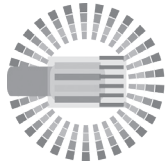


OPENING DATA | 2



ALLIED
MEDIA
PROJECTS



Detroit Community
Technology Project



OUR DATA BODIES

Acknowledgments and Credits

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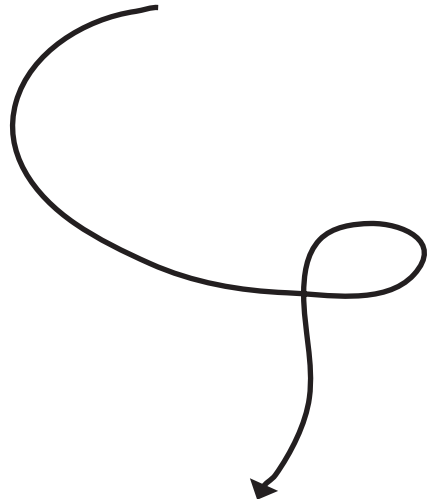
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What's Inside

DDJC Principles	1
Introduction	4
Equitable Open Data	7
Equitable Open Data Guidelines	20
Our Data Bodies	30
Data Justice Workshops	44
Resources and Examples	57

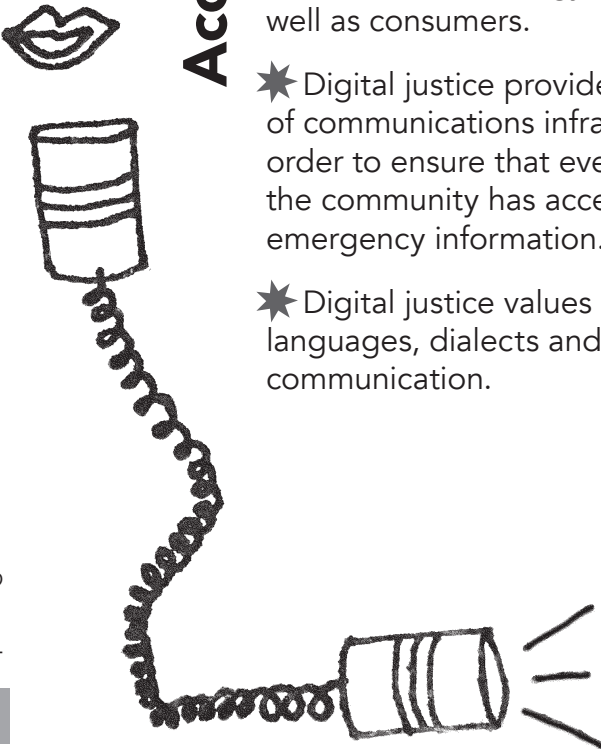


DDJC PRINCIPLES

The Detroit Digital Justice Coalition (DDJC) is comprised of people and organizations in Detroit who believe that communication is a fundamental human right. We are securing that right through activities that are grounded in the digital justice principles of: access, participation, common ownership, and healthy communities.

Access

- ★ Digital justice ensures that all members of our community have equal access to media and technology, as producers as well as consumers.
- ★ Digital justice provides multiple layers of communications infrastructure in order to ensure that every member of the community has access to life-saving emergency information.
- ★ Digital justice values all different languages, dialects and forms of communication.

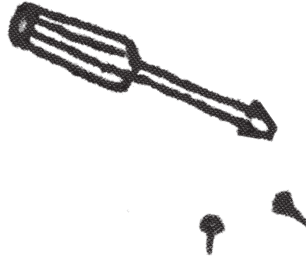


Participation

- ★ Digital justice prioritizes the participation of people who have been traditionally excluded from and attacked by media and technology.
- ★ Digital justice advances our ability to tell our own stories, as individuals and as communities.
- ★ Digital justice values non-digital forms of communication and fosters knowledge-sharing across generations.
- ★ Digital justice demystifies technology to the point where we can not only use it, but create our own technologies and participate in the decisions that will shape communications infrastructure.

Common ownership

- ★ Digital justice fuels the creation of knowledge, tools and technologies that are free and shared openly with the public.
- ★ Digital justice promotes diverse business models for the control and distribution of information, including: cooperative business models and municipal ownership.



Healthy communities

- ★ Digital justice provides spaces through which people can investigate community problems, generate solutions, create media and organize together.
- ★ Digital justice promotes alternative energy, recycling and salvaging technology, and using technology to promote environmental solutions.
- ★ Digital justice advances community-based economic development by expanding technology access for small businesses, independent artists and other entrepreneurs.
- ★ Digital justice integrates media and technology into education in order to transform teaching and learning, to value multiple learning styles and to expand the process of learning beyond the classroom and across the lifespan.

INTRODUCTION

In 2015, The Detroit Community Technology Project (DCTP), in partnership with the Detroit Digital Justice Coalition, published a zine called *Opening Data*. In that publication, we aimed to address the following:

Demystify data. What is it? What does it look like and how do we read it? What is my online identity?

Understand the risks of open data. What personal data is made public through open data and does it compromise individual's privacy and security? What are the risks of open data for marginalized communities? Does open data create risks of criminalization?

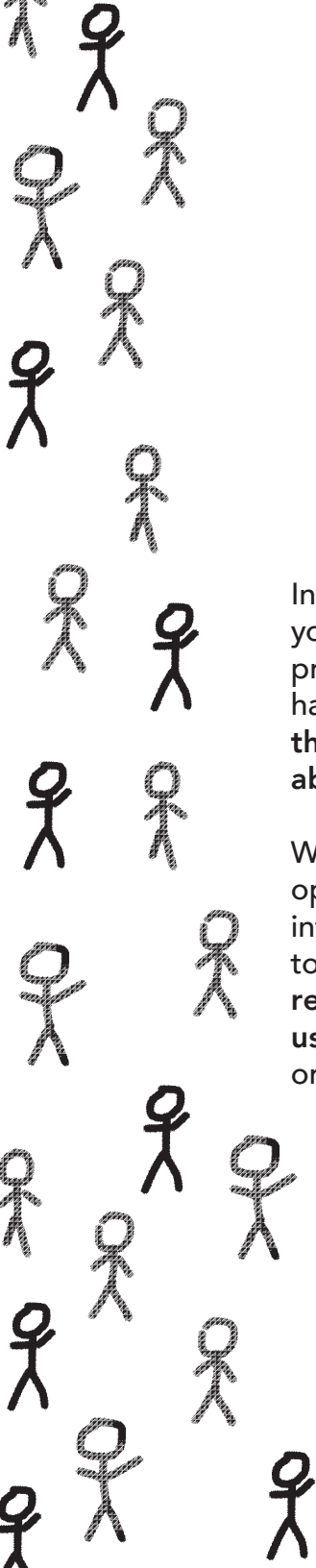
Understand how to use data in community organizing efforts. How can we use open data to solve problems in the community, make a case for community owned land trusts, and develop community wi-fi networks? Can we use open data to support the campaign to stop water shutoffs? What information on blight is available and how can communities use it to reclaim abandoned structures and land?

Use data in creative ways. What are unique ways we can tell compelling stories with data from our communities?

After the release of the *Opening Data* zine, we realized that *there was so much we still did not understand about how data affected people* - especially marginalized communities. So, we began working on a few community research projects.

The first community research project was specifically centered around the Detroit Open Data Portal, looking into **how open data can potentially harm or benefit communities**. This research engaged Detroit residents in thinking critically about the benefits and harms of open data and the development of self-advocacy. It culminated in a set of guidelines on how to steward equitable open data, which was shared with the City of Detroit.

The second project we became a part of is called Our Data Bodies (ODB), which is currently conducting interviews with residents in four cities across the U.S. to **gain insight on how marginalized adults view personal data collection**. That research will culminate in a set of popular education tools that can help people better protect information about them that is online, or in other words, their data bodies.

