Stanford PACS
Center on **Philanthropy and Civil Society**

Digital Civil Society Lab

INTEGRATED ADVOCACY:
PATHS FORWARD FOR DIGITAL CIVIL SOCIETY

JANUARY 2020

By Lucy Bernholz[a] / Nicole Ozer[b] / Kip Wainscott[c] / Wren Elhai[a]

a. Stanford University, Digital Civil Society Lab;

b. Non-Resident Fellow, Digital Civil Society Lab; technology and civil liberties director, ACLU of Northern California (affiliation for identification purposes only);

c. Non-Resident Fellow, Digital Civil Society Lab; senior advisor, National Democratic Institute (affiliation for identification purposes only)

CONTENTS

___

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Around the world, civil society is being thrust into the digital world. Technology systems are now entwined in every aspect of our individual and collective lives. People rely on the internet, mobile devices, and social networking platforms to connect and communicate, and civil society organizations must now grapple and engage with many issues that had been considered the more specific domain of a small subset of digital rights organizations in earlier decades. Digital policy issues—including information privacy, net neutrality, government surveillance, and the regulation of artificial intelligence—now affect the core missions of nonprofits and associations working in areas as divergent as education, the environment, criminal justice, health, community development, justice, and the arts. To effectively continue to protect and promote well-being, rights, and opportunities, civil society must become digital civil society—a sector with the confidence and resources to address how technology shapes core mission issues.

Starting in January 2019, the Digital Civil Society Lab at Stanford University initiated a research study to map these changing contours of civil society, to analyze current connection and collaboration between more traditional civil society and digital policy organizations, and to identify additional ways that the philanthropic and organizational community could better support civil society in the digital age. The research study focused on four geographic domains—the United States, the European Union, the UK, and Canada. The project was conducted through policy convenings, face-to-face and remote interviews, an online survey, and desk research to understand the policy agendas of leading civil society and digital policy organizations in each geographic domain.

What we discovered is that the current mix of relationships between civil society and digital policy organizations runs the gamut, from active and highly effective

alliances to just passing awareness. But there is a widespread and growing understanding and desire to weave together expertise on digital policies, civil society advocacy, and the lived experiences of many communities. Civil society organizations want to understand and be equipped to build, use, and advocate for digital systems and policies that protect people and promote rights. Experts in digital policy issues want to know and understand how people and organizations are experiencing social, environmental, or economic harms from these systems and be able to help take action to address it.

Both traditional civil society and digital policy organizations see a common, intertwined fate for the future of democracy, human well-being, and essential rights; recognize the power of connection; and are eager to have support to be able to develop more and new ways to work together. Organizations unsurprisingly highlighted funding and resource-support needs that are foundational for any meaningful and sustainable social change. These included long-term and general funding in order to develop expertise and capacity, as well as funding that is ecosystem-focused and flexible to support diverse organizations and integrated advocacy strategies that can adapt to changing dynamics. They also highlighted direct support for relationship building, common language, and collaboration infrastructure.

Our recommendations distill and build on each of these sets of research learnings and focus on the "how" to weave the way forward to build a healthy civil society ecosystem for the digital age.

We have identified some tangible steps that the philanthropic and organizational community can take, starting from where we found that people and organizations are now, and then tiering support to further build collective strength. It should begin with robust support for **The Core**— existing diverse alliances of organizations who are modeling digital civil society in action. It is critical that The Core be in a position to both continue their substantive, collaborative work and also have the time and resources to support **The Energized**—groups ready to engage on digital policy for the first time—and connect and share knowledge with the far broader circle of **The Affected**— groups that are ready to learn, but need support to do so.

The world is now digital and institutions committed to supporting a healthy civil society ecosystem must similarly adapt by understanding these new realities and supporting the learning, collaboration, and infrastructure needed for a robust digital civil society. This report illustrates some important ways forward.

INTRODUCTION: POSTCARDS FROM DIGITAL CIVIL SOCIETY

In the last decade, as the impact of digital issues on communities and individuals has become more salient, organizations from across civil society—especially groups focused on issues of justice—have adapted their work to address these new policy issues and to use more multi-modal, integrated advocacy strategies. Cases from the United States, Europe, Canada, and the UK shed light on this new reality and offer examples of how civil society and digital rights organizations are working together—and what additional support is needed to build and maintain a healthy and vibrant civil society in the digital age. Here are four examples:

The US and Facial Recognition Software

In June 2019, San Francisco became the first American city to ban the use of facial recognition surveillance technology by the government. The passage of this landmark local law was part of a wave of legal, policy, and corporate advocacy and grassroots organizing by a diverse coalition of more than one hundred local and national civil society organizations. The face-surveillance coalition included organizations with a wide range of primary issue areas—from civil rights, immigrants' rights, and racial justice to economic justice, homelessness, reproductive justice, and worker rights.[2] The threat of face recognition technology further powering attacks on immigrant communities, exacerbating discriminatory policing for people of color and the poor, further eroding worker autonomy, and undermining privacy and freedom of expression created common ground for many civil society and digital society organizations. They came together across issue areas and strategies to successfully push for important change.

Canada and Smart Cities

In Toronto, the bid by Google sister company Sidewalk Labs to develop waterfront property into a "smart" community has sparked collaborative connections between civil society organizations and digital rights advocates. Some of these connections have come through the formal structures the project itself has established to hear community views and collect input from civil society—the Sidewalk Labs Toronto Advisory Council, for example.[3] Some have sprung up from the concern many in Toronto feel about the project, including the Toronto Open Smart Cities Forum[4] and the #BlockSidewalk campaign. #BlockSidewalk, as an example, includes affordable housing advocates, environmentalists, and digital privacy advocates.[5] The group members are united across issues that include affordable housing, access to transport, jobs, health care for disabled and immigrant populations, environmental sustainability, and how digital policies like surveillance, data collection, and intellectual property issues will affect all. The coalition has combined grassroots and digital organizing and legislative advocacy to bring international attention to the impacts of technology company redevelopment projects and push back against opaque agreements that do not address community concerns.

Europe and Data Protections

In Europe, decades of advocacy and concern about data protections helped inform the design and implementation of the EU-wide General Data Protection Regulation (commonly referred to as GDPR), which put meaningful enforcement energy behind long-standing protections. As happened on a local level in San Francisco and Toronto, European and global civil society groups formed new coalitions to advocate for particular provisions in the regulation. Children's rights organizations and digital policy organizations found themselves aligned over the regulation of consent to data collection by minors.[6] Established privacy and civil liberties organizations joined forces with digital rights organizations to advocate for strong privacy safeguards.[7]

The United Kingdom and a Duty of Care for Social Media

In the United Kingdom in 2018, leading private-sector technology policy advocates advanced a proposal to establish a legal duty of care that would hold social media platforms liable for their products' negative effects on democracy, young people, and public safety.[8] A version of this proposal was included in a white paper issued by Parliament in early 2019[9], sparking a fierce debate (which was somewhat overshadowed by the constitutional crisis brought on by Brexit negotiations). British civil society ended up split by this proposal, with some privacy and free speech advocates arguing the duty of care was crafted so vaguely it could increase rather than reduce digital harm.[10] One wrote of the proposal that "[t]he duty of care is ostensibly aimed at shielding children from danger and harm but it will in practice bite on adults too, wrapping society in cotton wool and curtailing a whole host of legal expression."[11] Meanwhile, British advocates for children's safety online largely welcomed the proposal, while asking questions about how it would be carried out in practice.[12]

Looking at an earlier list of those consulted during the consultative process that led to the white paper, the breadth of stakeholders who chose to share their views with Parliament is striking: They ranged from representatives of social media platform companies to teachers' associations to schoolchildren.

In these cases and in other similar examples, technological change has progressed to the point that it is no longer feasible to maintain separate silos of knowledge for digital and more traditional civil society domains. Whether in considering the wide-ranging impacts of facial recognition, smart cities, or data regulations, protecting individuals and communities depends on civil society organizations learning from and working with digital policy organizations, and digital policy organizations learning from and working with civil society organizations that deeply understand the issues and communities affected by new technologies. Our task in this research and report is to consider how this becomes the norm and how we get there, starting with three questions: Where and how is collaboration already happening between civil society organizations and digital policy organizations? What issues are forming the basis for this collaboration? And what are the key supports needed to build a strong and effective digital civil society?

NOTES ON
LANGUAGE

In doing this research we continuously faced the challenges of language. Civil society actors have different levels of familiarity with the language of technology, technologists, and digital policy issues. Digital policy experts have different understandings of civil society and its language. We can't fix this challenge here, but we can clarify what we mean when we use certain terms.

Civil society: Individuals and not-for-profit, nongovernmental associations, both formal and informal, that come together to address shared social challenges. Includes nonprofit organizations and charities, social enterprises, individuals, and collectives, as well as the individuals and private groups that fund them.

Civil society advocates: Groups or individuals within civil society who research, advocate, legislate, or otherwise work to defend or promote civil society interests, and those who regulate the activities of civil society organizations and philanthropy.

Digital civil society: An aspirational sphere in which people and associations have the capacity to use, build, and advocate for rights-respecting digital systems that enable them to pursue their social missions and defend and promote individual and collective rights.

Digital systems: The integrated interactions of digital devices (mobile phones, laptops), the corporate structures that (usually) create and sell them, and the laws and regulations that govern the operations and use of them.

