

# Celso Bessa

Public Interest Technologist.  
Human rights, democracy, and technology advisor.

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Celso Bessa is a Brazilian **public interest technologist, and a consultant in the nexus of technology, human rights, and democracy**, with more than 25 years of experience in Internet technologies and project management. A member of the W3C Brazil accessibility workgroup and of the [Public Interest Technologist Network](#) steering committee, for two times he was a **Media Democracy Fund (MDF) fellow** -with Consumers International (UK, 2022/23) and with Dejusticia (Colombia, 2018/2020).

Since 2018, Celso Bessa has been advising on and investigating **technology and human rights-related topics** such as privacy, freedom of expression, artificial intelligence, public interest technology and accessibility with **academics, activists, NGOs and philanthropies** around the world. He also provides **digital security audits and training**, strategic consultancy and develops tools for activism, advocacy, investigative journalism and research .

## Previous Research and Projects - Highlights

### Fundamental Info Democracy: Access to Public Information

The research -- conducted in 2020/2021 within ISUR, with support from ILEX Acción Jurídica and funded by Open Society Foundations -- analyzed accessibility and performance issues on websites from Colombia's government and how they intersect with socioeconomic and ethnic factors.

### Expondo o Invisível / Exposing the Invisible

As partner to the NGO Tactical Tech, I led a team of volunteers in translating the Exposing the Invisible KIT, a collection of investigative journalism resources, into Brazilian Portuguese. This project was highlighted by Escola de Dados in a [webinar](#) and during the [CODA.BR 2023 conference](#).

### Building Blocks for Funding Digital Infrastructure (by Superbloom, previously Simply Secure)

As part of the 2IC Lab, Superbloom's regional partner, I led the research on [4 Latin American Countries](#) (Argentina, Chile, Colombia and Mexico) for the Building Blocks project.

### MOTA - Active Transparency Obligations Monitoring (retired)

MOTA is a set of tools, protocols and standards for evaluating, grading and improving government entities websites active transparency legal and best practices compliance: crawler/evaluator bot; transparency grading tool;

### Veritate – Fact Check Search and Aggregator (retired)

A non-profit experiment aimed at strengthening fact-checking in Brazil: a crawler/indexer, a public API and a search engine for fact-checking articles related to Brazil's politics.

## Languages

**Brazilian Portuguese (native), English (fluent), Spanish (intermediary level for conversation,**

advanced for writing/reading), German (basic). **Currently learning French** and planning to learn Arabic between late 2024 and early 2025.

## **Highlighted Skills** (*non-exhaustive list*)

Project Management; **OSINT Research**; **Digital/Holistic security training facilitation; cybersecurity auditing** (*SAFETAG, NIST Risk Management Framework, ISO/IEC 27000:2018, CIS Controls*), websites and applications development (HTML, CSS, Javascript, PHP, MySQL/NOSQL, WordPress, React, Typescript, Nativescript, Node.js, Python); Web Accessibility; Web /App performance optimization; **Data acquisition, analysis and visualization for research** (including use of R, Python and GIS tools); graphic design tools/techniques; **photography, photo and video editing**; writing;

## **Education**

**University of London** - **BSc Computer Science, Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence**  
*2020 (currently in hold)*

**Unisul - Universidade do Sul de Santa Catarina, Brazil, Web Design and Programming**  
*2009 - 2011 (dropped out)*

**Faculdades Integradas Rio Branco, Brazil, Social Communication**  
*2007-2008 (dropped out)*

**ETE Carlos de Campos, Brazil, Graphic Design professional degree**  
*2005-2006*

## **Current Work**

### **Independent Consultant and Researcher/Investigator**

*April 2023 - Current*

Since April, I have been freelancing as a consultant, research and investigator. Supporting organizations (e.g. CoWorker, Media Democracy Fund, Tactical Tech) in themes like the impact of technology in labor-rights in South America, the public interest technology and human rights ecosystem and investigative journalism, while also providing 1:1 digital/holistic security clinics for individual journalists and activists, and currently conducting a technical investigation on security vulnerability.

## **Previous Professional Experiences**

### **Consumers International, Consumer Rights Technologist**

*March 2022 - April 2023*

As part of a one-year fellowship, I offered technical and strategic support for the development of a digital strategy to defend consumer rights, in addition to carrying out context and market research, developing the use case for digital tools and evaluating technologies for internal use and for use by the members of the association.

### **Centro Internet y Sociedad Universidad Del Rosario - ISUR, researcher**

*September 2020 - September 2021 (occasional collaborator since then)*

I led the research Fundamental Info Democracy: Access to Public Information, carried out in 2020/2021 with the ISUR Center, being responsible for methodology, data analysis, development of technical tools, team management, and writing a public policy article.

### **Centro de Estudios en Derechos, Sociedad y Justicia - Dejusticia, consultant, fellow**

*November 2018 - October 2019 as fellow, and December 2019 - July 2020 as consultant.*

*(occasional collaborator since then)*

Technical and strategic support for research on topics in the intersection of human rights and technology; tools, audits and [workshops on digital security](#) for both staff, colleagues, partners, and students of their Human Rights School; development of tools

### **2Aces Conteúdo e Estratégia / WoWPerations, co-founder, project manager**

*May 2012 - September 2018*

Originally a strategist and project manager, later I assumed a more technical role, architecting and developing projects for clients and internal SaaS like products.

### **Freelance Consultant, Content Strategist and WordPress developer**

*November 2009 - May 2012*

### **BRQ IT Services, Social Media & SEO coordinator (formerly: Graphic Designer)**

*January 2006 - October 2009*

Initially a graphic/web designer, gradually I assumed planning and project management duties for social media / SEO efforts and the revamping of the company's intranet.

### **Freelancer, Designer and Project Manager**

*March 2001 - December 2005*

### **Zip.Net S/A, Webmaster**

*August 1999 - May 2001*

Webdesigner/webmaster for a major web portal in Brazil, design, coding and updating pages, newsletters and sites for the Chat division.

### **A series of so-called odd jobs**

*1993 - 1999, and in some cases, between some of the jobs highlighted previously*

Since I was a child, I held a series of "odd jobs" which, despite not bringing notoriety, taught me valuable hard and soft skills. And above all, it shapes a worldview with the utmost respect for the cultural differences, perspectives, and the work done by "blue collar" workers from different walks of life, without whom life in society wouldn't be possible.