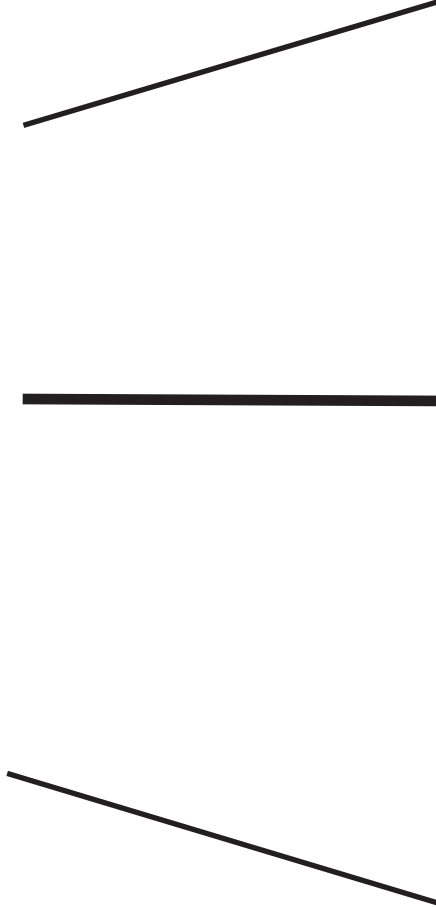


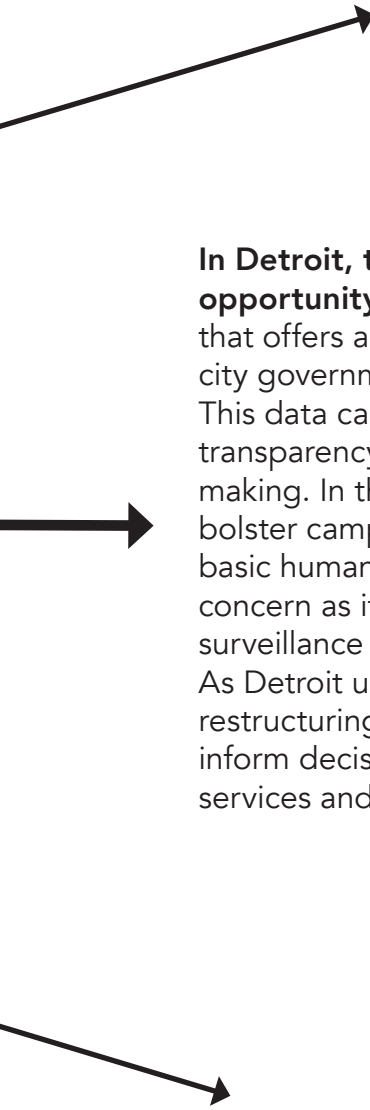
In this publication, we will share with you what we discovered through these projects, activities and workshops that have come out of our research, and **ways that you can engage others in thinking about data in your communities.**

We hope to foster critical thinking on how open data and data collection systems influence people's lives, in an effort to **work towards a digital future that respects the privacy and security of all of us** - not just those that are digitally literate or in privileged communities.



EQUITABLE OPEN DATA





In Detroit, the Open Data Portal presents both an opportunity and a threat. The portal is a website that offers access to data and information concerning city government operations and service delivery. This data can allow for greater accountability and transparency within government and local decision-making. In the hands of grassroots organizers, it can bolster campaigns for equitable development and basic human rights. However, it is also a cause for concern as it relates to the privacy rights and risks of surveillance of vulnerable low-income communities. As Detroit undergoes major financial and political restructuring post-bankruptcy, data will be used to inform decisions about the allocation of vital city services and resources.

Since the city launched the Detroit Open Data Portal and GO DATA policy initiative in 2015, the Detroit Digital Justice Coalition (DDJC) and Detroit Community Technology Project (DCTP) have been exploring how to advance equitable practices for collecting, disseminating and using open data.

To understand what these equitable open data practices could look like, we spoke with a broad spectrum of Detroit residents. From there, we assessed what actions can be taken by the city to maximize benefits and minimize harms, and investigated open data policies and tools in other cities that model our vision for data justice.



By **equitable practices**, we mean accountable, ethical uses of public information for social good that actively resist the criminalization and surveillance of low income communities, people of color, and other targeted communities.

By **data justice**, we mean understanding the ways in which open data - information and public records about government operations and services provided by the city - can be both beneficial and harmful to residents, especially to communities that have been historically criminalized.

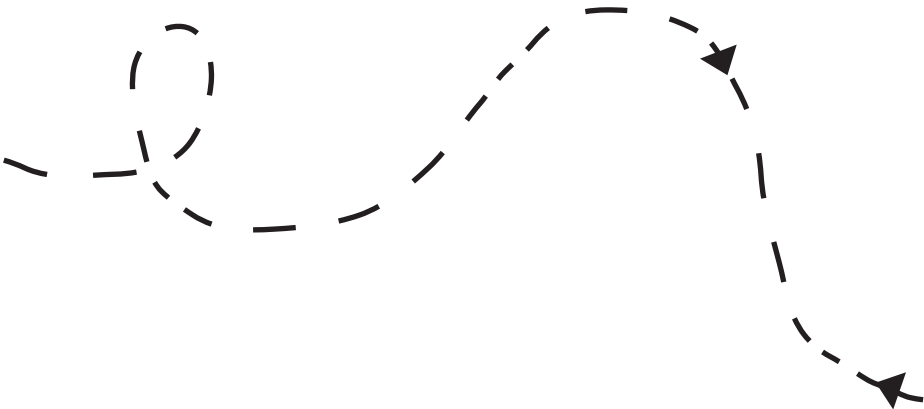


Our Research Process

Research processes define the outcome of the research.

We strived for a collaborative, community-driven process where we were not extracting information from people, but teaching and learning together on this journey to understand open data. We started by collaboratively identifying a series of questions to guide and motivate our research. These questions were generated by the DDJC, a diverse group of organizers in Detroit, many of whom do not work in the technology field. These questions reflect our own curiosity, as well as questions that came up when talking about digital justice within our organizing communities. Because of the multiple perspectives at the table - elders, artists, independent technologists, educators, and youth organizers - this process helped ensure that the research is relevant and useful to our communities.

Based on these questions, we developed our research tools. We utilized a **survey**, a set of **data-use scenarios** for discussions of harms and benefits, a study of **data policies** in other cities, and a series of **Data DiscoTech** public events.



Guiding Questions

Can data be neutral?

Can open data be useful to the average Detroit resident?

Does open data lead to government transparency?

What should Detroit residents be aware of when it comes to open data?

What are the perceived benefits and harms of open data to residents?

How can we inform all residents and educate our communities about open data?

What can we learn from other cities? What types of open data policies, portals and protective practices do they have in place?

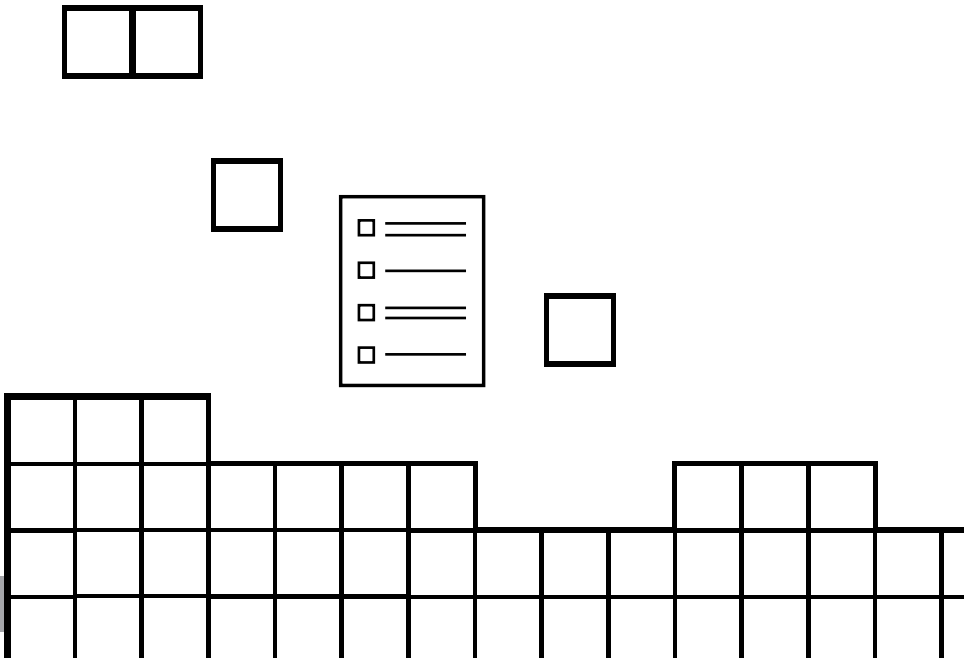
What does participatory and democratic governance of open data look like, and how can we help to facilitate it here in Detroit?

