WHAT IS PUBLIC INTEREST TECHNOLOGY?

Public interest technology refers to a set of practices to design, deploy and govern technology in ways that advance the public interest. Interdisciplinary by nature, it involves the ability to assess and respond to the core ethical, legal, policy, social, economic and political implications of technology.

PIT includes technical fields like computer science and engineering, along with law, policy, movement-building, the social sciences and the humanities, directing attention to our collective need for justice, dignity, and autonomy and ways to embed such values in an evermore technological world.

Similar to public interest law, institutions of higher learning are defining and driving the growth of this field. Crucially, it draws not only on the knowledge of experts, but on the experiences of everyday people whose lives and wellbeing are increasingly defined by technology.

WE LIVE IN A NEW KIND OF TECHNOCRACY, WHERE THE RULES OF TECHNOLOGY DETERMINE HOW WE LIVE OUR LIVES. THROUGH PUBLIC INTEREST TECHNOLOGY, WE CAN MAKE SURE THAT OUR DEMOCRACY GETS RESTORED.

Latanya Sweeney
Harvard University
2020 Annual PIT-UN Convening
Learn more at www.PITcases.org

The Public Interest Technology University Network (PIT-UN) fosters collaboration between universities and colleges to build the field of public interest technology and nurture a new generation of civic-minded technologists.

**Vision**

PIT practitioners place equity at the center of tech design, deployment and governance, leading to technologies that work for all, especially those who have been most marginalized.

**Mission**

To cultivate inquiry, education, research, and practice that positions the next generation of technologists to design, build, deploy and govern technologies that advance the public interest.

**Membership**

PIT-UN is comprised of 60 U.S. and 4 international members, including 70% of top tech schools in the nation.

Since 2019, PIT-UN members have created career pathway models for practitioners-in-training while supporting faculty in their efforts to make PIT a well-recognized and well-funded academic discipline.

Through new curricula, research agendas, and interdisciplinary centers, PIT-UN members are developing the capacity, expertise and human capital needed to make public interest the norm in technology.

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY
BOSTON UNIVERSITY
BROWN UNIVERSITY
CAL POLY STATE UNIVERSITY
Carnegie Mellon University
CASE WESTERN RESERVE UNIVERSITY
CEPI FDV DIREITO-SAO PAULO
CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK
CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY
COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY
CORNELL UNIVERSITY
DUKE UNIVERSITY
FLORIDA INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY
FORDHAM UNIVERSITY
GEORGE WASHINGTON UNIVERSITY
GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY
GEORGIA INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY (GEORGIA TECH)
GEORGIA STATE UNIVERSITY
HARVARD UNIVERSITY
HOWARD UNIVERSITY
ILLINOIS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
INDIANA UNIVERSITY BLOOMINGTON
JAMES MADISON UNIVERSITY
LANE COLLEGE
LEMOYNE-OWEN COLLEGE
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
MEHARRY MEDICAL COLLEGE
MIAMI DADE COLLEGE
MISSOURI UNIVERSITY OF SCIENCE & TECHNOLOGY
NAZARETH COLLEGE
NEW YORK UNIVERSITY
NORTHEASTERN UNIVERSITY
OLIN COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING
PARDEE RAND GRADUATE SCHOOL
PENN STATE UNIVERSITY
PEPPERDINE UNIVERSITY
PRAIRIE VIEW A&M UNIVERSITY
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY
ROCHESTER INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY
STANFORD UNIVERSITY
STILLMAN COLLEGE
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
THE OHIO STATE UNIVERSITY
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH
UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA
UNIVERSITY OF BASQUE COUNTY (INACTIVE FOR 2022-2023)
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA BERKELEY
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SANTA CRUZ
UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH
UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT CHICAGO
UNIVERSITY OF MASSACHUSETTS AT AMHERST
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN
UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA
UNIVERSITY OF RIJeka
UNIVERSITY OF SZEGET (INACTIVE FOR 2022-2023)
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON
VIRGINIA TECH
WEST VIRGINIA UNIVERSITY
WILLIAM & MARY
Worcester Polytechnic Institute
Network members may choose to focus on one, some, or all six of the field-building areas, in addition to other initiatives. The Network seeks to center equity, diversity and justice within PIT programs and projects, leveraging the use of data and human-centered approaches to foster new solutions.

**Successful PIT Projects include...**

- GIS Certificate that increases minority student access to climate tech training and supports flood-prone municipalities (Miami-Dade College)
- Training and employing young people from marginalized communities as data wranglers (Georgia Tech)
- Cybersecurity clinics where students educate and support local businesses and nonprofits (Stillman, UC Berkeley, MIT & others)
- Machine-learning tools that help public interest lawyers and everyday people assess court proceedings (UT Austin)

**Network Activities**

**NEW MEMBER ONBOARDING**
Applicants attend four sessions to learn key PIT concepts, build relationships and develop an institutional framework for success. Applicants who decide to become full members then set milestones and commit to an action plan.

**NETWORK CHALLENGE**
Our annual grant program has invested $14m since 2019 in new ideas to build PIT programs and career pipelines. $2.3m was awarded to 18 proposals from 48 institutions in 2022.

The 2023 Challenge will focus on Cross-Disciplinary Educational Initiatives, and Career Pipeline & Placement Efforts.

**WORKING GROUPS**
Anyone from a PIT-UN institution can help pilot innovative ideas to push the PIT space forward.

**2023 GROUPS:**
- Wiki Scholars
- DEI in Cybersecurity
- PIT @ NSF
- Mid-West Regional

**SPECIAL RFP’S**
Targeted grant opportunities to develop products, research curricula and programs. Past RFP’s include PIT Career Fairs and a Technologist Code of Ethics.

**ANNUAL CONVENING**
PIT-UN faculty, students, administrators and institutional leaders gather at a member campus to learn about and celebrate PIT alongside artists, technologists, nonprofits, government leaders and community organizations.

Housed at New America. PIT-UN’s work is funded through the support of the Ford Foundation, Hewlett Foundation, Mastercard Impact Fund, with support from the Mastercard Center for Inclusive Growth, Schmidt Futures and The Siegel Family Endowment.