Digital policy: This is not a term-of-art. In fact, for a two-word phrase it is remarkably complicated. Both words need to be defined.

We use "digital" to refer to the many legal and regulatory domains that are primarily concerned with the use of technology systems and the hardware, software, and personal information (data) that these systems incorporate.

We use "policy" expansively to refer to the full set of change strategies that are part of responding to or seeking social change (i.e., to change public policy), even if those undertaking the action might not see policy change as their first or last stop. It includes all of the stages of understanding and influencing public policy: academic and policy research and investigations; litigation; local, state and federal legislation and electoral/political advocacy; organizing; corporate advocacy; public education; and strategic communications.

Specific policy domains include telecommunications law, access and availability of internet and mobile coverage, intellectual property, laws about free expression and association, personal privacy, laws on digital information (governance, rights), consumer privacy, and surveillance and monitoring. These domains are increasingly impacting civil liberties and civil rights and must be examined and acted upon through the lens of constitutional and human rights laws.

Expertise in digital rights, digital law, and digital policy had generally developed within one or more of the digital domains listed above, whereas civil society actors often focus on a subset of the change strategies. But as technology systems have become entwined in every aspect of our individual and collective lives, the issues of concern that were once specific to particular domains are now widespread and present in many other areas of civil society and public policy. The use of change strategies has also matured and become more multi-modal and interdisciplinary and a model of "integrated advocacy" both within and among partner organizations has developed.

Integrated advocacy: This is a term increasingly used within the civil society space to describe an approach to powering social change that considers all available change strategies and leverages strategies in combination, concurrently or sequentially, to maximize efficiency, mutual benefit, and overall impact. Depending on organization focus, expertise, and available resources for particular change strategies, an integrated advocacy model for social change can be used inside a single organization or between partner organizations. It can be built for a single issue or for multiple, intersectional issues. Integrated advocacy considers all of the elements of policymaking (described above): academic and policy research and investigations; litigation; local, state and federal legislation and electoral/political advocacy; organizing; corporate advocacy; public education; and strategic communications. It can be built and utilized for a period of weeks (for a fast-moving, reactive issue), months, years, or even decades.

METHODOLOGY

The research for this report comes from several sources. Our first task was to identify and engage two policy fellows to co-lead the research. We sought expertise in civil society, nonprofit management, digital rights, policymaking, and alliance building. We also sought experience and familiarity with all four regions: The United States, Canada, the United Kingdom, and the European Union. A competitive call for fellowship applications yielded numerous qualified candidates. Nicole Ozer, technology and civil liberties director for the ACLU of Northern California, and Kip Wainscott, senior advisor at the National Democratic Institute and manager of the Design for Democracy (D4D) Coalition, were named non-residential policy fellows in January 2019. We also invited seven other top applicants to join an advisory board to the project. The advisors have helped develop interview and survey questions, provided insight on responses, and commented on draft reports. A few members of the advisory board have also participated in focus groups. We also reviewed relevant academic and trade literature on social movement funding, collaborative funding, data justice in communities, and algorithmic decision-making.

We conducted 31 individual interviews with stakeholders in Canada, the United States, European Union, and the United Kingdom. In addition, we held a total of twelve dedicated focus groups and workshops, independently and as part of other conferences across Europe, the United Kingdom and the United States. Members of the research team also engaged audiences on these topics in conference sessions at an additional 19 venues, resulting in 31 total sessions across the US, Europe, and the UK. (See Appendix A for details.) We have not, to date, conducted any workshops in Canada.

The sample size for our interviews and focus groups is small and not representative of the communities or

civil society organizations in any of the regions. We focused on outreach via informed and committed hosts in each region, and our participants tend to fall toward the more engaged end of the spectrum, even if their engagement only extends to "I don't know what I don't know."

The research team imposed the categories of "digital policy" or "civil society" on the groups and experts who participated in our workshops or interviews. We checked these with each organization, but these organizations rarely self-identified as such.

Paralleling the interview and focus group process, we also conducted web research to identify and categorize civil society and digital organizations in each of the regions. We coded these groups according to their public statements of policy action and then mapped them by issue area. This exercise allowed us to check the diversity of our coverage, select additional interviews, and ensure a broad reach. Finally, we conducted an online survey within the United States, targeting individuals who had been invited to workshops but were unable to participate. The organizations included in our workshops, survey, and interview set are not intended as a representative sample or a sample of the largest or most influential civil society organizations. Rather, we sought out organizations that have been active in existing coalitions on particular digital policy issues or who have received funding from funders who work with digital policy-focused groups.

CURRENT STATE AND DRIVERS OF CHANGE

People have been creating associations and nonprofits to manage and attend to the social and technological effects of digital technologies since the earliest days of public access to computing systems. These organizations—ranging from networks of educators using time-sharing systems in the 1970s to the founding in 1990 of the first civil liberties organization focused on human rights in "cyberspace"—are the earliest manifestations of digital civil society.[13]

This first, innermost circle of digital civil society was largely concerned with safeguarding civil liberties in the online world and protecting the potential of digital connections from government interference. They also created open source platforms and associated standards that organized the sharing of information and data for public use.

Over time, through a series of attention-focusing events, a wider range of organizations began to recognize the relevance of digital policy to their interests. Moves to electronic voting machines implicated groups concerned with democratic space and fair elections. Revelations about the growing reach of digital surveillance raised civil liberties concerns. These groups, which fall in the second circle from the center of our conception
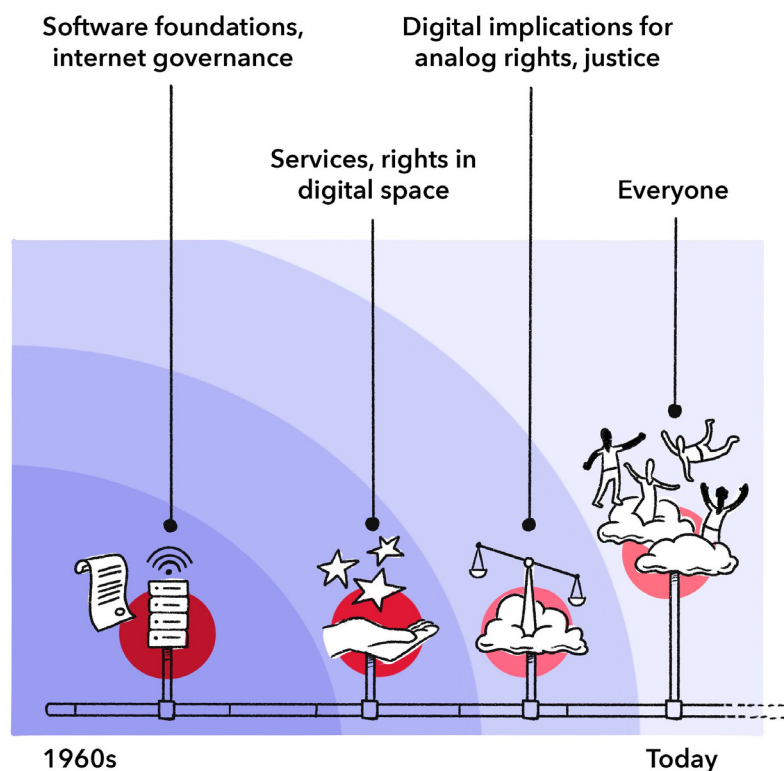

Figure One: The expansion of digital civil society

of digital civil society, brought their own methods and networks to bear in advocating for digital policies. As an example, in 2014, the environmental protection organization Greenpeace collaborated with the Electronic Frontier Foundation and the 10th Amendment Center to fly an airship over an NSA data center in protest. Greenpeace wrote at the time, "[i]t turns out the NSA's illegal spying is a problem for the environment, too, just like coal or overfishing."[14]

Today, digital connections affect nearly all forms of human association. As public services are tied to internet access and as digital surveillance covers ever more of the physical world, even people who prefer to remain offline are impacted by digital policy. Leaders of civil society organizations recognize and describe digital systems and policies as intertwined with their mission— whether that mission concerns ensuring access to health care, reforming the criminal justice system, or representing the interests of historically marginalized groups. In short, all of civil society is becoming digital civil society.

In the new world of an all-encompassing digital civil society, two major factors drive organizations that are primarily focused on digital issues and those who primarily work in other domains. First, civil society organizations grapple with their own use of technology, data, and digital platforms—and seek expertise from the digital rights community to manage their own data responsibly. Our dependencies on digital systems for communications, organizing, associational operations, financial transactions, and information-finding all

affect civil society organizations, many of which lack the in-house technical expertise to make confident, informed decisions about their digital footprints.

This points to a real and significant concern: Nonprofits and foundations in all the regions we examined are hungry for technological solutions at low financial cost. They are eager for both products and financial contributions from companies that make and sell digital technologies. Many of these companies now offer a version of their product line marketed as "for social good." These product offerings are most often off-the-shelf tools produced for other markets and provided to nonprofits at reduced costs. They are neither purpose-built nor customizable (except at great cost) to the particular "threat models" faced by nonprofits and associations, nor to the sector's overarching need for some form of independence. There is also a vast graveyard of "bespoke" nonprofit or philanthropic software solutions, often open source, that have died from lack of sustainable funding or revenue models.