Survey

The Data Justice Survey was created by members of the DDJC and brought to Data DiscoTechs for participants to fill out. Data DiscoTechs are community science fair-like events with education stations that allow participants to learn about data and data usage. We realized that in order for people to be able to critically think about open data, they first needed to learn about what it is and how it can be used to engage in a conversation about the harms and benefits of open data.

Our survey gauges familiarity with government data, perceptions of how open data is collected and used, and asks people to identify which datasets are most important for our communities to access.

Following is the survey we created and used.



Data Justice Survey

The information you provide in this survey will be used by the Detroit Digital Justice Coalition to guide the creation of new rules for how data that the government collects about you should or should not be used and shared. Your response will not be shared publicly.

1. Have you heard of the City of Detroit's Open Data Portal?
(circle one)

Yes No

2. If so, when and where did you first hear about it?

3. Have you ever been asked by a government agency to provide personal data that you did not feel comfortable sharing?

Yes No

4. If you said Yes, please explain:

5. Has a government agency ever collected or shared information about you without your consent?

Yes No

6. If you said Yes, please explain:

7. Which of the following tactics do you think would be MOST effective at making Detroiters aware of the portal and getting them to use it? (choose only one)

a. free 101 trainings for the general public libraries and community centers

b. advanced trainings in how to use and analyze the data for community leaders

c. a flyer in the mail

d. a radio PSA

e. Other _____

8. Please rate each of the following types of data with one of the following:

- 1= this data should be shared widely without restrictions
- 2= this data should be shared, but only if individual identities are protected
- 3= this data should be shared, but only if individuals give their consent
- 4= this data should not be shared under any circumstances
- 5= this data should not even be collected, much less shared

Data set	Circle your rating
Location of working and non-working streetlights	1 2 3 4 5
Number and location of police brutality complaints	1 2 3 4 5
Locations of clusters of highly communicable diseases, i.e. tuberculosis or HIV	1 2 3 4 5
Locations of houses entering foreclosure	1 2 3 4 5
Unedited police car dashboard camera footage	1 2 3 4 5
Types of food purchased with SNAP benefits	1 2 3 4 5
The Mayor’s travel budget and schedule	1 2 3 4 5
Names of anonymous informants to Child Protective Services	1 2 3 4 5
Names of donors to political candidates and campaigns	1 2 3 4 5
Number of utility shut-offs at the block level	1 2 3 4 5
Utility shut-off status at address (house or building) level	1 2 3 4 5
The location of stores that accept EBT cards	1 2 3 4 5
Addresses where domestic violence complaints reported to DPD occurred	1 2 3 4 5

9. See the attached document for a partial list of the data sets that are currently available via the City of Detroit's Open Data Portal. Which of these data sets (if any) do you think have the potential to be helpful to you, your family, or your community?

10. Please explain your selection:

11. Which of these data sets (if any) do you think have the potential to be harmful to you, your family, or your community?

12. Please explain your selection:

13. What data sets are not on the attached list that you think SHOULD be added?

14. What data sets are not on the attached list that you think SHOULD NOT be added?

Developing Data Justice Scenarios

We conducted a series of focus groups that began by teaching people how to explore Detroit's Open Data Portal. Then, participants learn about a specific dataset from the portal, raise questions about how it is initially collected, and craft possible positive and negative use case scenarios of that data. The goal of the activity is to identify actions and policies that would maximize benefits and reduce harms.

Following are examples of what our focus groups came up with:



Crime Incidents Datasets: *Details on crimes reported to the Detroit Police Department*

Initial questions about the dataset

What about the data on public crime incidents handled by entities outside of the Detroit Police Department, like Wayne State Police or other security forces?

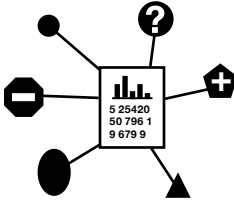
Perceived benefits

Exposes details about how different crime ratings are calculated, especially in the case of maps or visuals that focus only on number of crimes, not their type.

Perceived harms

Increases surveillance and policing in neighborhoods with higher crime levels in the past, justifying practices like "Stop and Frisk" now.

Heat map creates assumptions of safety based only on quantity of crime, not type or severity. For example, a cluster of noise complaints look more severe than a single incident, even though that single incident may be an assault.



Parcel Ownership Information: *Find ownership, sales, and tax information about land parcels in the Detroit*

Initial questions

We know some egregious property speculators change their names frequently - can that be tracked through the system, and if so, how?

Perceived benefits

Addresses and highlights issues of land speculation.

Shows community groups who is buying land around them.

Allows neighbors to find out who owns poor condition structures and advocate for community accountability/for owner to care for their property.

Perceived harms

Hastens the process of land speculation, especially for those who have technical skills to access and use the data.

Eases the process of big developers buying up huge tracts of land quickly.

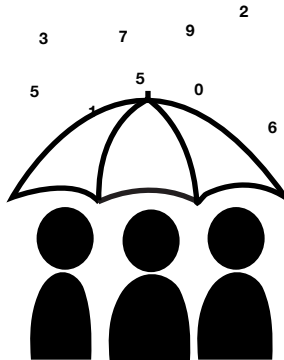
We found the exercise of creating scenarios to be helpful in both teaching people about data and generating ideas on using open data. We saw people making connections between open data and their neighborhoods, as well as seeing opportunities to use data sets to inform their own organizing, such as advocating and organizing for community land trusts using the land data.

What was interesting about this particular process is that it revealed that with every data set there can be both positive and negative outcomes - it all depends on how it is used. This led to even more questions and thoughts about data creation and the culture around data use:

How do we foster a culture of open data that is focused on benefiting communities?

How do we work toward the ideal of a truly unbiased, neutral dataset?

What can we do to protect our communities from harmful uses of open data?



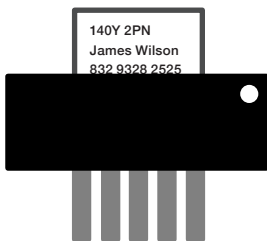
Equitable Open Data Guidelines

From our research, we developed a set of guidelines for equitable open data. We hope these recommendations will be adopted by the City of Detroit and used in other communities and organizations looking to responsibly implement open data policies.

Protect the people represented by the numbers

Issue While open data boosts government transparency, it can also be a source of fear and harm to residents. While facilitating data justice scenarios, we heard deep-rooted concerns about how the Improve Detroit Open Issues queue can incite property swindles, like a metal scrapper pinpointing an abandoned vehicle, how Blight Tickets can reinforce “bad” and “undesirable” neighborhood reputations and influence property values or red-lining practices, or how a randomized block-level location of a Crime Incident isn’t random enough in Detroit’s most desolate areas to truly protect from re-victimization, stigmatization or further harassment.

Guideline As the City continues to publish data, we ask for security audits to be performed and their outcomes shared by a third party, including penetration testing to expose potential vulnerabilities in existing data processing methods for anonymizing or randomizing personal data for release.



Don't retain personal information tied to accessing City services

Issue

We know that our personal information is often collected and stored when we apply for or access city services, such as entering a license plate number at a Park Detroit meter.

Guideline

While many privacy policies specifically promise to not share personal data with third parties, we want the city to go a step further and implement a provision to not retain any personal information associated with an application for city services. This would prevent the accidental loss or unauthorized use of personal data in ways that could harm or target residents. New York City exemplifies how to roll out a successful Municipal ID program while pledging to not store cardholder's personal background information, a policy that both safeguards the personal information of their cardholders - who are more likely to be low income, experiencing homelessness, undocumented, or people of color - and illustrates their commitment to Sanctuary City status.

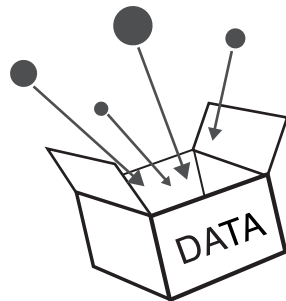
Publish data about all city services, even for privatized "public" services

Issue

Some crucial services in Detroit are now administered by government contractors, private corporations and quasi-public entities, like the Great Lakes Water Authority or Detroit Economic Growth Corporation? These entities are responsible for data sets that we found residents often cite as most important to have access to, such as utility shut-offs and development projects, yet are not subject to FoIA laws.

