Public interest technology (PIT) is the study and application of technology expertise to advance the public interest. This includes all the goods and services communities rely on, like healthcare, education, housing, food, voting rights, security, clean water, healthy ecosystems and more.

PIT involves many disciplines from computer science to art, and promotes justice, dignity and autonomy for all - especially those most impacted by technology’s harms.

WHAT IS PUBLIC INTEREST TECHNOLOGY?

PIT can take many forms across many professional fields and areas of human life, including:

ACADEMIA:
- Research and teaching on the effects of technology.
- Community Engagement

GOVERNMENT:
- Digital service delivery
- Government tech
- Law enforcement
- Public policy
- Regulatory oversight

INDUSTRY:
- Product Management
- Trust & Safety
- Diversity, Equity & Inclusion
- Elections Integrity

NONPROFITS:
- Advocacy
- Civil & Human Rights
- Human Services
- Public

PIT IN ACTION

PIT IS INTERDISCIPLINARY
Technology is too often created with the ideas and tools of only one or two professional fields, which prevents us from anticipating possible harms and designing for the public interest. PIT requires collaboration across many disciplines, including:

SCIENCES
- AI
- Biotechnology
- Computer Science
- Cybersecurity
- Data Science or Analytics Engineering
- Environmental Science
- Information Technology Information Science

SOCIAL SCIENCE & HUMANITIES
- Anthropology
- Art & Design
- Education
- Government / Public Policy
- International Relations Journalism & Communication Psychology
- Sociology
- Science, Technology & Society (STS)
- UX / Human-Centered Design

HOW DO I GET INTO PIT?

BUILD THESE SKILLS:
- Human-Centered Design
- Collaborating across cultures and disciplines
- Translating technical systems into simple language
- Gathering and applying community feedback

EXPLORE THESE FIELDS:
- Computer Sciences: AI, Cybersecurity, Data Science, Software Engineering
- Social Sciences: Anthropology, Sociology, Psychology, Public Policy

READ THESE BOOKS:
- The Tech that Comes Next by A. Bruce & A. Sample-Ward
- Power to the Public by H. Schank & T. Dawson-McGuinness
- Recoding America by Jennifer Pahlka

SEARCH THESE JOB BOARDS:
- Responsible Tech
- WeAreImpactful
- USAJOBS
- TheBridge
- Fast Forward
- All Hands
- Diversify Tech
- Code for America
- Higher Ground Labs

LEARN MORE ABOUT PIT CAREERS.