

**A BETTER TECH  
HOW TO GUIDE**



**A  
BETTER  
TECH**



**NYU**

# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A BETTER TECH 2021 was a fully virtual hands-on event for professionals, researchers, and students interested in building the field of public interest technology (PIT). It was the first convening of its kind in the US, bringing together the country's most talented students and leading researchers with organizations and companies that are at the forefront of creating responsible and accountable tech that serves the public interest.

Through hands-on Workshops, Dialogues, Keynotes, and short Ideas presentations, a Hackathon, and a virtual Career Fair, participants shared the latest developments in the PIT field, learned about careers in PIT, and connected with professionals across sectors and industries.

In this guide, you'll find more information about how to put on the event yourself! This guide is organized in sections that correspond to what we found were the elements necessary for a successful event:

1. Team and Roles
2. Event Elements
3. Project Phases: Planning, Production, Delivery, Post-Production
4. Tips and Tricks

+ Appendix with Newsletter Template and Schedule

# TEAM AND ROLES

We began with a team of 2 and grew to a team of 12 (plus volunteers and institutional support). While our Producer, Assistant Producer, Student Outreach and Book Fair Lead, Budget and Operations Administrator, and Fundraiser were team members from the beginning, the Outreach Coordinators, Interns, and Volunteer Coordinator were all brought on to the team closer to the event.

## The A BETTER TECH team was comprised of:

1 Lead Principal Investigator - Dr. Mona Sloane

1 Co-Principal Investigator - Dr. Matt Statler

1 Producer - Dr. Sarah Welsh

1 Assistant Producer and Career Fair Lead - Rebekah Tweed

1 Student Outreach + Book Fair Lead - Mara van Loggerenberg

1 Budget and Operations Administrator - Melissa Lucas Ludwig

1 Fundraiser - Esther DeVito

2 Outreach and Community Engagement Coordinators - Cat Blake and Nazelie Doghramadjian

2 Interns - Yifan Gu and Saurabh Kumar

1 Volunteer Coordinator- Chris Rzigalinski

15 Volunteers for Zoom Monitoring

+support from various internal university and external partner teams

# EVENT ELEMENTS

The event took place over two full days and featured a variety of virtual elements, including:

- **[Keynotes](#)** 30 to 40-minute talks given by PIT experts across government, philanthropy, journalism, and industry. They were pre-recorded on Zoom, produced by the Stern production team, and streamed on YouTube via StreamYard.
- **[Dialogues](#)** 40-minute panel discussions that brought together PIT experts from different sectors to discuss a wide range of topics in a Zoom webinar.
- **[Workshops](#)** 80-minute interactive introductions to public interest tech topics and problems held in Zoom meetings.
- **[Ideas](#)** 10-minute presentations given by professionals, students, and public interest tech practitioners on current projects, cutting-edge research, topics of interest related to PIT. We asked presenters to pre-record these talks, which we then streamed over approximately 4 hours on the second day of the convention.
- **[Career Fair](#)** Handshake networking sessions to bring together students and recruiters from the public and private sector. There was also a senior talent networking session held on Zoom that professionals could sign up for on EventBrite.
- **[Book Fair](#)** two book talks, and a collaboration with the NYU bookstore
- **[Hackathon](#)** in collaboration with Democracy Lab, to contribute volunteers to tech for good projects.

# PHASE 1: PLANNING

Phase 1 Duration: Approx. 4 months (Total Duration: 12 months)

After the majority of the team is hired, there are a few things that need to happen in order to move into pre-production. In this phase, it is critical to get logistics in order for all event elements.

