

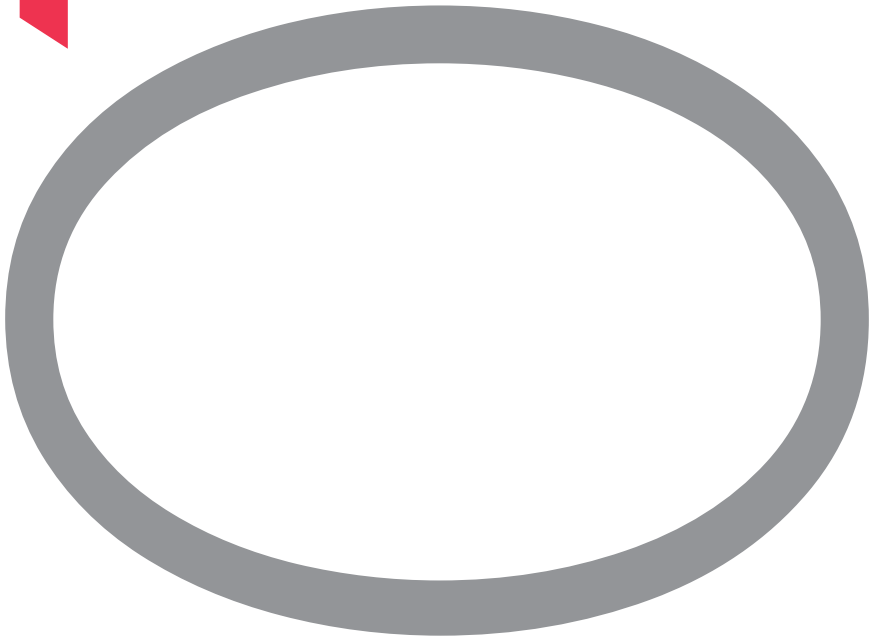
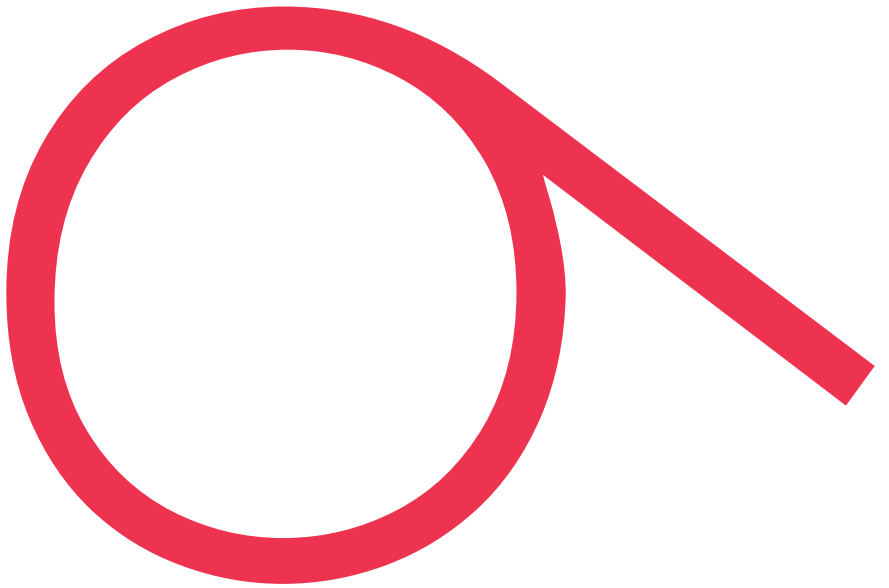


PHILANTHROPY AND  
DIGITAL CIVIL SOCIETY:

# BLUEPRINT

**THE ANNUAL  
INDUSTRY FORECAST**

BY LUCY BERNHOLZ



## Acknowledgments



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Copies available for free download at

<https://paccenter.stanford.edu/resources/blueprints>.

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### **Dedication**

This, the tenth edition of the *Blueprint*, is dedicated to Rob Collier, former CEO of the Council of Michigan Foundations, who retired in 2018. Rob has been a friend, mentor, and luge teammate. His adventurous spirit and commitment to the public good has inspired me in ways too numerous to count.

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# CONTENTS

- 2** **WHAT IS THIS MONOGRAPH?**
- 3** **INTRODUCTION**
- 4** **THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE**
  - WHERE IS CIVIL SOCIETY NOW AND WHAT ARE ITS BIGGEST CHALLENGES?
  - A RECKONING FOR PHILANTHROPY AND NONPROFITS
  - ALL THE WAYS WE CONTRIBUTE OUR TIME, MONEY, AND DATA TO OUR COMMUNITIES
  - TODAY'S CHALLENGES POSE BIG QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE
- 10** **INSIGHT: BIG IDEAS THAT MATTER FOR 2019**
  - WANTED: A VISION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY
  - FIRST PRINCIPLES AND SHARED DOMAINS
  - NEW QUESTIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY
  - NEW FEATURES ON THE LANDSCAPE OF DIGITAL CIVIL SOCIETY
  - CHANGING PRACTICES
  - ASSOCIATIONAL SUPPRESSION
  - WE NEED TO INVEST IN THE RIGHT SUPPORTS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY
  - OUR DATA GOVERNANCE DEFINES US
  - CIVIL SOCIETY CAN LEAD
  - BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A NEW VISION
- 26** **FORESIGHT: MOVING TOWARD THE FUTURE**
  - NEW GAME, NEW RULES
  - ASSUMPTIONS TO GROUND A FUTURE VISION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY
  - PULLING THE EDGE TO THE CENTER
  - WHAT IF'S
  - CALLING BS ON BIG CIVIL SOCIETY
  - GETTING OUT OF THE WAY
  - BRINGING IT HOME
- 35** **BUZZWORD WATCH**
- 37** **PREDICTIONS FOR 2019**
- 38** **2019 WILDCARDS**
- 38** **SCORECARD: RENOVATIONS TO 2018 PREDICTIONS**
- 40** **WAIT, WAIT, THERE'S MORE**
- 41** **DISCUSSION GUIDE**
- 43** **ENDNOTES**

## WHAT IS THIS MONOGRAPH?

*Philanthropy and Digital Civil Society: Blueprint 2019* is the tenth annual industry forecast about the ways we use private resources for public benefit in the digital age. Each year, I use the *Blueprint* to provide an overview of the current landscape, point to big ideas that will matter in the coming year, and direct your attention to changes on the horizon.

## WHY IS IT CALLED A BLUEPRINT?

I started this annual forecasting process in 2009, publishing *Blueprint 2010* in December of that year. I use the metaphor of a blueprint to describe the forecast because blueprints are guides for things yet to come and storage devices for decisions already made. My father is an architect. I grew up surrounded by giant rolls of blueprints and scale models of buildings. I also spent a lot of time in unfinished foundations, trying to play on, and not get hurt by, exposed re-bar. I worked in his office some summers, eavesdropping on discussions with contractors, planning agencies, clients, and draftsmen<sup>1</sup> – all of whom bring different skills and interpretations to creating, reading, and using blueprints. I learned that creating a useful blueprint requires drawing ideas from many people, using a common grammar that gets real work done, and being prepared for multiple interpretations of any final product. I intend my *Blueprints* to speak to everyone involved in using private resources for public benefit and help people see their individual roles within the dynamics of the larger collective project of creating civil society. I hope you will use it as a starting point for debate and as input for your own planning. Please [join the discussion on Twitter at #blueprint19](#).

## WHO WROTE THIS DOCUMENT?

I'm Lucy Bernholz and I'm a philanthropy wonk. I am a Senior Research Scholar and Director of the [Digital Civil Society Lab](#), which is part of [Stanford University's Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society \(PACS\)](#). *The Huffington Post* calls me a "philanthropy game changer," *Fast Company* magazine named my blog [Philanthropy2173](#) "Best in Class," and I've twice been named to *The Nonprofit Times*' annual list of 50 most influential people. I studied history and earned a BA from Yale University and an MA and PhD from Stanford University. On Twitter I'm known as @p2173, and I post most of my articles, speeches, and presentations online at [www.lucybernholz.com](http://www.lucybernholz.com). The Lab supports the [Digital Impact community](#) and curates, creates, and shares free resources related to data governance.

## WHERE CAN I GET MORE INFORMATION?

The best way to keep up with my thinking is via a free email subscription to [Philanthropy2173](#). Information about Stanford's Digital Civil Society Lab is at [www.pacscenter.stanford.edu](http://www.pacscenter.stanford.edu). Previous *Blueprints* can be downloaded at [www.lucybernholz.com/books](http://www.lucybernholz.com/books) or <https://pacscenter.stanford.edu/resources/blueprints>.

# INTRODUCTION

Over the course of this ten-year series of annual forecasts, I've gotten some things right and some things wrong. From the beginning I've been trying to nudge us into questioning our assumptions about how philanthropy works, why the social economy matters, and what purposes civil society serves.

In 2010 I was trying to get nonprofits and foundations to see beyond their binary relationship built around grantmaking as the sum total of civil society. I wanted us all to incorporate impact investing, social enterprise, informal volunteer associations, and political activism into the space we call the social sector (or better yet, civil society). I framed the first several years of *Blueprints* around the social economy and showed how different types of organizations and funding streams were shifting and influencing the world in which foundations and nonprofits operated.

A few years ago I pushed the boundary again – moving digital dynamics and dependencies to the center of the analysis and including all the organizational forms (and “unforms”) of the social economy and online activity. I urged readers to “assume digital.”

Last year I pushed that further and changed the title to “Philanthropy and Digital Civil Society.” I wanted to capture the global nature of our connections, the broad range in which people are using their private resources for public benefit, and the need

to focus our collective attention not on programmatic efficiencies but on the massive shifts in democratic practice in which civil society is implicated. I'm exploring the same theme again this year. The challenges we face are global and existential – climate change, technological capabilities, and democratic practice are domains in which the assumptions and practices that brought us to 2019 are clearly not working for most of the people on the planet. At such times it seems necessary to question whether doing the same thing we've been doing is the right

***The challenges we face are global and existential. It seems necessary, then, to question whether doing the same thing we've been doing is the right plan of action.***

plan of action. I hope this *Blueprint* helps you ask that question about your own work, organizations, and mission – and get closer to answers that you can act on. To help with this we've included a Discussion Guide at the end of this volume. And you'll find “discuss this” icons throughout the margins.”

