

Data&Society

Report
on Activities

16–2017

Data&Society

Data & Society is a research institute focused on the social and cultural issues arising from data-centric technological development.

2016–2017

Data & Society conducts **research** and **builds the field** of actors in order to ensure that knowledge guides debate about the implications of data-centric and automated technologies as these intersect with people, organizations, cultural norms, and society.

This report presents an overview of institutional highlights from the fiscal year spanning from May 2016 to May 2017.

In the 2016-17 year, Data & Society enjoyed a period of rapid growth, expansion, and evolution in all areas of our work. We are profoundly grateful to all the supporters, advisors, and partners who have allowed us to fulfill our research and field-building mission.

This report represents a short moment of reflection on the incredible momentum we have generated together.

Our increasing reputation for established expertise gave us the opportunity to advance the public conversation about the many potential solutions and potential harms springing from complex sociotechnical developments. Just a few notable developments from this year include:

- Formalizing two new research initiatives, the Future of Labor and Media Manipulation/Disinformation, and bringing coherence and complementary research streams to our broader theme of accountability in algorithmic systems;
- Advancing our field-building work strategically through increasing the value and depth of our fellowship program;
- Convening experts in diverse fields including computer science, biohacking, edtech, artificial intelligence, accountability, online trolling, conceptual art, and journalism;
- Strengthening our organizational management structures, human resources capacity, governance, and funding;
- Strengthening our communications and engagement capacity, with researchers and recent fellows speaking in major public fora from SXSW to the Sage Bionetworks Assembly—and publishing multiple op-eds in the New York Times and Harvard Business Review.

We are delighted to watch our research mature and our network grow.

Over this year, as we watched our field deepen and expand, we also recognized the need to bridge and translate between our work and new communities and sectors. Expect more details regarding our commitment to engagement work in the year to come.

This report represents a short moment of reflection on the incredible momentum we have generated together.

The Board, advisors, and staff of Data & Society graciously thank our funders and partners for their continued support. Looking forward, we will continue to foster research that provides new frames for the evolving public debates around topics such as disinformation in media, the human elements of AI, and the emerging field of precision medicine.

Thanks to our supporters and allies, we can continue to produce original research that grounds informed, evidence-based public debate while cultivating a unique network of researchers and practitioners ready to anticipate great challenges with vivid insight and direction.

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Research at Data & Society is shaped by cross-cutting themes:

- Automation**
From social implications of automation to manipulation of algorithmic systems, many of our research efforts track and inform broader conversations about how data-driven systems, automation, and machine intelligence impact people and society.
- Accountability**
Who should be accountable? Accountable to whom? Understanding how powerful, technological systems can be governed is a core concern that shapes many of our research efforts.
- Values and Ethics**
Concern about what is ethical, just, and appropriate influences how our different research efforts approach trade-offs, conflicting values, and social implications. Notably, many initiatives focus on privacy, social justice, and equity and fairness.

What follows is a high-level overview of our larger research projects that either launched, or were strengthened and expanded over the 2016–17 fiscal year. For a full range of outputs over the course of 2016–17, please visit our website (www.datasociety.net).

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Data, Human Rights, and Human Security

Background

Data can provide real-time awareness about disaster, violence, or protest. Yet practitioners, researchers, and policymakers face unique challenges and opportunities when assessing technological benefit, risk, and harm. The Data, Human Rights, and Human Security initiative asks: How can these technologies be used responsibly to assist people in need, prevent abuse, and protect them from harm?

Team

Mark Latonero

Project

Human Rights, Data, and Migration

As data-driven technologies and digital ecosystems increasingly intersect with migrants, refugees, and the displaced, what are the social impacts, consequences, and tradeoffs? This project bridges the knowledge gap surrounding technological interventions, and addresses a diverse set of themes—movement, economic inclusion, integration, asylum, identification, information seeking, rights, health, and social support. In early 2017, researcher Mark Latonero presented at the International Data Responsibility Group Annual Conference at The Hague, the Tech and Human Rights Conference at Grinnell College, and at RightsCon in Brussels, where he spoke on panels “Tech and Slavery in Global Chains” and “Private Sector Data and the Refugee Crisis.” The project’s next output is a report in collaboration with Harvard Humanitarian Initiative,

Leiden University, and the International Data Responsibility Group on the privacy implications of technology use by Syrian refugees in Greece.

Featured Outputs

Tech Companies Should Speak Up for Refugees, Not Only High-Skilled Immigrants
HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW, 16 MAY, 2017
AUTHOR: MARK LATONERO

Tech folk: ‘Move fast and break things’ doesn’t work when lives are at stake
THE GUARDIAN, 2 FEBRUARY, 2017
AUTHORS: KEITH HIATT, MICHAEL KLEINMAN, MARK LATONERO

Victims Are Not Virtual: Situation assessment of online child sexual exploitation in South Asia
UNICEF PAPER, 30 NOVEMBER, 2016
AUTHORS: MARK LATONERO, MONICA BULGER, BRONWYN WEX, EMMA DAY, KAPIL ARYAL, MARIYA ALI, KEITH HIATT

An App to Save Syria’s Lost Generation?

FOREIGN AFFAIRS, 23 MAY, 2016
AUTHOR: MARK LATONERO

Featured Talks

Fighting for Freedom: The Search for Weapons and Warriors to End Slavery in Supply Chains
Data Responsibility: Helping Refugees in a Digital Age
RIGHTSCON, BRUSSELS, BELGIUM, 30–31 MARCH, 2017
SPEAKER: MARK LATONERO

Research Initiative

Intelligence and Autonomy

Background

The Intelligence and Autonomy initiative develops grounded, qualitative research to inform the design, evaluation, and regulation of AI-driven systems.

Team

Madeleine Clare Elish
Tim Hwang



Illustrations by Sarah Nicholls

Upcoming Research

Mapping Human Infrastructures of AI

Background

Mapping Human Infrastructures of AI is a series of ethnographically-informed studies of intelligent systems in which human labor plays an integral part, and will explore how and why the constitutive human elements of artificial intelligence are often obscured or rendered invisible. The research will produce empirical work examining these dynamics in order to facilitate the creation of effective regulation and ethical design considerations across domains.

Team

Madeleine Clare Elish

Featured Book

An AI Pattern Language

DATA & SOCIETY, 29 SEPTEMBER, 2016
AUTHORS: MADELEINE CLARE ELISH, TIM HWANG

Published by Data & Society in September 2016 as a book and complimentary dynamic microsite, *An AI Pattern Language* presents a taxonomy of social challenges emerging from interviews with a range of practitioners working in the intelligent systems and AI industry. Authors Madeleine Clare Elish and Tim Hwang describe these challenges and articulate an array of patterns (from “Show the Man Behind the Curtain,” to “Establish a Catch and Release Data Pattern”) that practitioners developed in response.