Second, the policy domains in which civil society organizations seek influence have themselves been transformed by digital policy. For example, economic development advocates need to consider the rules and incentives that bring (or block) affordable and accessible internet access in the communities they represent, as that access is critical for connecting with services, building businesses, and creating jobs and markets. Advocates of all kinds, from environmental protectors to racial justice groups, need to engage with the tools and rules that enable distributed

surveillance of people and associations. Educators and health providers need to consider the digital tracking and privacy implications of online learning and mobile services.

These challenges manifest in new sorts of work. We see both civil society organizations and digital policy organizations rethinking how they do their work. Some civil society organizations are hiring information security specialists and launching reviews of the way they store and use personal information. Some digital policy organizations, for their part, are working on grassroots organizing and public education campaigns to connect with many more people than those who engaged in debates around digital policy in the first two decades of the internet.

Despite these efforts, we must recognize an unfortunate fact about the current state of civil society globally. So far, the digital future has not been kind to civil society or democracy. Over the last 13 years, as billions of people connected to the internet for the first time, Freedom House reported the longest continuous period of decline in democratic freedoms globally since it began tracking these metrics in the 1970s.[15] Freedom of expression, freedom of association, the rule of law, and individual liberties have all trended downwards. And autocrats seeking to limit the freedom of civil society now count among their tools restrictions on internet access and use, data control, and digital surveillance. Independent monitors of internet freedom, digital rights, and basic access to the internet note concurrent decreases in each of these areas over the same time period.[16]

To arrest and reverse this trend, civil society's adaptation to the interconnected, digital world must happen more quickly. And just as all actors in the system have contributed to this state of affairs, there are roles that each can play to make positive change. Individuals, nonprofits, civil society organizations, civil society, philanthropic infrastructure groups and advocates, funders, and commercial partners can all make a difference. There is work to do at all levels, from digital literacy to digital policy. The urgency of this point in time calls for simultaneous action on all fronts, with special attention given to integrated advocacy regarding digital civil society. There are several reasons for this.

First, we have entered a new era in the regulation of technology, both globally and in the United States. Second, the mass deployment of automated decision-making systems (including those powered by artificial intelligence and machine learning) as well as smart sensors (the internet of things) extends the reach of digital policy into ever more corners of public and private life. Third, as we've reached this point of digital dependency, experts on civil society policy domains are stepping forward to actively engage with the digital implications for their work (see, for example, cases in humanitarian aid and racial justice). Finally, the coinciding trends noted at the top of this report make clear the degree to which the integration of digital systems and civil society can be used to close civic space. Efforts to keep it open and, indeed, to reinvigorate it, will require the same kind of integrated attention and expertise.

There is good news. The necessary expertise to identify, create, and enforce technological regimes that support civil society exists in many realms. It needs to be connected, supported, diversified, expanded, and prioritized. There is a growing awareness, in both civil society circles and among digital policy actors of the intersections between their interests. There are successful coalitions and alliances and practices to build upon. Success is not guaranteed. But building on existing resources and expanding alliances across expertise is both possible and a known criteria for long-term success.

"The necessary expertise to identify, create, and enforce technological regimes that support civil society exists in many realms. It needs to be connected, supported, diversified, expanded, and prioritized."

FINDINGS: BROAD EXPERIENCE, OVERLAPPING INTERESTS, CLEAR NEEDS

Our data show a broad recognition on the part of civil society (both digital policy organizations and groups that traditionally have not engaged on digital policy issues) that technology has changed the ways in which they must work towards their goals. Promisingly, many groups report experience working across the digital/non-digital divide, and they articulate clear reasons for spending their time and energy on building these sorts of collaborative efforts.

In conversations across the civil society and digital policy communities, we encountered broad interest in expanding opportunities for these constituencies to get to know and work with one another. These sentiments are rooted in shared interests both in strengthening and empowering civil society in the digital age, and in building inclusive and effective alliances to advocate for responsible digital policy. More particularly, stakeholders expressed a desire to collaborate more proactively, identifying joint strategies for nascent risks and challenges, rather than merely reacting to new policy developments.

EXPERIENCE WITH COLLABORATION AND COALITION

Collaboration across sectoral dividing lines is not new to those in our sample of organizations. Of the 31 people individually interviewed, 20 reported that they have already participated in a coalition or campaign that involved collaboration between digital and other civil society groups. Similarly, of those who responded to our online survey (n = 36), a majority reported that they had been involved in such a coalition or campaign.

Digital policy groups reported being involved in collaboration more often than

civil society organizations. Combining interview and survey responses, over 80 percent of respondents from digital policy organizations (17 of 21 organizations) reported participating in a collaborative campaign or coalition. In contrast, fewer than half of respondents from civil society organizations (18 of 39 organizations) reported the same.

Interviewees gave varied reasons for their decision to participate in coalitions or collaborative campaigns. Categorized broadly, they fell into two categories: (1) strategic reasons; and (2) interest-based reasons. Strategic reasons focused on the possibility for organizations to achieve more by pooling their expertise and networks. One EU-based interviewee said, "Everybody has a lack of capacity—some of these organizations are very small, often quite specialized, and working together augments what we can achieve." Meanwhile, interest-based reasons focused on the importance of the particular issue and its relevance to an organization's mission.

The topics that drove collaboration across sectoral lines tended to vary by geography. In Europe, respondents commonly made reference to activism around the GDPR legislation implemented in 2018 (possibly explaining the high awareness of data ownership as a policy issue). There is emerging philanthropic support in the European Union via a funders network (Civitates) and through renewed and expanded investments in digital policy from Luminate. There is also a significant new effort in the design phases, funded by the estate of Herb Sandler. In the United States, several people referenced campaigns that targeted the use of facial-recognition surveillance technology by government (as

discussed in the introduction to this report). In the United Kingdom there are small, regional networks in London, Manchester, and Cardiff, sometimes built around a university center (the DataJustice Lab in Cardiff, for example) or led by funders (National Lottery and National Heritage Foundations, private philanthropists Fran and Will Perrin, Luminate). In Canada, Powered by Data works with national and provincial governments, foundations, and community groups across several provinces. Canadian interviewees also referenced ad hoc, issue-based coalitions around national security legislation and surveillance and around smart city technology and data privacy.

In each of the four regions we examined, and sometimes across regions, organizations exist whose missions are the development and growth of the civil society sector. Many of these organizations have policy expertise and relationships centered on issues of tax and charitable law, corporate law, and cross-border finance. More recently, some have built expertise in, or at least support for, national census work. With the exception of the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organizations, however, none of these groups has made sustained commitments to advocacy within digital policy domains such as telecommunications law, intellectual property, broadband access, or data protections in ways that reflect the importance of these issues to an independent civil society.[17] On the contrary, when these organizations have developed programming for their members about digital technologies it has been largely uncritical: often simply conference sessions that champion the benefits of off-the-shelf technological solutions as offered by corporate vendors.

COMMON AREAS OF CONCERN AND DIFFERENCE

Definitions and priorities varied widely among the individuals and organizations who provided input to this research. Overall, the most frequently referenced digital policy issues of concern were consumer privacy (including corporate data collection), government surveillance, access to technology, data ownership, AI and algorithmic accountability, and government transparency (including freedom of information and access to data). We observed regional variation in both the digital policy issues highlighted by participants in our four policy consultations and in our interview transcripts. In general, issues around surveillance, consumer privacy, and inequitable access to technology and digital services featured more heavily in U.S. responses while EU-based participants raised issues of data ownership more frequently.

Participants from civil society organizations and digital policy organizations also diverged to some extent in the digital policies they chose to highlight. People we interviewed who work at digital policy organizations tended to more frequently highlight the privacy implications of collection of information by companies and governments. Though consumer privacy and government surveillance also came up in interviews with people at civil society organizations, they often raised the importance of the protection and ownership of data—especially data held by nonprofits. Nearly half brought up data ownership, and about a third raised questions around data security and crimes associated with data breaches.

We also heard about regional and organizational differences in levels of engagements, experience, and different types of expertise with digital issues.

Thus, while the long-term goal may be collaborative and infrastructural, near-term work may need to focus on targets of opportunity—specific and achievable policy wins unique to particular countries or localities that can concentrate local civil society's efforts around a shared goal. This strategy falls under the "transactional" category of the Building Movement Project's framework of cross-movement approaches, defined as "focus[ing] on winning specific changes in the short-term by figuring out what each partner can bring to the table to move a shared target or policy."[18]

The very diversity of issues identified here informs the need for an integrated advocacy approach moving forward. Simply put, civil society is too diverse and digital systems too pervasive to expect silos of expertise to achieve broad success. Digital civil societies that serve democracies require many types of expertise, working in alliance and coalition, setting and fighting for aspirational policy agendas while also moving opportunistically, quickly, and over time. Diverse coalitions, in which many types of expertise are sustained, shared, built, and activated, are key.

LESSONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF DIVERSE COALITIONS

Academic research and evaluations of similarly complex philanthropy and civil society areas underscore the importance of collaborative work for meaningful and sustainable change. From the environmental movement to the movements for health care reform and public education reform, organizers have sought to build broad coalitions that pair subject-matter expertise with on-the-ground relationships and organizing capacity. Reading across the literature on social movements and philanthropic investment across the ideological spectrum, we find success is linked to a small number of well-known (though not always well-used) tactics:

"Fueled by common campaigns and coordinated action. Grounded in relationships sturdy enough to navigate challenges and to seize collective opportunities that emerge from coalitions and alliances forged across regions, constituencies, issues. These essential elements do not simply arise out of good will and best intentions. They depend on funders' sustained investment in field infrastructure, their tolerance for ambiguity, and their patience in realizing results."[i]

Similarly, a review of philanthropic roles in these efforts notes five key elements for successful investment:

- Investing in a broad range of organizations, change strategies and issues

- Brokering relationships among groups and their allies

- Connecting grantees to one another in impactful ways

- Fostering learning to grow a field

- Influencing peers and policy through these supports [ii]

[i] Fine, M. & Jacobs, L. (2014). Strengthening Collaboration to Build Social Movements. NEO Philanthropy.