If you are just joining the *Blueprint* series with this tenth edition, welcome. If you've been reading since 2010, thank you. Feel free to go back in time by reviewing previous editions (several of which include organizational worksheets). The worksheets are free online at <https://digitalimpact.io/tools/> and previous *Blueprints* are free online at <https://pacscenter.stanford.edu/resources/blueprints/>.



# THE CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Where is civil society now and what are its biggest challenges?

Before diving into where we're headed, allow me to reflect on where we are.

## A RECKONING FOR PHILANTHROPY AND NONPROFITS

The past year began with an industry-wide reckoning for philanthropy and nonprofits in the United States. After decades of defending certain tax incentives for charitable giving as sacrosanct, the “nonprofit and philanthropic infrastructure” organizations in the U.S. lost their fight to do so one more time. The tax law that went into effect on January 1, 2018 changed the rules of the game for charitable giving. Initial predictions from big name groups that represent some of the sector suggest significant

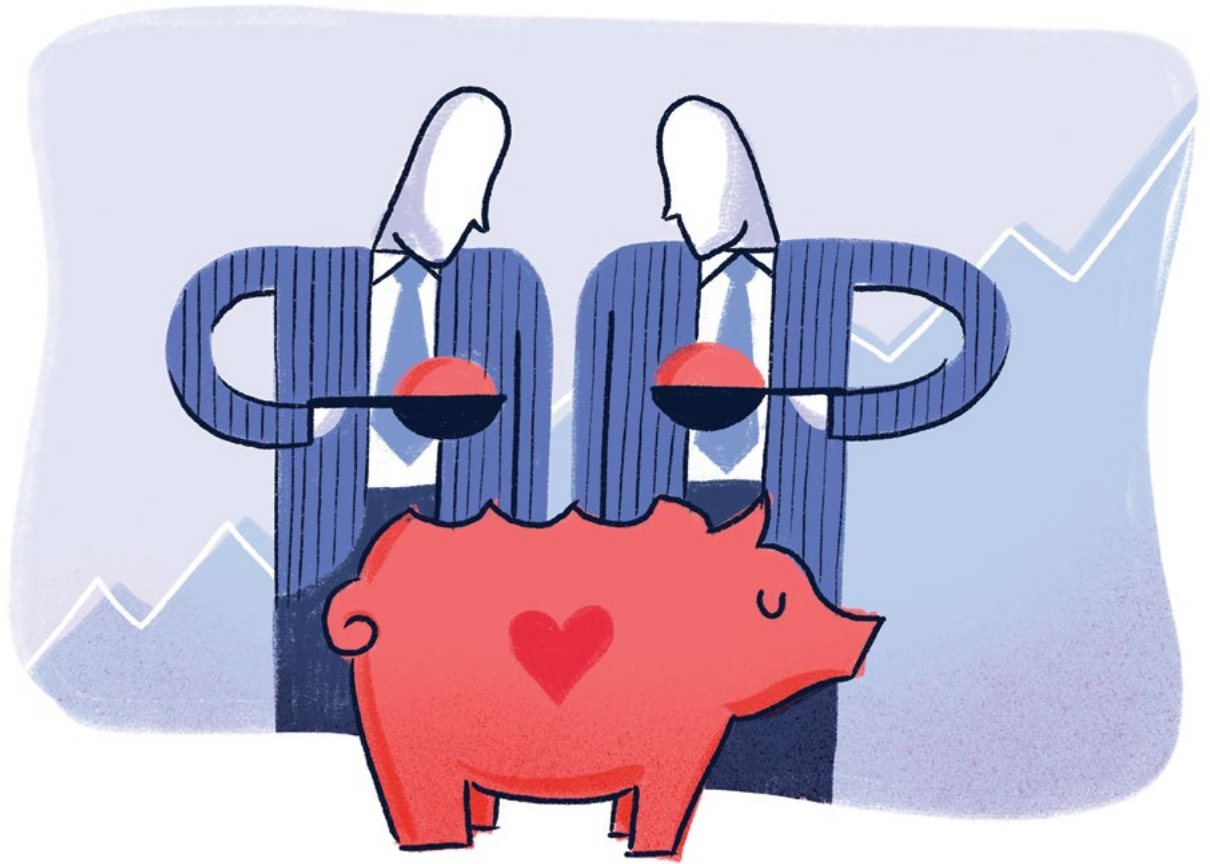
declines in individual giving to charitable nonprofits. **Experts estimated** that single year giving would **drop by between 4 and 6.5 percent** (resulting in an annual dollar decline of \$12 to \$19 billion).<sup>2</sup> Other opinions focused on the tax bill's windfalls for the wealthy, and argued that the wealthy would keep giving and might increase their philanthropic activity.<sup>3</sup> The rules have changed but we've yet to see what the effect will be.

*The decades-old political fortress around nonprofit tax deductions has been dramatically weakened, if not toppled.*

Predictions, however, abound: most people will give less, new types of giving products will emerge, giving will flow to nonprofits beyond charitable 501 (c)(3) organizations, and so on. Tax incentives do impact the way many people give – but philanthropy is not a single-variable equation.

Lots of things factor into how, when, where, why, and how much we give. We don't know how 300 million Americans will react to new laws. We do know that the decades-old political fortress around nonprofit tax deductions has been dramatically weakened, if not toppled. What philanthropy and civil society's U.S. political agenda will be, who will carry it, who speaks for whom and on what regulatory issues – well, those are interesting questions which





haven't been this unpredictable since John Gardner and others called for the creation of Independent Sector almost forty years ago. While we don't know much about how giving in the U.S. will change, we do know that the infrastructure/industry/political voice of philanthropy ain't what it used be. One clear sign – U.S. nonprofits giving up the tax status that allows deductible donations in exchange for the one that allows them to be full participants in the political sphere.<sup>4</sup>

And that all happened on the first day of the year. In one of the most “inside baseball” parts of our democracy – the world of policy wonks, financial advisors, and tax lawyers focused on the arcana of marginal costs – the discussion was essentially about new privileges for the rich and new hardships for the rest of the country. That same conversation was also happening on streets and in classrooms and on the news. By the fall

of 2018 a new book by Anand Giridharadas called *Winners Take All: The Elite Charade of Changing the World* called into question the whole industry of big philanthropy, big consulting, and big nonprofits, and hit the best seller list in its first week.

2018 was also the year privacy went mainstream. In the U.S. this came from Congressional hearings into Facebook, Twitter, and Google. In the EU it came in May, when the implementation of the General Data Protection Regulation lifted the region to a new position as global standard setter for digital data governance. In Australia it came from public reactions to the government's announced plans on digitized health records, which were met with national outrage and which the government promptly began to walk back. This tweet from Australia sums up how some longtime privacy advocates felt about this change:

Tweet seen in August regarding Australian government's handling of people's health records:



**Tim de Sousa** @TimdeSousa · Jul 31

Privacy and system security is an actual election issue now.

\*wipes away tear\*

I never thought this day would come.

**Ben Grubb** @bengrubb  
BREAKING: Labor's shadow health minister @CatherineKingMP is doubling down, saying @GregHuntMP's My Health Record fix is "inadequate" and doesn't go far enough. That was unexpected.

The screenshot shows a tweet from Ben Grubb (@bengrubb) with a blue checkmark. The text reads: "BREAKING: Labor's shadow health minister @CatherineKingMP is doubling down, saying @GregHuntMP's My Health Record fix is 'inadequate' and doesn't go far enough. That was unexpected." To the left of the text is a small image of a newspaper clipping with the headline "This is a Govt announcement but it's time to implier" and the date "1 AUGUST 2018".

To get an overall feel for what happened in 2018, we can zoom in to professional economic estimates or zoom out to observations of lived experience. Some rural communities continue to lose young people, struggle to hold on to jobs, and are barely connected to the digital world, even as low national unemployment rates imply that jobs are going begging.<sup>5</sup> Urban centers battle it out with each other for the title of worst commutes and highest costs of housing. Opioid addiction ravages generations. Wages have only grown 11%

since the 1970s – effectively stagnant – while today's big company CEOs earn 1,000% more than their predecessors.<sup>6</sup> The trillion dollar mark is now used to measure two American companies – Amazon and Apple – and the collective student loan debt of U.S. students, which reached \$1.41 trillion in the second quarter of 2018.<sup>7</sup> Student loans are second only to mortgages when it comes to total household debt, with the rise in the former preventing millions of people from hopes of ever taking on the latter.





Unprecedented natural disasters are now regular events. Hurricanes and wildfires caused more than \$300 billion in damage in the U.S. last year.<sup>8</sup> The costs of renewable energy sources have dropped below those of fossil fuels, and public activism has driven investors to pull more than \$6 trillion out of fossil fuel assets.<sup>9</sup> Yet U.S. energy policy continues to be captured by oil companies and science deniers.

*The actual decline in giving matters and so does the impact of that decline on our collective sense of who we are.*

And, even before the news on giving went into effect and certainly before their impact could be felt, the unthinkable started to happen. Charitable giving rates dropped. Analysis of 2017 data and data from the **first two quarters of 2018** showed that fewer households gave than in years before, and many gave less. The continued growth in the aggregate pool of U.S. giving (over \$410 billion) obscured this important change in participation rates.<sup>10</sup> It's hard to overstate the extent to which Americans believe – and the nonprofit sector depends on – that most of us give to charity every year. But the reality is the percentage has dropped to 55%, meaning just more than half of us give.<sup>11</sup> That fewer Americans are giving is almost as tough to imagine – and may be as big a blow to our society – as house prices dropping. The actual decline matters and so does the impact of that decline on our collective sense of who we are.

What does it mean if charitable giving rates drop before the tax changes go into effect and during a time when other economic indicators are strong? We don't know. Maybe people are replacing charitable donations with other “public benefit”

activities, and maybe they're not. We don't know what people are doing, or why. This uncertainty should make the sector even more uncomfortable than just knowing the numbers are dropping.

We see disconnects and distance between people across the country, but also in the measures we depend on to help us gauge ourselves as a society. For example, official counts of volunteering and giving show declining rates by household.<sup>12</sup> Yet when you look out the window or read, listen to, or scroll through the news, these numbers seem nuts. Every weekend brings more marches against gun violence, campaigns against sexual assault and harassment-filled industries, and stories of people organizing cross-country driving shuttles to reunite families torn apart at the U.S. southern border. Teachers are striking in states across the country (and winning). Women and people of color are running for political office in numbers that are finally beginning to reflect the demographics of the country. A February poll by the Kaiser Family Foundation and the *Washington Post* found that 20% of Americans said they'd participated in a protest, rally, or speech in the last two years, even though 80% of those who'd done so, identified as “non-activists.”<sup>13</sup>





## ALL THE WAYS WE CONTRIBUTE OUR TIME, MONEY, AND DATA TO OUR COMMUNITIES

We need to consider the whole to understand the pieces. Are tax laws changing giving? Is giving changing? We can only answer these questions if we consider all the ways people contribute their time, their money, and their digital data to their communities. What's political, what's charitable, what's ethical consumption, what counts as civic participation? At the same time that the wealthiest (Zuckerberg, Omidyar, Powell, Jobs) are foregoing tax incentives in setting up their charitable entities, the rest of us are flocking to crowdfunding and social media platforms to spend our funds. These sites deliberately mix together activities that might once have been kept distinct as political, social, charitable, or consumption – because the people using the platforms don't seem to distinguish between them.