Guideline

The portal should provide basic contract information about all service providers at minimum, and ideally, additional data about their specific operating activities. For example, what vendor(s) does the city contract to remove garbage? Where is that vendor located, what is the timeline and total amount of their contract? The Sunlight Foundation offers legal language for a provision like this to ensure "government decisions to employ outside contractors do not result in the public losing access to its own information."



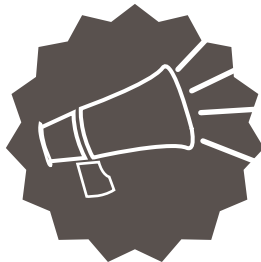
Prioritize the release of new datasets based on community interest

Issue

Currently, two obvious ways exist for residents to request public records not yet published to the data portal: through the portal's nomination form and through Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests. The first option requires internet access, and only a single nomination from over 30 suggestions has been approved since launching. The second option, FOIAs, are also notoriously cumbersome and can be costly. Yet, these two mediums remain crucial ways for the City to gauge community interest and data needs.

Guideline

FOIA requests and their responses, as well as approved nominated data sets, should be posted to the portal in a timely manner. This will boost relevant data sets for users and save internal resources in answering duplicate requests.



Increase transparency around how data sets are defined and processed



Issue

While we appreciate open data efforts, many data sets are not easy to decipher. Participants in our data justice focus group often pointed to an example of confusing language in the Blight Violations dataset. How can we begin to use or analyze these data if we don't know how the city defines "blight"?

Guideline

All data sets published on the portal should include field definitions, collection methods (especially for anonymizing or randomizing personal data), and basic definitions of policy-specific or technical language. The DPD: Citizen Complaints dataset exemplifies useful, thorough documentation by offering a description, contact information, and field definitions, yet we have found many other data sets in Detroit's portal to be lacking these metadata. We also looked to national cases where open data is being used for predictive analytics, like predictive sentencing in Philadelphia. The algorithms and analysis methods used are often inaccessible to the public and not subject to community oversight, yet can be encoded with implicit biases that affect how different factors are weighed. We ask that transparent practices apply to all open data definitions, methods, analysis and algorithms.



Engage residents offline about open data

Issue

In order to build awareness and open data literacy in Detroit, it's important to consider digital inequality and limited access to the internet. Through our data justice surveys, we found that most residents first learn about open data and the portal at events or workshops, which can be infrequent and hard to access.

Guideline

In addition to the online tutorials offered for learning to use the portal, we need an engagement plan that emphasizes community dialogue and in-person training sessions. Through organizing Data DiscoTechs, we have found effective strategies like partnering with local recreation centers and developing popular education methods to interactively learn about open data, as a starting point.





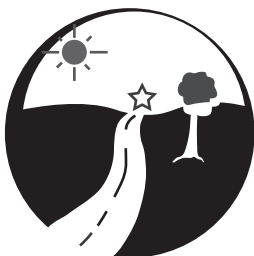
Share what's coming next

Issue

While it's simple to see how the Portal has grown since its launch through the Public Dataset Inventory, we also want to know what's coming next so that we can plan community research and organizing initiatives.

Guideline

Once or twice a year, Department of Information Technology should publish their key goals and activities, sharing with the public which dataset releases, portal feature improvements and public events to anticipate. Similar to the NYC Open Data Portal, the header of Detroit's portal should rotate to highlight features, identify the purpose, advertise new releases and offer quick links to things that matter most to Detroiters.



Equitable Data Policies in Practice

To vision our dream open data ecosystem in Detroit, we have looked to the transparency policies, data portals, civic-driven applications, and open data practices and tools in place in other U.S. cities for inspiration. The goal was to understand how data policy shapes data culture and to highlight creative, just use cases of open data.

Research on comprehensively defining “Public Safety” and looking beyond crime incidents

Detroit’s Public Safety category has a heavy focus on numbers and locations of crime incidents. The crime-heavy focus creates a narrative which criminalizes certain neighborhoods and makes them look undesirable.

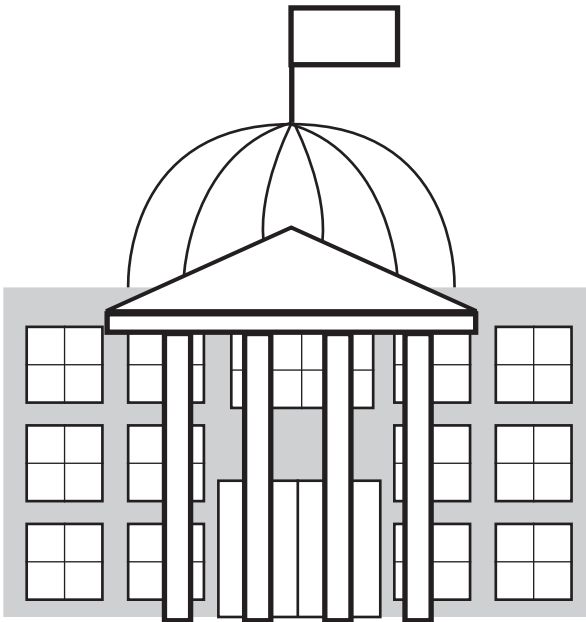
In contrast, **New York** uses a broad, less crime-focused definition of “Public Safety” (<https://nycopendata.socrata.com/data?cat=public%20safety>), including datasets about evacuation zones, lead-based paint dwellings, fire codes, citizen emergency response teams, and warming centers.

SmartChicago’s Crime and Punishment app (<http://crime-punishment.smartchicagoapps.org/>) looks beyond the point of crime to trace data sources from commission all the way to prisons, and provides valuable documentation about criminal justice data accessibility throughout.

Examples of ways to use open data to better communicate with our government

Councilmatic (<http://www.councilmatic.org/>) is at work in Philadelphia, New York, Chicago and more and lets users track the status of bills in City Council, contact their council representatives sponsoring the legislation and share their opinions through comments.

SimpliCity (<http://simplicity.ashevilenc.gov/>), developed by the City of Asheville, NC, prompts users to ask civic questions related to an address or property location, like “when is my recycling pick-up day?” This tool parses many types of city data into digestible, relevant answers to everyday questions.



Data DiscoTechs

Data DiscoTechs, or Discovering Technology fairs, are community events that use interactive multimedia workshop stations to engage and inform participants about the impact and possibilities of technology and communication within our communities, and to demystify open data.

In 2015, the DDJC adapted the DiscoTech model to specifically address ideas of open data, as the City of Detroit had just launched its open data portal.

Through organizing Data DiscoTechs, we have found successful strategies for identifying relevant host organizations and developing popular education methods for teaching communities about open data. Our strategies can offer important lessons for the city and other data stewards to craft open data engagement plans.

Our organizing approaches and findings about three key Data DiscoTech components include:

- ★ Partnering with organizations around Detroit to host the event
- ★ Developing hands-on, interactive activities to teach station content
- ★ Gathering feedback from participants and station managers to make future workshops more relevant, accessible and engaging



OUR DATA BODIES

Our Data Bodies (ODB) is a collaborative, participatory research and organizing effort. Beginning in 2015, we began working in three cities: Charlotte, North Carolina; Detroit, Michigan; and Los Angeles California.

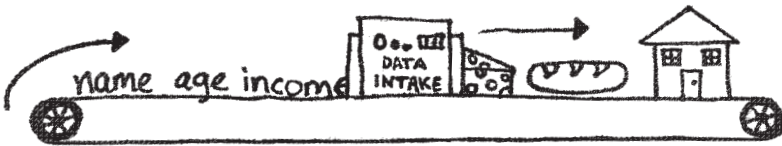
Our goal is to find answers to three main questions:

- ★ How do marginalized adults experience and make sense of the collection, storage, sharing and analysis of their personal information?
- ★ How, if at all, do marginalized adults connect their ability to meet their basic material and social needs to their inclusion in (or exclusion from) data-based systems?
- ★ What strategies do marginalized adults deploy, if any, to protect their digital privacy, self-determination, and data rights?

To answer these questions, we have embarked on new ground, developing a way of research that includes and centers the stories of the most marginalized. Our project attempts to combine community-based organizing, capacity-building, and academic research.

As of writing for this zine, we've completed 85 of our goal of 150 interviews. **The stories our research participants have shared are extraordinary.**

Across the three cities, we've seen many similarities in how people are experiencing data systems. There are patterns like insecurity and safety, resignation and resistance, the separation of family — whether through incarceration, detention, deportation, or foster care systems — and **the feeling that we must trade away our data to attain our human needs**. People feel that they are being forced to engage with different data-driven systems and their life stories and data reputations precede them into their relationships with other institutions.