For more information on the January 2017 launch of this initiative, see page 27.

Research Initiative

Algorithms and Publics

Background

The Algorithms and Publics initiative maps how the public sphere is currently understood, controlled, and manipulated in order to spark a richer conversation about what interventions should be considered to support the ideal of an informed and engaged citizenry.

Team

Robyn Caplan Lauren Hanson

Featured Output

Facebook Must Acknowledge and Change Its Financial Incentives

THE NEW YORK TIMES, 22 NOVEMBER, 2016
AUTHOR: ROBYN CAPLAN



When Media Companies Insist They’re Not Media Companies and Why It Matters for Communications Policy

SSRN, 18 MARCH, 2016
AUTHORS: PHILIP M. NAPOLI, ROBYN CAPLAN

Related Project

Platform Accountability

The Platform Accountability project explores how the concept of the “public interest” in media policy has been reconfigured through algorithmic and data-driven technologies currently underpinning news media production, consumption, and distribution. Outputs address emerging governance, design, and policy issues for platforms and technology companies such as the potential tradeoffs of regulating or removing problematic content, and the implications of designating social media platforms and online content aggregators as “media companies.”

See the Media Manipulation initiative (next page) for more on these themes.



Postdoctoral Scholar Caroline Jack (left) and Researcher Robyn Caplan (right)



Research Initiative

Media Manipulation

Background

The Media Manipulation initiative works to provide news organizations, civil society, platforms, and policy-makers with insights into new forms of media manipulation to ensure a close and informed relationship between technical research and socio-political outcomes. This requires assessing strategic manipulation, imagining the possibilities for encoding fairness and accountability into technical systems, and conducting ethnographic research to describe and understand new social activity.

Team

danah boyd
Patrick Davison
Caroline Jack

Becca Lewis
Alice Marwick

Featured Report

In May 2017, Data & Society published “Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online” by Fellow Alice Marwick and Researcher Rebecca Lewis.



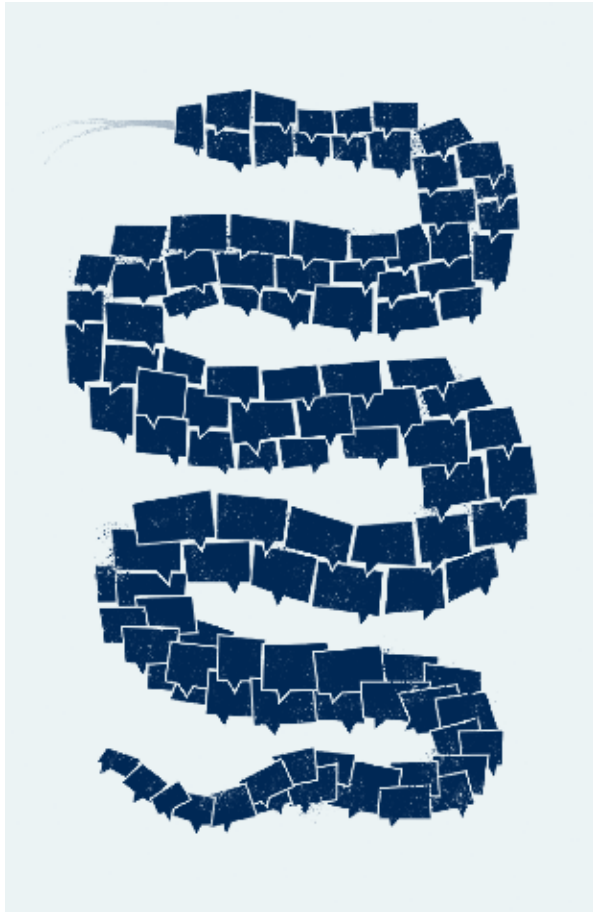
“Media Manipulation” was cited in the New York Times, Mashable, BoingBoing, and in an appearance by Alice Marwick on the Guardian’s tech podcast. It inspired op-eds by report co-authors in Columbia Journalism Review and New York Magazine’s Select/All. The report was included in the newsletters and on the websites of Nieman Lab, the American Press Institute, International Journalists’ Network, the Global Investigative Journalism Network, Media-Shift, and the National Press Association of Chile, with a pre-arranged Spanish translation of the executive summary.

Featured Outputs—Essays

In January 2017, the Data & Society Medium blog, Points, published six essays responding to key questions in the battle for the public sphere:

- **Hacking the Attention Economy, Did Media Literacy Backfire?**, and **Why America is Self-Segregating** by danah boyd
- **How do you deal with a problem like “fake news?”** by Robyn Caplan
- **Are There Limits to Online Free Speech?** by Alice Marwick
- **What’s Propaganda Got To Do With It?** by Caroline Jack

These pieces grappled with timely questions such as how media consumers decide which sources to trust, who decides what information is “real,” what makes a story “propaganda,” why consumers of information are so polarized, and the tensions between curtailing harassment and protecting free speech.



Illustrations by Jim Cooke



What They Said on Twitter



This is a really big deal for trustworthy and good faith journalism

CRAIG NEWMARK
FOUNDER, CRAIGSLIST AND THE CRAIG NEWMARK FOUNDATION



Essential: “Media Manipulation” report from @alicetiara and D&S. Its a superb document, carefully researched, and frighteningly relevant

TARLETON GILLESPIE
PRINCIPAL RESEARCHER, MICROSOFT RESEARCH
NEW ENGLAND



Media Manipulation + Disinformation Online-report from @datasociety w/ a syllabus. Research comms at its finest

SIERRA WILLIAMS
COMMUNITY MANAGER, PEERJ



read.

TOOMAS HENDRIK ILVES
FORMER PRESIDENT OF ESTONIA



Research Initiative

Future of Labor

Background

Technology is disrupting, destabilizing, and transforming many aspects of the labor force. The Future of Labor initiative seeks to better understand emergent disruptions in the labor force as a result of data-centric technological development, with a special focus on structural inequalities.

Team

Alexandra Mateescu
Alex Rosenblat
Julia Ticona

Project

As on-demand business models bring practices like algorithmic management and on-demand scheduling into new areas of work, the Mapping Inequalities Across the On-Demand Economy project contributes a more refined understanding of the ways that on-demand work shapes workers’ lives by producing a detailed map of the spectrum of “gig economy” workers, as well as the business models affecting them.