**By the end of Phase 1 you should have:**

- A website
- A logo and branding strategy
- An email newsletter
- A marketing and outreach strategy targeted to:
  - Students (undergraduate and graduate)
  - Presenters (academics and practitioners)
  - Attendees (students, PIT practitioners, industry representatives, general public)
- A social media presence
- Initiated regular meetings with Hackathon partner
- Coordinated with PIT-UN leaders and network for planning promotion

# PHASE 1

- Made a list of and begun contacting potential:
  - Sponsors
  - Keynote speakers
  - Book Fair authors
  - Recruiters and hiring managers for the Career Fair
  - Presenters for Workshops, Dialogues, and Ideas
  
- Started content solicitation campaign
  
- Decided on the technologies and platforms you wish to use for the conference
  
- Set up Handshake for the Career Fair

# PHASE 2: PRE-PRODUCTION

Phase 2 Duration: Approx. 2 months (Total Duration: 12 months)

After you've taken the time to build a list of contacts and a web presence, it's time to move into Pre-Production. In this phase, you'll lean on your network and the work you've done in the planning phase to generate interest in the event and populate a schedule. A BETTER TECH was run with pre-recorded Keynote talks and introductory remarks, and synchronous Workshops and Dialogues, so most content was prepared in advance and then streamed the day of the event.

**By the end of Phase 2 you should have done the following:**

- Build a schedule
  - Update the website with the final schedule of confirmed Keynote speakers and presenters
  - Create EventBrite pages for all Workshops and Dialogues
  
- Review Hiring Needs
  - Assess hiring needs and bring on interns, outreach coordinators, and other partners if necessary
  
- Review Submissions
  - Create an assessment criteria for presenter submissions
  - Review Dialogues, Workshops, and Ideas Submissions per assessment criteria
  - Create copy for acceptance and rejection and send accordingly

# PHASE 2

## Increase Marketing

- Increase frequency of email newsletter
- Increase social media marketing
- Identify and reach out to relevant listservs and institutional networks
- Design marketing materials targeted to the schedule
- Leverage PIT-UN network as much as possible
- Write blogs for the website with more information about the upcoming event
- Solicit profiles of public interest technology professionals for Career Fair
- Develop press strategy with press team of host institution

## Coordinate Keynote Speakers

- Invite and confirm Keynote speakers
- Write a script/outline for each talk
- Record Keynote speaker talks on zoom

## Career Fair

- Invite PIT-UN schools to add the fair to Handshake
- Invite recruiters and hiring managers to set up sessions in Handshake for the event

## Begin Video and Event Production

- Obtain media release forms from all presenters and speakers
- Record asynchronous talks on zoom (Keynotes, Book Talks)



# PHASE 2

- Bring in a production team to produce pre-recorded videos (sound and video editing)
- Assess accessibility needs and contact and prepare ASL interpreters (include video and transcript for the talks they are interpreting)
- Set up Workshops and Dialogues as Zoom meetings and webinars

## Produce the Ideas Stream

- Ask Ideas presenters to record their 10-min talks and submit to a Google Form (leave enough time for these to be produced in a continuous stream)

## Set up Zoom infrastructure for synchronous events

- If using Zoom, all Workshops and Dialogues should be scheduled at their appropriate times by different members of the team.
- Zoom links should be sent to Workshop and Dialogue hosts

## Make a Social Media Promotion Plan

- Write and schedule live tweets for Keynote and sessions day-of in HootSuite or Zoho Social

# PHASE 3: THE EVENT

Phase 3 Duration: 1 week (Total Duration: 12 months)

Now it's time for the show! In the delivery phase, all the work you've done in the previous phases will come together in the form of a two-day event.

During the week leading up to the event, you will:

- Do a pre-event tech check across all your technologies and platforms
- Check Zoom links
- Check in with presenters of synchronous elements
- Make any final changes to the schedule
- Confirm the run of show with your team
- Work with your press liaison on promoting the event
- Give the event a final promotion push

Continued on the next page...