We need to consider the data we have on volunteering and giving from three perspectives: What do the trends show? What do the measures actually mean now? And how do we get the data to know? This is not just an opportunity in the U.S., these changes are afoot

everywhere. Efforts such as **vTaiwan**, **MiVote**, and **DemocracyOS**, from Taiwan, Australia, and Argentina, respectively, are different institutional combinations of nonprofit organizations, political activism, crowdsourcing platforms, formal government institutions, and the blockchain. To understand where civil society is now and where it is headed, we need to stop assuming that our decades-old list of institutional ingredients – nonprofits, individual activists, political groups – still holds. We need to start looking for and understanding all the new recipes for civic action and participation that people are creating.

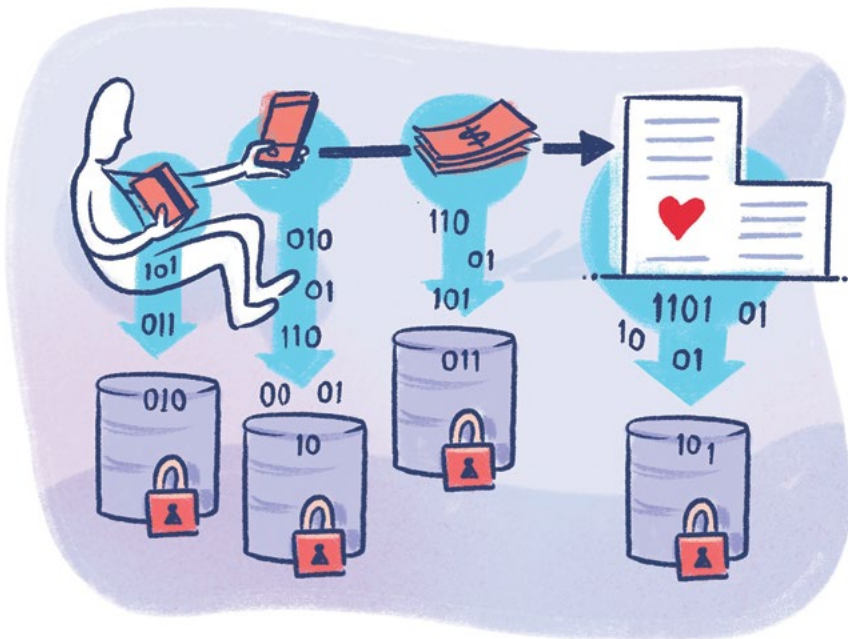
We also need to make sure that we can continue to access the data we need to measure what we care about and all the ways we contribute to our communities. This is a much bigger challenge than choosing between Facebook and GoFundMe for your fundraiser. The big question of access to your data might even have implications for how you think about your very tactical choices. Choosing either one (or both) is the digital equivalent of renting space on



the companies' servers. They will own your data, and they will control what you know

*We need to make sure the data on our collective actions are not locked down by proprietary platforms.*

about your donors. You will work by their rules, and they will keep all the digital data. At the end of the day, they will tell you how much you raised. At the end of the year, they will tell the world how much fundraising was done. In either case, there's no recourse to check their word (or their data). If we want to keep measuring civil society activity – giving, volunteering, activism, participation, etc. – we need to make sure the data on our collective actions are not locked down by proprietary platforms.



Today's civil society is not just yesterday's institutions plus digital tools. It's a recursive, dynamic, diverse, fragmented mix of assumptions, aspirations, and allies whose very relationship to democratic governance is being reimagined – both intentionally and by default.

## TODAY'S CHALLENGES POSE BIG QUESTIONS FOR THE FUTURE

In 2001, the commercial public relations firm Edelman launched its Trust Barometer. The Barometer has become an oft-cited index purporting to measure trust across institutions, cultures, and more than two dozen regions of the world. That first year the report focused on "The rise of NGO influence." Eighteen surveys later, the 2018 global results summarized our times as "The Battle for Truth."<sup>14</sup>

*How do people participate in civil society and all its component parts? What is its collective purpose and how do we get there?*

The big question for philanthropy and civil society should not be "what do we do this year?" The big questions now should galvanize civil society writ large to ask what has been our role, collectively, in creating today's trust-challenged times? Who and what is civil society now? What is – and should be – civil society's role in democracies in relationship to the state and to the marketplace? How do people participate in civil society and all its component parts? What is its collective purpose and how do we get there? I firmly believe we can't answer these questions with old assumptions and outdated measures. Even more importantly, we won't answer these questions until we all start asking them.

# INSIGHT

## Big Ideas that Matter for 2019

### WANTED: A VISION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY IN THE DIGITAL AGE

One way of looking at the current moment is as one of collapse – a collapse in charitable giving, economic mobility, environmental sustainability, assumptions about data privacy and security, and public trust in institutions. The other way is to see opportunities to build new and better. That’s what civil society and philanthropy need in the U.S. and elsewhere. There is new

thinking to build on. Theorists, scholars, engineers, political leaders, and activists from France to Finland, Chile to Russia are reimagining how we participate in governing ourselves, what the “demos” is in the age of global connectivity, and how software, social, and moral codes can be integrated together. The governance of technology needs as much new thinking, energy, and investment as technological innovation does.

Civil society’s new vision needs to be informed and led by people from all backgrounds and walks of life, and it involves much more than rethinking connection and participation in a digital age. The Civil Society Futures effort in the U.K. is an example of one process to do this. The image below represents their view of the institutional components of civil society. This image provides a starting point for other discussions about what is and isn’t included, and what are the systemic relationships within civil society and beyond.

*The governance of technology needs as much new thinking, energy, and investment as technological innovation does.*





## FIRST PRINCIPLES AND SHARED DOMAINS

Let's start with some first principles about civil society. In order to participate and act with others – parallel to, in contrast to, or in partnership with formal systems of government and the markets – you need a set of rights, freedoms, and responsibilities:

- To control what you do and who you do it with (personal agency and identity)
- To control what you contribute (economic rights)
- To choose what to do (expressive and associational rights)
- To have access to time, space, and privacy to do it (associational rights, right to privacy)
- To take action toward a collective vision, good, or cause (associational rights, collective rights, mechanisms for interacting with states and markets)

Now, let's look at the digital norms, policies, and domains that connect to these rights and freedoms:

- Personal agency – digital identity, data rights, civil liberties in digital spaces
- Economic rights – digital ownership, copyright, commons

- Privacy – data rights, encryption, data destruction
- Associational rights – net neutrality, broadband access, broadband and wireless governance, ownership, monopoly rights, public access, structure of the internet and the web
- Collective/common good – census, aggregate data, demographically identifiable information (not just personally identifiable information)
- State/market intersections – surveillance, data collection on people, people's access to third-party data holdings/analyses on them

These first principles lead us to a set of shared domains – from personal identity to state surveillance – that are radically different from the ones most nonprofits or foundations think matter to how they do their work. This is not to say these are the only domains that matter. But it is to argue that no worthwhile reconceptualization of civil society, or meaningful argument about the policy boundaries, will be complete without the list above.

## NEW QUESTIONS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY

Meaningfully engaging with the domains suggested above will allow us to ask some questions we couldn't even ask before the digital age. For example, in the digital age, is philanthropy a valid means of redistributing the wealth of the rich, or a potential constraint on the wealth of middle- and low-income individuals?

First, a quick economics lesson: Digital data are non-rival economic goods, meaning that your use of them doesn't inhibit mine. We know this from the simple act of sharing photos from our camera – I have a copy, you have a copy, we can store a copy. The digital



nature of the photograph means it can be used by many people at once and no one's use is affected by what others are doing. You can even crop the photo or put a filter on it and my copy is fine.

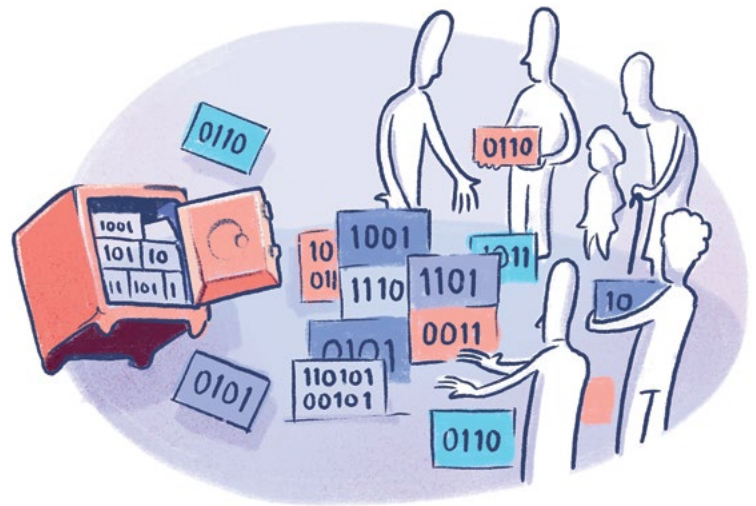


Now, a thought experiment on how digital data might be a resource we hold as a collective good, which in turn might shed light on the question I asked about philanthropy's impact in the digital age. We need to note up front that the purpose of a thought experiment is to provoke new ideas, new arguments, and new questions. It isn't intended to dot all the i's and cross all the t's.

Non-rival goods can be managed as a common resource. Think of clean air and water. We all need them, we all use them at once, and managing them collectively (is supposed to) ensure equitable and fair access. What if we managed the digital data

***What if we managed the digital data that we generate in trust, or as a commons, or as public goods?***

that we generate in trust, or as a commons, or as public goods? We would treat digital data not as my property or yours, but as a collective good to which we all held certain rights. The data wouldn't be the property of the telecom company, software company, or device manufacturer on whose gadgets we produced the data, it would be held in common. This would decrease the power of the companies that now claim ownership of our data. It would redistribute control over a resource that only exists because each of us contributes to the aggregate. And in so doing, it would reposition the power over that resource, away from companies and toward people.



