David Gray Widder he/him

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Degrees and Academic Employment

Assistant Professor, School of Information, **University of Texas at Austin**. December 2025–Present.

Research Affiliate, **Data & Society Research Institute**. January 2025–Present.

Incoming Faculty Fellow, Center for the Digital Humanities, **Cambridge University**, Summer 2027.

Past Positions

Global AI & Market Power Fellow, **European AI & Society Fund**. November 2024–December 2025.

Digital Life Initiative, Cornell University, New York City. September 2023–August 2025.
Postdoctoral Fellow, working with Professors James Grimmelmann and Helen Nissenbaum.

Ruhr University Bochum, Germany. June 2024
Visiting Researcher, hosted by Professor Uta Wilkens in the Institute of Work Science

School of Computer Science, Carnegie Mellon University, Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. 2017–2023
PhD in Software Engineering.
Committee: Laura Dabbish & James Herbsleb (co-chairs), Dawn Nafus, Jay Aronson
Thesis title: "Ethics down the AI supply chain: playing with power"
Masters of Science in Software Engineering, earned 2021

Robert D. Clark Honors College, University of Oregon, Eugene, Oregon. 2013-2017
Bachelor of Science in Computer Science, *Magna Cum Laude*
Committee: Stephen Fickas (chair), Helen Southworth, Boyana Norris

Working Papers

David Gray Widder. "Generality, and Changes in the Political Economy of AI Production." Work in progress.

David Gray Widder. "How to Blow up an AI Supply Chain." Work in progress.

Kevin Woohyeuk Lee, Hanlin Li, **David Gray Widder.** "Open at the Edge, Captured at the Center: llama.cpp and the Political Economy of Local AI Inference" Under review, PDF preprint.

Shuxian Liu 刘 姝贤, **David Gray Widder.** "AI is Discursive, AI is Material: DeepSeek and the Remaking of the US-China "AI Arms Race." Under review, PDF preprint.

Inha Cha, Richmond Wong, **David Gray Widder.** "Unpacking the Concept of AI Sovereignty: A Framework and Pathways for Future HCI Research." Work in progress.

David Gray Widder, James Grimmelmann. "Accountability and Liability in 'General Purpose' AI Technologies: GPT is GPT?." Work in progress.

Peer-Reviewed Publications

Nikko Stevens, **David Gray Widder,** Harini Suresh. "*Intersectionality doesn't Scale.*" Authors contributed equally. In: *SAGE Journal of Big Data & Society*, October 2026. PDF to come.

Alicia DeVrio, **David Gray Widder**. "No More Plaudits for Algorithm Audits: A Provocation." In: *AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics and Society,* October 2026. PDF, TLDR on BlueSky. **Best Paper: Social Science.**

Mohamed Abdalla, Sahar Abdalla, Alicia Cappello, Kyrie Dowling, Danaé Metaxa, **David Gray Widder**, and Catherine Stinson. "Cost-of-Ethics Crisis: Beliefs, Decisions, and Justifications in the Job Searches of Computer Science Students in Canada and the United States." In: *AAAI/ACM Conference on AI, Ethics and Society,* October 2026. PDF.

David Gray Widder, Sireesh Gururaja, Lucy Suchman. "*Basic research, lethal effects: Military artificial intelligence research funding as enlistment.*" Authors contributed equally. In: *SAGE Journal of Big Data & Society*, June 2026. PDF. TLDR on Bluesky, Twitter, Mastodon.

Lucy Suchman, Sireesh Gururaja, **David Gray Widder.** "AI interdisciplinarity as critical technical practice" In: *Cambridge Forum on AI: Culture and Society,* October 2025. PDF.

Blair Attard-Frost and **David Gray Widder.** "The ethics of AI value chains." In: *SAGE Journal of Big Data & Society,* May 2025. PDF, TLDR.

David Gray Widder, Sarah Myers West, and Meredith Whittaker. "Why 'open' AI systems are actually closed, and why this matters." Perspective in: *Nature,* November 2024. PDF. Extended 2023 preprint: PDF, TLDR.

David Gray Widder and Claire Le Goues. "What is a 'bug'? On subjectivity, epistemic power, and implications for computing research." In: *Communications of the ACM*, November 2024. PDF, TLDR on Twitter, Mastodon.

David Gray Widder, Laura Dabbish, James Herbsleb, Nikolas Martelaro. "Power and Play: Investigating 'License to Critique' in Teams' AI Ethics Discussions." In: *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work And Social Computing* (CSCW), 2024. 36% acceptance rate. PDF. TLDR on Twitter, Mastodon.

David Gray Widder. "Epistemic Power in AI Ethics Labor: Legitimizing Located Complaints." In: *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency* (FAccT)*,* 2024. 24% acceptance rate. PDF. TLDR on Twitter, Mastodon.

Madiha Z. Choksi, Ilan Mandel, **David Gray Widder**, Yan Shvartzshnaider. "The Emerging Artifacts of Centralized Open-Code." In: *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency* (FAccT)*,* 2024. 24% acceptance rate. PDF: PDF.

Sireesh Gururaja*, Amanda Bertsch*, Clara Na*, **David Gray Widder**, Emma Strubell. "To Build Our Future, We Must Know Our Past: Contextualizing Paradigm Shifts in Natural Language Processing" *denotes equal contribution. In: *Empirical Methods in Natural Language Processing* (EMNLP), 2023. 23% acceptance rate. PDF, TLDR on Twitter, Mastodon.