# PHASE 3

On the days of the event you will:

## DAY 1

- Assemble ASL interpreters for Keynotes, invite to Streamyard via links
- Stream pre-recorded videos (Keynotes, Book Talks, emcee introductory remarks) through Streamyard at set schedule times
- Host all Zoom webinars and meetings at set times
- Trouble-shoot technical issues with presenters

## DAY 2

- Monitor Handshake attendees and participating hiring managers for Career Fair
- Stream pre-recorded videos (Keynotes, Book Talks, emcee introductory remarks) through Streamyard at set schedule times
- Host the senior talent networking session

# PHASE 4: POST-PRODUCTION

Phase 4 Duration: 1 month (Total Duration: 12 months)

When the event is over there is still work left to do! By the end of Phase Four you should have done the following:

- Sent Thank You notes to Keynote speakers, presenters, and attendees
- Archived all project material
- Added any Dialogue or Workshop recordings to YouTube and promote
- Updated YouTube descriptions for any Keynote recordings that were streamed
- Continued social media strategy for any remaining content
- Compiled metrics

# TIPS AND TRICKS

## Phase 4 Duration: 1 month (Total Duration: 12 months)

There are a number of things you'll want to keep in mind when running an event of this scale in a fully virtual (or even hybrid) setting.



Keep track of the budget and plan for contingencies. Be mindful that there are always things that pop up at the last minute and that may affect your budget.



Handshake is a standard platform for Career Fairs but not all universities have access to it.



Streamyard was beneficial for pre-recorded talks that were not pre-recorded with ASL. This also gave the pre-recorded event a "live" feel.



Building and maintaining good relationships with presenters and keynote speakers is key for building a good program.



Internal support from your institution is vital, for example in terms of video production, or administrative support.



Everyone on the team learned to do things that we didn't know we'd have to do: team members should be able to grow in their roles as they envision them.

# APPENDIX: SCHEDULE (DAY 1)

## SCHEDULE

Day 1 Day 2



The event will take place across two days (October 14 + 15) and is fully virtual. All times are listed in Eastern Standard Time (EST). Visit our [EVENTBRITE PAGE](#) for a list of workshops and dialogues, and check the links below, which are updated frequently. If you don't see an Eventbrite page for the session you're looking for, please [email us](#) or check back.

### DAY 1

★ Keynotes will be streamed on the website

THURSDAY OCTOBER 14, 2021

★ 9:30am-10:00am EST **STREAMING**

Welcome! Mona Sloane and Matt Statler

#### Keynote: Building Equity in PIT



Alondra Nelson (Deputy Director, Science and Society, White House Office of Science and Technology Policy)



Charlton Mcllwain (Vice Provost, Professor of Media, Culture and Communication, NYU)

[ 10:00am-10:30am EST Break ]

10:30am-11:10am EST Dialogues **SYNCHRONOUS**

- **Paving the Way: Entry-Level Careers in Public Interest Tech Opportunities** | Ariana Soto(Coding it Forward), Joey Headley, Flora Wang, Eric Richards
- **Unpacking the Racial Digital Divide** | Alisa Valentin (FCC), Dominique Harrison (Joint Center for Political and Economic Studies), and Daiquiri Ryan (National Hispanic Media Coalition)

10:30am-11:50am EST Workshops **SYNCHRONOUS**

- **Demystify AI: Comics as a Vehicle for Public Education** | Julia Stoyanovich and Falaah Arif Khan(NYU Center for Responsible AI)
- **Foundations of Humane Technology** | David Jay (Center for Humane Technology)

11:15am-11:55am EST Dialogues **SYNCHRONOUS**

- **Cross-Sector Collaborations in PIT** | Maria Luque, Johanna Okerlund, Shlomi Hod
- **The Open and Decentralized Web** | Sal Kimmich (Sonatype), Drake Talley (Attentive), Derek Slater (Google), Lila Bailey (Internet Archive)
- **Sourcing Novel Data Science Questions from the Public** | Alissa Talley-Pixley, Kelly Kowatch (University of Michigan)






12:00pm-12:30pm **SYNCHRONOUS**

Hackathon Kickoff

# SCHEDULE (DAY 1)

★ 12:15pm-1:00pm EST **STREAMING**

## Keynote: Philanthropy Panel

-  Michelle Shevin (Ford Foundation)  Jenny Toomey (Ford Foundation)
-  Tom Kalil (Schmidt Futures)  Kumar Garg (Schmidt Futures)
-  Travis Moore (TechCongress)