Featured Outputs

Our researchers are gaining visibility as experts in the public discourse. In the past year, Data & Society emerged as a key source for media outlets reporting on how technology continues to shape changes in the workplace.

In March 2017, researcher Alex Rosenblat’s co-authored paper The Taking Economy: Uber, Information, and Power shot directly to SSRN’s Weekly Top 5 list. She was then quoted in How Uber Uses Psychological Tricks to Push Its Drivers’ Buttons (The New York Times, April 2, 2017), and spoke to the New York Times’ editorial board on deep background for their op-ed The Gig Economy’s False Promise (April 10, 2017).

See *Programs: Workshops and Conferences* for an overview of our *Work, Labor and Automation* workshop (January 23, 2017).

“These platforms seem to benefit people earning supplementary income or those lacking other job opportunities the most, while they impose the most risk on full-time earners.”

ALEX ROSENBLAT, HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW

The Taking Economy:
Uber, Information, and Power

SSRN, 7 MARCH, 2017

AUTHORS: RYAN CALO, ALEX ROSENBLAT



Illustration by Alexandra Mateescu



What Motivates Gig Economy Workers

HARVARD BUSINESS REVIEW, 17 NOVEMBER, 2016

AUTHOR: ALEX ROSENBLAT

Discriminating Tastes:
Customer Ratings as Vehicles for Bias

SSRN, 19 OCTOBER, 2016

AUTHORS: ALEX ROSENBLAT, KAREN LEVY,
SOLON BAROCAS, TIM HWANG

Best Paper Prize, 2016 Internet, Policy & Politics
Conference at Oxford Internet Institute,
University of Oxford



Research Analyst Alexandra Mateescu

Enabling Connected Learning

Background

What is the value of data in education and learning? The Enabling Connected Learning (ECL) initiative assesses how existing and proposed policies affect connected learning initiatives, and where and when education-related data can and should be used.

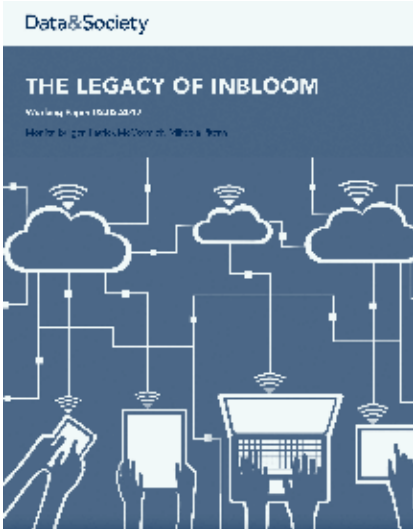
Team

Monica Bulger
Claire Fontaine

Featured Output

The Legacy of inBloom

DATA & SOCIETY WORKING PAPER, 2 FEBRUARY, 2017
AUTHORS: MONICA BULGER, PATRICK MCCORMICK, MIKAELA PITCAN



The Legacy of inBloom

The ECL team at Data & Society published a suite of Medium posts to coincide with the release of their working paper, which used interviews and research to trace the closure of inBloom, an ed-tech initiative that aimed to improve American schools by providing a centralized platform for data sharing, learning apps, and curricula:

- **inBloom: Analyzing the Past to Navigate the Future** by Brenda K Leong and Amelia Vance
- **The inBloom Legacy** by Olga Garcia-Kaplan
- **inBloom—Data, Privacy, and the Conversations We Could Have Had** by Bill Fitzgerald
- **Rationalizing Those “Irrational” Fears of inBloom** by Audrey Watters
- **inBloom’s collapse undermined personalized learning and data standards efforts** by danah boyd

Upcoming Research

Data & Equity in School Choice

Background

The Data and Equity in School Choice project aims to better understand whether, and in what ways, and to what ends, parents and youth draw on publicly available school performance data when making decisions about where to apply and enroll.

Team

Claire Fontaine

Featured Outputs

Driving School Choice: By positioning public education as a commodity, “school choice” risks re-entrenching segregation

DATA & SOCIETY, POINTS, 20 APRIL, 2017
AUTHOR: CLAIRE FONTAINE



Left to right: Fellow Alice Marwick with Researchers Monica Bulger and Claire Fontaine

Research Project

How Youth Navigate the News Landscape

Background

Supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, this report explored how young people use mobile devices, messaging apps, and social media to consume breaking news. The co-authors found that American teens and young adults express low levels of trust in the news media and use a variety of strategies to confirm, verify, and clarify the stories they care about. The report was based on findings from six exploratory focus groups with 52 teenagers and young adults in three U.S. cities: Philadelphia, Chicago, and Charlotte.

Team

Claire Fontaine
Amanda Lenhart
Mary Madden

Featured Report

How Youth Navigate the News Landscape

DATA & SOCIETY, MARCH 1, 2017
AUTHORS: MARY MADDEN, AMANDA LENHART,
CLAIRE FONTAINE

Featured Press

A rise in critical skills for sharing news online

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR, 30 APRIL, 2017
AUTHORS: THE CHRISTIAN SCIENCE MONITOR EDITORIAL BOARD



How young adults define 'news': 7 good questions with Data & Society's Mary Madden

AMERICAN PRESS INSTITUTE, 14 APRIL, 2017
AUTHOR: LAURIE BETH HARRIS



For Young People, News Is Mobile, Social, and Hard to Trust, Studies Find

EDUCATION WEEK, 8 MARCH, 2017
AUTHOR: BENJAMIN HEROLD

Research Project

Measuring Cyberstalking and Digital Domestic Abuse Across the Lifespan

Background

Led by Amanda Lenhart and Michele Ybarra of the Center for Innovative Public Health Research, this Data & Society project conducted a nationally representative landline and mobile phone survey of 3,000 Americans ages 15 years and older to quantify the prevalence of online harassment, cyberstalking, and digital domestic violence. Recognizing that witnessing abuse can also have a negative impact, the researchers further investigated the extent to which people witness others' abusive behavior online.

Team

Amanda Lenhart

Featured Outputs

Nonconsensual Image Sharing

DATA & SOCIETY, 16 DECEMBER, 2016
AUTHORS: AMANDA LENHART, MICHELE YBARRA,
MYESHIA PRICE-FEENY

Co-produced with the Center for Innovative Public Health Research, this report offered the first national statistics on the prevalence of nonconsensual pornography, also known as "revenge porn." The study found that 4% of U.S. internet users—roughly 10.4 million Americans—have been threatened with or experienced the posting of explicit images without their consent.