For resources that are held in common, a philanthropic enterprise makes no sense. Philanthropic enterprises control resources and allocate them as they see fit. But if the resource can be controlled by those who create and benefit from it, then the idea of "data philanthropy" – where one group controls and donates the resource – is actually exclusionary, not expansive. Philanthropy, in this view, goes from being a way to share wealth to being a(nother)

way to take it away. See what I mean about asking new questions?

There are many other such thought experiments we should be running. What if – as some scholars suggest – data were valued as the result of labor?<sup>16</sup> This would change the equation for big companies, sure. But it would also allow us to reimagine the relationship between people and the data they produce, have new conversations about dignity, and reconsider the nexus of donations and the economy. It would change how nonprofits view the data they collect on beneficiaries.



Alternatively, we could think of our digital data as representations of ourselves. These thought experiments lead us to ask: what if we – each of us – could really manage our digital identities? Technological tools to manage digital identity exist. Changing market conditions and society’s changing norms may make a market for our individual data yet. If this came to pass, what would civil society organizations need to do for us to trust them enough to share our data?

## NEW FEATURES ON THE LANDSCAPE OF DIGITAL CIVIL SOCIETY

The last year has been a perfect example of the adage, “every challenge brings opportunity.” I spent much of 2017 and 2018 learning from activists, nonprofits, funders, and technologists around the world. Every speech I gave and every conversation I had included some version of the following statements:

Civil society is the place where we can demonstrate what it looks like to take maximal advantage of digital data and infrastructure without erasing human dignity.

We can invent the technologies and organizational practices that use digital data safely, ethically, and effectively – and influence business and governments to borrow them from us.

Over the course of the last two years there has been a major shift in how civil society – and individuals – contribute to and understand these conversations. More organizations and coalitions are taking the lead and are building tools, organizational structures, and policy proposals to use digital data in ways that protect civil society’s values, particularly expressive rights and privacy. Most organizations are still struggling to do this – but they understand the importance of doing it.

This awareness is an important step forward. Credit for this change goes to visionary leaders within civil society showing us how to do this. Probably even more credit goes to the very crises that have sparked these changes.

The sight of major tech company CEOs testifying before the U.S. Congress and the U.K. and EU parliaments got people’s attention. The **MyHealthRecord** debacle in Australia got people’s attention. Digital manipulation of elections and propaganda campaigns got people’s attention. The global



conversation about the European Union's General Data Protection Regulation – **what it means, to whom it applies, and how to comply** – got people's attention.

These are all critical to seeing the changes we need to make.

***All philanthropists and sectors have a pressing opportunity to look at emerging digital forms and consider where they fit on their landscape of action.***

Many important experiments are actually happening – and it's time for more of us to consider not just these individual options but what conditions they're trying to address. All philanthropists and civil society sectors have a pressing opportunity to look at emerging digital forms and consider where they fit on their landscape of action.

I wrote last year about **digital civic trusts** as a new form of civil society organization. These are getting **lots of attention** now – at least in part because of **resident engagement in Toronto** regarding proposals from Sidewalk Labs (part of Alphabet, Google's parent company).

Trusts are “purpose-built” organizations **dedicated to protecting digital data for public benefit** in which the people represented in the data have a say over

how the data are governed and used. Other organizations are also concerned with **“fiduciary responsibility” for digital data**. Each of them recognizes civil society's critical new role in intermediating between individuals, governments, and corporations regarding use of digital data (just as civil society has – for decades – played a similar role in mediating the use of financial resources and volunteered time). Be prepared to hear a lot about **data trusts** in the year ahead. Here are four other variations on this theme.:

- **Data Unions** (which have both EU and U.S. versions). These enable individual members to get paid for their data.
- The **MyData** Global Network. A growing movement of people and institutions with interests in personal data management, digital identity, decentralization, and other elements related to putting people back in charge of their data. Started in Finland, this network has local hubs on **four** continents (as of November 2018).
- MIDS – an abbreviation for **“Mediators of Individuals' Data.”** These are voluntary associations, each with its own rules about data. The MID represents its members in negotiations about data use, maintains data integrity, and manages usage.<sup>17</sup> This is also a buzzword for 2019.



■ **Administrative data research trusts.** These are third party organizations designed to hold and manage access to government data sets and they are increasing in number. Funders like the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and Laura and John Arnold Foundation are funding the creation of these bodies as well as research and experimentation on their governance structures.

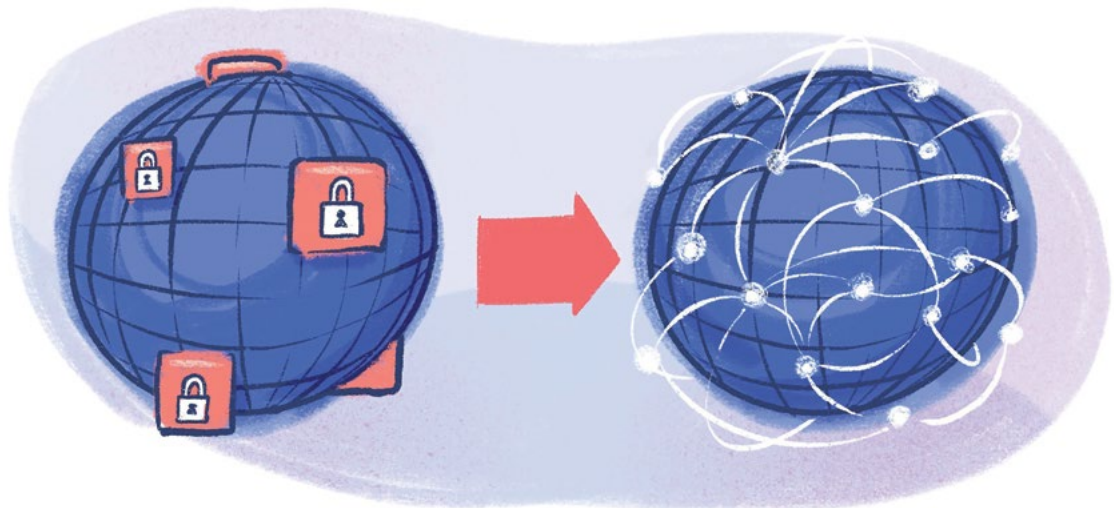
Three other important features on this landscape are **SocialScience.One**, the #GivingTuesday Data Collaborative, and efforts to decentralize the web. Described briefly below, each of these also represents an effort to protect, manage, and make available for public benefit the digital data we generate as users of online platforms.

■ **SocialScience.One** is a philanthropically-funded, academically-managed initiative to facilitate research on Facebook data. With ten million dollars of startup capital, this is perhaps the highest profile attempt to create new governance models for digital data. It's designed by scholars, managed through the Social Science Research Council, and represents a significant design effort to manage data from one company (Facebook) on one set of issues (elections). The norms of academic research, including ethical processes, an eye toward reproducibility, and independent data analysis are driving the design. Those who are working on

it hope that the investment in process and institutional governance of this new **industry-academic partnership** will form the basis for many more sources of data.<sup>18</sup>

■ Meanwhile, the people who catalyzed the global #GivingTuesday movement are hard at work on a collaborative effort of data platforms, nonprofits, funders, and academic researchers – called the #GivingTuesday Data Collaborative. The work is driven by the desire to get useful answers to practical questions about donors. It brings together as many of the relevant data platforms (crowdfunding, online donation, payment processing) as possible in order to learn how people behave as donors these days. At the time of this writing there were more than 60 companies participating, and the agreements on data sharing and use are being crafted to accommodate the interests of the competing platforms, researchers, and nonprofits. Unlike SocialScience.One the norms of academic research are not in the forefront here, it's more of an industry partnership. In the near term the public will likely get analysis of the data, and perhaps even some visualizations or dashboards of aggregate information. The governance design efforts so far have prioritized platform participation and data security.

■ Technologists are also busy reimagining how the web works. I've discussed the



“decentralize the web effort” in past *Blueprints*. To oversimplify, this is a community tech-led effort that includes many of the original developers of core web functions who are drafting tools and protocols to address some of the ways the original design went awry. Tim Berners-Lee is leading an effort called **Solid**, which provides people with ways to control their digital data. Then there is Protocol Labs, another organization focused on developing software and governance protocols that could foster a more open, decentralized, and identity-protecting web. There are a growing number of organizations and individuals working on privacy-protecting software and identity management tools and rules (see the **self-sovereign ID** movement). The numerous civil society-based research and advocacy organizations focused on artificial intelligence and the internet of things (IoT) also fall into this category – trying to create tools and rules that better serve democratic societies.

There are other experiments underway to gather, manage, govern, and use data in ways that bring together civil society, governments, and corporations.

- In India, an organization called **Societal Platform** is building shared, open, digital infrastructure to address country-wide challenges. The first such effort – EkStep – provides an open source platform on which school teachers can create and share lesson plans. They’ve linked the platform to textbooks via QR codes. The sheer scale of India’s educational system, the geographic diversity of the country, and the combination of government issued digital IDs and intermittent electrical infrastructure make this an extremely challenging undertaking. Even partial success will be instructive.

- Early in 2018, Pia Mancini, a democracy activist from Argentina, announced the launch of **OpenCollective**. The goal is to make it easy for groups of people to work together with financial transparency as the key sign of trust.<sup>19</sup> The assets she seeks to unlock are human. The first people to flock to this new “institutional form” were people building things (open source software) and community groups working to improve public services (civic tech collectives). The Open Collective model is an associational form that “assumes digital” – people can participate from anywhere, trust is proxied through relationships and financial transparency, and leadership is left local.

Other areas of innovation include new software (including, but not limited to, blockchains), new legal approaches (such as the California Consumer Privacy Act and the EU General Data Protection Regulation), and new alliances such as the cryptographers, lawyers, engineers, human rights leaders, and community activists fighting Australia’s **proposed encryption regulations**. There are also some signs of broader collaboration between digital rights groups and civil society, as exemplified in the **Toronto Declaration** that came out of the 2018 **RightsCon**.

Each of these efforts is global. Each of them centers digital data as the resource around which the governance is being invented. And each of them is attempting to lasso some combination of public and private resources toward public good. We are seeing meaningful institutional innovation focused on directing assets to community improvement, the same purpose that led to the invention of the modern community foundation a century ago.