[ii] Grantmakers for Effective Organizations. (2013). Many Hands, More Impact: Philanthropy's Role in Supporting Movements: Washington, DC.

RECOMMENDATIONS: A FRAMEWORK FOR ACTION

Research participants expressed an overarching and often-echoed desire to break down the artificial distinction between digital systems and broad social issues. One Canadian interviewee argued for the need to "demystify" technology among civil society organizations. "We need to stop saying that technologists deal with technology. No. Humans deal with technology. ... Digital rights are human rights and human rights groups who are concerned at the level of rights-based policy are all going to deal at some level with the digital."

It must be noted that there are numerous forces at work that maintain civil society's current uncritical approaches to digital technologies. Some corporate vendors are eager to capture the digital relationships between civil society organizations and their members and beneficiaries. Many public and philanthropic funders are intent on demanding granular data from their grantees while also not providing resources for securing that data or training in rights-based collection, storage, or destruction techniques. The "tyranny of convenience" that keeps individuals hooked on certain mobile applications also applies to organizations; many have built digital processes that are familiar, if not appropriate, and will be reluctant to change them. Some of these forces are deliberate, others are habitual; all will require attention, support, and time to change.

It's also true that there are forces actively working to handicap the kinds of alliances and expertise we propose. As one participant noted:

"These issues are becoming more and more important, and I worry that funders don't fully realize how much more investment is needed in this space—particularly as oppressive governments are spending billions to develop new techniques for surveillance and ways to consolidate their power and authority vis a vis local actors."

Comments like these remind us of the scale of the challenge we're facing. Building alliances and expertise to protect digital civil society is about more than individual missions and organizational health, it is critical to protecting all associational spaces, the role that plays in supporting democratic governance, and, indeed, in sustaining democracies themselves.

The path forward will require networks and connections between digital policy organizations and broader civil society. We envision a digital civil society ecosystem that can effectively promote the health and well-being of both individuals and society in the digital age. To build that ecosystem, we need to start from where people are now, and provide support to move people and their organizations up a ladder of capability to build collective strength. Funders, civil society infrastructure organizations, and organizations with expertise in both digital and non-digital policy domains all have roles in building the health of this ecosystem.

Digital civil society expanded over decades. It is now time to weave alliances across the different layers of experience and readiness. There are several tiers of expertise: from experienced alliances to those who are ready to engage to those who need capacity support to engage within their organizations before reaching to the next step. The three tiers we describe below make room for all of civil society to engage, building on successes and sharing different expertise across networks.

Getting Started and Looking for Guidance
THE AFFECTED

The majority of civil society comprises organizations that recognize that their interests are affected by digital policy, but aren't quite sure what to do about it. Often, they are trying to address their own organizational concerns about data governance or digital security. People in these organizations often say they "don't know what they don't know." They're ready to learn—they just need opportunities to do so, and to address some of their internal capacity needs in order to join coalitions or alliances.

Adjacent, Ready and Willing
THE ENERGIZED

Many organizations are ready and willing to engage but have not yet done so. They lack relationships to allies, dedicated time to prioritize the work of collaboration and learning, and places (physical and digital) to build coalitions. These are organizations with particular digital policy concerns, ready to join coalitions for the first time and to design strategies for action.

Successful Coalitions
THE CORE

There are a number of existing alliances and organizations where expertise cuts across digital policy and social issues. These can be seen as leading lights for digital civil society. These alliances are effective, they can be supported to expand their own reach and share their knowledge and strategies, and they offer an active vision of how digital civil society can lead. These are existing coalitions of digital and community expertise, with real-world experience in forming cross-sector movements to identify and pursue policy agendas that protect democratic and human rights in digital and domain-specific policy arenas.

We suggest visualizing these different stages of coalition building not as separate tiers but as pieces of latticework that are mutually reinforcing. Organizations can position themselves within the digital civil society ecosystem and seek resources from peers, coalitions and funders that are most appropriate for their current capacity—instead of being frozen in place by the overwhelming challenge of taking on new policy domains.

SUPPORT THE AFFECTED – ORGANIZATIONAL READINESS AND SECTOR AWARENESS

This tier represents groups just beginning to recognize their membership in digital civil society. They are often experts on specific issue areas, but mostly not on digital policy. They offer deep knowledge and networks across not only a broad set of substantive issues but also across diverse geographies and ethnic communities.

These groups need support for learning and the ability to access insights from more experienced peers. Many of them are concerned with how to take on new work with limited organizational resources. Funders can help with direct organizational grants to support general operations as well as distinct, supplemental collaboration grants to enable organizations to spend time and resources on digital policy work without abandoning existing, immediate needs.

Meanwhile, civil society infrastructure and digital policy organizations can tailor training and mentorship to this category of organizations by focusing on best practices in data governance and offering primers on the implications

of digital policy for civil society space. Understanding how to use technology safely and effectively in their core work can decrease the fear organizations might feel of a new operational domain. And by becoming conversant in the overall policy debates around issues like data privacy, net neutrality, and algorithmic bias, organizations will develop the capacity to see the digital policies that affect their own work.

ENGAGE THE ENERGIZED

Many organizations are aware of the civil society implications of digital policy and are ready to invest organizational resources in learning more and engaging in advocacy, but need to be "invited in" in order to get started. There is plenty of room for new connections and alliances. Funding organizations can establish space for these alliances to form by funding a range of different touch points that allow for ongoing and consistent interaction and the growth of trust, mutual respect, and shared interest.[19] Over time, these "tables of the energized" can contribute to the development of common language and identification of specific opportunities for policy advocacy. Such tables might be hosted by advocacy groups, research centers, existing infrastructure organizations, community foundations, or other trusted and engaged partners.

"Coalition broker" organizations, groups that have existing relationships with diverse organizations, are best positioned to establish and expand these tables of the willing. The Communities for Public Education (CPER), a long-term philanthropic effort for education reform, directly funded multi-issue groups and highlighted the power of these

organizations to work in collaboration be shift the dialogue on issues.[20] The Ford Civil Rights Table also funded a larger organization as a convener and facilitator, finding it helpful to have a group that already had an existing working relationship with many of the civil rights members and prior experience in facilitating coalitions and building relationships and shared understanding. The ACLU of Northern California's position as a multi-issue organization was also central to the growth and success of the face surveillance coalition in San Francisco. In Appendix A, we explore five existing models in greater detail.

As these tables develop, it is important to ensure they are easy to find and culturally accessible to new organizations. This will help bulwark against relationship bias and broaden the potential for new collaboration, project ideas, greater understanding and potential impact. Knowledge sharing in these groups can be explicitly multidirectional—those with skills in aspects of integrated advocacy like litigation, media campaigning, and employee activism can offer insights on these tools while people with digital policy expertise can share policy knowledge.

REINFORCE THE CORE – SUPPORT FOR DIVERSE ALLIANCES AND INTEGRATED ADVOCACY CAMPAIGNS

These are the coalitions and groups leading the work on advocating for civil society's digital policy interests. These groups are already in alliance and partnership and already have policy impact to show for it. They need two types of support.

First, funders should invest in these coalitions to ensure that they persist beyond specific issue-based campaigns, can communicate their messages broadly, and are able to link up with other functional alliances. While a number of the coalitions have shown the potential of integrated advocacy to shape better digital policy, this strategy requires significant, sustained resources. There has not been adequate funding or infrastructure to utilize an integrated approach across many digital civil society issues. By using a mix of approaches to create a "virtuous cycle"[21] and having the funding flexibility[22] to take advantage of opportunities and pivot to other approaches when necessary, there will be the opportunity for much greater impact.

Second, groups in existing coalitions should seek funding and allocate resources to build toolkits, share their lessons learned through workshops and conferences, and conduct training for adjacent organizations in their regions or issue areas. Infrastructure groups— professional and trade associations within civil society, philanthropy, and digital policy spaces—should highlight the work of these coalitions and serve as distribution channels for their expertise, models, and insights. These activities will create an expanded knowledge base for organizations that seek ways to upgrade their digital or community knowledge and advocacy skills. They can create templates and toolkits that coalitions can draw from in situations where the lead time to act is short. Codifying knowledge will help insulate coalitions from the setbacks created by personnel turnover and will help new organizations accelerate their learning.

A LATTICEWORK OF ALLIANCES

Building organizational capacity, encouraging and making space for cross-cutting coalitions, providing the funding flexibility for many different types of strategies, and using experienced alliances to develop resources for others are all ways to weave together the many types of expertise that digital civil society demands. Our research surfaced a number of ideas on how best to support the digital policy work of civil society organizations. These ideas spanned several structural areas, including funding, networks, planning, personnel, and communications. Many of these are familiar independently; here we encourage civil society organizations, infrastructure providers, and funders to consider how these well-known, though not widely enough practiced, strategies fit together.