Online Harassment, Digital Abuse, and Cyberstalking in America

DATA & SOCIETY, 21 NOVEMBER, 2016
AUTHORS: AMANDA LENHART, MICHELE YBARRA,
KATHRYN ZICKUHR, MYESHIA PRICE-FEENY

Co-produced with the Center for Innovative Public Health Research, this report offered the most comprehensive picture to date of Americans' experiences with online harassment and abuse, finding that most U.S. internet users have witnessed online harassment, and almost half have personally experienced it.

Related Project

Best Practices for Conducting Risky Research

DATA & SOCIETY, 18 OCTOBER, 2016
AUTHORS: ALICE MARWICK, LINDSAY BLACKWELL, ALICE LO

This practitioner guide shared best practices for researchers—especially junior researchers—who wish to engage in research that may make them susceptible to online harassment. The authors provided recommendations for academic institutions, supervisors, and individuals, including cyber-security guidelines and links to other resources.

Related Press

How to Handle Revenge Porn

TEEN VOGUE, 16 MARCH, 2017
AUTHOR: LILY PUCKETT

Why Can't Silicon Valley Fix Online Harassment?

NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE, 4 APRIL, 2017
AUTHOR: JENNA WORTHAM

Libraries and Privacy

Background

Libraries and Privacy is a suite of projects exploring the roles of libraries in supporting their communities with regard to data-centric technological development. Topics include privacy in libraries, facilitating safe research data sharing worldwide, and new roles for librarians as data scientists. Initially supported by the Knight Prototype Fund, and with continuing funding from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Digital Privacy & Data Literacy project will continue its work by training 600+ information and library professionals in the New York metropolitan area.

Team

Bonnie Tijerina

Featured Book

Protecting Patron Privacy

ROMAN & LITTLE FIELD, 19 MAY, 2017
AUTHORS: BONNIE TIJERINA, BOBBI NEWMAN

Published in May 2017, *Protecting Patron Privacy* is an authoritative Library Information Technology Association (LITA) Guide edited by Bobbi Newman and Bonnie Tijerina. The book covers topics including library data collection, retention, use, and protection; and in-house tools such as social network sites, surveillance video, and RFID.



Reframing Privacy

Background

Reframing Privacy was a study to better understand the language and framing of privacy issues by low-socioeconomic status youth who may not use the terms or the rubrics of mainstream debates, and to generate empirical data about cultural frames and expectations in order to build more effective policies, technologies, and educational interventions. Relatedly, the Privacy and Harm in a Networked Society project aimed to better understand how privacy

is understood in a networked society, and the ways in which control is complicated by the networked nature of information.

Team

| | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| danah boyd Claire Fontaine | Karen Levy Alice Marwick |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|

Featured Output

“Nobody Sees It, Nobody Gets Mad”: Social Media, Privacy, and Personal Responsibility Among Low-SES Youth

SOCIAL MEDIA + SOCIETY, 30 MAY, 2017
AUTHORS: ALICE MARWICK, CLAIRE FONTAINE, DANAH BOYD



Founder and President danah boyd and Data & Society Affiliate Solon Barocas

Upcoming Research

Privacy and Low-SES Populations

Background

This project includes a soon-to-be-released nationally representative survey of the digital privacy and information security-related practices of low socioeconomic status American adults.

Team

Mary Madden

Featured Output

The Class Differential in Big Data and Privacy Vulnerability

UNDER REVIEW/FORTHCOMING, 6 OCTOBER, 2016
AUTHORS: MICHELE GILMAN, KAREN LEVY, MARY MADDEN, ALICE E. MARWICK



Researcher Mary Madden

Upcoming Research

Fairness in Precision Medicine



Postdoctoral Scholar Kadija Ferryman

Background

“Precision medicine” is a growing field that aims to use multiple data sources to tailor medical care to individuals. The Fairness in Precision Medicine initiative aims to critically assess the potential for bias and discrimination in health data collection, sharing, and interpretation.

Team

Kadija Ferryman Mikaela Pitcan

Featured Talk

Researcher Kadija Ferryman was invited to give the keynote address at the April 2017 meeting of Sage Bionetworks Assembly, a key gathering on open innovation in science and the acceleration of health research through open systems, incentives, and standards. Her highly praised talk, Reframing Data as a Gift, applied sociologist Marcel Mauss' theory of the gift to data sharing and data donation in the context of biomedical research. The talk was published as a paper on SSRN in July, 2017.

Upcoming Research

Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency in Machine Learning (FATML)

Background

Machine learning raises novel challenges for ensuring non-discrimination, due process, and understandability in decision-making. The FATML initiative explores how to characterize and address these issues with computationally rigorous methods while translating these findings to those policymakers, regulators, and advocates who seek to understand the complexities of automated decision-making.

Team

Sorelle Friedler
Suresh Venkatasubramanian

Featured Outputs

How to Hold Algorithms Accountable

MIT TECHNOLOGY REVIEW (OP-ED), 17 NOVEMBER, 2016
AUTHORS: NICHOLAS DIAKOPOULOS, SORELLE FRIEDLER

Upcoming Research

Data Ethics for Computational Research

Background

This project is a collaborative effort with several partner research institutes to create a qualitative and quantitative dataset documenting how computational scientists, regulators, and other stakeholders are practically addressing issues in data and AI ethics.

Team

Jake Metcalf

Featured Outputs

Ten simple rules for responsible big data research

PLOS COMPUTATIONAL BIOLOGY, 30 MARCH, 2017
AUTHORS: MATTHEW ZOOK, SOLON BAROCAS, DANAH BOYD, KATE CRAWFORD, SEETA PEÑA GANGADHARAN, ALYSSA GOODMAN, RACHELLE HOLLANDER, BARBARA A. KOENIG, JACOB METCALF, ARVIND NARAYANAN, ALONDRA NELSON, FRANK PASQUALE

Perspectives on Big Data, Ethics, and Society

COUNCIL FOR BIG DATA, ETHICS, AND SOCIETY, WHITE PAPER, 23 MAY, 2016
AUTHORS: JAKE METCALF, EMILY F. KELLER, DANAH BOYD

Where are Human Subjects in Big Data Research? The Emerging Ethics Divide

BIG DATA AND SOCIETY, 14 MAY, 2016
AUTHORS: JAKE METCALF, KATE CRAWFORD

Creative Practices

Artists not only offer imaginative approaches to translating our work—their practice and output can also reveal elusive truths that might otherwise be ignored or dismissed.