1:00pm-1:40pm EST Dialogues **SYNCHRONOUS**






- **Technologists in Government Working for the Public Good** | Stephanie Rodriguez and Grace Dewson (USofTech), Betsy Cooper (Aspen Institute), Michelle Skor (Bitwise Industries), Rachel Dodell (Coding It Forward)
- **Decolonizing AI: Perspectives from the Global South** | Dr. Ahmed Ansari (NYU), Dr. Noopur Atal Raval (AI Now Institute), Dr. Syed Mustafa Ali (Open University), Dr. Maya Indira Ganesh
- **What Skills are Needed to Work in Tech and Data Ethics?** | Natalia Domagala (UK Cabinet Office), Maria Axente (PWC), Dr. Dave Tarrant (The Open Data Institute)

1:00pm-2:20pm EST Workshops **SYNCHRONOUS**

- **Using Tech for Local Civic Engagement** | Christopher Jackson, Arti Garg (Engineers and Scientists Acting Locally)
- **Social Justice Informatics for Public Interest Technology** | Kenneth Fleischmann (UT Austin), Amanda Masino (Huston-Tillotson Univ.), Angela Smith (UT Austin)

★ 1:30pm-2:00pm EST **STREAMING**

## Keynote: Public Interest Technology Book Panel

-  Sylvanna Falcón (UCSC)  Hana Schank (New America)
-  Tara McGuinness (New America)  Cyd Harrell (UX Researcher)
-  Beth Noveck (Northeastern)





1:45pm-2:25pm EST Dialogues **SYNCHRONOUS**

- **What We Can Learn From the Race Between Disruption and Democracy?** | Rob Reich, Mehran Sahami (Stanford)
- **Assessing Digital Political Gendered Violence in Latin America** | Luz Elena González (PIT Policy Lab), Saiph Savage PhD (Northeastern), Cristina Martínez Pinto (PIT Policy Lab), Yasmin Curzi, Barbara Liborio

# SCHEDULE (DAY 1)

★ 2:30-3:00pm EST **STREAMING**

**Keynote: Big Data Book Panel**

 Viktor Mayer-Schönberger (Univ. of Oxford)  Ari Waldman (Northeastern)  
 Thomas Ramge (Writer & Journalist)  Beth Noveck (Northeastern)

2:30pm-3:10pm EST Dialogues **SYNCHRONOUS**





- **Technology and the Administrative Burden** | Emily Tavoulareas, Don Moynihan, Dan Hon (Georgetown University, Beeck Center for Social Impact and Innovation)
- **Mainstreaming the Embodied Knowledge and Lived Experiences of BIPOC PIT Practitioners** | Maria Yuan, Tayo Fabusuyi & Dwayne Barnes (University of Michigan)

2:30pm-3:50pm EST Workshops **SYNCHRONOUS**

- **Applying Data Equity + AI Ethics** | Rachel Whaley, Eva Sachar (LA Tech4Good)
- **How Journalists Hold AI Accountable** | Hilke Schellmann, Emma Cillekens (NYU)

★ 4:00pm-4:30pm EST **STREAMING**

**Keynote: Journalism Panel**

 Vivian Schiller(Aspen Institute)  Karen Hao (MIT Tech Review)  
 Damon Beres(Unfinished)  Khari Johnson(WIRED)



# SCHEDULE (DAY 2)

## DAY 2

FRIDAY OCTOBER 15, 2021

★ Keynotes will be streamed on the website

★ 9:00am-10:00am EST **STREAMING**

### Keynote: Public Interest Tech and Venture Capital



Freada Kapor Klein (Kapor Center)



Allison Scott (Kapor Center)



Irma Olguin, Jr. (Bitwise Industries)

10:00am-2:30pm EST **STREAMING**

IDEAS for A BETTER TECH

10:00am-3:00pm EST **SYNCHRONOUS**

Career Fair

2:00pm-3:00pm EST **SYNCHRONOUS**

Responsible Tech & PIT Senior Talent Networking Session

3:00pm-4:00pm EST **SYNCHRONOUS**

Hackathon Presentation

★ 4:00pm-4:30pm EST **STREAMING**

### Keynote: Careers in AI for A BETTER TECH



Rumman Chowdhury (Twitter)



Lauryn Langster (NYU Tandon)

# APPENDIX: NEWSLETTER TEMPLATE



## CALLING ALL STUDENTS!

Join the first public interest technology event of its kind.