Research so far suggests that research participants are specifically targeted for more intrusive, less secure, and more densely integrated data systems because of their membership in groups that have historically faced exploitation, discrimination, and other forms of structural violence. Their data stays with them--whether it's an error or something they've overcome — far longer than more advantaged groups, and its impacts are profound. Further, surveillance and data collection are deeply connected to diversion from public benefits, insecure housing, loss of job opportunities, and the policing and criminalization of our communities.

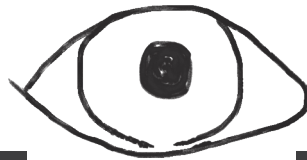
The following pages showcase some of their insights.

Security & Surveillance

A feeling of being surveilled and insecure is a very real issue for some interviewees.

"No, I'm not feeling all that secure. Some of the way I'm feeling is because I don't fully understand the technology." - Sam (Detroit)

"...When I slept on the curb I was confronted. They took pictures of me, but I didn't know they was taking pictures. I was covered up with a sitting blanket and the girl said 'They took your picture,' so he took the blanket off my head and said 'We're going to have to talk to you about [this] homeless, sleeping on the bus thing.'"
- DO (Charlotte)



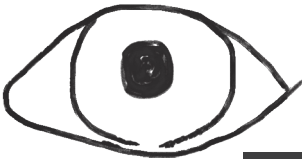
Predatory Data Systems

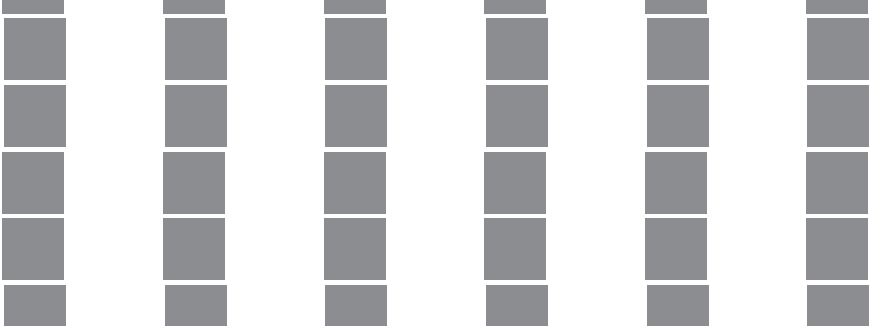
Interviewees express feelings of vulnerability in being exposed to systems they experience as predatory, biased, and exploitative.

"Nowadays, there are all these services where you can pay. Anybody can just pay a fee and get access to all kinds of information. It could be somebody who's stalking me. It could be somebody who—it could be a potential employer. I don't know even if it's legal, but who's going to stop them? They never have to tell me that they did it." - Justice Black (Detroit)

"I had no option but to give it to them; I need to work, I need a cell phone to work, I need communication, I need a cell phone, so I had no alternative but to give out my information." - Una Guerrera (Los Angeles)

"When applying for certain jobs, some of those websites share your information to colleges... which is uncomfortable. You're expecting a job-related call—an interview, and it's somebody asking if you want to go to college. It can be pretty forceful." -Johnny D (Charlotte)





Tracked and Targeted

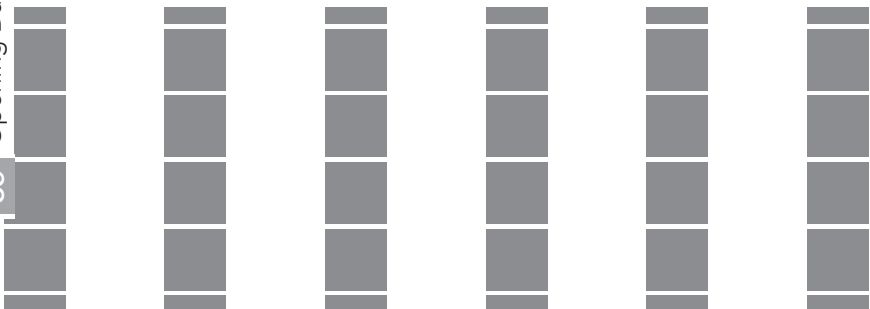
Many interviewees expressed feeling a lack of agency when interacting with data-collecting agencies, employers, and companies. This leads them to feel tracked and targeted by shadowy data systems.

"That's why a lot of companies, they'll mess with you but they don't want you to do nothing but pack and lift boxes, stuff like that. They want your physical physique but they don't want to help you." - Bee (Charlotte)

"When you go to the DPSS [Department of Public Social Services] office they want to know all your information, if you own a house, if you own a car, if you own storage, if you own stocks...I mean how much money do you got in the savings account or do you have any money under your bed." - Amy Black (Los Angeles)

"For their benefit they do communicate. But for my benefit, no." - Assata (Charlotte)

"In my experience, even if you don't want to interact with them, law enforcement will find ways to stop you and collect your data." - Janet (Los Angeles)

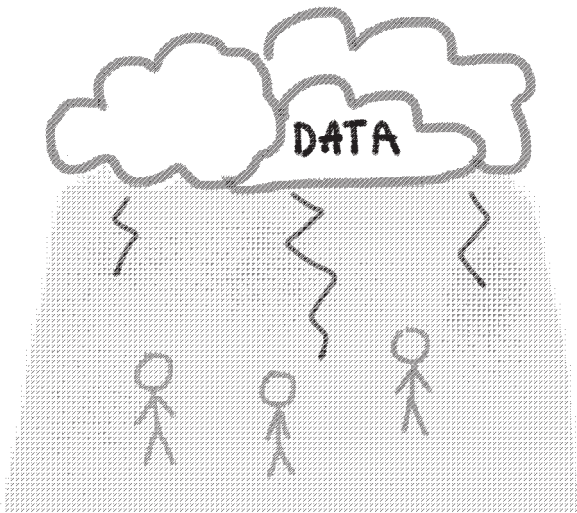


Emotional and Material Costs

Interviewees have expressed fear, anxiety, and dread around the material consequences of data sharing.

"Everything you do in this country, good or bad, it's used against you. Does it have an impact on your family? Of course it does! A very negative impact. Those who suffer most are always the children. What are we creating? Panic, fear, sadness." - Guadalupe (Los Angeles)

"I see why people fake their identity. This is a circle, the DMV, the department of social services, credit, jobs, probation, I mean... come on, how you going to get out?" - Jack (Charlotte)



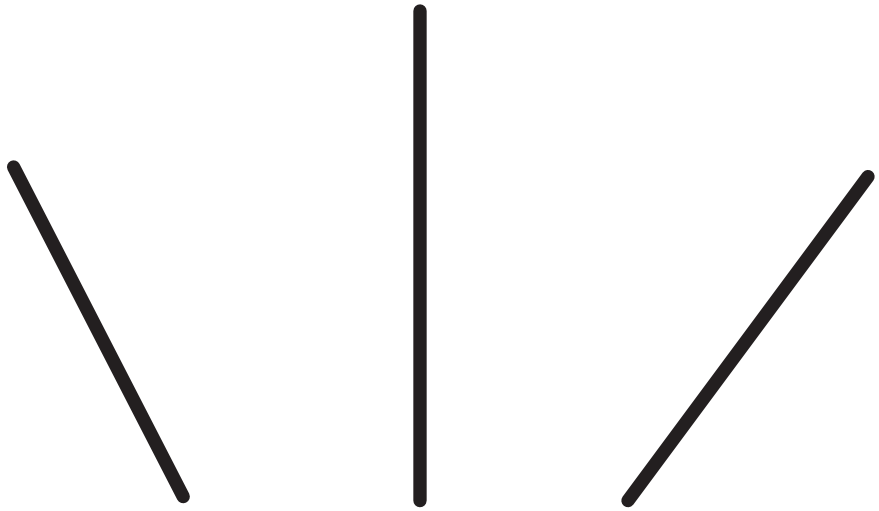
Innovation, Resistance and Self-Defense

Despite feeling tracked and trapped by data collection, interviewees have shared innovative strategies for survival and data self-defense. They have talked about blocking, avoiding data collection, expungement, FOIA requests of their records, and building alternative communication systems that support human dignity and self-determination. They offer compelling policy prescriptions: minimize the amount of data that is collected, for example, or use a level of data privacy common to healthcare in other settings.