In the 2016-2017 calendar year, Data & Society elevated a diverse array of voices in the cultural sector while directly supporting several prominent research-based art practices. Our creative network addressed complex emerging concepts in data-centric technology while portraying ongoing challenges in visual and visceral ways.



Artist-in-Residence Ingrid Burrington and Fellow Tega Brain

Photo by Butcher Walsh



Advisor Baratunde Thurston experiences an artwork by Tega Brain and Sam Lavigne at The Glass Room

Photo courtesy of Tactical Technology Collective



Artwork by Artist-in-Residence Heather Dewey-Hagborg

Photo by Thomas Dexter



Recent Fellow Mimi Onuoha, artist and researcher, speaks at the 2017 Eyeo Festival

Photo courtesy of Eyeo

Programs

In addition to producing significant research, Data & Society supports and expands the emerging field of actors exploring the sociotechnical implications of a data-centric society.

To do this work, we develop and sustain relationships and networks with a range of individuals and institutions, from our internal annual cohort of fellows to our broader network of NGOs, industry actors, policy-makers, media, and academics.

Programs

Small group sessions

Small group sessions are the core workshoping device for the Data & Society cohort. Geared towards substantive conversations on thorny topics, these 60-90 minute sessions are designed to create an intellectually stimulating space to converse, learn from each other, and shift perspectives. We invite visitors to come to us with knotty problems, research insights they would like to kick the tires on, and policy questions.

Featured Sessions:

Annette Markham—*Ethics as Levels of Impact: A future-oriented framework for decision making in everyday research practices*

16 NOVEMBER, 2016

Fellow Alice Marwick hosted Annette Markham (University of Aarhus), who discussed her framework of levels of ethical impact in an informal conversation.

Caroline Sinderson—*Design Thinking Workshop for Online Harassment Tool*

16 FEBRUARY, 2017

Caroline Sinderson, a machine learning UX designer and Open Lab Fellow with BuzzFeed and Eyebeam, led a design thinking session around tools and interventions that could combat online harassment using machine learning.

Ed Finn—*What Algorithms Want*

29 MARCH, 2017

This small group conversation with Ed Finn was based on his book, *What Algorithms Want: Imagination in the Age of Computing*. Finn considered how the algorithm—in practical terms, “a method for solving a problem”—has its roots not only in mathematical logic but also in cybernetics, philosophy, and magical thinking.

Art Critique Day

31 MAY, 2017

This inaugural peer review art critique session curated by Angie Waller gathered Artists-in-Residence, Fellows, and Affiliates Mimi Onuoha, Surya Mattu, Tega Brain, and Heather Dewey-Hagborg to present their work and engage in discussion with invited guest critics from Rhizome at the New Museum, Art in America, Postmasters Gallery, Public Art Action, The New School, and School for Poetic Computation. A public reception followed.



Design Thinking Workshop for an Online Harassment Tool



The Glass Room (installation shot)—photo courtesy of Tactical Technology Collective



Fellows Rebecca Wexler and Anne Washington with guest



Researcher Alexandra Mateescu and guests



Journalist and filmmaker Adrian Chen

Programs

Weekly Wednesdays

Every Wednesday evening at the Data & Society office in New York City, our open social hour offers a lightweight way for members of our community to interact and learn from one another, connect people who share something in common, share their work with visitors, and help solidify Data & Society as a crucial node in a knowledge network.

Notable Wednesday gatherings

Policing and Accountability

14 SEPTEMBER, 2016

Hosted in collaboration with the Brennan Center for Justice and the Legal Aid Society, we hosted a reception bringing together a wide range of stakeholders and experts concerned about policing and accountability in the digital age and the ways that policing is being transformed by technology. Guests included civil society actors, social justice activists, lawyers, government officials, professors, journalists, and police officers.

Networks of New York Book Party

5 OCTOBER, 2016

We hosted a book party to celebrate the publication of Data & Society Artist-in-Residence Ingrid Burrington's book, *Networks of New York, An Illustrated Field Guide to Urban Internet Infrastructure*. The party brought together many journalists and artists interested in mapping, decoding, and making visible the material infrastructure of the internet that surrounds and connects us.

The Glass Room

30 NOVEMBER, 2016

We took our usual cohort on a field-trip adventure to The Glass Room, Tactical Technology Collective and Mozilla's inventive and immersive pop-up art exhibition that explored our individual relationship to data. The Glass Room exhibition and its public programming featured many Data & Society artists and friends.

Recent Data & Society Fellow Mimi Onuoha had her work featured in the New York Times Magazine's exhibition review, *Finding Inspiration for Art in the Betrayal of Privacy* (17 December, 2016).

Intelligence and Autonomy Research Launch

25 JANUARY, 2017

We hosted an evening of celebration at the conclusion and release of a major set of research materials produced by our Intelligence and Autonomy initiative exploring how intelligent systems are emerging, and how they operate in practice. We toasted the release of Data & Society researchers Madeleine Clare Elish and Tim Hwang's book *An AI Pattern Language*, which explores the patterns that practitioners have developed to grapple with the social challenges of AI. Special guests included tech industry practitioners, journalists, and academics.

Inform/Transform Zine Party

29 MARCH, 2017

We hosted artists from Eyebeam, a nonprofit studio for collaborative experiments with technology, for a zine party to debut a collaboration between Data & Society Fellow Zara Rahman and Eyebeam Resident and former Data & Society Fellow Mimi Onuoha. The illustrated zine, *Inform/Transform*, explores ways that information is controlled, manipulated, and transformed.

The Moderators Film Screening

3 MAY, 2017

Data & Society hosted a special screening of *The Moderators*, a short documentary co-directed by Ciaran Cassidy and New Yorker staff writer Adrian Chen. Known for his investigative journalism work on topics such as troll farms, Chen presented the film and hosted a Q&A on labor, censorship, and how the technology industry relies on a huge and hidden army of workers known as content moderators to keep the internet free of offensive content.

Programs

Databites

Data & Society's public speaker series engages our network and the broader public on unresolved questions and timely topics of interest to the Data & Society community. Databites brought more than 20 speakers through Data & Society to a packed house over the course of the year. It was livestreamed to a larger audience, then rolled into a podcast series averaging 500 downloads per episode.