David Gray Widder and Dawn Nafus. "Dislocated Accountabilities in the AI Supply Chain: Modularity and Developers' Notions of Responsibility." In: *SAGE Journal of Big Data & Society,* 2023. PDF, TLDR.

David Gray Widder*, Derrick Zhen*, Laura Dabbish, James Herbsleb. "It's about power: What ethical concerns do software engineers have, and what do they (feel they can) do about them?" *denotes equal contribution. In: *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency* (FAccT), 2023. 24% acceptance rate. PDF, Video, TLDR on Twitter, Mastodon.

David Gray Widder, Dawn Nafus, Laura Dabbish, James Herbsleb. "Limits and Possibilities for 'Ethical AI' in Open Source: A Study of Deepfakes." In: *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency* (FAccT), 2022. 26% acceptance rate. PDF, Video, TLDR.

Hana Frluckaj, Laura Dabbish, **David Gray Widder**, Sophie Huilian Qiu, James Herbsleb. "Open Source Software Participation Trajectories for Male and Female Participants" In: *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work And Social Computing* (CSCW), 2022. 25% acceptance rate. PDF, Video.

David Gray Widder, Laura Dabbish, James Herbsleb, Alexandra Holloway, Scott Davidoff. "Trust in Collaborative Automation in High Stakes Software Engineering Work: A Case Study at NASA." In: *Proceedings of the ACM Conference on Human-Computer Interaction* (CHI), 2021. 26% acceptance rate. PDF, Video, TLDR.

David Gray Widder, Michael Hilton, Christian Kästner, and Bogdan Vasilescu. "A Conceptual Replication of Continuous Integration Pain Points in the Context of Travis CI." In: *Proceedings of the ACM Joint European Software Engineering Conference and Symposium on the Foundations of Software Engineering* (FSE), 2019. 24% acceptance rate. PDF, Replication Package.

David Gray Widder, Joshua Sunshine, Stephen Fickas. "Barriers to Reproducible Scientific Programming." In: *Proceedings of the IEEE Symposium on Visual Languages and Human-Centric Computing*, Short Research Papers Track (VL/HCC), 2019. 44% acceptance rate. PDF.

Zack Coker, **David Gray Widder**, Claire Le Goues, Christopher Bogart, and Joshua Sunshine. "A Qualitative Study on Framework Debugging." In: *Proceedings of the IEEE Conference on Software Maintenance and Evolution* (ICSME), 2019. 23% acceptance rate. PDF.

Courtney Miller, **David Gray Widder**, Christian Kästner, and Bogdan Vasilescu. "Why Do People Give Up FLOSSing? A Study of Contributor Disengagement in Open Source." In: *Proceedings of the Conference on Open Source Systems* (OSS), 2019. Unknown acceptance rate. PDF.

David Gray Widder, Christian Kästner, Michael Hilton, Bogdan Vasilescu. "I'm Leaving You, Travis: A Continuous Integration Breakup Story." In: *Proceedings of the Conference on Mining Software Repositories, Short Research Papers Track* (MSR), 2018. 27% acceptance rate. PDF.

Other Publications

Peer-Reviewed Conference Talks

Sahana Udupa, Kaarina Nikunen, Marcelo Alves Dos Santos Junior, **David Gray Widder.** "Destructive Effects of Generative Technologies: Perspectives Against AI Power." Accepted to the conference of the Association of Internet Researchers (AoIR), 2026.

Shuxian Liu, **David Gray Widder.** "The discursive-material articulation of AI infrastructure: a comparative discourse analysis of DeepSeek R1." Accepted to the Conference of the Society for the Social Studies of Science (4S), 2026.

David Gray Widder, Nathan Kim. "How Big Cloud becomes Bigger: Scrutinizing Google, Microsoft, and Amazon's investments." Policy report: PDF, academic talk accepted to the conference on Law and Political Economy (LPE), 2026.

Other Policy Reports, Workshop Reports, and Public Writing

Britt Paris, **David Gray Widder**, Theodora Marisco, Jed Brown, and Veena Dubal. "Trump Science Initiative Subordinates Common Good to Corporate Profit" Report of the AAUP committee on Technology and Higher Education. PDF.

Britt S. Paris**,** et al. "Artificial Intelligence and Academic Professions". American Association of University Professors report. PDF, press coverage.

David Gray Widder, Tamara Kneese. "Salvage Anthropology and Low-Resource NLP: What Computer Science Should Learn from the Social Sciences." Lightly reviewed, *ACM Interactions*. Link.

Dasha Pruss, Hannah Pullen-Blasnik, Nikki Stevens, Shakeer Rahman, Clara Belitz, Logan Stapleton, Mallika G. Dharmaraj, Mizue Aizeki, Petra Molnar, Annika Pinch, Nathan Ryan, Thallita Lima, **David Gray Widder**, Amiya Tiwari, Ly Xīnzhèn Zhǎngsūn, Jason S. Sexton, Pablo Nunes. "Prediction and Punishment: Critical Report on Carceral AI." 2024. Link.

David Gray Widder, Mar Hicks. "Watching the Generative AI Hype Bubble Deflate." Harvard Ash Center's Political Economy of AI Essay Collection. 2024. Web link, ArXiV link.

David Gray Widder and Richmond Wong. "Thinking Upstream: Ethics and Policy Opportunities in AI Supply Chains." In: *Designing Technology and Policy Simultaneously: Towards A Research Agenda and New Practice,* 2023. A workshop co-located with CHI'23. Link.