"What's the price of me having my records expunged? After that, where do we go from here? You going to still neglect to forgive me, or you going to not forgive me? Is it going to count against other things I'm going to do in life to get ahead?" - Hatman (Los Angeles)

"My cell phone is a prepaid cell phone. I don't have a contract, so there is no true tie back to my identity. Wherever I can minimize me giving someone any of my information, I will. I avoid as many contracts as possible. I do a lot of direct channel transactions if I can. I don't think there is anything that you can really do to secure yourself." - Renita Gray (Detroit)

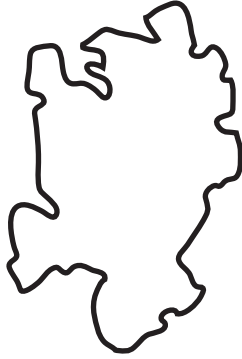
"Each institution [should] deal only with the information it needs... Collection systems should only capture data that's necessary. They should not intimidate people. They should not violate their human rights." - Angélica (Los Angeles)



Although the impacts of data collection are significant, we are finding that our communities still have a great deal of hope, creativity and resilience. Those we have spoken to have also expressed promising visions for building a future based in social justice, material abundance, and open and free communication.



About the ODB cities



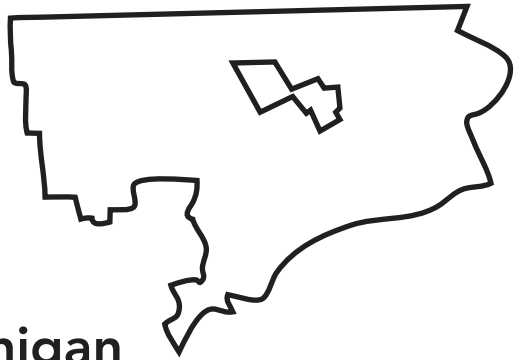
Charlotte, North Carolina

A beacon of the New South, Charlotte has grown rapidly and its population transformed over the past century. Plantations worked by slaves, cotton mills, railroads, banks and more laid the groundwork for Charlotte's boomtown status. However, its residents do not reap the benefits of this wealth equally. **The city ranked last out of 50 large cities for income mobility according to a 2013 study.**

Mobility and opportunity are directly affected by an old kind of data with new implications in the internet age—criminal records. Our work in Charlotte grapples with the impact of data and surveillance on people trying to harness some of the economic success of the city while the label of a past conviction remains a barrier to employment, services, and housing. African-American residents are five times more likely to be incarcerated than their white counterparts in North Carolina. The legacy of Jim Crow and slavery continues.

City websites highlight Charlotte's moderate response to the civil rights movement, and it is true that the business community was proactive in dismantling segregation in

public accommodations. Yet, white supremacists bombed African-American community leaders' homes, and the school district fought integration up to the Supreme Court. Today, Charlotte spends millions to equip police with body cameras in the name of countering bias and promoting accountability. But the cameras did not prevent officers shooting dead a young black man in 2016, nor did they capture the incident. **Community outrage boiled over into the streets. Organizing efforts continue, including agitation for broader criminal justice reform.**



Detroit, Michigan

Once the industrial center and the fourth largest city in the United States, **Detroit is a crucible of social transformation and participatory democracy, where residents have been making a way out of no way for decades.**

In recent years, its residents have challenged a “comeback” narrative that leaves too many of its people out. The narrative largely focuses on corporate-led initiatives, negating any mention of extraction of resources, lending discrimination, and redlining practices leveraged by commercial actors against the residents of this majority Black city. **Any “renaissance” the city has experienced is profoundly uneven in its distribution.** Detroit led the country in unemployment and child poverty rates in 2013, and in 2015 the Federal Communications Commission

found that 40% of residents lack access to broadband internet¹ - the highest percentage among big cities.

Our work in Detroit is situated within this context and against a backdrop of recent crises for residents of the Motor City. Between 2011 and 2015, the city foreclosed on one in four homes due to overdue property taxes. Community members and scholars have decried the foreclosures as illegal, resulting from improperly conducted tax assessments and blatant disregard for the state's constitutional safeguards. This flawed tax assessment dataset has devastated communities. Meanwhile, since 2014, the city has shut off water to tens of thousands of households, nearing 100,000 residents in just three years.

In a city where African-Americans make up over 80% of the population, foreclosures and water shutoffs have a discriminatory impact. These trends follow a history of institutional racism in the city stretching back to the response to the Great Migration, which brought thousands of black folks to Detroit.

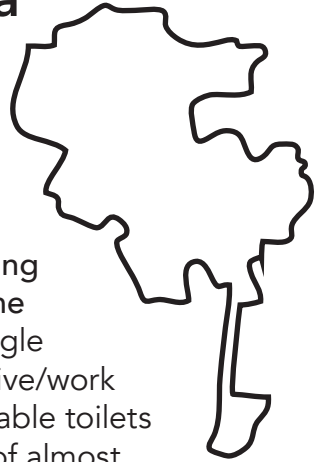
But contemporary Detroit also draws on its history as a **center of human resilience**, from the legacy of work coming out of the James and Grace Lee Boggs Center to Nurture Community Leadership and the formation of Detroit Summer over 20 years ago, to groups like Michigan Welfare Rights Organization, People's Water Board Coalition, We the People of Detroit, Detroit Black Community Food Security Network, Allied Media Projects, and more.



¹ <http://fortune.com/2016/05/23/detroit-broadband-access/>

Los Angeles, California

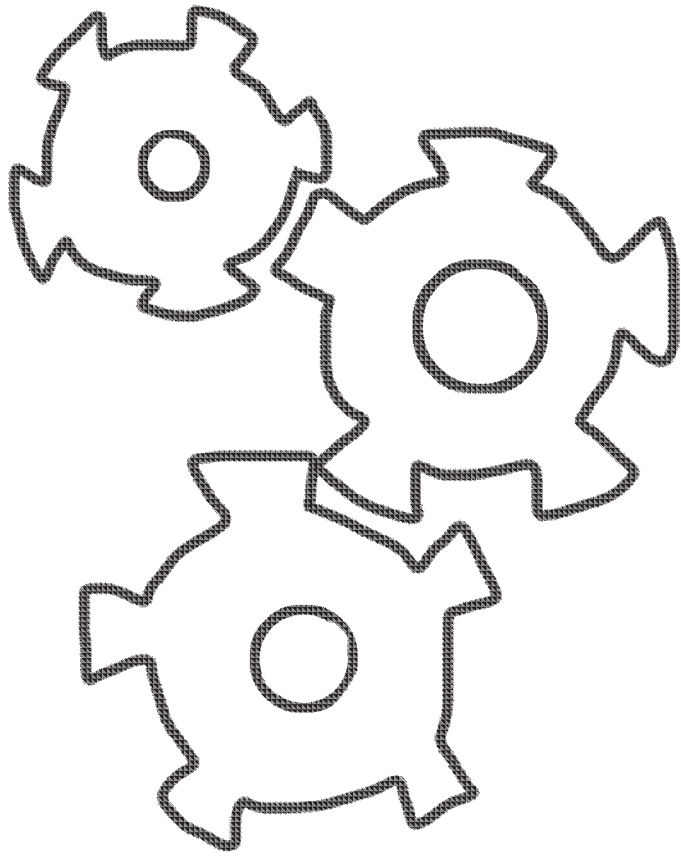
Los Angeles is the third largest metropolitan economy in the world and rates better than many other U.S. cities on scales of segregation and opportunity. Yet, homelessness saw a 25% increase in 2017. The wealth pouring into downtown is pushing out long-time residents, as gentrification replaces single residence occupancy (SRO) units with live/work lofts. A recent study found just nine usable toilets at night for a street-based population of almost 2,000, far below United Nations' mandates for human rights and cleanliness².



As marginalized communities push back — such as a drive for Skid Row to have its own elected neighborhood council — our work in Los Angeles considers resistance to surveillance, whether by police or other state actors such as the Department of Social Services. The Los Angeles Police Department's history of misconduct and abuse gives pause as the agency has developed some of the most sophisticated and secretive surveillance systems in the country. This includes a partnership with a CIA-backed company on the forefront of predictive policing and deployment of facial recognition software on parts of its vast CCTV network to search for "matches" to a closely guarded and problematic gang database.

Data mining on such an unprecedented scale is now being utilized in the name of fraud detection and benefits management for government services. With the increasing integration among government data systems, the questions and perspectives of the subjects of this data are more critical than ever.