## CHANGING PRACTICES

We need big ideas, **big ways of sharing**, and big ways of allowing dispersed people to collaborate. There are scholars and activists working to imagine whole new ways that communities, business, and governments could work – redesigning voting, rethinking democracy, and imagining how we can use artificial intelligence and machine learning to protect human rights, strengthen self-governance, and freely associate.<sup>20</sup>

*We need big ideas, big ways of sharing, and big ways of allowing dispersed people to collaborate.*

Civil society can't get caught on its heels – reacting to challenges, assuming that the value placed on speed and scale by the corporate sector applies to us, and fighting policy battles that were framed in the last century rather than those our digital dependencies present to us today.

There are signs of change. Since the *Blueprint* series focuses on changes on the horizon, it is important to understand the ideas that are moving from edge to center. Here are a few:

- The distributed model of leadership that exemplifies the Movement for Black Lives has become, in just a few years, much more common. Small groups of people who know and trust each other and work locally, are sharing ideas via digital technologies but not trying to coordinate on a grand scale (or create huge “attack surfaces” via a big web presence).
- Rapid response funds. These have grown in number and in the scope of issues covered. Institutional funders might even

be getting a little better at being useful to dispersed, intersecting movements.

- Bigger general operating support strategies. Left-leaning and mainstream foundations have talked this talk louder and longer than they've walked it, but some of them are beginning to do what they say. The 40-year-long strategy of conservative U.S. funders providing general operating grants to think tanks and judicial programs paid off big in late 2018 with a conservative majority firmly seated on the Supreme Court. The political center and left in philanthropy have been scolded by pundits. Many a foundation staffer has asked themselves “What is all this adding up to?” (And by the way, more general operating grants might decrease the pressure for more rapid response funds. The inverse, however, is not true. Just sayin’).

- Funders – both public and private – are beginning to question their role in the data ecosystem. They are asking themselves how their own data demands may be unintentionally putting their nonprofit partners and the people they serve at risk. And they're trying to change that behavior.

Many people have called the first two decades of the 21st century a second gilded age of philanthropy. The good news with this description is that the first such gilded age contained within it, and was followed by, an era of trust-busting, power-checking journalists, social workers, public health innovators, and activists fighting for less gilt and more justice.

In our time this pendulum is in motion. The signs are both new and familiar. New anti-trust theorists remind us of Ida Tarbell and Justice Louis Brandeis.<sup>21</sup> Perhaps the people starting OpenCollectives are playing the role of Jane Addams. Public interest

technologists draw specifically from a prior movement to train public interest lawyers. Educational efforts to instill ethical training into computer science curriculum draw from the early days of civil engineering. And the innovation in data trusts and unions are digital parallels to previous debates over physical spaces such as parks and libraries.



## ASSOCIATIONAL SUPPRESSION

The right to free assembly – and the will to act on it and protect it – underpins our ability to think big about civil society, philanthropy, and democracy. If, as many have asserted, social media networks are (part of) the new public square, then we

*The right to free assembly – and the will to act on it and protect it – underpins our ability to think big about civil society, philanthropy, and democracy.*

need robust defenses of our own ability to enter and exit these spaces, to identify ourselves or not as we wish, and to act within these spaces without constant surveillance.

The last decade has not been kind to democracy. Global monitoring groups such as **Civicus**, **Freedom House**, and the **International Center for Nonprofit Law** have all been tracking declines in individual liberties and democratic governments. The rise of autocrats – often within self-described democratic systems – has spread from Russia to Turkey to Hungary and has many people in the U.S. considering the possibilities of a similar fate. Activists and researchers have long noted, followed, and tried to

counteract the potential links between **global digital networks and the rise of authoritarianism**.<sup>22</sup> This is a marked turn in popular discourse which for years was fixed on the idea of the internet's democratizing potential. For many, the discourse pendulum has swung far to the other side.

In the U.S., 2018 was a year of early come-uppance for big tech firms, specifically Facebook, Twitter, and Google. Disinformation, election manipulation, incitement to violence, and propaganda each became topics of investigations into the companies by legislators and regulators in the U.S., EU, and elsewhere. Scholars have been trying for years to get attention for their credible research about algorithmic bias. Just as their work was beginning to gain traction, it was hijacked for political purposes. A few loud claims of bias against conservatives and, before you knew it, right wing pundits and Republican Party leaders were suddenly calling for the nationalization of tech companies.

Even in this weird world where up is down and Republicans want to nationalize business assets, the discussion of digital networks and their influence on liberties and democratic values has concentrated on issues of free speech.<sup>23</sup> What has received less attention – from Constitutional scholars, tech lawyers, advocates, and even

*When algorithms decide the content of a web page, a video feed, and the prominence of certain voices in your news feed, they are also, effectively, shaping the bounds of our associational lives.*

civil society watchdogs – is the role that these social media companies and our current digital infrastructure play with regard to freedom of association.

This issue needs much more investigation and research. In a world where algorithms decide the content of a web page, a video feed, and the prominence of certain voices in your news feed, they are also, effectively, shaping the bounds of our associational lives. When the companies hold our identities and networks, and make it difficult if not impossible for us to “move” to another network, they are defining our associational options. Most extreme, when companies or governments “shut down” internet access during a protest, slow down WiFi speeds for certain communities, or refuse to bring broadband access to rural areas, they are locking whole populations out of the digital economic and public square.



## **WE NEED TO INVEST IN THE RIGHT SUPPORTS FOR CIVIL SOCIETY**

We are now dependent on access to computer networks, mobile phones, the wireless spectrum, and remote servers (the cloud) for everyday actions. Two things are no longer true. First, the line between digital and analog actions, and what rules apply where, are not “bespoke” issues anymore. They matter to all of us. Second, analog practices for balancing privacy and transparency don’t work in the digital world. For example, filing information with governments or companies for accountability purposes and then relying on analog file-keeping mechanisms to keep that information out of the public’s eye doesn’t work in the age of e-filing.

Civil society needs to contend – directly – with the following realities:

- Digital practices and policies undergird how we associate.
- Company algorithms determine who sees what information and who finds what groups online.
- Government regulations of broadband, intellectual property, and consumer privacy shape who has access to what material and for what purposes.
- Digital policies are civil society’s policies.
- Most digital rights groups are part of civil society, but most civil society advocacy organizations are weak on digital policy expertise.
- Digital rights groups are often – though not exclusively – focused on individual rights. Civil society organizations bring in important expertise about groups of people and the rights of those groups. Individual and group rights do not always align.

We need these communities to come together and lead discussions when the values are in tension – the rights of individuals and the collective good. In our digital age, these tensions often clash. One example is at the level of research, where **issues like public health** depend on access to aggregate data that needs to respect the rights of the people represented in the dataset. The challenges of protecting individual privacy while making data available for demographic analysis goes beyond individual research studies, however. Community groups need aggregate data to do advocacy, policy makers rely on demographic compilations drawn from individual records, philanthropists and city governments base their spending on

*Striking the right balance between access to demographically useful data and personal privacy is as much a political issue as a statistical or technological one.*

population projections. Striking the right balance between access to demographically useful data and personal privacy is as much a political issue as it is a statistical or technological one.

This same disconnect is true when it comes to civil society policy. There are numerous groups around the world that focus on digital rights – from **Public Knowledge** to **DigitalRightsWatch Australia**, from the Center for Internet and Society in Bangalore to the **Humboldt Institute for Internet and Society** in Berlin. There are groups that focus on telecommunications infrastructure and those that do advocacy about copyright and others that advocate

about copyright through the lens of disability rights. All of these groups, whether their names call out the digital or not, are experts on the many different types of digital policy that matter to civil society. But civil society tends to center its policy advocacy around tax, corporate, and charitable law. We need analysis, investment, and advocacy on civil society’s digital policy agenda.

**OUR DATA GOVERNANCE DEFINES US**



So far I’ve talked about global civil society-wide challenges. It’s not clear who is going to lead this thinking, where, or how. But there are a set of decisions that

everyone involved in any single civil society institution – whether a foundation, a nonprofit, a



social enterprise, a political group, or an informal gathering – can make now that relate directly to these broader challenges.

These decisions have to do with how the organization collects, uses, stores, shares, analyzes, and destroys the digital data it collects. This is



called data governance, and it will be part of defining civil society organizations in the near and long term future.

How can I claim this? Again, go back to first principles.





If you work for a nonprofit or a foundation, your organization exists to direct time and money toward a cause. The institution is purpose-built

to make sure that its resources (financial and human) go toward its mission. Hence, laws are in place that distinguish your organization from a commercial or public enterprise – the non-distribution clause, the lack of shareholders, the restrictions on self-dealing, etc.

In addition to the legal requirements that shape how organizations are governed, nonprofits and foundations have focused on effectiveness for the last decade or more. Strong operational and financial management, good board governance, proportional investment in evaluation – these have become the hallmarks of effective organizations. And now these same organizations must manage and govern digital resources (including digital data). Civil society organizations should use their digital resources with the same



integrity of purpose and mission-focus as they do their analog resources. How they do this – in alignment with their institutional missions and their broader collective purpose in democracies – is going to define who civil society is and how it is treated in

the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

In other words, the way that civil society organizations

manage and govern digital data is key to how they achieve their stated missions, how they earn their privileged places in

***Digital data governance is just as much about stewardship as is the management of time and money.***

our democracy (and our tax code), and how they earn the trust and support of the people who depend on them and the donors who support them. Ultimately, digital data governance is just as much about stewardship as is the management of time and money. How civil society manages and governs digital data – our newest resource – will determine how (and whether) the sector can be distinguished from commercial and public sector peers going forward. It's worth considering the counterfactual: if civil society organizations don't treat data differently than public sector or commercial enterprises do, what's distinctive about them?

### **CIVIL SOCIETY CAN LEAD**

Here's the opportunity. Civil society can – and should – play a leading role in meeting the challenge to define the mechanics of data management and governance. And – even more exciting – civil society can and should lead in showing the other sectors – public agencies and commercial enterprises – how to use digital data safely,

***And – even more exciting – civil society can and should lead in showing the other sectors – public agencies and commercial enterprises – how to use digital data safely, ethically, and effectively.***



ethically, and effectively. For example, there has been a good amount of work done to create decision making guides for when blockchain is the right tool and when it isn't.<sup>24</sup> And if we can create such guides for blockchain use, we can create similar guidelines for selecting other digital tools. Every organization should be fully aware of the ways in which their chosen digital tools either align with and facilitate progress toward their mission, or not. Understanding the terms of use of the software and hardware on which you depend is the digital equivalent of reading your landlord's lease. We can lead not only in our own sector, but for digital data use writ large.