David Gray Widder. "Gender and Robots: A Literature Review." Technical Report, 2019. Link.

David Gray Widder. "Gender in Open Source Communities: Different Migration Patterns and Forms of Work." *VL/HCC Graduate Consortium,* 2019. Link.

David Gray Widder. "Tensions Between Scientific Programming and the Scientific Method." *Undergraduate Honors Thesis*. Pass with Honors, 2017. Link.

David Gray Widder. "What Are Barriers to Efficient ROS Debugging?" *REUSE Poster Session*. 2016.

Selected Research Funding

2024, **$65,000, Principal Investigator.**
The European AI & Society Fund, Programme on AI & Market Power.

2024, **$68,000, Principal Investigator.**
Federation of Humanitarian Technologists, AI Supply Chains of War.

Related Work Experience

Responsible AI Research Intern, Intel Labs. Remote. July 2021 – May 2022

Designed and led research to improve company Responsible AI policy

Findings were presented to C-suite decision makers as AI policy recommendations

Led two workshops to translate findings into AI Ethics policy improvements

Presented findings to 150+ employees in two internal invited talk series

Responsible AI Research Intern, Microsoft Research. Washington. February – May 2020

Interviewed adopters of pilot AI Ethics guidance to find technical and organizational barriers

Presented findings to C-suite decision maker to inform internal Ethical AI policy roll out

Trustworthy AI Research Intern, Jet Propulsion Lab, NASA. California. June – August 2019

Conducted interviews, participant observation, and user studies to study software engineers' trust in an automated software engineering tool

Presented usability improvements to software team to improve software framework

Invite-Only Conferences Attended

"Invitation-Enforcement & Remedies Workshop" workshop hosted by Julie Cohen, Simone Edwards, Britney Firmin, Meg Leta Jones, and Paul Ohm at Georgetown Law, May 8-9, 2025.

"Artificial Intelligence Action Summit" hosted by the French government at the Grand Palais, Paris, 10 Febuary 2025.

"The UK's industrial strategy for AI" workshop hosted by Matt Davies of the Ada Lovelace Institute. Virtual, 14 May 2024.

"Convening on the Political Economy of AI" hosted by Danielle Allen at Harvard Kennedy School's Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation. Cambridge, Massachusetts, 8 May 2024.

"Workshop on Advancing Responsibility in Open Foundation Models" hosted by Github and the Partnership on AI. San Francisco, 11 April 2024.

Selected Invited Talks and Panels

Invited Academic Talks

"Why is AI doing our writing and art instead of our dishes and laundry?" Invited panel on the "Global Economic Order" for public yearly flagship Shasha Seminar event at **Wesleyan University**, upcoming on 14 November 2026.

"Big Isn't Open! Who Big serves, and small ways forward." Invited Talk and Panel at the **Seoul AI Policy Conference,** 17 June 2026.

ICLR AI for Peace workshop: "Basic Research, Lethal Effects: on Academic-Military-Big Tech Entanglement." Invited keynote at the **International Conference on Learning Representations (ICLR)** AI for Peace Workshop, 26 April 2026.

"How to Blow up an AI Supply Chain: On the role of the academy and technical researchers in times like these," Invited lecture, at the **MILA Quebec AI Institute** Critical Science Group, 10 April 2026.

"How to Blow up an AI Supply Chain, and two examples." Invited lecture, at the **Columbia University Sociology Department**, New York City, 6 April 2026.

"How to Blow up an AI Supply Chain: Wielding Counter-Archives to make AI 'Sovereignty' and 'Openness' meaningful." Invited talk at the **University of Toronto School of Information,** Toronto, Canada, 26 February 2026.

"AI Supply Chains: Tools to locate power and responsibility in AI production for critical, accountable computing." Invited lecture, at the **SUNY University of Buffalo** AI & Society Department. Buffalo, New York, 15 January 2026.

"Power in Open AI." Invited lecture, at the **University of California Berkeley** AI Research Lab. Berkeley, California, 12 August 2025.

"Basic Research, Lethal Effects: Examining US Military Funding for AI Research." Invited lecture, at the **RealML** workshop, Mexico City, 4 June 2025.

"General Purpose Technologies." Invited lightning talk, hosted by Professor Kristen Ann Underhill at **Cornell Law School's** Faculty Workshop series**,** 28 April 2025.

"Openness in AI: Behind the Scenes." Invited lecture, hosted by the Data Ocean project at **Stanford University,** 22 April 2025.

"Basic Research, Lethal Effects: Military AI Research Funding as Enlistment." Invited lecture, hosted by the Political Economy and Algorithms reading group at the **University of Michigan**, 12 April 2025.

"Basic Research, Lethal Effects: Military AI Research Funding as Enlistment." Invited lecture with Sireesh Gururaja, hosted by Professor Patrick Smith at the **University of Salford**, 25 March 2025.

"Towards epistemic pluralism in AI production." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Amelia Acker at the **University of Texas at Austin** School of Information, 25 Februrary 2025.

"AI Supply Chains: Tools to locate power and responsibility in AI production for critical, accountable computing." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Amy Ko at the **University of Washington** School of Information, 3 February 2025.

"AI Supply Chains: Tools to locate power and responsibility in AI production for critical, accountable computing." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Ken Holstein for the **Carnegie Mellon** HCII Seminar Series, 31 January 2025.

"AI Supply Chains: Glued to Big Tech, Disavowing War." Invited lecture, hosted by Layla Bouzoubaa for the **Drexel University** College of Computing and Informatics Distinguished Speaker Series, 8 October 2024.