Given the breadth and diversity of missions reflected across digital civil society, policy alliances and collaborations cannot easily develop organically. This work requires a financial investment in infrastructure that will need to be developed, strengthened, and adapted over time, with input from organizations working across multiple fields. As one US-based interviewee said, "it really comes down to creating the time and incentives for resource-strapped nonprofits to commit some capacity to think this through. ... Capacity—and creating space for these conversations within pretty limited budgets and organizational capacity—that's going to be a necessary condition here."

Another US civil society interviewee noted, "civil society is slow to adapt to new challenges. ...This is an infrastructure challenge, and they don't typically get funding to address infrastructure issues." Throughout our interviews, participants frequently requested a greater level of investment in multi-organization collaboration, in the development of shared resources, and in opportunities for meaningful information-sharing across different segments of civil society and the digital policy community.

One UK-based participant stressed the need to design interventions responsibly and not to pre-judge solutions. "You have to build with, not for. ... Multiple rounds of discovery are absolutely necessary and they may not lead to tech." The digital policy sphere changes rapidly and evolves constantly. Effective collaborations among civil society and digital policy actors will require flexibility, allowing for strategic and tactical adjustments in response to new developments or emerging risks.

Digital policy advocacy and strategy suffers when there is not a diversity of strategy and organizations funded—particularly a lack of support for community level work that interfaces directly with individuals often facing the greatest threats to their rights. In highlighting this challenge, one digital policy advocate in Europe noted "the digital rights community is a bit disconnected from the societal, grassroots, and other stakeholders and we need to engage to be smarter about our work." Being smart and strategic about the work means making sure that there is support for a mix of organizations with different expertise and perspective and the flexible funding needed for integrated advocacy approaches that can take advantage of different change strategies and pivot quickly when necessary.

Enduring connections between civil society and digital policy communities require sustained and reliable funding. Short-term funding creates transactional costs that intimidate resource-strapped organizations in civil society. As one European participant said, "I haven't seen anyone who really does this well,

and I'm not sure why we haven't done a good job. Maybe it's because it's always project-funded? The funding ends and then everything stops."

Before we can expect civil society and digital policy communities to collaborate meaningfully, it's necessary for these communities to become better acquainted with each other. Despite noting interest in more robust alliances, many of the individuals we interviewed expressed frustration at not knowing whom to engage or how to identify and plug into existing networks. One UK-based interviewee said:

"A real challenge is that this work touches on all issues—criminal justice to welfare, everything in between—so who do you talk to? Who are the organizations we should be talking to? It's an unlimited universe, and daunting."

Several interviewees emphasized the need to broaden these networks to include populations often excluded from decisions on digital policy. They called for explicit efforts to empower organizations with longstanding ties in communities of color and marginalized communities to express their positions on digital policy issues. As one interviewee from Canada put it, "in order to have the right policy solutions in this space, you've got to be talking to the communities affected. And you've got to give a voice to those communities."

The complexities and dynamic nature of digital systems necessitate that stakeholders approach the policy

environment thoughtfully and strategically. Throughout our research we heard variations of a common lament: That resourced-limited, mission-focused organizations were unable to create time and space for strategic planning amidst the demands of delivering on their commitments to funders and the communities they serve. A US-based participant told us:

"When I think about progress here, it really comes down to creating the time, space, and incentives for resource-strapped nonprofits to commit some capacity to thinking this through. I'm sure there are other considerations but developing that capacity and creating that space is going to be a necessary condition here."

Strategic planning will be critically important to any effective collaborations in the digital policy space. Funding and in-kind support for planning and design can have an appreciable impact on positioning such collaborations for success, particularly when contemplating the involvement of representatives from resource-limited civil society organizations and social sector movements. Investing in the development of coherent, adaptable strategies may pave the way for greater efficiency in the ultimate implementation of actionable tactics and programs.

The implications of digital policies cut across every facet of civil society and the social sector, creating countless points of intersection across communities and organizations. Understanding the ways

that digital policies may collide with an organization's mission requires attention and study. As one nonprofit leader noted in our interview, "it requires staying active in networks and up on the research ... but this isn't the whole of my job, and it's a real challenge to stay on top of what are hugely expanding issues."

To begin developing wider, intersectional awareness across civil society and digital policy communities, organizations will benefit from dedicated personnel who can help identify relevant issues and map the various points of connection and relationships that can help these communities advance their shared values and objectives in the digital policy sphere. Many interviewees identified active human support for collaboration—connectors, navigators or conveners who do the work of defining the goals and parameters of diverse coalitions. One UK-based interviewee told us: "To help two networks meld a bit more and explore what common ground they have—that needs time and facilitation, and some concrete projects people can jump into working on together."

More broadly, organizational capacity can be augmented by greater investment in and amplification of research that studies the various intersectional impacts of digital policies and risks, and helps illustrate for organizations the ways that their missions or communities may be affected.

Several participants shared sentiments similar to this one, from a European interviewee.

"I think one of the key challenges is essentially a language barrier. There's a need for interpreters and shared language, vocabulary around tech. Academics speak academically; digital rights groups speak tech; traditional civil society groups speak a different language."

In order for diverse stakeholders across civil society and the digital policy landscape to collaborate effectively, it's necessary that they learn how to communicate with one another. Throughout our interviews and discussions, we encountered numerous observations suggesting that there is a language barrier or knowledge differential that is inhibiting productive collaboration, particularly between digital experts and more traditional civil society stakeholders.

For example, even though many EU organizations worked collaboratively on the passage of the GDPR privacy regime for an extensive period of time, the language and conceptual gap between digital rights organizations and civil society was significant, as this UK interviewee noted:

Successful efforts to build relationships and collaborative work may require skilled facilitators who are positioned to bridge the experiential divide between attendees. Moreover, these convenings may need to build in acclimation time for participants to familiarize themselves with others' perspectives (one NGO leader attended a recent multistakeholder convening on digital issues and remarked "it took two days for the organizations to start even speaking the same language, and by then we were wrapping up!"). To help address this challenge over time, these distinct communities may also benefit from an investment in a shared lexicon or way of talking and thinking about certain challenges.

To address these language challenges, the workshops we led as part of this research experimented with several different forms of information gathering that would allow each participant to use the language with which they are most comfortable. We used a mix of scenarios, issue spotting, and relationship mapping (via index cards) to allow participants time to generate ideas, learn from each other, map their terminology to each other, and produce language we could then code. These materials can be found in the Worksheets section.

"These collaborations require a high degree of mediation even once everyone is at the table, because there can be a hugely differential level of understanding of some of the technical sides of issues and the language that's used. I've seen examples of people from people from the charity world and the tech world coming together, and the language barrier and the power differentials get in the way of any sort of meaningful engagement and I think that's a big problem."

Beyond a common vocabulary, collaborations between civil society and digital policy stakeholders will further benefit from a shared narrative about risks and opportunities and a common vision for progress. Such narratives may help to foster a sense of commonality among diverse alliances, while also raising broader awareness and rallying new collaborators to this work. We repeatedly heard people (especially in civil society groups) say that they need clear opportunities to impact policies—if they are to invest their time in coalitions and campaigns, they want to see results from their actions. (And indeed, most of the examples cited of effective collaboration were around particular policy battles, whether at the local or national levels.) One UK-based interviewee who normally works on digital policy issues discussed the delicate balance involved in finding the right approach to collaborating with other civil society groups:

"One thing we haven't done particularly within the digital rights community is get the narrative or the tone right. It has unfortunately often been based in fear, and we know that generally isn't an effective approach for engaging people. So it's important to think about the right narrative around digital policy that isn't going to send civil society into some kind of rabbit hole or make them fearful. We want them to engage in this space, so I think that the narrative that we share with civil society is a really important aspect."

Together, these recommendations speak to a collective strategy that will build an alliance-based, locally rooted, and internationally informed infrastructure of expertise and advocacy to advance values-respecting and responsible approaches to digital policy.

NOTABLE OMISSIONS: WHAT WE DIDN'T HEAR

Throughout this project, a major focus of our inquiry has been surfacing opportunities to strengthen the connective tissue and opportunities for collaboration between the digital policy and civil society communities. However, based on our own professional experiences in the realm of public interest technology and digital civil society, there are certain familiar ideas we have encountered in these communities that were notably absent from the responses we received.

We found it noteworthy, for example, that neither traditional civil society organizations or digital policy groups advocated for greater investments in in-house technical capacity within organizations. Regarding technical personnel, one public interest technology leader noted that "it's not realistic for every nonprofit to hire a PhD-level data scientist; instead, we need to create space for learning and understanding around these issues and making that learning accessible."

That said, there is agreement that civil society actors and organizations need to increase their "digital literacy," including an understanding of the technological, political, and economic nature of digital networks and technology. This alone, however, is insufficient to drive policy engagement. Policy engagement, on the other hand, can help increase the appetite for digital literacy, as has been seen in communities familiar with and opposed to government surveillance take action to understand the effects of new digital technologies on their rights. Digital literacy can also help make "visible" the nature, effects, and costs of "invisible" digital connections.

Other stakeholders questioned the value of large conferences as a means of fostering genuine conversation, instead suggesting that dedicated convenings or collaborative working tables were a better area for investment. Finally, while several foundations have started discussions of new organizational forms, such as data trusts, these were also not mentioned by civil society groups or community actors as a key priority or area of need.