² <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2017/jun/30/la-skid-row-homeless-toilet-access-report>



DATA JUSTICE WORKSHOPS

What is the worst thing you can imagine someone using this data for? Write a short story about the worst-case scenario use of this data:

What might a community-based organization be able to use this data for in their social justice work? Write a short story about the best-case scenario use of this data:

¹ <https://data.detroitmi.gov/Property-Parcels/Targeted-Multifamily-Housing-Areas-aka-20-Minute-N/qw3n-zsbc>

² <https://detroit.curbed.com/2016/6/15/11946166/mayor-detroit-neighborhoods-walk-bike>

Power Not Paranoia

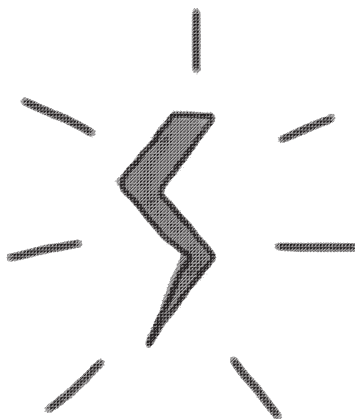
Community Workshop Activities: An Introduction to Data and Privacy

Created by the ODB Project Team

The Power Not Paranoia participatory workshop activities are designed to introduce data and digital privacy to the members of the various communities in which we work. The workshops are designed to build community knowledge, defense, health and wellness, and organizing strategies through collective processes that increase community members understanding in the following areas:

Data: Introduce community members to data and digital privacy and provide community members with clear, concrete, and accurate information about what is collected about them and how it might impact their daily lives.

Data Collection: Help community members gain a working understanding of the types of information they share, intentionally and unintentionally. Unpack myths about data, privacy, and collectively learn while providing information about what is collected and how it is used. Investigate the impact that data collection has or may have on our daily lives.

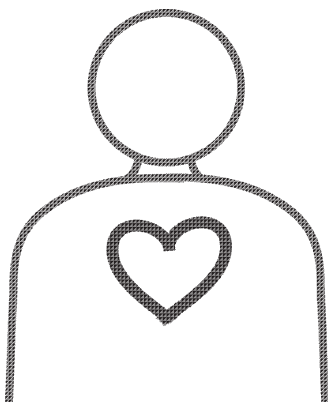


Data Streams: Help community members understand what a data stream is, how it functions, and its primary purpose. Enable community members to see themselves as the origin of a stream of data that is collected, stored, shared, monetized, and/or criminalized by various entities (commercial entities, the state, etc.)

Data Safety: Share information with community members about how to protect their “data safety” and their due process rights (in automated decisions, e.g.). Connect the collection of personal and/or individual information to the collection of information about us as groups, neighborhoods, and communities.

Data Security: Gather information about what people are most concerned with regarding data and their basic needs so we can connect and build on the knowledge to help win current organizing campaigns.

All together, there are **three different activities** that focus on the various dynamics of data and digital privacy. **These activities can be facilitated as one whole continuous program or small workshops**, depending on the needs of any specific community.

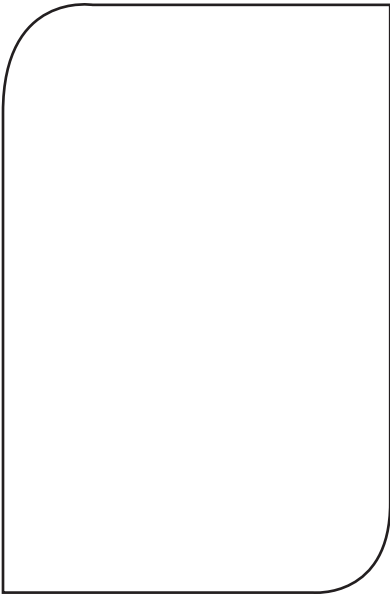


Your Data Body

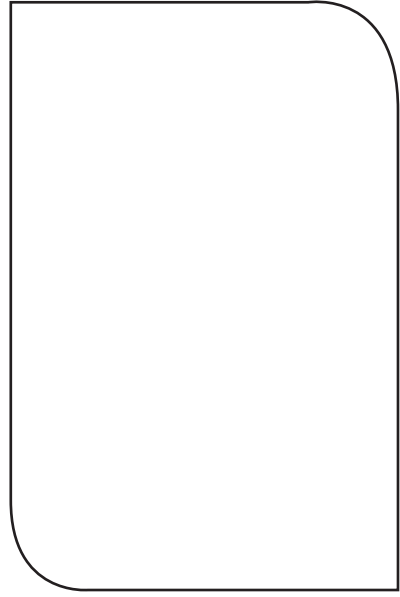
Created by Tamika Lewis and the ODB Project Team

Instructions: Fold this paper in half along the solid line and follow the instructions on each side.

Draw a picture of your data body under the surveillance state:



Draw a picture of your data after the surveillance state has been dismantled:



Please answer the following questions:

What is the same between your two data bodies?

What is the difference between your two data bodies?

What needs to change to help you free your data body?

What's in Your Wallet?

Created by Tawana Petty and the ODB Project Team

1. What makes up your online identity?

First, write the card types in your wallet in the workspace below. Then, draw lines between each card and the types of information that were collected to receive the service.

card type: _____	Social Security number Address Phone number	card type: _____
card type: _____	Birthdate Work information School information Health information (<i>eye color, weight, height, etc.</i>)	card type: _____
card type: _____	Marital status Emergency contact/references	card type: _____

(continued)

2. What does this activity make you think about with respect to data collection?

3. What concerns come to mind when you think about your online identity (data body)?

4. How does your data body connect to your neighborhood/community?

Our Communities, Our Bodies, Our Stories, Our Data

Created by Mariella Saba and the ODB Project Team

After collectively uncovering which and how data systems affect our daily lives, this workshop builds on working knowledge of data systems and helps community members engage in a process of developing strategies to reclaim power of their data, bodies, stories, and communities.

Goals

To collectively answer the question: “What systems do we interact with on a daily basis as we go about accessing/exercising our human needs/rights?”



To build community knowledge, create and practice ways to defend ourselves/our rights, connect knowledge gained to our everyday lives, challenges, and work, and practice collective transformation and liberation with all participants



Format

Facilitated group discussion

Duration

90 minutes

Materials

Chairs, markers, sticky butcher paper, sticky notes (*optional*), camera (*for documentation*)

Description of Activity

1. Opening: As a group, brainstorm and map out answers to the following questions. Capture people's answers on the butcher paper.

What are systems?

What words come up when you think of "systems"?

After 15 minutes or so, ask:

What do they have in common?

2. Digging Deeper: On a new sheet of paper, ask people to brainstorm and map out answers to the following questions. Continue to capture answers and themes on butcher paper.

What are public benefits systems? (spend 10 minutes)

Which systems are we most frequently interacting with in our context? (Underline them. Spend 10 minutes)

Invite the group to

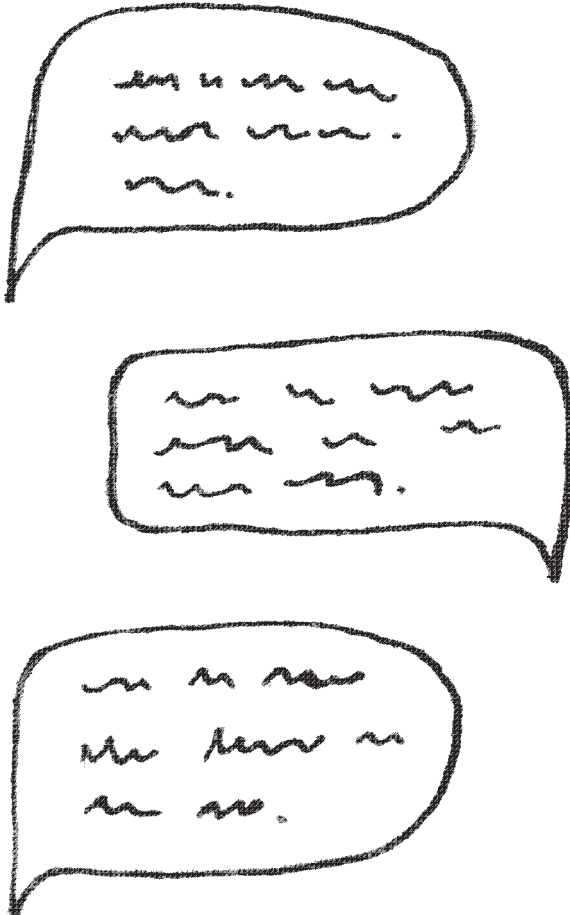
list what we know about how our information is collected, shared, or used when we interact with these systems. (spend 10 minutes)