"Low Resource NLP and Salvage Anthropology: Lessons to Bolster Computer Science's Critical Turn," hosted by Professor Lauren Goodlad for the **Design Justice AI Institute**, Pretoria, South Africa. 8 July 2024.

"Trustworthy AI is about Context: Lessons from an Ethnography at NASA." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Nicole Krämer in the **Research Center on Trustworthy Data Science and Security**, Dortmund, Germany. 26 June 2024.

"Basic research, explosive effects: Researcher Disavowal in US Military AI Research." Invited lecture, hosted by Zsuzsanna Ihar for the "(Dis)arming academia – tracing the military-industrial-university complex" workshop, Centre for Research in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, **Cambridge University**. 19 June 2024.

"AI Supply Chains: Glued to Big Tech, Disavowing War." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Seda Gürses for the Programmable Infrastructures Project, **Delft University of Technology**, Netherlands. 13 June 2024.

"Open (for Business): Big Tech, Concentrated Power, and the Political Economy of Open AI." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Seda Gürses, **Delft University of Technology**, Netherlands. 12 June 2024.

"Epistemic Power in AI Ethics Labor: Legitimizing Located Complaints." Invited lecture, **New York Academy of Sciences**, 23 May 2024.

"Ethical AI is about power: more FAT* algorithms, AI openness, or 'objective' evidence will not save us." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Olga Russakovsky, at **Princeton University**, 13 November 2023.

"Smart Cities, Smart Buildings, and IRBs: the Insufficiency of Ivory Tower Research Governance." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Madelyn Rose Sanfilippo, at **University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign**, 9 November 2023.

"Putting Human-AI Trust in an Organizational and Supply Chain Context." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Uta Wilkens, at **Ruhr University Bochum**, 6 November 2023.

"'Openness' in AI Production: Upsides, Downsides, and Middle Ground Approaches." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Maarten Sap, at the **Allen Institute for AI**, 6 April 2023. Slides, Video.

"// MODULARITY, BUG // An Anthropological Examination of the Epistemic Implications of Two Core Ideas in Computer Science." Invited lecture and panel discussion at the annual meeting of the **Society for Applied Anthropology**, Cincinnati, with panel chair Professor Hsain Ilahiane, 30 March 2023. **2023 Beatrice Medicine Award Winner**. Slides.

"Ethical AI in Open Source." Invited lecture, hosted by Dr. Ola Michalec for the Data Ethics Club at the **University of Bristol**, 8 March 2023.

"AI Trust in a High Stakes Workplace: An Ethnography at NASA." Hosted by Senior Lecturer Rikke Jensen at the Information Security Group at **Royal Holloway University of London**, 1 June 2022.

Invited Course Lectures

"The political economy of AI supply chains." Invited lecture, for Professor Harini Suresh's *Critical Data and Machine Learning Studies* course at **Brown University**, 11 March 2026.

"Feminist Currents through the AI Supply Chain." Invited lecture, for Professor Harini Suresh's *Critical Data and Machine Learning Studies* course at **Brown University**, 19 November 2024.

"Feminist Currents through the AI Supply Chain." Invited lecture, for Professor Brooke Erin Duffy's *Gender and Media* course at **Cornell University**, 18 November 2024.

"The AI Supply Chain and Employee Concerns: AI Ethics as a Workplace Issue." Invited lecture, for Professor Uta Wilkens's *Managing Change and Human Resources in Digital Transformation* course at **Ruhr University Bochum**, 24 June 2024.

"Epistemic Power in AI Ethics Labor: Legitimizing Located Complaints." Invited lecture for Professor Helen Nissenbaum's *Digital Life Initiative Seminar* at **Cornell Tech**, 25 April 2024.

"Epistemic Power in AI Ethics." Invited lecture for Professor Nicki Dell's *Technology and Social Justice* course at **Cornell Tech**, 12 March 2024.

"Situated Trust and Ethics." Invited lecture for Professor Motahhare Eslami's *Human-AI Interaction* course at **Carnegie Mellon University**, 12 February 2024.

"Trust and Ethics in Software Supply Chains." Invited lecture for Professor Kenneth Huang's *Development Tools and Visualizations for HCI* course at **Penn State**, 31 January 2024.

"Where are we? Where might we go? Situating 'Ethical AI' in our future careers." Invited lecture, for Professors Kyra Gan and Volodymyr Kuleshov's *Applied Machine Learning* course at **Cornell Tech**, 30 November 2023.

"Trust in Human-AI Interaction: Context Matters." Invited lecture, hosted by Professor Haiyi Zhu's *Human-AI Interaction* course, **Carnegie Mellon University**, 11 October 2023.

"Openness in AI: Upsides, Downsides, and Corporate Power." Invited lecture for Jennifer Dumas, JD, at the **Seattle University Law School**, 21 June 2023.

"Where are we? Where might we go? Situating "AI for Social Good" and "Ethical AI" in our Future Careers and at our University," for Professors Emma Strubell and Maarten Sap's *Computational Ethics for NLP* course, Language Technologies Institute at **Carnegie Mellon University**, 16 February 2023, and for earlier iteration of course with Professors Emma Strubell and Alan Black on 5 April 2022.

Invited Panels

"Radical Histories of Collective Organizing in Computing". Invited Panel, as Moderator, with Joan Greenbaum and Lucy Suchman at **Aarhus Conference**, 19 August 2025.

