




Public Interest Technology Pipeline

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What is PIT?

“Public interest technology refers to the study and application of technology expertise to advance the public interest/generate public benefits/promote the public good.”

-[New America](#)

CMU is a founding member of the [PIT UN](#) project at New America.

<https://www.newamerica.org/pit/>

<https://builtin.com/edtech/public-interest-technology>

https://www.schneier.com/essays/archives/2019/02/public-interest_tech.html

<https://news.climate.columbia.edu/2019/10/21/technology-public-interest/>

Why it matters

“Tech touches all parts of our lives, and therefore all points of policymaking. Public-interest technologists with experience in civil society, industry, and government represent our best chance to bring balance to the technology ecosystem and enshrine democratic norms in industry behavior.”

-Fast Company

A New Field?

- 2013 Report by [Ford Foundation](#) with MacArthur Foundation and [Freedman Consulting](#)
 - Found significant gaps in the pipeline
 - Training
 - Cultivating Interest
 - Recruitment
 - Retention
- [#MoreThanCode](#) report (2018) led by Research Action Design & Open Technology Institute at New America
 - PIT not a new concept - just new label
 - Other labels have alienated some groups
 - PIT needs MUCH more than just developers
 - **No standard path**
 - Nothing about us without us
 - No Silver Bullets or “parachuting” into technologists

PIT Project Examples

- Cities can use [text messaging](#) to get more residents using services
- [Plentiful](#) - Reservation system for food pantries
- CMU - **Policy Innovation Lab**: [Landslide Mitigation/Prediction](#) w/ remote-sensing
- [Reducing police court overtime](#) with data science
- My work at DOL

Resources / Reading

- [Public Policy Analytics](#): Code & Context for Data Science in Government
 - Free online - published February 2021
 - “The goal...is to make data science accessible to social scientists and City Planners, in particular. ...one with strong domain expertise plus intermediate data skills can have a greater impact in government than the sharpest computer scientist who has never studied economics, sociology, public health, political science, criminology etc.”
- [List of readings, resources](#), organizations, “Programs to Put Technologists in Policy Positions”, and more - regularly updated
- More [readings and cases](#)

How to Keep up

- Kara Swisher (Twitter, NYT, Vox, etc)
- [Politico Morning Tech](#)
- [Axios](#)
- Washington Post [Technology 202](#)
- Tech Congress ([Twitter](#), [Newsletter](#), [Jobs](#))

Evidence-Based Policy Act

- Foundations for [Evidence-Based Policymaking Act](#) of 2018
 - Each agency shall designate an Evaluation Officer
 - OMB shall establish Advisory Committee on Data for Evidence Building
 - Public gov data required to be machine-readable
 - Each agency shall designate a Chief Data Officer
- Most agencies currently have Data, Evaluation and also Statistical Officers
- October 2020: OMB Official Says [Evidence Act Implementation Guidance](#) May Come in Early 2021
- June 2020: Federal [Chief Data Officers Council](#) Names First Chairman
- January 2020: [One Year In](#), the Evidence Act is Producing Results

Recent Updates

- [White House Memo](#) creates Chief Science Officers at Fed Agencies (Jan 2021)
 - [Calls for new officials](#) and an update to policies established over the last two administrations.
- [Discretionary Funding Request](#) [released](#) April 9
 - NSF: \$10.2 billion for NSF, a \$1.7 billion or 20-percent increase from the 2021 enacted level
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Jobs!!!

- List of [Job boards, fellowships and resources](#)
- Code for America [Job Board](#) (down until July 1)
- Oak Ridge Institute for [Science and Education](#) (STEM Internships/Fellowship)
- Center for Science in the Public Interest: [Public Interest Internship Program](#)
- Civic Tech Field Guide: [Emerging Tech Organizations](#)
- New Economy Coalition: [New Member Directory](#)
 - “We exist to organize our members into a more powerful and united force, in order to accelerate the transition of our economic system from capitalism to a solidarity economy.”
- **Network!!!**
 - When having info interviews with people etc, always ask at the end for 3 people to talk to and their contact info.

Questions?