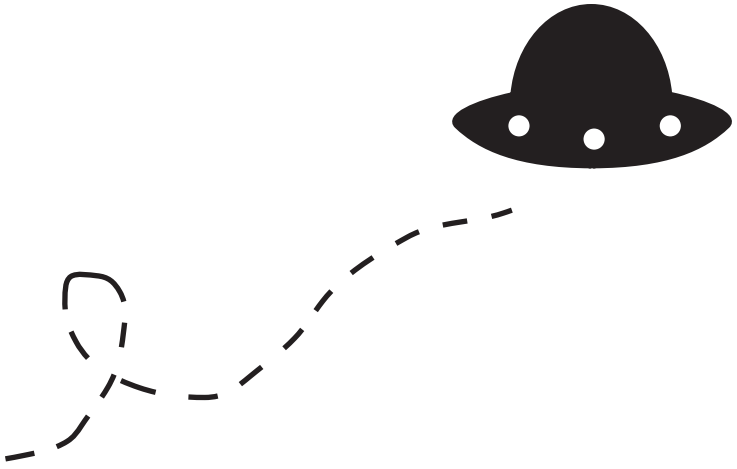
Invite the group to

list what we "don't know" and want/need to know about how our information is collected, shared, or used when we interact with these systems.

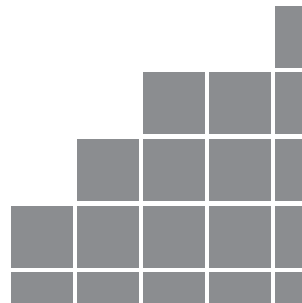
3. Understanding: Dialogue with participants on what they are understanding about what's happening from previous steps, and create space for participants to name people's power in navigating, surviving, and resisting these systems. Do this for about 20 minutes.

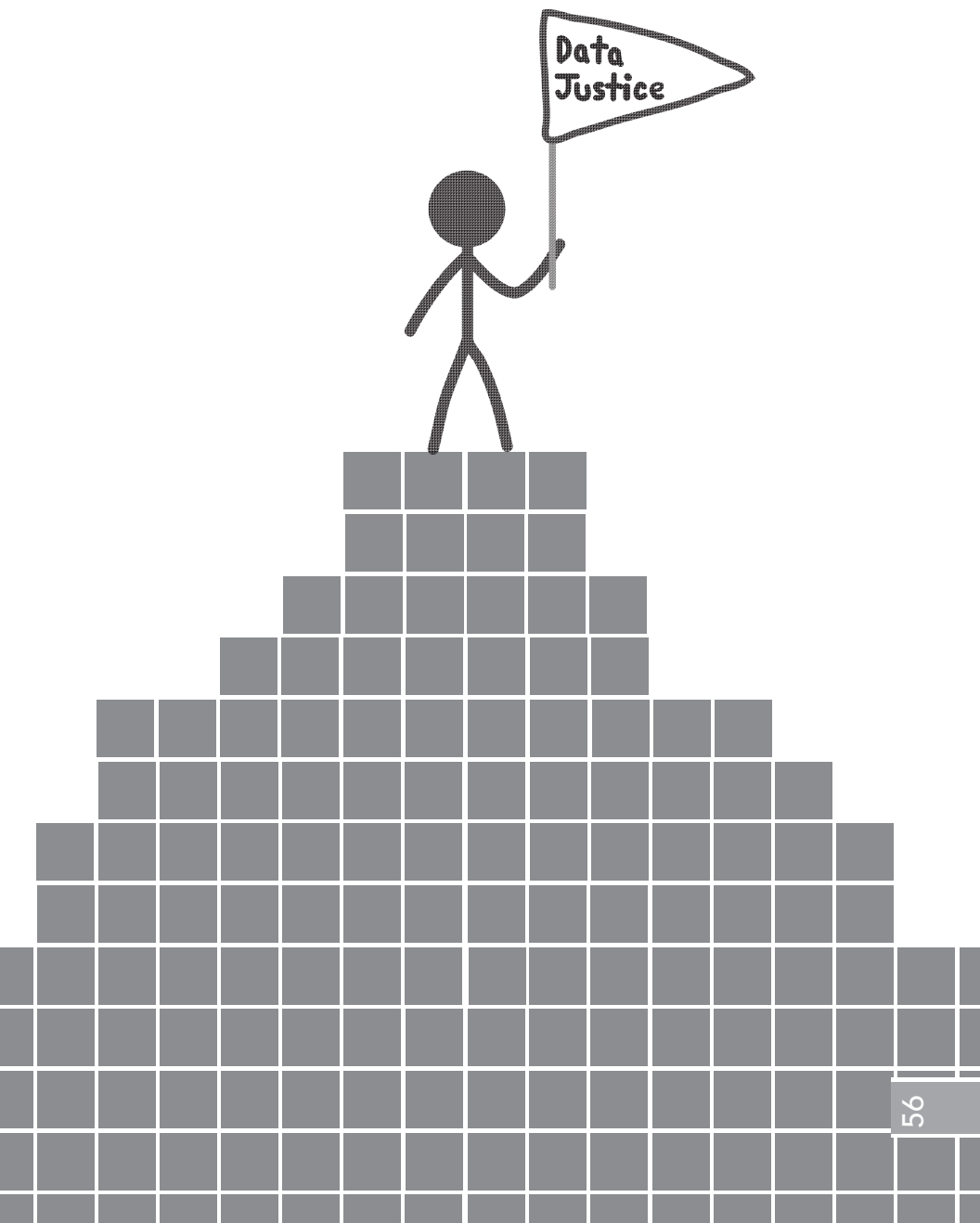
4. Closing: Close with takeaways that participants can commit to sharing or doing in order to build greater awareness about data collection in their community and strategies that support greater community protection and defense.





Data is everywhere. It has an impact on everyone's life, even if you are not suffering from economic injustices. The more you know about your personal data and how data systems are managed, the more you are able to protect yourself and hold institutions accountable.





RESOURCES + EXAMPLES

For a deeper understanding of equitable open data practices, check out these resources:

Opening Data zine volume 1 (<https://detroitcommunitytech.org/learning-materials>)

Compiled by the DDJC and DCTP in 2015, the zine includes a primer on open data, real-world examples of data discrimination, use cases of data in organizing, creative data storytelling, and many links to follow for local projects.

Data DiscoTech model (<https://www.alliedmedia.org/news/2015/10/27/video-and-photos-data-discotech>) &

Discotech Zine (<https://detroitcommunitytech.org/learning-materials>)

Through photos and videos, see what happens at a Data DiscoTech from the perspectives of participants and station managers. Then, check out the zine for **step-by-step instructions and resources for organizing your own!**

Open Data Policy Guidelines (<https://sunlightfoundation.com/opendataguidelines/>)

Presented by the Sunlight Foundation, a national nonprofit dedicated to government transparency and accountability, these guidelines offer **in-depth, technical ideas and language for comprehensive open data policy** and are foundational to the locally-rooted guidelines we've shared here.

Teaching Community Technology Handbook (<http://www.detroitcommunitytech.org/teachcommtech>)

This 100+ page handbook will take you through the history of popular education while offering a **step-by-step guide to developing community rooted technology workshops and curricula**. It helps us craft relevant, educational exercises for data literacy at DiscoTechs and through focus groups.

Open Data Release Toolkit (<https://datasf.org/resources/open-data-release-toolkit/>)

Released by DataSF in California, the toolkit supports our top two Recommendations for Equitable Open Data by providing “practical, clear guidance for government employees considering publication of sensitive or protected raw data” and offers strategies for identifying sensitive information, performing risk assessments, and choosing and implementing privacy solutions.

Share a resource

Know of something else that should be on this list? We’re especially interested in projects, reports, popular education tools and reading materials that model our vision for data justice.

Submit your ideas and links to additional resources by email at communitytechnology@alliedmedia.org or submit an issue to our Github repository at <https://github.com/datajustice/report/issues>.

Visit detroitcommunitytech.org for info on these and other projects, and for more learning materials.



NOTES