"The Future of the Humanities in a World of AI." Invited Panel, hosted by Dr. John Slaterly at the Carl G. Grefenstette Center at **Duquesne University**, 30 April 2025.

"Ethics of Language Modeling." Invited Panel, hosted by Helen Nissenbaum at the **Conference on Language Modeling** (COLM) in Philadelphia, 7 October 2024.

"What can openness give us? AI & the Commons." Invited Panel, with Sarah Myers West, hosted by Alek Tarkowski and Alicja Peszkowska of **Open Future**. 11 December 2023.

"Artificial Intelligence, openness, and 'existential' risk: well informed vibes on what is hype and what is real." Invited Panel, with Avijit Ghosh and Fabio Tollon and hosted by Wei Sun, at the **Boston Computation Club**. 7 October 2023. Video.

"Who is building open source AI?," with Marzieh Fadaee, Abinaya Mahendiran, Mophat Okinyi and hosted by Jennifer Ding and Arielle Bennett of the **Turing Institute**. 21 September 2023. Video.

"Upstream AI Supply Chains." Fireside chat, in conversation with Catherine Stihler, CEO of Creative Commons, moderated by Luis Villa, General Counsel of Tidelift, as part of the **Upstream Conference**. 7 June 2023. Video.

Invited Industry Talks

"AI Supply Chains: Tools to locate power and responsibility in AI production for critical, accountable computing." Hosted by Adina Williams at **Facebook AI Research**, New York City, 31 March 2025.

"'Ethical AI' Across the AI Supply Chain: The Developer's Perspective." With Dawn Nafus at the Intel Insights Discussion Forum invited talk series, hosted by Michael Jacobson at Intel Corporation, 16 December 2021, and presented earlier at the Data Science Center of Excellence invited talk series, hosted by Joyce Weiner at **Intel Corporation**, 9 September 2021.

"'Responsible AI'? Complicating and Situating Accountability, Transparency, and Trust." Invited by Dr. John W. Sherry to present to the User Experience Innovation Lab, **Intel Labs**, 20 May 2021.

"Usability Barriers in the F-prime Flight Software Framework." Hosted by Dr. Scott Davidoff and Jeff Levison at the **Jet Propulsion Laboratory**, August 2019

Workshops Organized

Visioning Resistance: A CRAFTing Workshop on Adversarial Responses to AI. 28 June 2026, at FAccT, Montreal Canada. CRAFT Tutorial, with Alicia DeVrio, Inha Cha, Shira Abramovich, Audrey Le Meur, and Ali Alkhatib.

How Could AI Supply Chain Research Shape HCI Inquiries And Vice-Versa? 4 April 2026, at CHI, Barcelona, Spain. With Inha Cha, Blair Attard-Frost, Jatinder Singh, Agathe Balayn.

Studying, Governing, Critiquing and Tooling for AI Supply Chains. 27 June 2025, at FAccT, Montreal, Canada. Tutorial, with Aspen K Hopkins, and Jatinder Singh.

Towards the promise of open source AI: Co-creating a vision for responsibility and research roadmap. 12-13 August 2025, UC Berkeley. NSF ReDDDoT Workshop. With Genevive Smith et al.

The Pentagon and Silicon Valley, or There and Back Again: Research Approaches to Investigating Sociotechnical Systems and Conflict. 23 June 2025, at FAccT, Athens, Greece. Tutorial, with Shazeda Ahmed, Joshua A. Kroll, Andrew Smart, and Tina M. Park.

Sociotechnical AI Governance: Challenges and Opportunities for HCI, 27 April 2025, at CHI, Yokohama, Japan. With K. J. Kevin Feng et al.

From Stem to Stern: Contestability Along AI Value Chains. 9 November 2024, at CSCW, San Jose, Costa Rica. With Agathe Balayn et al.

Political Economy and Accountability in AI Supply Chains, New York City, 23-24 September. With Jennifer Cobbe, Jatinder Singh, Michael Veale.

Public Scholarship and Selected Media

I started and facilitate a weekly Reading Group, currently reading at the intersection Feminist Science and Technology Studies, and Critical AI. We usually meet on Thursdays at 3:30pm ET. Open to all, but are currently on hiatus.

Press Coverage

Spoke from my research on podcast: "Computer Says Kill: The Toxic Love Triangle of Big Tech, Big War & Big Science w/ David Gray Widder" with Alix Dunn on **Computer Says Maybe**, May 15 2026.

Spoke to Capitol Forum economic publication: "FTC settlement imposes no fine or penalties for OkCupid sharing user data with AI company. **Capitol Forum,** 6 April 2026.

Defended the freedom to teach and learn on local TV news: "University of Texas regents approve limits on teaching "unnecessarily controversial subjects" David Gray Widder on **Spectrum News and Associated Press**, 19 Feb 2026.

Defended the freedom to teach and learn in Austin's paper of record: "Students can solve controversial problems. UT must trust them to do so," David Gray Widder in the **Austin-American Statesman**, 17 February 2026.

Spoke about my research on NPR Affiliate KUT's Texas Standard: "The New Wild West, Texans on the AI Frontier." Michael Marks reporting for **The Texas Standard on KUT**. 28 September 2026.

Essay quoted in online essay: "ChatGPT Is a Gimmick: AI cannot save us from the effort of learning to live and die." Jonathan Malesic writing for **The Hedgehog Review**. 21 May 2025.