CONCLUSION: INTEGRATED ADVOCACY FOR DIGITAL CIVIL SOCIETY

We have focused our recommendations not on any single organization or class of organization, but on the types of ongoing, sustainable alliances and relationships that need to be supported for both short and long-term change. Being a strong, effective digital civil society will be essential to all mission-driven work going forward. So, the goals of these relationships and connections should be to lay the groundwork for organizations to develop capacity no matter where they currently stand on. We close this report with a recap of basic principles we hope will form the core of an argument for investing in the ecosystem of digital civil society in the years to come.

Digital policies affect civil society institutions and individuals, but not equally. The rules that shape how certain technologies are used have implications for how civil society functions. For example, the ubiquitous use of facial recognition technologies creates privacy concerns for all residents of an area; but marginalized and vulnerable populations that are already the target of government surveillance will be even more affected. The right to protest or assemble publicly, the freedom to attend meetings, and the rights of certain groups to organize are implicated by corporate or government use of these technologies.

Community action to policymaking. People and civil society institutions can affect our digital environment in myriad ways. Teaching basic digital security in communities, building privacy-protecting technologies, and organizing coalitions to champion policy alternatives are only a few examples. Different types of civil society groups have different skill sets and networks based on the activities and communities they engage in and with. Effective

integrated advocacy means bringing these different actors together to work in concert when it makes sense to them.

Social policy agendas often require digital knowledge and domain expertise. Health access, education reform, environmental action, women's rights, housing, community economic development, and people's rights to organize or associate are all examples of domains where policy possibilities now demand expertise in both the social issue and the nature of data collection, digital networks, or automated decision making. Civil society actors are critical voices in shaping the policy conversations about data rights, technology deployment, network development, and automated decision-making. In return, digital expertise is now necessary for strong policies in each of the social domains.

Digital systems require more than technological expertise. Crafting tools, policies, practices, norms, and regulations that make systems that work for people cannot be the work of technologists alone. We call for approaches that center organizational and network missions and seek to develop and implement critical approaches to digital practice and policy that grow from those missions and shared value positions.

Academia/research, community actors, and policy experts need each other. Each of these actors is part of understanding the numerous intersections, long-term interactions, and positive/negative consequences of emerging technologies and social policy in the digital age. Building relationships

and feedback loops between them, in ways that improve each of them, is critical, albeit difficult, work.

Sustainable, cross-cutting relationships that integrate digital expertise into the many domains of civil society expertise are critical to the health and success of independent civic action in democracies. Every policy issue that shapes civil society, and the civil society actors engage on, now require consideration of the policies and design choices that shape the technological infrastructure on which we operate. There are successful models to build on, and a great deal of expertise to rely on.

We need to come together to create a future where digital technology works for civil society, rather than civil society getting worked by digital technology.

APPENDICES
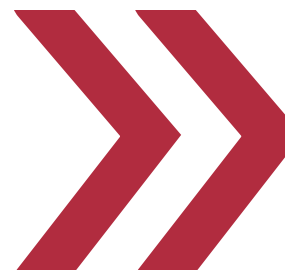
APPENDIX A:
EXISTING MODELS

Through our workshops, interviews, and presentations participants mentioned a number of examples of "what better looks like." Below, we provide snapshots of five such examples that were mentioned often.

Civil Rights, Privacy and Technology Table, Coordinated by the Leadership Conference on Civil and Human Rights Education Fund—Ford Foundation

Funded by the Ford Foundation since 2011, this is an ongoing forum for civil rights organizations and public interest technology organizations to meet, build relationships, and "better understand the technical and cultural dimensions of the new digital age—and the implications for civil rights and social justice in a world of growing inequality." The Table began with four civil rights organizations and six organizations that were focused on media justice and/or public interest technology—and has grown to include more than 30 organizations and thirteen working groups who focus on a wide variety of projects at the intersection of technology and civil rights. The table includes mostly national (and some regional organizations). Meetings are always held in Washington, DC, limiting the ability of distant organizations to participate.

Early on, the Table focused on discussion and building relationships via monthly meetings. Participants worked to develop narrative messaging on two issues of shared concern. Participants also attend an annual retreat to interact in ways that deepened mutual understanding and respect. The foundation provided financial support for external issue experts and consulting organizations to support the Table with advice on strategy, communications, public opinion research, and technical aspects underlying civil rights and privacy concerns. These groups collected and analyzed data to help frame and draft the Table's position statements. With guidance and input from advocates with deep knowledge of the political and policy environment, the consultants produced reports on topics including body-worn cameras, online lead generation, payday loans, facial recognition, and predictive policing.

The foundation provided financial support for convenings on civil rights and issues of big data, lending, and surveillance, as well as roundtables on body-worn cameras and small-dollar lending. The consultants conducted public opinion research on privacy, telecommunications, and internet issues, and helped Table members draft position statements on civil rights principles and predictive policing. They also helped draft comments to federal and state agencies on the uses of surveillance technology. Over time, the Table broadened its focus to include a wide range of technology and privacy concerns related to civil rights and shifted to taking action.

Today, the Table focuses on leveraging relationships to achieve specific goals—and in doing so, offers a model for other civil society collaboratives. The Leadership Conference has continued to serve as a facilitator of a Table that now encompasses 13 working groups that meet independently, between full monthly convenings.

NetGain Partnership

This is a collaborative effort of five foundations: Ford Foundation, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, John S. and James L. Knight Foundation, Open Society Foundations, and Mozilla Foundation (the Omidyar Network joined in 2019). Starting in 2015 the partnership came together to "cultivate leaders in business, government, and civil society to understand and fulfill the promise of the internet, and support cross-sector alliances to ensure technology and data are used to advance the public good."

The funders recognized that "the rapid growth of the internet creates challenges and opportunities in every area of contemporary life, from health and education to economic development, political engagement, civic life, and more. This change is enormous in scale and touches virtually every area of concern to philanthropy."

Collectively the five funders have committed about $50 million, most of which continues to be grants by individual members within the respective foundations' existing structures. The NetGain partnership centers on a set of shared "technology principles," and the group has jointly funded several reports geared specifically for civil society on issues such as autonomous decision making, the internet of things, and cybersecurity. Staff within each of the participating foundations have been working internally to spread these insights and principles across their organizational programming. This approach of embedding a deeply informed, collectively discussed set of technology principles into and across programmatic areas is replicable by other foundations and allows them to remain focused on their existing areas of expertise while also making that work more sensitive to and prepared for the realities of digital dependencies.

The advantage of this approach is the potential to integrate expertise within the foundation, influencing multiple portfolios of work and potentially creating a broad collaborative ethos on appropriate, secure, and ethical philanthropic funding.

Powered by Data

Created as a nonprofit arm of the commercial company Ajah.ca, Powered by Data (PbD) has led provincial and national conversations across Canada about digital data as a resource for the social sector. Canada has laws on both open data and individual privacy, and PbD helps the public sector, nonprofits, and partnerships to navigate the legal landscape and develop data strategies that fit the nonprofits. They seek to bridge between government agencies and grassroots groups, hiring community organizers who can help engage First Nations communities and individuals, immigrant groups, foster youth, poverty advocates, and others to hear from a diversity of voices.

PbD has been a leading advocate across the country and works closely with many foundations and government departments. While it reaches out to and includes diverse voices, its own governance, decision-making, hiring, and mission are set internally by a closed group. Funding comes largely through project grants and the work ebbs and flows with funding availability. It is better connected to open data and innovation advocates, by virtue of its own origins, than to the digital rights or security communities in Canada.

UK National Heritage Lottery Fund/ National Lottery Community Fund

The United Kingdom has been a leader on open data for a generation. In recent years, two individual leaders from the open data movement have taken leadership positions at the National Lottery and the National Heritage Lottery Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund. These individuals are drawing from their own experiences and networks to increase the attention on digital policies, rights, access and security across the grantmaking portfolios of these foundations. They are frequently in discussions with other UK funders, but there is little formal collaboration across the foundations.

The United Kingdom is also home to a small group of very active philanthropic/political leaders (Julia Unwin, Will Perrin, Martha Lane Fox) who navigate across these communities on digital issues. The recently completed Civic Futures exercise and the ongoing work of Dot.Everyone and the Ada Lovelace Institute bring high-level attention to issues of digital access and disruption. These groups are less visible outside of London and are not themselves very diverse. The UK universities are rich in digital expertise, some of which (the Data Justice Lab at Cardiff, numerous scholars at LSE, Oxford Internet Institute) are well connected—and eager to be more so—in and with communities on issues of surveillance, discrimination, the future of work, and immigration.

Digital Funders Group and Civitates

Within the European Union there are several individual foundations and numerous university institutes with a programmatic focus on elements of digital civil society. There are also flexible networks of civil society organizations (most quite small) working on digital literacy, digital rights, and, to a lesser extent, digital capacity-building for other nonprofits. While these groups tend to be small, they are well-connected

via European Digital Rights (EDRi), which includes 42 member organizations. In addition, at least two funder groups have emerged over the years, the Digital Funders Group and, more recently, Civitates, while other networks (Ariadne, Funders Initiative for Civil Society, Environmental Funders group) are paying increased attention to the role of digital dependencies on human rights, democracy, and environmental protections.

These funders alliances seem to operate largely like the NetGain Partnership in the US—focused on sharing knowledge across foundations, but not necessarily pooling funds and pursuing joint or collaborative funding or advocacy options. Civitates is an exception, having created a pooled fund from which the first round of grants has been allocated.

