



# The world is changing We need to talk

We need to have  
Brave Conversations

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**BOSTON | JUNE 30 2019**

Part of the 11th International ACM  
Conference on Web Science 2019

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## Humans, Values, Technology - Web Science in Practice

Brave Conversations was created to bring Web Science to mainstream conversations that occur in everyday life. It's objective is to demystify the world of emerging technologies and enable an exploration of the impact that these technologies will have on everyday life - our selves, our communities, our societies and our planet.

We deliberately create a space where everyone can be brave, can say the things that they know need to be said, and be prepared to apply intellectual rigour to challenging ideas that might take us to uncomfortable places.

## Background

In 2008 a group of people from industry, government, academia, and the community sectors came together to create the first **Brave Conversations** (then called the Meta conference) to create a forum for people to discuss and debate the emerging issues related to humans and their use of digital technologies.

At about the same time a group of luminaries from the Web world were creating **Web Science** in order to focus interdisciplinary research on precisely the same thing.

### **Since that time the world has changed.**

The Web has evolved from being read-only to read-write and now dominates how the majority of society interacts with digital platforms, giving rise

to the largest companies of the modern era. These companies are now pushing the boundaries for how data and information are used and are becoming a key driver for the next step in human evolution.

We can all feel that the world ahead is very different from the world behind, but:

- How often do we find the time to step back, to engage in robust and challenging dialogue and debate with others from diverse backgrounds about what sort of future we want to create?
- How often do we feel that our opinions are respected, that we have the space to imagine real possibilities, and that we can take some proactive control of the world that is emerging?

**“We ... need to be prepared for the internet that we know to evolve unpredictably, and work to ensure that it remains beneficial for humankind.”** Professor Dame Wendy Hall & Dr Kieron O’Hara, **“Four Internets: The Geopolitics of Digital Governance”**

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## Objectives

The goal of Brave Conversations is to challenge everyone who participates - regardless of what background they come from, or what their skillset and expertise are - to more fully explore and understand the interplay between humans, the societies we live in, and the technologies we have created.

We want to empower people to proactively make decisions about how we live our everyday lives, how we participate as commercial actors within the economy, and how we operate as digital citizens and exercise our political rights. That empowerment comes from demystifying data and information and understanding how it informs the everyday decisions which gradually create the future.

Each of those decisions begin on an individual human level - our bodies and our minds - and then emanates out to our families, communities, societies and from there to nation states. We are all responsible for the world we are creating and never has there been a time when we have more potential to influence the changes around us. But we need to be given the space for robust debate and respectful curiosity, learning from each other, playing with ideas, and asking the questions that are both confronting and potentially will take us to uncomfortable places.

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## How it works

The best way to learn is through experience and the act of playing with ideas.

We have deliberately chosen to integrate Brave Conversations in to the 2019 Web Science Conference at Boston in order to enable teams of diverse participants to critically examine our current societies through the lens of systems, communications, governance and technology.

This is important as the **Geopolitics of Political Governance** is now playing itself out as the Internet and the Web become more enmeshed in how regimes govern.

Brave Conversations will complement the formal programme of **WebSci19** and present the diversity and potential of Web Science to addressing the challenges and opportunities which face contemporary society.

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## Brave Conversations Boston Part of the 11th International ACM Conference on Web Science 2019

**WHEN** June 30 2019 9am - 4pm

**WHERE** Northeastern University  
360 Huntington Ave, Boston, MA 02115  
(Room information coming soon)

**For more information please visit**  
**[www.braveconversations.org](http://www.braveconversations.org)**

Limited Places Available  
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