Keynotes : Workshops : Dialogues : Ideas : Recruiting : Job Board : Hackathon

### *In this Issue*

- **Welcome** from the Lead Organizers: Mona Sloane + Matt Statler
- **In the Spotlight:** Cyd Harrell, Public Interest Technologist and UX Researcher
- **Hackathon:** Register today!
- **Propose an Idea:** Present your research at A BETTER TECH
- **What We're Reading:** *Power to the Public: The Promise of Public Interest Technology*, Tara Dawson and Hana Schank

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Dear <<First Name>>,

Thank you for signing up for A BETTER TECH's newsletter—we're so excited to have you on board!

A BETTER TECH is the first public interest technology convention and career fair of its kind in the U.S., happening **October 14 + 15, 2021**, this virtual hands-on event is for professionals, researchers and students interested in creating a better world through technology.

There will be keynotes from high-profile speakers who have forged successful careers in public interest technology, dialogues and workshops on various public interest and responsible technology topics, a hackathon, and fire-presentations on innovative public interest technology research and applications. Whether you're an undergrad, grad student, recent grad, a recruiter, or someone who works with students, A BETTER TECH will provide extensive networking opportunities. Keep up with the schedule and sign-up for A BETTER TECH events on [our website](#).

**We welcome sponsors and partners to help sustain our event and grow public interest technology. [Contact us about sponsorships today](#) to learn more about event perks and benefits for your organization.**

### **[Calling All Students!](#)**

Are you part of a student organization that focuses on responsible technology, public interest technology, computer science, digital humanities, tech law and policy, or something similar? Do you know a student group that might like to participate? Help us spread the word to students and student organizations by forwarding this email to a friend.

Join A BETTER TECH!

*Mona Sloane & Matt Statler*  
Lead Organizers, New York University

## IN THE SPOTLIGHT: CYD HARRELL



*We highlight a public interest technologist in every newsletter. This week, we talked to Cyd Harrell, a UX researcher and author of the book [A Civic Technologist's Practical Guide](#).*

### **A BETTER TECH: What does Public Interest Technology mean to you?**

**CYD HARRELL:** I'll approach this from the perspective of design: it means what I work on is for everyone, and I have a responsibility to embed justice and care in what I do. It can be almost anything with a public mission—there are so many organizations inside and outside government that need to step up their tech. And it almost always means working with colleagues for whom tech isn't a top priority—if it's even on their priority list at all—so it means sharing what I know with humility, and learning from their much greater knowledge of their missions.

## HIGHLIGHTS

### **REGISTER FOR THE HACKATHON**

A BETTER TECH has partnered with Democracy Lab to put on a hackathon during the convention and career fair! The two-day [hackathon](#) will be an opportunity for participants to collaboratively apply their skills to innovate on a wide range of active tech-for-good projects, sourced from the [Code for America Brigade Network](#) and [Democracy Lab](#).



**Register for the hackathon**

## PROPOSE AN IDEA

Are you a student, researcher, or practitioner thinking about a problem in public interest technology or responsible tech?



Share your work by proposing a short Ted-Style Ideas session. You can also propose with a friend or group. Visit our website for more information, or [propose here](#).

Propose an Idea

## WHAT WE'RE READING

*[Power to the Public: The Promise of Public Interest Technology](#)*, by Tara Dawson McGuinness and Hana Schank.

Power to the Public is a powerful new blueprint for how governments and nonprofits can harness the power of digital technology to help solve the most serious problems of the twenty-first century.



**A BETTER TECH**  
PUBLIC INTEREST TECHNOLOGY  
CONVENTION AND CAREER FAIR



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**A  
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**HOW TO GUIDE**