APPENDIX B:
WORKSHOP LOCATIONS AND RESEARCH INFORMANTS

We held a series of stand-alone workshops and embedded ourselves in other events and conferences. A list of locations and events follows. We offered anonymity to everyone who participated in either interviews or workshops and allowed people to opt-in to be named as a source for this report. Ultimately, several hundred people shared their views as part of the research process for this report, and we are very grateful to all of them. Those who chose to be named are listed below.

LOCATIONS *(number of workshops)*

- New York, NY *(two workshops)*
- Sydney, Australia *(three)*
- New Orleans, LA *(two)*
- Beijing, China *(two)*
- Redwood City, CA *(one)*
- Seattle, WA *(two)*
- Providence, RI *(one)*
- Stanford, CA *(one)*
- Miami, FL *(two)*
- Stockholm, Sweden *(two)*
- Cardiff, Wales *(two)*
- London, England *(two)*
- Brussels, Belgium *(two)*
- Paris, France *(one)*
- San Francisco, CA *(one)*
- Cleveland, OH *(two)*
- Vienna, Austria *(two)*
- Chicago, IL *(one)*

Interviewees and Workshop Participants Who Opted-in to Being Identified

Allen Gunn, Aspiration Tech

Alvaro Bedoya, Georgetown Center on Privacy and Technology

Aman Ahuja, The Data Guild

Amy Lee Pierce, The Wallich

Angela Gallegos-Castillo, Instituto Familiar de la Raza

Annemarie Nayler, Future Care Capital

Annette Bernhardt, UC Berkeley Center for Labor
    Research and Education

Anthony Martinez, National Immigration Law Center

Ashley Boyd, Mozilla

Bethan Bonsall, Information Commissioner's Office (UK)

Brandi Collins-Dexter, Color of Change

Brenda McPhail, Canadian Civil Liberties Association

Brian Pascal, County of Santa Clara

Carl Morris

Carla Mays, #SmartCohort

Cassie Robinson, Big Lottery Community Fund

Catherine Bracy, TechEquity Collective

Cecillia Wang, ACLU

Chantal Forster, Technology Affinity Group

Chloe Hardy

Chris Calabrese, Center for Democracy and Technology

Christopher Worman, Philanthropic infrastructure and
    digital capacity building

Cown Fullerton, Welsh Government

Cynthia Overton, Kapor Center

Dame Julia Unwin, Civil Society Futures

Daniel Dietrich, Hivos

David Biemesderfer, United Philanthropy Forum

Dewi Smith, Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Doug Rutzen, ICNL

Emily Katz, Northern California Grantmakers

Erik Stallman, Samuelson Law, Technology & Public
    Policy Clinic, Berkeley Law

Fran Perrin, Indigo Trust

Frederike Kaltheuner, Privacy International

Gerry Salole, European Foundation Centre

Gillian Peace, Welsh Centre for International Affairs

Helen Milner, Good Things Foundation

Ian Bird, Community Foundations Canada

Jan Masaoka, California Association of Nonprofits
(CalNonprofits)

Jennifer King, Center for Internet and Society,
Stanford Law School

Jennifer Lee, ACLU - Washington

Jon McPhedran Waitzer, Powered by Data - Canada

Jon Penney, CitizenLab

Joseph Jerome, Center for Democracy & Technology

Joshua Stickney, Equality California /
Equality California Institute

Jumana Musa, National Association of Criminal
Defense Lawyers

Kathleen Kelly Janus, Stanford Program on
Social Entrepreneurship

Kay Guinane, Charity & Security Network

Lauren Kahn, HealthRIGHT 360

Lina Dencik, Data Justice Lab

Madeleine Maxwell

Mark Cridge, MySociety

Mark Surman, Mozilla

Mark Toney, The Utility Reform Network

Mathias Antonsson, Civil Rights Defenders

Max Lesko, Children's Defense Fund

Megan Graham, Samuelson Law, Technology &
Public Policy Clinic at UC Berkeley School of Law

Meghan Land, Privacy Rights Clearinghouse

Micah Sifry, Personal Democracy Forum

Michelle Greanias, PEAK Grantmaking

Raphael Kergueno, Transparency International (Europe)

Rashida Richardson, AI Now Institute

Rebekah Evenson, Bay Area Legal Aid

Rhodri Davies, Charities Aid Foundation

Riana Pfefferkorn, Stanford Center for Internet
and Society

Russ Barratt, Council on Foundations

Ruth Lovell, PLANED

Sarah Simon, Hayaat Women Trust

Seeta Peña Gangadharan, LSE

Sharon Bradford Franklin, New America's Open
Technology Institute

Stefan Shaefers, King Baudouin Foundation for Europe

Steven Huddart, McConnell Foundation

Susan Mizner, American Civil Liberties Union (ACLU)

Tawana Petty, Detroit Community Technology
Project, a sponsored project of Allied Media Projects

Ted Mermin, UC Berkeley Center for Consumer
Law & Economic Justice

Tim Delaney, National Council of Nonprofits

Timothy Vollmer, Creative Commons

Tris Lumley, New Philanthropy Capital

Vinhcent Le, The Greenlining Institute

Zara Rahman, Responsible Data Forum /
New Philanthropy Capital

Zoe Dibb, Young Foundation

APPENDIX C:
FULL LIST OF DIGITAL POLICY TOPICS IDENTIFIED

The full list of digital policy issues identified by research participants as relevant to civil society interests includes:

- AI (algorithmic accountability/automation)
- Competition
- Consumer privacy
- Copyright/IP
- Data ownership
- Data security
- Digital and broadband access
- Digital identification
- Digital literacy/education
- Encryption
- Free speech/expression
- Government transparency
- Misinformation
- Net neutrality
- Personal security
- Smart cities
- Surveillance

WORKSHEETS
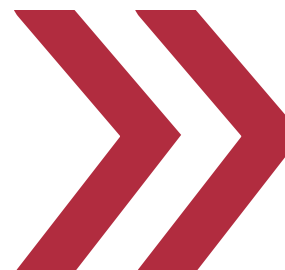
WORKSHEET:
ISSUE SPOTTING ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

▶ **SCENARIO ONE: THE CITY OF TOMORROW**

The city's river, once its pride and joy, has been a concrete-barriered scar for at least two generations. Dry, trash-filled, and harboring the homeless most of the year, the decades-old attempts to channel and control the water have also failed spectacularly in the last two wet seasons, leading to widespread flooding and millions in damage. The river slices between the office buildings of downtown and a low-income neighborhood on the opposite bank. The damage to the high-rise buildings was minimal, whereas many of the two-story apartment buildings were rendered uninhabitable.

One of the city's major corporations, a company specializing in technology for the home (specifically digitally-enabled appliances, such as refrigerators, thermostats, and doorbells) has proposed a public-private partnership to repair the barriers that channel the river through the city and revitalize the surrounding area with new, high end housing and retail. They've offered to provide tools that will automatically melt snow from public sidewalks, power cashless stores, install public art based on movement through the space, subsidize WiFi, and install facial recognition technology in the entire area for community safety. The City Council has announced a public hearing in one month's time to consider the proposal.

▶ **SCENARIO TWO: MOBILITY FOR ELDERS**

Housing costs in the city have risen dramatically in the city center, due to revitalization of several central neighborhoods. Most of the new construction is commercial and high-rise luxury housing. A large number of lower-income elderly residents have been pushed into the outskirts of the

city. At the same time, city transit budgets have been reallocated, and bus lines have been greatly reduced outside the newly revitalized and more concentrated city center. The lower-income elderly residents now have no affordable way to get around, and many cannot drive their own vehicles.

The city council is considering several options to address these needs, given the budget and physical infrastructure in the town, including: nonprofit coordinated volunteer car rides, a commercial mobile app that allows friends and family to order rides for people in other places, driverless cars provided as a taxi-like service that use location tracking to identify and provide service to the elderly, and re-routing existing public transit options out of the city center.

▶ SCENARIO THREE: REFUGEE MOVEMENT AND IDENTIFICATION

There is a civil war and ethnic violence in the country of Kundu. Refugees are fleeing into three neighboring countries, and some are moving beyond those small countries into a larger country with no direct border with Kundu. Many young, healthy adults had initially stayed behind in Kundu to continue fighting in the civil war, and many children consequently have been separated from their families. Both government and humanitarian aid workers are struggling to set up services and reunite family members. Many of the refugees' personal documents have been lost in the violence.

Some strategies to address the challenge of identifying refugees are in place, and some new ideas are being proposed by both international NGOs and technology companies prototyping products. These strategies include: the government collecting information on paper forms in multiple languages, with NGOs using tech company-provided tablets to log information and translate; NGOs setting up a phone tree/text alert system; and a proposed partnership with a commercial genealogy company, which is offering to donate technology and on-location staff capacity to collect blood/DNA/biometric samples and match them against a database at no cost to families.

In addition, a social media campaign to reunite families has gone viral across multiple platforms. Using the hashtag #Care4Kundu, users are encouraged to post photos and videos to share the stories of separated families and to provide information that might help families find one another.

▶ SCENARIO FOUR: ACCESS TO INFORMATION

A major social networking company that has been under fire recently for both its privacy and content control practices has set up a new project to enable people who otherwise have no Internet access to be able to access particular websites on their phones without paying data charges.