Essay quoted in news article: "Ignore The Noisy AI Hype Machine, Just Get Stuff Done." Joe McKendrick writing for **Forbes**. 24 November 2024.

Spoke about my research on limits of Open Source AI: "Openwashing." Sarah Kessler writing for the **New York Times**. 17 May 2024.

Spoke about our research on AI benchmark culture: "Why most AI benchmarks tell us so little." Kyle Wiggers writing for **TechCrunch**. 7 March 2024.

Spoke about our research on open source Deepfakes: "The Dark Side of Open Source AI Image Generators." Lydia Morrish writing for **Wired**. 6 March 2024.

Research preprint quoted as "reality check" in Axios: "Stanford study outlines risks and benefits of open AI models." Ryan Heath writing for **Axios**. 27 February 2024.

Research preprint quoted in the Associated Press: "White House wades into debate on 'open' versus 'closed' artificial intelligence systems." Matt O'Brien writing for **Associated Press**. 21 February 2024.

Luddite activism mentioned in The New Yorker: "Revenge of the Luddites." Sheelah Kolhatkar writing for **The New Yorker**. 23 October 2023.

Research preprint covered in Wired: "The Myth of 'Open Source' AI." Will Knight writing for **Wired**. 24 August 2023.

Research preprint covered in Fortune: "The ugly truth about 'open' A.I. models championed by Meta, Google, and other Big Tech players." Sage Lazzaro writing for **Fortune**. 22 August 2023.

Activism profiled in article: "Computer scientists designing the future can't agree on what privacy means." Eileen Guo and Tate Ryan-Mosley writing for **MIT Technology Review**. 3 April 2023.

Research paper featured in French tech news site: "Comment se construit la confiance dans un logiciel de génération automatique de code?" Martin Clavey writing for **NextInpact**. 9 February 2023.

Spoke about our research on software engineers' ethical concerns: "Twitter Employees on Visas Can't Just Quit." Chloe Xiang writing for **Vice's Motherboard**. 18 November 2022.

Spoke about our research on open source contributor disengagement: "Small open source projects pose significant security risks." Stephanie Glen writing for **TechTarget**. 28 November 2022.

City Council testimony, newspaper interview: "Pittsburgh City Council told facial recognition bill should be stronger." Tom Davidson reporting for **Pittsburgh Tribune-Review**. 2 September 2020.

Podcast Appearances

Podcast interview: "After the FAccT: Materiality and Militarisation" in conversation with Soizic Pénicaud on **Computer Says Maybe,** 18 July 2025.

Podcast interview: "Open" in conversation with Mél Hogan on **The Data Fix**. 23 October 2023.

Anthropology podcast interview: "Developing Responsible AI" in conversation with Dawn Nafus and Adam Gamwell on **This Anthro Life**, 2 June 2023.

Podcast Interview: "Building creative restrictions to curb AI abuse" in conversation with Stefano Maffulli, Executive Director of the **Open Source Initiative** for their Deep Dive AI podcast series. 6 September 2022.

Podcast interview: "Computers Aren't Demigods: On the existence of Bias-Free systems" in conversation with hosts Ellie Young and Matt Lepinski on **Byte Size**. 4 May 2021.

Public Scholarship

Invited editorial in Tech Policy Press: "AI Countergovernance: Lessons Learned from Canada and Paris." Blair Attard-Frost, Ana Brandusescu, David Gray Widder, and Christelle Tessono writing for **Tech Policy Press**. 20 February 2025.

Invited summary of research and activism for ACM's student magazine: "Ethical Tech Begins with Ethical Workplaces: Power dynamics in companies and universities." David Gray Widder writing for **ACM XRDS**. 28 June 2024.

Research summary in AI Ethics newsletter: "AI supply chains make it easy to disavow ethical accountability." David Gray Widder writing for the **Montreal AI Ethics Institute**. 9 August 2023.

Wrote article for software engineering practitioner blog: "Can you stop your open-source project from being used for evil?" David Gray Widder writing in the **Stack Overflow blog**. 8 Aug 2022.

Wrote article for software engineering practitioner blog: "'Ethical AI' isn't just how you build it, it's how you use it." David Gray Widder writing in the **Stack Overflow blog**. 30 May 2022.

Other Public Works and Media

Profile of impact of recent work: "Widder Wins Beatrice Medicine Award for AI Ethics Research." Josh Quicksall writing in **S3D's departmental news brief**. 1 August 2023.

Quoted in white paper on Open Source AI, released by the **Open Source Initiative** governing body: "Deep Dive: AI - Final Report." Stefano Maffulli, Executive Director, Open Source Initiative. 28 February 2023.

Email interview, research paper quoted in practitioner blog: "The robots are coming for (the boring parts of) your job." Eira May writing in the **Stack Overflow blog**, 21 April 2022.

Teaching and Pedagogical Activities

Teaching and Pedagogical Design

Developed and led new Undergraduate Informatics Seminar *AI, Hype, and Capitalism,* highest enrolled elective in its concentration, drawing significant enrollment from interested students across the university.

Developed and led new PhD seminar *Political Economy of AI Supply Chains,* drawing enrollment from outside the department. Course led to 5 research projects prepared for peer review in top venues, including *Big Data and Society* and *FAccT*. Spring 2026.

Advocated for, developed, and delivered the first ethics content in Carnegie Mellon's Software Engineering PhD curriculum. Curated reading assignments, delivered lectures, facilitated accompanying discussions, and graded reading responses. *Introduction Course for Software Engineering PhD Students,* with Professors Jonathan Aldrich and Christian Kästner. Fall 2022, 2023. PDF of readings and discussion questions for Ethics in Software Engineering Practice, Ethics in Software Engineering Research, slides for both lectures.

