonialism has enriched our understanding of political economy, but the movement of plants in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries continues to be political. The differences in these two time periods shed light on changes in plant science, and the law around the movement and acquisition of biological materials for science and industry. I study how these forces come together in a specific technoscientific endeavour that aims to conserve what is left of plant biodiversity before it is lost forever: seed banking. The fundamental question tackled by this paper is: Who controls the intellectual property rights of banked seeds or their genetic features and how is this control maintained? Since the future value of the seed can only be realised when the seeds are propagated outside the vault, this story considers and traces how access to the seeds is controlled at a time rife with anxieties around biopiracy and food insecurity. I show that the law that governs the acquisition and patenting of living things has moved in the direction dictated by industry and states' national interests and how the data created to maintain knowledge of seed collections plays a role in the meting out of intellectual property rights. For instance, the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) recharacterized plants from living things accessible to all of humanity to 'genetic resources' that are now considered sovereign national property. While multinational agribusiness has come under harsh scrutiny over their acquisition of 'biopirated' seeds, seed banks such as the Svalbard Global Seed Vault in Norway, and the Millennium Seed Bank in England, seem to be able to navigate the restrictions on the movement and use of foreign plants. With the 2014 enacting of the Nagoya Protocol that goes further than the CBD to enable benefit sharing for the owners of plant resources, this talk portrays how seed banks are struggling to make their historical collections compliant with the law. Overall, I trouble the value of propertising living things to show that the movement to secure rights over plants has done little to incentivise breeding and provide financial security to farmers but rather has had the undesired effect of attenuating the ability of scientists outside the Western world from collaborating across international boundaries.