Featured Speakers

Databite No. 88
Cathy O'Neil—*Weapons of Math Destruction*
26 OCTOBER, 2016

Cathy O'Neil spoke on her new book *Weapons of Math Destruction: How Big Data Increases Inequality and Threatens Democracy*. As algorithms increasingly mediate education, employment, consumer credit, and the criminal justice system, how do we measure their impact on our society? Cathy presented her perspective as a mathematician and data scientist on the pervasive, opaque, and unaccountable mathematical models that regulate our lives, micromanage our economy, and shape our behavior. A book party and reception followed the talk.

Databite No. 91
Bruce Schneier—*Security and Privacy in a Hyper-Connected World*
7 DECEMBER, 2016

In this talk, Bruce Schneier took a look back at what we have learned from past attempts to secure information systems. He pushed us to seriously consider what technologies, laws, regulations, economic incentives, and social norms we will need to secure them in the future.



2016–2017 Ford-Mozilla OpenWeb Fellow Suchana Seth

Databite No. 92
Jonathan Mayer—*Regulating Security and Privacy*
1 FEBRUARY, 2017

Jonathan Mayer's talk addressed regulatory agencies'—especially the Federal Trade Commission and the Federal Communications Commission—rise to prominence on technology security and privacy issues. He explained why FTC, FCC, and similar agencies have assumed policy leadership roles, what legal authorities are at their disposal, and how agencies have exercised their authorities. The presentation included case studies of both successes and failures, and offered suggestions on best practices and recurring challenges. The talk also addressed how researchers and civil society groups can effectively engage with regulatory agencies.



Jennifer Pan

Databite No. 94
Jennifer Pan—*How the Chinese Government Fabricates Social Media Posts*
22 FEBRUARY, 2017

Jennifer Pan presented her research on Chinese “50c party” posts. The Chinese government has long been suspected of hiring as many as 2,000,000 people to surreptitiously insert huge numbers of pseudonymous and other deceptive writings into the stream of real social media posts, as if they were the genuine opinions of ordinary people. Pan shared what is known about the Chinese censorship program, and suggested how these posts may change our broader theoretical understanding of “common knowledge” and information control in authoritarian regimes.

Databite No. 98
Eric Horvitz—*AI in the Open World: Directions, Challenges, and Futures*
26 APRIL, 2017

Eric Horvitz broke down societal and technological complications of using AI in this talk. While artificial intelligence promises to provide great value, along with aspirations come concerns about inadvertent costs, rough edges, and failures. Concerns include failures of automation in the open world, biased data and algorithms, opacity of reasoning, adversarial attacks on AI systems, and runaway AI. Horvitz discussed short-and longer-term challenges and studies aimed at addressing concerns, including the One Hundred Year Study on AI at Stanford

University and the Partnership on AI to Benefit People and Society.

Databite No. 99
Whitney Phillips and Ryan Milner—*The Ambivalent Internet: Mischief, Oddity, and Antagonism Online*
18 MAY, 2017

Whitney Phillips and Ryan Milner discussed their new book, *The Ambivalent Internet*, which explores the weird and mean and in-between that characterizes everyday expression online, from absurdist photoshops to antagonistic Twitter hashtags to ambivalent online play with the 2016 U.S. Presidential election. A book signing and reception followed the talk.

Databite No. 100
Alice Marwick, Daniel Grushkin, and Rebecca Wexler
7 JUNE, 2017

The first of three talks in the **Databite 100 Series**—the 2016–2017 Fellows' class grand finale—showcased the wide-ranging interdisciplinary connections and provocative questions that have emerged from our cohort of Fellows this year. Daniel Grushkin spoke on *The DNA Revolution: Merging Data with Biology*; Alice Marwick on *Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online*; and Rebecca Wexler on *Trade Secrets and Black-Boxing Criminal Justice*.



Research Analyst Mikaela Pitcan (center)

Programs

Workshops and Conferences

The Data & Society **workshop** is designed to maximize scholarly thinking. Authors participate in critical discussion about papers with the explicit intent of making the work stronger and more interdisciplinary. Our **conferences** bring together practitioners around the evolving and societally important issues surrounding data-driven technologies.



Founder and President danah boyd

Propaganda and Media Manipulation Workshop
19 MAY, 2017

This workshop focused on the ways in which technology and algorithmic practices have altered dynamics of propaganda and media manipulation. danah boyd selected 59 participants from over 100 applications. Authors did not present their work, but rather participated in critical discussion with the assembled group about papers. This event was not open to practitioners or observers; it was designed to help researchers be reflective and candid about works-in-progress.



2016-2017 Fellows Tega Brain and Zara Rahman

Work, Labor, and Automation Workshop
23 JANUARY, 2017

This workshop, curated by danah boyd, focused on the intersection of technology and work/labor, and brought together researchers from diverse disciplines ranging from computer science to law, economics to history, and anthropology to media studies.

Eclectic Ideas Workshop
9 DECEMBER, 2016

This workshop brought together 34 researchers to discuss drafts of selected papers with the express goal of improving arguments and ideas. Participation in the event was invite-only and curated by danah boyd. Attendees were required to read three papers in advance of the event and come ready to offer constructively critical feedback. Researchers from different intellectual traditions were encouraged to spar with and challenge one another.

Media Literacy in Hostile Information Environments
9 JUNE, 2017

This gathering brought together media literacy scholars, educators, practitioners, and journalists in order to help us better understand where media literacy can be an effective intervention, and where its limits are, in the context of information war.

Future Directions in Youth News Research
25 APRIL, 2017

Following on the release of a qualitative research report on youth news behaviors supported by the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, we gathered a group of researchers, media practitioners, and foundation colleagues to discuss implications and possibilities for further research in the field.

Future Perfect Conference
15-16 JUNE, 2017

Future Perfect was an experimental onsite gathering of creators and practitioners whose work broadly addresses themes of speculative fiction, embodied futures, and the material/architectural dimensions of world-building. The invitation-only June 16 conference was curated by Data & Society Artist-in-Residence Ingrid Burrington, who selected 35 participants from over 100 applications. The night prior, Data & Society hosted a complimentary “un-conference” that invited participants to create their own spaces for play and discussion. Autonomous groups included a self-care circle for discussing the emotional discontents of apocalyptic speculation, a dystopian start-up simulator, and a cybernetic tarot reading with artist Suzanne Treister’s Hexen 2.0 deck.



Future Perfect attendee



Activist, designer, and academic Ada Cable (right)



Author, journalist, professor, and lecturer Farai Chideya

Sessions

Come with Me If You Want to Live: Speculative Fiction in the Public Interest featuring Elizabeth Angell, Ava Kofman, and Farai Chideya

Life Finds a Way: Bodies, Futures, Embodied Futures featuring Ruha Benjamin, Joanna Radin, and Ada Cable

In the Off-World Colonies: Speculation and Worldbuilding as Landscape featuring Deji Bryce Olukotun, Jillian Crandall, and Alexander Huggins

Fellowships

Our annual Fellowship Program supports Data & Society’s crucial ongoing field-building work at the intersection of data-centric technology and society.