Designed and led a credit-bearing residential course, *People>Computers? Technology Advancing Humanity*, to playfully introduce first year students to core computer science ideas while orienting them at university. Fall 2015, with Professor Helen Southworth.

Executive Education

Developed and delivered the Ethics Module in an Executive Education course, including assignment design, lecture materials development and delivery: "Beyond Bias: AI Ethics in Business," for Professor Karan Girotra's *Generative AI For Business Transformation* course at eCornell, 20 May 2024.

Teaching Assistant

Teaching Assistant for Ethics and Policy Issues in Computing, Carnegie Mellon University, Spring 2021. Course Instructors: Laura Dabbish and James Herbsleb, Carnegie Mellon University. Held office hours, led breakout discussions, graded and gave feedback on exams and assignments.

Teaching Assistant for Human Factors in Human-Computer Interaction, Carnegie Mellon University, Fall 2019. Course Instructor: Laura Dabbish, Carnegie Mellon University. Guest lectured, held office hours, graded and gave feedback on exams and assignments.

Evidence of Educational Impact

University of Texas, American Studies, Professor Iván Chaar López's graduate seminar "Debates in STS" assigns my *Harvard Political Economy of AI* essay.

Yale University, American Studies, Professor Madiha Tahir undergraduate seminar "Digital War" assigns my BD&S'26 paper.

Yale University, American Studies, Professor Madiha Tahir undergraduate seminar "Technocapitalism" assigns my BD&S'23 paper.

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, "Introduction to Computing & Society" assigns my Nature'24 paper.

University of Pennsylvania, Computer Science, Professor Chris Callison-Burch assigns my FAccT'22 paper as optional reading

Technical University of Munich, School of Politics and Public Policy, Professor Timo Seidl's *Digital Capitalism and Digital Policymaking* assigns my *Nature* preprint as optional reading.

Sabancı University, Computer Science Department, Professor Dilara Keküllüoğlu's *Data and AI Ethics* course assigns my FAccT'22 and *Nature* papers as required reading.

Georgia Tech, Literature, Media and Communication, Professor Richmond Wong's *Learning and Speculating About Tech Companies* course assigns my *XRDS*, *CSCW'24, FAccT'23,* and *Big Data and Society* paper as additional reading.

University of Maryland, College of Information Studies and Department of Computer Science, Professors Ido Sivan-Sevilla and Gabriel Kaptchuk's G*overning Algorithms and Algorithmic Governance* course assigns my *Nature'24* preprint as required reading.

Georgetown University Center for Security Studies, Professor William Andrew Imbrie's *Tech Policy Across Borders* course assigns my *Nature'24* preprint as required reading.

Georgetown University Law, Professor Paul Ohm's *The Law of Open Source Software* course assigns my *FAccT'22* and *Nature'24* preprint as required readings.

University of Pittsburgh, Department of Computer Science, Professor Xiang Lorraine Li's *Bias and Ethical Implications in AI* course assigns my *FAccT'23* paper as required reading.

Brown University, Computer Science Department, Professor Harini Suresh's *Critical Data and Machine Learning Studies* assigns my *FAccT'24* paper as required reading and my *Big Data & Society* paper as recommended reading.

University of Colorado Boulder, Information Science Department, Professor Casey Fiesler's *Information Ethics & Policy* course assigns my *FAccT'23* paper as required reading.

University of Erfurt, Faculty of Political Science, Professor Thorsten Thiel's *Intelligente Maschinen, intelligentere Politik? Vom Umgang mit künstlicher Intelligenz in der Demokratie* assigns my *Nature'24* preprint.

Cornell University, Feminist, Gender & Sexuality Studies, Professor Brooke Erin Duffy's *Gender and Media* course assigns my *FAccT'24* paper as required reading.

University of Pennsylvania, Cinema and Media Studies, Zane Talley Griffin Cooper's *Television and New Media* course assigns my *Big Data & Society* paper as reading.

College Year in Athens, Professors Krokidas's and Rekatsinas's *AI Innovations: Bridging Theory and Practice in Applied Sciences* course assign my *FAccT'22* paper as required reading.

George Mason University Philosophy Department, Professor Dasha Pruss's *The Politics of Algorithms* graduate level course assigns my *FAccT'24* paper as required reading.

Simon Fraser University School of Communication, Professor Professor Sun-ha Hong's *AI, Algorithms, and Power* assigns my *Big Data & Society* paper as recommended reading.

University of Michigan School of Information, Professor Ron Eglash's *Doctoral Foundations Seminar* assigns my *Nature'24* preprint as required reading for this course, itself required of all first year PhD in Information students.

John's Hopkins University, Computer Science Department, Professor Anjalie Field's *AI Ethics and Social Impact* course assigns my *FAccT'23* paper as required reading.

University of Southern California, Computer Science Department, Professor Jesse Thomason's *History and Language of Computing* required PhD course assigns my *EMNLP'23* paper as required reading.

Cambridge University, Faculty of Law, Professor Jennifer Cobbe's *LLM Law, Technology, and Society* course assigns my *Nature'24* preprint as recommended reading.

Northeastern University, *IDEAS 2024* summer undergraduate program assigns my *FAccT'23* paper as required reading.

Rutgers University, *Teaching Critical AI Literacies* policy document references my *Nature'24* preprint.

