

FSCONS 2019 Project Description

Free Society Conference and Nordic Summit (FSCONS) is a non-profit conference and networking event that will be held 8th and 9th of November 2019 in Oslo. The aim of the conference is to stimulate open peer conversations around the relationship between culture, technology and democracy.

The conference has been organized in Gothenburg for 10 years and was held in 2017 in Oslo.

The conference is a meeting place for social change, focused on the intersection between technology, culture and society, bringing together people from a wide range of fields, and merging the technical with the social, seeking both to activate and challenge. Discussion are at least as important as the talks.

The goal of FSCONS is to inspire free-thinking individuals to collaborate in creative ways and to do so in a participatory and inclusive way. We believe that most such collaborations start with conversation, and FSCONS aims to be the place where that conversation starts.

To achieve this goal we invite artists, technologists and political activists to show their work and give talks on a range of subjects including freedom of speech, patent laws, alternative models for society, the role of culture in our economical system, as well as talks on software that enables new forms of expression or interaction with society.

The ultimate result of such a combination of talks is the unavoidable cross pollination of ideas between technologists, journalists, movie makers, authors, engineers, freedom fighters small and large, scientists and others that are passionate about a more democratic, sustainable and culturally richer earth.

FSCONS is on the most part a local event due to time and financial limitations on how far most people can travel, but also because it is easier to form stronger ties to people who aren't physically separate, even in this digital day and age. Our hope is to connect people across disciplines, and we therefore strongly believe in a collaboration of citizens of neighbouring Nordic and Baltic countries. The conference is however open to and frequented by people from the rest of northern and central Europe, and a few travellers from other continents.

FSCONS Norway was started by a group of like-minded organizers with backgrounds in technology and culture who wanted to see the conference grow from its beginnings in Gothenburg into a Nordic collaboration.

FSCONS is an egalitarian initiative which has a stated goal of having inclusiveness as one of its primary goals. Without an inclusive agenda we cannot hope to have the kind of

conversations about culture, technology and society that we aim to have. We achieve this by always having one male and one female keynote speaker, by attempting to balance the sexes in our programme, and by including speakers from widely different backgrounds.

One of our recurring main topics is the state of the planets ecology and what can be done to improve the situation. We will have at least one speaker specifically on the topic of ecology, but the subject usually comes up in several unrelated talks because the implications are so far-reaching that they are some of the most important issues in politics, art and technology.

The theme of sustainability permeates our conference, not only when talking about ecology, but also in terms of discussing what activities humans are engaged in that are not sustainable and how to build a future that is more sustainable. We will be hosting talks about such topics like food sustainability and infrastructural security, to name a few, all to inspire conversations and collaboration around sustainability.

It is hard to measure the impact of our work on others, but if you believe conversations can change minds then our attendees, many of them are engaged in creative work on a daily basis go home from FSCONS with fresh inspiration and perhaps new connections to create together with.

We realize that our goals are quite ambitious, as this is the ultimate ambition of the event: to create a better world by inspiring people to create.

By actively inviting people to attend who are from different backgrounds and walks of life, and by creating a context where these people seek to share and experience each others work as well as engage in discussions, FSCONS directly contributes to sharing and distributing new knowledge and experience. We also video most of our talks and make these available online so that those who cannot attend can still have some benefit from the conference in terms of the knowledge that is disseminated there.

We aim for an equal gender distribution within our attendees by inviting equal amounts of women and men speakers.

The risks are that we do not attain an equal distribution of attendees, or that discrimination will occur despite this, which will cause a negative feedback loop that will result in an ever worse gender distribution, not representing society as a whole.

We have two keynote speakers, always one woman and one man. To ensure gender equality we have a stated written code of conduct which is enforced by the organizers before, during and after the event. We also encourage non-confrontational, open peer discussions and explicitly do not tolerate discrimination of any kind.