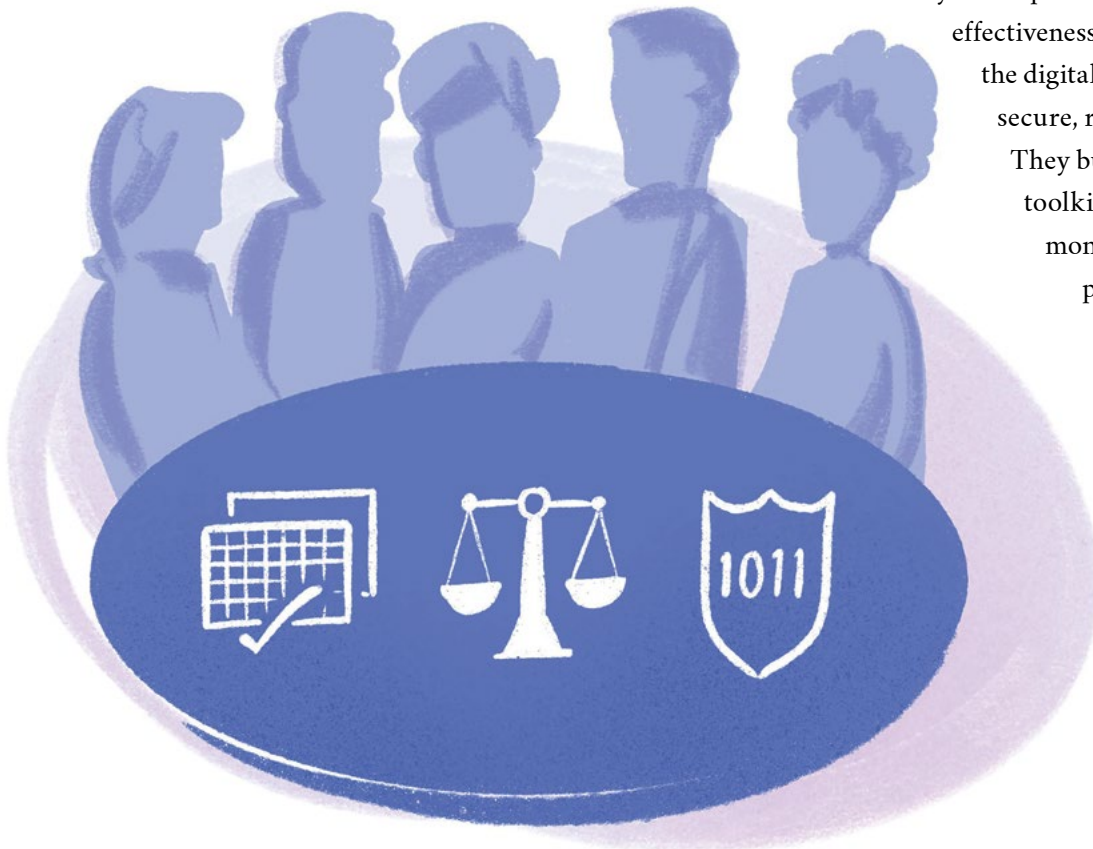
Organizational leaders can start right now – if you haven't already – to address the digital data management and governance challenges your organization faces. Boards of directors need to lead these discussions – and the kind of expertise this requires

is as critical to a highly functioning board as are accountancy and legal skills. Every organization needs a plan, practices, and budget to train employees and volunteers in the mission-aligned management of digital resources, just as they already train them regarding financial resources. Data management plans that incorporate and respect the rights of your beneficiaries are as important as the analog practices that respect your financial donors.

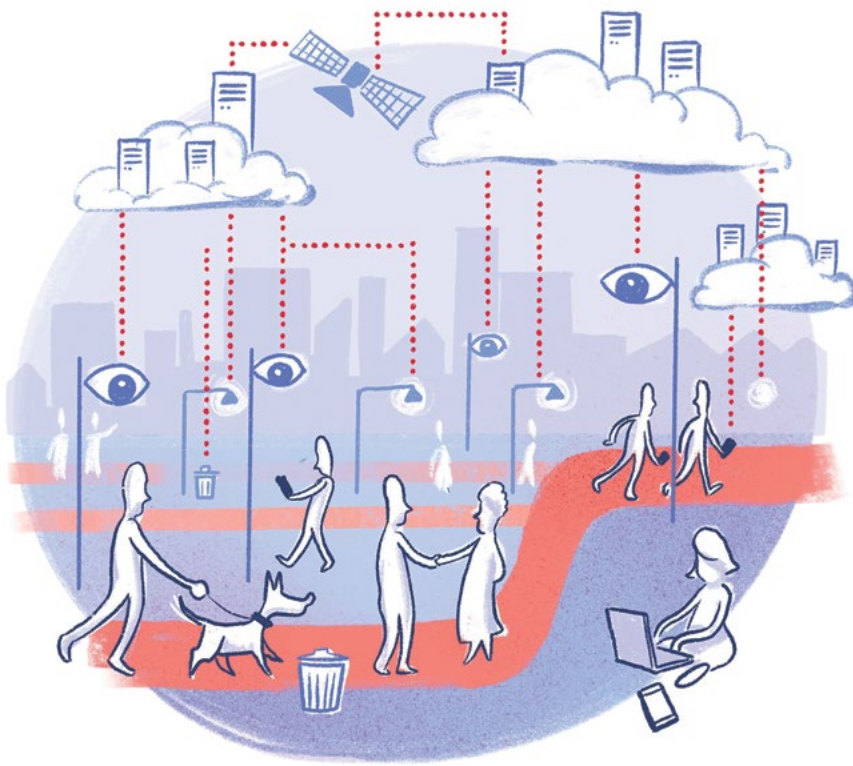
Again, some of this is already happening. The **Responsible Data Forum**, an informal network of civil society employees and volunteers who think hard about digital rights, has been meeting, publishing, and sharing resources for years. **Aspiration Tech**, **eQualit.ie**, **Citizen Lab**, the **Center for Media Justice**, **Equality Labs**, **Freedom of the Press Foundation**, **MayFirst**, **OpenWhisper Systems**, **Tactical Tech Collective** and many others. These are

hybrid experts of “organizational effectiveness” and “infrastructure” for the digital world. They focus on safe, secure, rights-protecting data use. They build software, develop toolkits, conduct consultancies, monitor policy changes, and provide training. To sideline them as “data security” or “technology builders” and not see them as infrastructure and organizational capacity resources is to miss the forest for the trees.

Data governance is also shaping the issues on which civil society organizations work.



Every issue – from justice to creativity, shelter to education, environmental health to early childhood care, food security to voting – is now shaped by how digital data is collected and used. For example, when Sidewalk Labs, one of the Alphabet family of companies (along with Google), signed a deal with the City of Toronto to experiment in building a “smart city” in one of Toronto’s waterfront neighborhoods, data governance became a big public concern. Just how and by whom would all that data, from street sensors



and lighting fixtures, speed cameras and building entry badges, be used? Who would decide what data could and could not be collected? Who would have access to the information and how might an individual resident of the neighborhood check what was being collected on them? The project is still in design phases, because these data governance

questions – now captured in a proposed **Responsible Data Use Framework** – need to be resolved.<sup>25</sup> **Civil society associations, individuals, and activists** are making sure that this data governance gets addressed before anything gets built or any sensors get installed.<sup>26</sup> This is civil society’s job.

***Perhaps the data that corporations collect on us should be held in common or treated as public goods.***

Defining what digital data mean in a civil society context is an opportunity for more big thinking. Perhaps the data that corporations collect on us should be held in common or treated as public goods. If they were, we’d need some new type of intermediary to hold, protect, and provide access to those data in “public good serving” ways. If we let our imaginations go down that track we may find ourselves engaging in the kind of institutional design that led to the creation of nonprofit organizations a century or so ago.

This is the opportunity we face. Now is the time for as much innovation in data governance as we’ve seen to date in data monetization. We can take the regulatory changes from the **European Union** and **California** as design parameters. We can look to disbursed social movements like **#NotMyDebt** and the **Black Census Project** for models of leadership, institutional form, and new ways to work with and change official government policy.

***Now is the time for as much innovation in data governance as we’ve seen to date in data monetization.***

The opportunity is here now. It may not be available for much longer. This is because state, national, and regional regulators are actively examining how digital data get used. This is why civil society needs to lead, not only on organizational practice, but in policy conversations and regulatory discussions. Copyright law, broadband access, and data protection regulations affect nonprofits, foundations, and all civil society organizations. We need to be in the room where those decisions get made.

*Imagine how different our world would be if we designed our digital systems to give us full control of our identity, our actions, and the data those actions generate.*

Imagine how different our world would be if we designed our digital systems to give us full control of **our identity**, our actions, and the data those actions generate.<sup>27</sup>

### **BUILDING BLOCKS FOR A NEW VISION**

We have lots of individual experiments at the organizational level. We need to make some sense of them in aggregate.

We have lots of tools and policies for organizational change – we have the ingredients. We need interactive “cooking video” opportunities for people and organizations to learn how to implement these changes.

We have effective examples of grassroots and organized civil society-based policy groups that focus on changing the way companies and governments treat our data. We need better ways for the rest of civil society to learn from and engage with these efforts.

We have managerial resources, guidance, and networks to support civil society organizations in using data safely, ethically, and effectively. We need to help boards learn to govern these resources and make sure we’re fostering strong organizational capacity at the top. Digital data needs to be considered in terms of mission, liabilities, and line items.

We have lots of research underway, policy analysis, and advocacy about expressive rights in a world of digital interconnectedness. We need a similar level of investment and attention on associational protections, structures, and practices.

# FORESIGHT

## Moving toward the Future

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*So as we try to imagine – and influence  
– the future of philanthropy and  
civil society we need to center our  
assumptions on what is common  
now, not what used to be.*

### NEW GAME, NEW RULES

At a meeting in Australia I listened as a colleague in her twenties commented that none of the assumptions of my generation were true for hers. She was going to incur debt for higher education, have to pay for medical care, couldn't count on a pension even if she started saving now, and doubted she'd ever own a home. Back in the U.S. I shared these comments with some other people in their twenties. They noted they were already deeply in debt, chose specific jobs based on health care benefits as much as salary, laughed at the idea of owning a home, asked what a pension was, and noted that they weren't sure when or if they would start families because of their existing debt loads.

These trends aren't new, they've been building for years. But their consequences are here now. Just like climate change. The future and a new vision for civil society will depend on policy, organizational, personal, and software decisions based on assumptions that reflect these consequences, not on the assumptions of a generation or two earlier.