Hosting a variety of practitioners and academics—data scientists and engineers, lawyers and librarians, ethnographers and creators, historians and activists—each class of Data & Society fellows connects us more deeply to the field through individual projects, mutual support, contribution to core research projects, and insightful public communications.

During their time at Data & Society, this 2016-2017 class had work appear in the New York Times op-ed, technology, and arts sections; at Internet Freedom Forum, the Museum of Modern Art, W3C, Personal Democracy Forum, RightsCon, and Eyeo Festival; and in viral digital videos about data surveillance and bio-design.



Mark Ackerman
2016-2017 Fellow

Mark Ackerman investigates the lived experience of data, so as to help people gain control of and better use the information that is being generated about them. He is the George Herbert Mead Collegiate Professor of Human-Computer Interaction and a Professor in the School of Information, the Department of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science, and the Science Technology and Society program at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. His major research area is Human-Computer Interaction (HCI), primarily in social computing and in health. Mark is a member of the CHI Academy (HCI Fellow) and an ACM Fellow. Mark has degrees from the University of Chicago, Ohio State, and MIT.

Featured Output

Safety Checklists for Sociotechnical Design, Data & Society–Points, 26 October, 2016



Tega Brain
2016-2017 Fellow

Tega Brain is an artist, environmental engineer, and researcher whose work intersects art, ecology, and engineering. As an artist, she makes dysfunctional devices, eccentric infrastructures and experimental information systems. She is an Assistant Professor at SUNY Purchase and holds degrees in environmental engineering and fine arts. She also contributes to open source software initiatives of the Processing Foundation. Her current research addresses the relationship between computational systems and the environment. How is computation both shaping environmental systems and changing our perception of them?

Featured Press Coverage

Fake Pop-Up Exposes the Dark Side of the Information Age, The Creators Project, 17 January, 2017



Ingrid Burrington
2016-2017 Artist-in-Residence

Ingrid Burrington is an artist who writes, makes maps, and tells jokes about places, politics, and the weird feelings people have about both. Her work has previously been supported by Eyebeam Art and Technology Center, the Center for Land Use Interpretation, and Rhizome. She also runs the Data & Society speculative fiction reading group. During her fellowship, Burrington launched a book on New York City’s urban internet infrastructure and took multiple groups of Glass Room visitors on an infrastructure walking tour. Burrington had a solo show in Berlin and published widely in popular press outlets such as The Atlantic, Fusion, and The Verge on topics such as domain name registration, network outages, and fiber-optic cable ownership. She also curated Future Perfect, a new conference on the influence of speculative fiction on technology, policy, and culture.

Featured Book

Networks of New York: An Illustrated Field Guide to Urban Internet Infrastructure

Featured Project

Future Perfect Conference, 16 June, 2017

Fellowships (continued)



Heather Dewey-Hagborg
2016-2017 Artist-in-Residence

Heather Dewey-Hagborg is a transdisciplinary artist and educator who is interested in art as research and critical practice. Her biopolitical art practice includes the project *Stranger Visions* in which she created portrait sculptures from analyses of genetic material (hair, cigarette butts, chewed up gum) collected in public places. Heather has shown work internationally at events and venues including the World Economic Forum, Shenzhen Urbanism and Architecture Biennale, the New Museum, the Centre Pompidou and MoMA PS1. Her work has been widely discussed in the media, from the New York Times and the BBC to TED and Wired. She is an Assistant Professor of Art and Technology Studies at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and a 2016 Creative Capital award grantee in the area of Emerging Fields.

During her fellowship, Dewey-Hagborg spoke at multiple events including the SXSW panel "Biopunk: Subverting Biopolitics" and her virtual reality work-in-progress was selected with collaborator Toshiaki Ozawa for the Sundance Institute's New Frontier Story Lab.

Featured Press Coverage

- From Chelsea Manning's Art Springs an Art Show**, The New York Times, 30 June, 2017
- How Heather Dewey-Hagborg Is Highlighting Gender Disparities in Art and Technology**, Artnet News, 13 September, 2016



Daniel Grushkin
2016-2017 Fellow

Daniel Grushkin is the Executive Director and co-founder of Genspace, a nonprofit community laboratory dedicated to promoting citizen science and access to biotechnology. He is founder and director of the Biodesign Challenge, a university competition devoted to creating new visions for the future of biotech. From 2013 to 2014, he was a fellow at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars, where he researched the field of synthetic biology, and an Emerging Leader in Biosecurity at the UPMC Center of Health Security. As a journalist, he has reported on the intersection of biotechnology, culture, and business for publications including Bloomberg Businessweek, Fast Company, Scientific American, and Popular Science.

During his fellowship, Grushkin curated The Biotech Futures Talk + Lab Series. Guests included Christina Agapakis, Jason Bobe, Tom Knight, Julie Wolf, and Dr. Sophie Zaaier. Grushkin held hands-on synthetic biology workshops to teach staff and visitors unique lab skills such as engineering bacteria to glow. A student-submitted speculative artificial womb project from his Biodesign Challenge competition received 16 million Facebook views.

Featured Events

- Biodesign Challenge Summit 2017, Museum of Modern Art**, 22 June, 2017
- Privacy in the Era of Personal Genomics**, 19 January, 2017
- Biotech Futures Talk + Lab Series**, Various dates



Alice E. Marwick
2016-2017 Fellow

Alice Marwick (PhD, New York University) is now a Data & Society advisor, research affiliate with the Media Manipulation project, and Assistant Professor of Communication at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research focuses on far-right media manipulation, online privacy, and internet celebrity. Her current book project examines how the networked nature of online privacy disproportionately impacts marginalized individuals in terms of gender, race, and socio-economic status. Marwick was previously Assistant Professor of Communication and Media Studies and the Director of the McGannon Center for Communication Research at Fordham University.

During her fellowship, Marwick led the Media Manipulation team and co-authored Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online, a report on why the media was vulnerable to manipulation from radicalized groups emerging from internet subcultures. She was cited in the New York Times and recorded appearances with The Guardian, CNN, WNYC, NowThis, and the Today Show. Her co-authored op-eds with Data & Society researcher Becca Lewis appeared in Columbia Journalism Review and New York Magazine.