Rochester Institute of Technology, minor in *Free and Open Source Software and Free Culture* teaches from my work.

Student Research Mentorship

Feature about my mentoring work: "REUSE Mentors Students to Success," Cristina Rouvalis writing in The Link, Magazine of CMU's School of Computer Science, Summer 2019. Related video.

Formally Supervised Students

Ali Alkhatib, Harrington Doctoral Fellow, PhD student Information Studies, University of Texas. Chair. 2026-Present

Shuxian Liu, PhD student Information Studies, University of Texas. Committee. 2026-Present

Haley Triem, PhD student Information Studies, University of Texas. Committee. 2026-Present

Kevin Woohyuek Lee, MS in Information Studies, The University of Texas at Austin. Committee. 2026-Present.

Yao Cheng, PhD in Information Studies, The University of Texas at Austin. 2026.

Current Research Mentees

Inha Cha, 2025—Present, PhD student at Georgia Institute of Technology.

Madiha Zahra Choksi, 2023 – Present, PhD student at Cornell Tech, now a Post Doc at Columbia Data Science

Lin Kyi, 2024 – 2025, PhD student at the Max Planck Institute for Security and Privacy, now a post doc at EPFL.

Sireesh Gururaja, 2022 – Present, PhD student at Carnegie Mellon University.

Past Research Mentees

Matt Army, 2024 – 2026, Masters student at Brown University.

Alicia DeVrio, 2024 – 2026, PhD student at Carnegie Mellon University, now an incoming Professor at Georgia Tech Digital Media

Amanda Bertsch, 2022 – 2024, PhD student at Carnegie Mellon University.

Clara Na, 2022 – 2023, PhD student at Carnegie Mellon University.

Derrik Zhen, 2022 – 2024, undergraduate at Swarthmore College, now a PhD student in History and Philosophy of Science at University of Pittsburgh.

Lyric Sampson, 2022, undergraduate at Alabama Agricultural and Mechanical University.

Hana Frluckaj, 2019 – 2020, while an undergrad at Carnegie Mellon University, then a PhD student at University of Texas at Austin, now a postdoctoral fellow at the University of Virginia.

Courtney Miller, 2018 – 2019, while an undergrad at New College of Florida, then a PhD student at Carnegie Mellon University, now an Assistant Professor at George Washington University.

Jamie Rosas-Smith, 2018, while an undergrad at Wellesley College, now a PhD student at Johns Hopkins University.

Activism and Community Service

Against Carceral Tech Pittsburgh. 2022-Present

Organizing across the CMU and wider Pittsburgh community against carceral technology, including law enforcement use of facial recognition, predictive policing, and military contractor recruitment on campus.

CMUBetter. 2022-2023

Building graduate student solidarity towards a workers' union to achieve better pay and working conditions.

Towards an Anti-Racist School of Computer Science. 2020

Co-lead letter campaign with Victoria Dean for anti-racist institutional change within CMU's School of Computer Science, with 40 research-supported, actionable demands, accruing 605 signatories and 110+ personal testimonies: p, Accountability Tracker.

#NoTechforICE organizer. 2019

Organizing against Immigration and Customs Enforcement and contractor companies recruitment events on campus, allied with Mijente.

Judge of Elections 2023. **Election worker** 2020-2022.

Pittsburgh Ward 8 District 3: ensuring all eligible voters can easily vote, educating skeptical voters about election integrity and the importance of broad access to the vote.

Institutional Service

Application Reviewer, Research Experience for Undergraduates, 2018-2023
Reviewed 25-35 applications for the REUSE program yearly.

Dean's PhD Advisory Committee, Co-Director, 2017 - 2020, Member, 2020-2021
Advocating for SCS PhD student interests to Dean: i.e. healthcare, anti-racism, advising issues.

Departmental Climate Task Force, Student Co-Chair, 2018-2019
Committee tasked with improving departmental climate, inclusiveness, and diversity.

Nominee for Carnegie Mellon University Graduate Student Service Award, 2019
Nominated for school-wide award, recognizing my advocacy for graduate student causes

Research Experience for Undergraduates in Software Engineering Mentor, 2018, 2020
Mentored summer undergraduate research interns as part of the REUSE summer program

Professional Service

SAGE Social Studies of Science (SSS), 2024 Reviewer

Doctoral Consortium Co-Chair for Northeast HCI Meeting (providing networking opportunities for junior scholars who are conscientious objectors to CHI in Hawaii), 2024

ACM Conference on Fairness, Accountability, and Transparency (FAccT), 2023, 2024 Reviewer, 2025, 2026 Associate Paper Chair

Springer AI and Ethics, 2024 Reviewer

SAGE Big Data & Society (BD&S), 2023, 2026 Reviewer

ACM Conf. Human-Computer Interaction (CHI), 2020, 2021, 2023, *not* 2024, 2025 Reviewer

IEEE/ACM International Conference on Automated Software Engineering (ASE), 2018 Sub-reviewer

IEEE Transactions on Software Engineering (TSE), 2018 Sub-reviewer

Memberships and Affiliations

Committee on AI and Academic Professions, American Association of University Professors (AAUP)

Coveillance Collective: arts and technology group building counterpower to surveillance

Association for Computing Machinery (ACM); Special Interest Groups for: Software Engineering (SIGSOFT), Computer-Human Interaction (SIGCHI)

Upsilon Pi Epsilon, Honor Society for Computing and Information Disciplines

Phi Beta Kappa, Liberal Arts Honors Society