The project goal is to "connect the world." The company makes it money by collecting and selling information of people who use its services and the websites are selected by the company and include content on related to news, employment, health, education and local information.

Staff of the company project have approached both nonprofits and community leaders in a heavily agricultural, unincorporated area of the Central Valley of California with a large immigrant community, to discuss this project and offer a pilot program for this community.

This community has little to no community infrastructure, including access to municipal water, and the community has been trying to educate, organize and mobilize itself to make sure their families are able to live in a healthy and safe community.

ISSUE SPOTTING RESPONSES

On your own: For the scenario you selected, spend five minutes reviewing and identifying potential issues or challenges. What potential issues or complications do you see? Rank them in order of importance.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

As a group: Spend 10 minutes sharing your top five identified issues/complications and discussing the similarities and differences between what you each identified and why.

As a group: Spend the next five minutes and list five issues/considerations you've identified together as the most important to consider.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

On your own: Spend three minutes and answer the questions below.

As a group: After you've written your individual answers, spend seven minutes discussing your answers as a group.

1. Was anything surprising, or unexpectedly illuminating, about this group conversation? If so, what?

_____

_____

_____

_____

2. Was anything helpful about this group conversation? If so, what?

_____

_____

_____

_____

3. Was anything challenging about this conversation? If so, what?

_____

_____

_____

_____

Readout: Select a representative to report back to the larger group

- Report back the 5 issues that the group considered most important

- Report back how the initial considerations identified by the members were similar or different

- Report back if group members found anything surprising, helpful, or challenging about this conversation.

WORKSHEET:
FINDING CONNECTIONS ACTIVITY INSTRUCTIONS

—

How do legal and policy domains intersect?

▶ STEP ONE: *CREATE YOUR CARDS*

Spend a minute thinking of the (non-digital) issues in your community that you care about. Write **ONE ISSUE** per card, coding them by color:

- Write general civil society issues (like 'housing affordability' and 'freedom of speech') on **YELLOW** cards.

- Write technology and digital policy issues on **BLUE** cards.

Try to generate at least 2 yellow cards and 5 blue cards per person.
NOTE: It might make sense for the organizers to pre-populate and distribute blue cards so that participants need to generate fewer of them.

▶ STEP TWO: *SET UP YOUR GAME*

Form a group of 4-5 people, ideally with people you haven't met. Shuffle your group's blue cards together in one stack, and yellow cards in a separate stack. Place the stacks of yellow and blue cards face down in the middle of the table. Deal five blue cards to each player. (Players – don't show anyone else your blue cards!)

▶ STEP THREE: *PLAY A ROUND*

Choose a player to lead the first round. The leader flips over the top yellow card and reads out loud the issue written on it. Then, all other players choose a blue card that creates the most interesting intersection with the yellow card. Each person places their selected blue card face down on the table. The leader shuffles the blue cards and reveals them one by one.

▶ STEP FOUR: *DISCUSS*

The leader starts a discussion of why and how the issues are related, and everyone else shares their thoughts. Use the examples in the table below to spark some ideas. Spend about two-three minutes discussing the potential combinations.

▶ STEP FIVE: *RECORD THE WINNING COMBINATION*

When you've identified the best intersection(s) of issues from your round, record the pair of issues in a blank row on the table. Repeat steps three through five, with each player acting as leader in turn (proceeding clockwise around the table). Play at least three rounds, then close with a short discussion of what connections players found surprising.

Digital card		Civil society card		Why?
Net neutrality	is a/an	racial justice	issue because	Without it, inequality is exacerbated by privileging the voices of those who can pay.
Data portability	is a/an	freedom of association	issue because	It lets people choose which online spaces to congregate in.
Facial recognition	is a/an	reproductive rights	issue because	It deters patients who desire anonymity when accessing clinics.
	is a/an		issue because	
	is a/an		issue because	
	is a/an		issue because	
	is a/an		issue because	
	is a/an		issue because	

ENDNOTES

1. This research focused on Canada, the European Union, the United Kingdom, and the United States. These are regions in which there is some consensus about the term "civil society" and its role in democracies. It is important to note that the term and the role of the sector is contested and contestable, especially outside of these regions.

2. ACLU of Northern California. 2019. "Re: SUPPORT for the Stop Secret Surveillance Ordinance." https://www.aclunc.org/docs/Coalition_SUPPORT_Stop_Secret_Surveillance_Ordinance.pdf

3. Brodhead, John. 2018. "A Note about Sidewalk Labs' Advisory Council." Sidewalk Labs Toronto. https://storage.googleapis.com/sidewalk-toronto-ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/13210454/18.1 0.13_SWL_Advisory_Council_Blog_Post.pdf

3. Brodhead, John. 2018. "A Note about Sidewalk Labs' Advisory Council." Sidewalk Labs Toronto. https://storage.googleapis.com/sidewalk-toronto-ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/13210454/18.1 0.13_SWL_Advisory_Council_Blog_Post.pdf

4. "Toronto Open Smart Cities Forum." Centre for Free Expression., accessed Oct 1, 2019, https://cfe.ryerson.ca/key-resources/initiatives/toronto-open-smart-cities-forum.

5. "About Us." BlockSidewalk., accessed Oct 1, 2019, https://www.blocksidewalk.ca/about.

6. Milkaite, Ingrida, Valerie Verdoodt, Hans Martens, and Eva Lievens. "The General Data Protection Regulation and children's rights: questions and answers for legislators, DPAs, industry, education, stakeholders and civil society. Roundtable Report." (2017). https://www.betterinternetforkids.eu/documents/167024/2013511/ GDPRRoundtable_June2017_FullReport.pdf

7. Ryan, Johnny. 2018-12-03. £"38 businesses and organizations urge European Governments to break ePrivacy deadlock." Brave Insights. https://brave.com/industry-and-ngo-eprivacy-letter-dec18/

8. William Perrin and Lorna Woods. 2018, 05-08. "Reducing Harm In Social Media Through A Duty Of Care." Carnegie UK Trust. Available at https://www.carnegieuktrust.org.uk/blog/ reducing-harm-social-media-duty-care/

9. Department for Digital, Culture, Media, and Sport. 2019, 06-26. "Online Harms White Paper." Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/online-harms-white-paper/online-harms-white-paper

10. Privacy International. 2019-07-05. "Privacy International's Response to the UK's Open Consultation on the Online Harms White Paper." Available at: https://privacyinternational.org/advocacy/3027/ privacy-internationals-response-uks-open-consultation-online-harms-white-paper

11. Jim Killock and Amy Shepherd. 2019, 04-08. "The DCMS Online Harms Strategy must 'design in' fundamental rights." Open Rights Group. Available at https://www.openrightsgroup.org/blog/2019/ the-dcms-online-harms-strategy-must-design-in-fundamental-rights

12. The UK Safer Internet Centre. 2019-07-10. "Online Harms White Paper Response." Available at https://www.childnet.com/ufiles/UKSIC-response-to-the-Online-Harms-White-Paper-Consultation.pdf

13. Bernholz, Lucy. 2019. "The Invention of Digital Civil Society." Stanford Social Innovation Review 17 (3): 18–25.

14. Pomerantz, David. 2014, 06-24. "Greenpeace Takes to Skies to Protest NSAs Illegal Internet Spying." https://www.greenpeace.org/usa/greenpeace-takes-skies-protest-nsas-illegal-internet-spying/

15. Freedom House. 2018, 01-16. "Democracy in Crisis: Freedom House Releases Freedom in the World 2018." Accessed at https://freedomhouse.org/article/democracy-crisis-freedom-house-releases-freedom-world-2018

16. "About." NetGain Partnership, accessed Oct 1, 2019, https://www.netgainpartnership.org/about.

17. Civicus and WINGS have both made efforts to engage with digital policy issues. The International Center for Nonprofit Law, based in the US but globally active, and EPIC (also US-based) are active on digital rights issues in and through global networks of civil society organizations connected to multilateral organizations such as the UN. These efforts have not yet, but are perhaps ready to, engage and influence philanthropic and civil society networks more broadly.

18. Thomas-Breitfeld, Sean. 2018-09-18. "Bridging Differences and Movements." Building Movement. https://www.buildingmovement.org/blog/entry/bridging_differences_and_movements

19. Beamish, Thomas D. and Amy J. Luebbers. 2009. "Alliance-Building Across Social Movements: Bridging Difference in a Peace and Justice Coalition." Social Problems. November, Volume 56, Number 4. p 670

20. Fine, Melinda and Lauren Jacobs. "Strengthening Collaborations to Build Social Movements: Ten Lessons from the Communities for Public Education Reform Fund (CPER)" p 17

21. Each strategy reinforces awareness of the ongoing issues and further lays the groundwork for broader-reaching change. See Ozer, Nicole, Putting Online Privacy Above the Fold: Building a Social Movement and Creating Corporate Change (June 5, 2012). New York University Review of Law & Social Change, Vol. 36, 2012. Available at SSRN: https://ssrn.com/abstract=2083733

22. Ford highlights the importance of funding with "flexibility to respond to emerging issues and opportunities"

23. CPER recommends that funders "[s]tand ready to support rapidly emerging opportunities." "Opportunities for impact can arise suddenly ... and requires quick action to defend or take advantage of new opportunities. ... Quick collaborative action may demand more resources than groups have at their disposal ..." "Funders can ensure groups' capacity to seize the moment by providing time-sensitive, special opportunity grants."