Featured Output

- Media Manipulation and Disinformation Online**, Data & Society, 15 May, 2017

Featured Press Coverage

- How Twitter Is Being Gamed to Feed Misinformation**, The New York Times, 31 May, 2017



Zara Rahman
2016-2017 Fellow

Zara Rahman is a researcher, writer, and linguist who is interested in the intersection of power, race, and technology. She has travelled and worked in more than 25 countries in the field of information accessibility and data use in civil society, and speaks four languages fluently. She worked for OpenOil, investigating the use and availability of open data in the extractive industries, then worked for Open Knowledge, primarily with School of Data on data literacy for journalists and civil society. Now, she is a Research Lead at The Engine Room where she leads their Responsible Data Program, supporting the responsible use of data in advocacy and social change. Her work at Data & Society looked into creative and artistic ways of boosting critical data and tech literacy.

Zara's work was partially supported by a Shuttlesworth Flash Grant.

Featured Output

- Inform/Transform** (co-author) with Mimi Onuoha, March, 2017

Featured Talk

- Von Menschen, Daten und guten Vorsätzen**, Datensummit 2017, April, 2017



Suchana Seth
2016-2017 Ford-Mozilla OpenWeb Fellow

Suchana Seth is a physicist-turned-data scientist from India. She has built scalable data science solutions for startups and industry research labs, and holds patents in text mining and natural language processing. Suchana believes in the power of data to drive positive change, volunteers with DataKind, mentors data-for-good projects, and advises research on IoT ethics. She is also passionate about closing the gender gap in data science, and leads data science workshops with organizations like Women Who Code. At Data & Society, Suchana studied ways to operationalize ethical machine learning and AI in the industry. Her interests included fairness, accountability and transparency in machine learning, monetizing AI ethically, security vulnerabilities specific to machine learning and AI systems, and the regulatory landscape for predictive algorithms.

Featured Talks

- Holding Algorithms Accountable to Protect Fundamental Rights**, RightsCon, 31 March, 2017
- Gender deanonymization through machine learning—risks and implications**, Internet Freedom Festival, 8 March, 2017
- Measuring privacy risk and implied consent in app permissions**, MozFest 2016, 28 October, 2016



Ravi Shroff
2016-2017 Fellow

Ravi Shroff is a Research Scientist at New York University's Center for Urban Science and Progress (CUSP), where he specializes in computational social science. His work involves using statistical and machine learning techniques to understand the criminal justice system, child welfare, and related urban issues. At Data & Society, Ravi will examine how simple computational models can be designed and implemented in city government. He studied mathematics at UC San Diego (PhD) and applied urban science and informatics at CUSP (MS).

Featured Output

- Creating Simple Rules for Complex Decisions (co-author)**, Harvard Business Review, 19 April, 2017

Fellowships (continued)



Mark Van Hollebeke
2016-2017 Privacy Practitioner-in-Residence

Mark Van Hollebeke is a privacy professional at Microsoft. A former philosophy professor specializing in ethics, pragmatism, and social and political philosophy, his recent work at Microsoft centers on articulating the norms and ethical guidance required to design data-driven services in a principled manner. At Data & Society, he worked to broaden existing IT industry privacy practices to include moral inquiry about the nature of data use, as well as to find practical ways to intersect ethical reflection into the data-analytics design process.

Featured Output

Shining a light on the darkness,
Data & Society—Points, 27 October, 2016

Featured Event

Workshop on Data and Algorithmic Transparency, 19 November, 2016



Anne L. Washington
2016-2017 Fellow

Anne L. Washington is a computer scientist and a librarian who specializes in public sector technology management and informatics. She is an Assistant Professor at George Mason University. As a digital government scholar, her research focuses on the production, meaning, and retrieval of public sector information. She developed her expertise on government data working at the Congressional Research Service within the Library of Congress. She also served as an invited expert to the W3C E-Government Interest Group and the W3C Government Linked Data Working Group. She completed a PhD from The George Washington University School of Business. She holds a degree in computer science from Brown University and a Master's in Library Information Science from Rutgers University. Before completing her PhD, she had extensive work experience in the private sector including the Claris Software division of Apple Computers and Barclays Global Investors.

Featured Project

Data Science Reasoning

Featured Output

Unlocking the secrets of the digital library, Centre for Public Impact, 12 April, 2017

Sausage, politics, and data predictions?, Data & Society—Points, 31 October, 2017

Featured Events

Roundtable on AI and the Future of Government, with the Centre for Public Impact, 30 June, 2017

Data Science Reasoning: From the Classroom to the Workplace, 28 October, 2016



Rebecca Wexler
Lawyer-in-Residence

Rebecca Wexler works on data, technology, and criminal justice. Her current scholarship focuses on trade secrets in new data-driven criminal justice technologies. While at Data & Society, she worked for The Legal Aid Society defending criminal cases that involved computer-derived evidence, including Stingray surveillance, cell site location tracking, probabilistic DNA analysis software programs, and the Shotspotter audio surveillance system. She also initiated partnerships between Legal Aid, GovLab, and the Vera Institute of Justice to analyze Legal Aid's internal data, representing 230,000 criminal cases per year. Before law school, Rebecca worked as a documentary filmmaker. She holds a JD from Yale Law School, an MPhil from Cambridge University, and a BA from Harvard College. She is a member of the New York bar and a law clerk to the Honorable Pierre N. Leval of the Second Circuit Court of Appeals.

Featured Output

When a Computer Program Keeps You in Jail, The New York Times (op-ed), 13 June, 2017

Life, Liberty, and Trade Secrets: Intellectual Property in the Criminal Justice System, SSRN, 21 February, 2017

Featured Testimony

NY State Assembly Standing Committees Testimony, 8 February, 2017



Lawyer-in-Residence Rebecca Wexler and Fellows Alice Marwick and Daniel Grushkin

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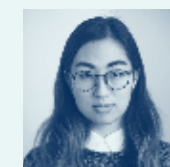
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Data & Society in September 2016

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Data & Society is an independent, nonprofit 501(c)(3) research institute. We are committed to the independence and autonomy of Data & Society’s initiatives and convenings.

We do not accept funding that would affect our ability to pursue work free of external interference, and we fiercely protect the independence of our researchers and fellows in their intellectual activities and individual funding relationships.

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We are deeply thankful for the support we have received during the fiscal year from May 2016 to May 2017 from the following entities:

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We are truly grateful for the support that we have received to help make this organization and our work possible.

If you are interested in supporting our work, we welcome your inquiry at info@datasociety.net.

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