A quick reflection on the teachers' strikes that swept across several U.S. states last spring is illustrative. The #RedForEd movements – strikers wore red – succeeded in raising wages and/or limiting cuts to health benefits in five states where public

school teachers were paid the least and schools were the subject of annual budget cuts. These are states where the legislatures or governors' offices had been leading decades-long anti-tax, small government efforts and had worked hard to break labor unions as part of that package. The result: terribly underpaid teachers, underperforming schools, and, eventually, a labor force with nothing left to lose. And so they struck. And won. Not just on the issues but in the hearts and minds of the communities where they lived.

What do I make of this story? Ten years ago, when I started this series, the idea of successful teachers' strikes in five conservative states in the U.S. was unthinkable. The possibility was way out on the edge. The pendulum was starting far to the right and was swinging further in that direction. Also 10 years ago, the landscape I was drawing of philanthropy and civil society was one in which crowdfunding, social enterprise, benefit corporations, and philanthropic LLCs were on the horizon, on the edge as "maybes." They were as unthinkable as successful teachers' strikes or the idea that **Microsoft, a global computer powerhouse built on closed systems, would become home to GitHub**, a key platform for open source software. But both have happened.<sup>28</sup>

There's been an inversion since then, the edges are now the center. So as we try to imagine – and influence – the future of philanthropy and civil society we need to center our assumptions on what is common now, not what used to be. We need to look to the horizon for ideas and forms that may one day be central.

To do this let's begin with a set of assumptions based on two forces at work in the world: First, the assumptions and behaviors of today's young adults, the ones who will be living their key working years in this future. And second, the ideas, institutions, or innovations that are gathering momentum and might move in from the edge.

## **ASSUMPTIONS THAT WILL GROUND A FUTURE VISION FOR CIVIL SOCIETY**

After each assumption, I briefly note why I make the assumption and what matters about it. These are not necessarily the kinds of changes I'd like to see or the assumptions that I think should matter, they're what I see happening.

- **Tax incentives for giving are going to matter differently.**

**Why:** Crowdfunding already blurs tax incentives. Standard deduction changes mean most young donors won't take exemptions.

**What matters about it?** Manipulating tax incentives as a means of influencing giving may not be as important as it once was.

- **Nonprofits are not as "haloed" as they once were.**

**Why?** Trust barometers, data breaches, and young people's sense that there are lots of ways to do good.

**What matters about it?** There may be a new structure that replaces "nonprofit status" as the seal of trustworthiness and mission focus. It could be a new organizational form, new governance requirements, a licensing scheme, or something else altogether.

- **The charitable is political.**

**Why?** The efforts by governments to close civil society around the world have involved a variety of efforts to label charity as political. Even where regulatory efforts have failed (e.g. the **Johnson Amendment** in the U.S., **foreign registrations in Australia**), the assumption of a line between these sectors has been blurred. Efforts to disparage charities have worked as effectively as efforts to question the credibility of news media – confusion and doubt are the goals.

**What matters about it?** The old-line argument for drawing "bright lines" between the two won't work. We need a new approach to allowing charities to advocate and have a voice, to limiting the abuse of charitable anonymity for political purposes, and to countering politicization of the parts of civil society that don't want to be political. There are (at least three) different challenges embedded in here – there probably won't be one solution.

- **"Giving" happens everywhere, but we're doing less of it.**

**Why?** For at least two decades there have been consistent efforts to build social enterprises, engage consumers as givers through cause marketing, and blend social purpose into investing. Giving opportunities are now folded into online gaming platforms, into the patronage systems that people use to support their favorites gamers, as well as into dating apps. The assumption of these melded efforts is that

they'd be "pie-expanding" and would result in more participation and contributed resources. But we have no evidence that this is happening. The limited research that exists on how cause marketing shifts behavior actually correlates these kinds of purchases with decreases in donations.<sup>29</sup>

**What matters about it?** We need to study and understand how people think they're contributing their time and money in an age when choices are both everywhere and poorly delineated for the average person. Are all the options actually making giving invisible? We need to understand how donors behave when they're surrounded by choices, asked all the time, and offered digital options (with all the blurring they encourage) as a default.

■ **Organizations and laws must assume digital capacities (positive and negative).**

**Why?** The age of anticipating digital pervasiveness is over. We're now dependent on these systems. Today's legal and policy debates about data regulation, AI oversight, algorithmic accountability, and even anti-trust enforcement represent a rapid catch-up effort to bring policies into alignment with a world underpinned by corporate ownership of networks and data.

**What matters about it?** The regulatory and policy choices being made today will set the stage for the forces that will shape civil society for decades – from digital access to content ownership, data regulation, privacy, anonymity, and so on. Existing organizations need to institute governance mechanisms for their data, and civil society writ large needs to participate in these policy discussions.

## PULLING THE EDGE TO THE CENTER

The list above essentially argues that today's popular assumptions about civil society and philanthropy are different in significant ways from those of the past. This is important because we must realize that people moving into the sector today will operate within a different set of norms and will develop their programs, organizations, activism, and policy awareness accordingly. In addition, we can look at some of the "edge" features being worked on today and assume that they will become more common. Let's see how that might play out with some examples:

■ **Blockchain (or blockchain-like) features**

We're in a period of blockchain hype and experimentation. When it settles out, we'll know at least two things 1) what kinds of civil society actions can appropriately use blockchain's permanently encrypted, distributed storage and governance functions, and 2) what civil society values are significant enough (privacy, anonymity) to warrant designing new technological capacities for them.

■ **A differently regulated tech and media industry**

The internet and web as we've known them will be different in a few years. I can't predict what the confluence of legal and regulatory (and political and national security) dimensions will yield, but it won't be what we've had.

■ **Digital-purpose institutions**

Organizations like the examples I discussed in the Insight section (administrative data trusts, **SocialScience.One**, and the collaborative data platform being designed by #GivingTuesday) will be common, not

the exception. It may not be any of these exact examples, and the forms will likely morph over time, but organizations that are custom-built to manage digital data for public purpose will be out there. Their existence will in turn influence the choices and operations of every donor and other alliances, nonprofits, and associations.

- Privacy-protecting philanthropy

One thing we can extrapolate from the increasing number of donors using Donor Advised Funds, the rise of LLCs, and the efforts to limit disclosing the names of donors to social welfare organizations is that the need to protect the privacy of donors is being well attended to by both the marketplace and legislators. Calls to meet this need won't go away and will result in new products and laws designed for this purpose. While advocacy for personal privacy in other domains is an uphill battle for both products and laws, protecting the privacy of those with both market and political clout is sure to continue. Legal and policy actions that increase requirements for donor transparency should anticipate that their success will inspire a reaction of new products and other legal battles.

- People in the web

Most of the organizations, laws, and social practices we experience today still assume that there is such a place as "off line." The rates at which we are installing remote sensors in our homes (smart speakers, thermostats), workplaces (management software, RFID employee tags), and built environments (building, traffic, and climate sensors) along with the pervasiveness of mobile phones effectively obviates this possibility. Each of these sensors not only tracks us but adds its bounty to the pools of training data that feed voracious AI systems. People will actively and

iteratively create new ways to hide, protect, fool, distort, or dismantle their digital tracks. Simultaneously they will be working to distinguish themselves and others from the bots with which they will share the digital networks.



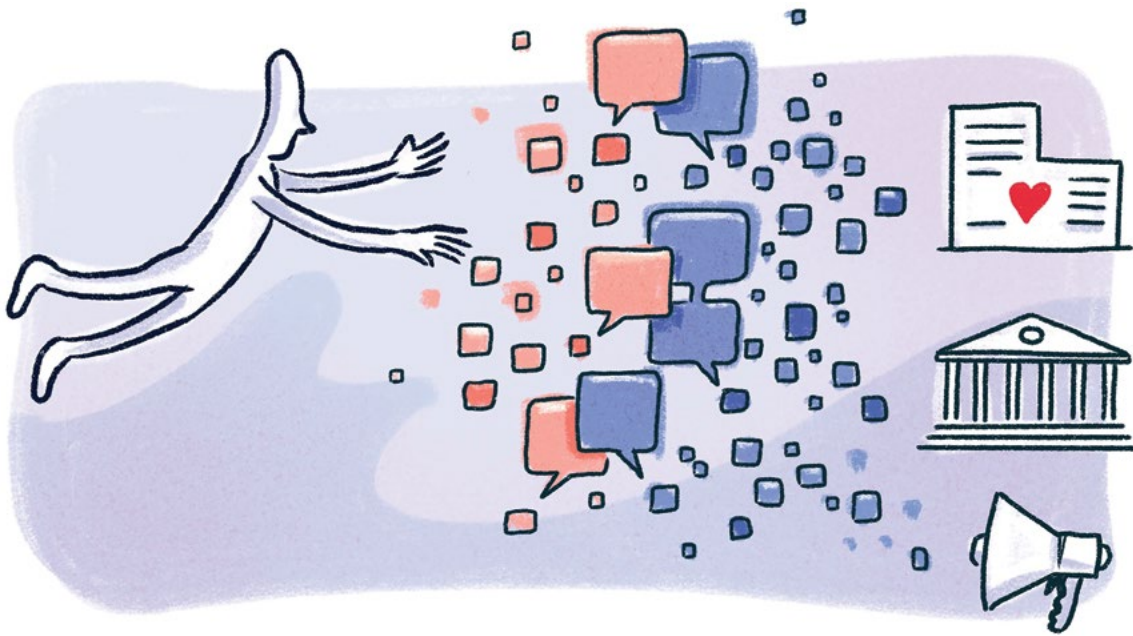
## WHAT IF'S

Mix together some of the assumptions with some of the edge cases, and you start to imagine a very different looking civil society. Here are some (perhaps) out-there ideas that could just become common.

### What if?

- Privacy-protecting institutions shift back and forth between acting as investors, political supporters, or charitable donors, and substitute for tax-privileged corporations designed for perpetual giving.
- Activism is two-pronged, addressing both government and corporate control of people's information. Associations that manage people's data and direct them toward mission will proliferate.
- Digital currency and identity managers are melded in such a way that "anonymous" or "disclosed" is built into the financial transaction itself, rather than being determined by institutional governance.
- Associations that "shape shift" from issue to issue, catalyzing different networks of trusted people as needed, sit next to professionally-staffed, hierarchical organizations.





- Each of us has our own bots that we set loose to interact with the corporate, political, and social purpose bots filling our digital interfaces.
- Trusted data intermediaries become as common as libraries and parks – holding data for the common good with a set of clear, widely understood, equal-access set of rules.
- The laws for private digital associational activity – and the technology to facilitate it – are as commonly available and protected as are physical meeting places for analog associational activity.

I invite you to bring this list of “what ifs” into your next planning session or strategy conversation and 1) come up with valid reasons they won’t happen or won’t affect your work if they do, 2) improve upon them, make

***Worldwide efforts to reimagine democracy in an age of digital representation are well underway – and the nature of these movements point also to new ideas for civil society itself.***

them more just and equity-oriented, and/or 3) add to the list.<sup>30</sup> Share your insights via social media with the hashtag [#blueprint19](#).

It’s possible that none of these specific ideas comes true. But something like them will. When it comes time for #Blueprint2029, we’ll be operating in a new landscape of organizational forms and data alliances. The regulatory environment for digital companies and personal data – worldwide

– will be different. Worldwide efforts to reimagine democracy in an age of digital representation<sup>31</sup> are well underway – and the nature of these movements point also to new ideas for civil society itself.

How we measure civil society will have to change. In the U.S. today, the nonprofit sector spends a lot of time and money defining itself by the number of its organizations, the percentage of the labor force it employs, and the dollars it moves. Maybe none of these measures captures what will actually matter in the future. It’s harder for me to assume the continuation of what exists today at the center of civil society – that is, tax-privileged charitable giving and nonprofit organizations – than

it is to see something quite different. **Social enterprise** and impact investing have already shifted the balance of organizations (and values) in some places.<sup>32</sup>

This is not to say the organizations now at the center will go bust – many of them were designed to last. But they will be surrounded by alternatives designed to



manage the associational aspirations of people and their digital trails. It's

*It's incumbent upon us to articulate the collective purpose and values we want the alternatives to embody.*

incumbent upon us to articulate the collective purpose and values we want the alternatives to embody.

### **CALLING BS ON BIG CIVIL SOCIETY**

In February of 2018, after yet another school shooting, a high school student named Emma Gonzalez took the microphone handed to her and announced that she and her peers were "calling BS" on the gun industry and politicians. A whole generation of American school children has been educated according to a curriculum that includes lessons on protecting yourself when armed gunmen arrive on campus. That these lessons could slither into schools' curricula, unremarked upon until affluent suburban students called them out, goes to show how injustice becomes common. That years of such call outs from students in impoverished inner city schools continue to be ignored is unsurprising additional proof of how injustice works. That we've put the onus of safety on individual children rather than designing systems (of schools, gun laws, human welfare) to protect them speaks to the many ways in which we've abrogated collective responsibility and overcorrected for individual rights.

On September 13, 2018, Jeff and MacKenzie Bezos announced they were dedicating \$2 billion to the Bezos Day One Fund, a "philanthropic initiative" focused on homelessness and early childhood education.

The Twitter-verse and mainstream media attention to Bezos's philanthropic announcement was significantly more skeptical and less salutary than Mark Zuckerberg's 2015 announcement about the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. Not only that, on the same day Bezos announced the fund, U.S. Senator Elizabeth Warren of Massachusetts called for the breakup of Amazon, the company that generates the Bezos family's tremendous wealth.<sup>33</sup>

What do these two vignettes have in common? First, young people don't think politicians or industry are working for them. They're ready and eager to push for change using the tools they know best in the only information ecosystem they've ever experienced. The students Marching

*Young people don't think politicians or industry are working for them.*

for their Lives against gun violence planned for and countered the "haters" of their message – knowing they'd be out in force online and in person. They built diverse alliances immediately. They took on the industry players, political decision makers, and nonprofits who defend and benefit from the status quo all at the same time. They put people in front and organizational names in the background. Similar efforts – led by distributed groups of people, addressing government and industry simultaneously – exist to fight against climate change or for women's rights, racial justice, disability rights, and digital rights.

Second, the ship has sailed (at least temporarily) when it comes to assuming big philanthropy has society's best interests in mind. As I said at the start, "philanthropy ain't what it used to be." Questions about

why Bezos wouldn't put his time and money into improving working conditions at Amazon followed the philanthropy announcement as quickly as did questions about whether he'd structure his giving in ways that provide some public visibility (if not accountability).

Admittedly, these are cherry picked examples. The status quo carries a lot of weight. But we may be peeking around an important corner, if not yet turning it.<sup>34</sup>

And once we turn that corner – or as we head around it – we might ask ourselves whether we've been focusing on understanding the right elements of civil society. Measuring and incentivizing professional growth in nonprofits, seeking scale without reflection, and prioritizing financial measures has helped industrialize U.S. civil society – which the sector tends to tout as signs of strength. Isn't it also possible these are signs of weakness?

While advocates tout the fact that 10% of U.S. jobs are in nonprofits, I've always wondered why that is presented as a sign of health, either for the sector or the economy. How can it be a good sign for the economy when 10% of it is made up of financially fragile organizations whose own employees are often one paycheck away from disaster?

And when we know that the staff and boards of most nonprofits don't represent the demographics of the populations they serve, how can the sector claim to represent marginalized voices? What happens to independence when nonprofit organizations are outsourced government contractors operating entirely on commercially built and owned software and servers? Perhaps, just as the overhead ratio waxed and waned as a measure of organizational health, the sector-wide focus on scale and efficiency is also misplaced.<sup>35</sup>

I don't know the answers to these questions. I know a lot of scholars who think about them. I know a lot of nonprofits that bemoan the contractual requirements that bind them to funders – by leashes built of both money and data. I know a lot of social entrepreneurs who dread the moral and financial tradeoffs their structures seem to demand. I know a lot of impact investors who are still looking for a sweet spot they can't find. And I know a lot of philanthropists who are painfully aware of how much their work doesn't live up to its own rhetoric, but don't know what to do about it. It seems clear to me we need to invite in new ideas, new voices, and new ways of working (some of which may well be old ways of working).

*We need to invite in new ideas, new voices, and new ways of working.*



## GETTING OUT OF THE WAY

We need to listen to voices we don't know how to hear. I'm not talking about in your Twitter feed (though – really, folks – that is the easiest place to make such a change).

I'm talking about on our newscasts, in our board rooms, at our strategy meetings, in policymaking environments, and, sure, in our selection of reading material or social media.

I'm not talking (only) about perspectives that are self-labeled as being politically different from your own. I'm talking about listening to people who have always known a deceitful online environment, have always doubted whether their futures would be covered by a social safety net, who have never expected to work for one company for their entire life, and who've been raised on stories of what the weather used to be

*We need to listen to voices we don't know how to hear.*

of frequent “once-in-a-lifetime” climate-driven natural disasters.

I'm also talking about young people. We need to listen to the people who will lead civil society ten years from now and start getting out of their way. They have priorities, they have ideas for leading across political lines, and their digital resources will be part of their entire lifetimes – and they have ideas for how to manage those resources. But in order to do this, we need to get out of the way.

I'm not calling for a mass retirement. I'm calling for people, like myself, who have a position of influence to figure out how

to diversify our own circles and make the stage bigger for other people who have been left out for too long. We need to do it because we can't understand their assumptions if we don't ask. And we need to do it because the only way to understand

*I'm calling for people, like myself, who have a position of influence to figure out how to diversify our own circles and make the stage bigger for other people who have been left out for too long.*

how young people think about social change, how they imagine their careers, how (or if) they want democracy to work, and what kind of meaning they make from helping others, is to listen to them and let them lead.

Those of us who've made long careers in civil society cannot assume that we understand the perspectives of those who will either inherit or ignore what we've built. Research shows that the professionalization of nonprofits has created a sector that doesn't represent the people it serves nor does it mobilize membership or a feeling of belonging.<sup>36</sup> It's important for us – as we get out of the way – to go where the action is, to listen to those who are making change without us, and to seek to be helpful to them in ways that reflect genuine interdependency.

I hope you'll take this call to heart. What have you done lately to share your stage with someone else in your organization or community? Are you able to shine a light on someone usually left in shadow? Can you hand off your next speaking engagement to someone who hasn't yet been heard from? Co-author your next paper with a rising peer? Co-lead the next meeting with the



new person on the team? The question I keep asking myself is “How can I get out of the way of the talent that is all around me?” It can be uncomfortable not to lead, but to listen and follow. I think we need more of it.

## **BRINGING IT HOME**

My colleagues and I launched the Digital Civil Society Lab at a university to surround ourselves with young people who want to change the world. We’ve put students in leadership positions in designing our public programs – seeking their guidance on the questions to ask and the people to invite for discussion. We use our **Digital Impact** platform to facilitate a series of virtual conversations on issues that diverse voices in the social sector suggest to us – the programming is designed by the community. We share our research in its earliest stages with groups of nonprofit leaders and use their feedback to improve our work and ask different questions.

There’s much more we’d like to do (beyond our research): Create cohorts of young thinkers – writing, podcasting, making movies – anything to help us to understand what civil society and political action mean to them. Support communities that have taken their digital dependencies seriously and are building new ways to operate that account for their very real threat models. Help them share what they have learned without appropriating it or making them vulnerable. Bring together technologists and civil society activists to build robust networks that can adapt, develop, and adapt again to changing digital dependencies. Facilitate rapid action and meaningful expertise-sharing across policy groups whose work touches on civil society. Help people experiment with bold ideas – like data trusts, new forms of governance,

and public interest technologists.

Throughout this *Blueprint* I’ve marked questions and topics that I think are ripe for discussion, experimentation, and improvement. I hope you will use these as topic starters for your next brown-bag lunch, flyer mailing-party, board retreat, or brainstorm session. I’ve included a “discussion guide” to the *Blueprint* as a way to help you do so – but feel free to do whatever makes the most sense in your context. If you’d like to share your additional ideas and any insights from your discussions or help host an online discussion about these ideas (or others) – please contact my team at [hello@digitalimpact.org](mailto:hello@digitalimpact.org). We’ll be setting “virtual” tables for conversations on the Digital Impact platform. We invite you to join us and hope you might invite us to join yours.

There’s a lot to do. Let’s get busy.



# Buzzword Watch

The jargon you'll be hearing in the news, at conferences, and around meeting tables in 2019. Some are ephemeral, some are meaningful. Get your BINGO cards ready.

## DATA MATURITY

How well does your organization manage and govern its digital data? There are several tools available or being built to help you determine your data maturity level, an indicator of organizational effectiveness that is growing in importance. Existing examples are available from Datakind and Harvard. Be on the lookout for more from TechSoup Global and Makaia.

## DEEP FAKES

A deep fake is a manipulated video that mixes audio from one person or event into another, making it look like people are doing and saying things that they didn't really do or say. This is "photoshop" for video, but on steroids, as the connection to algorithmic systems means the videos can be constantly updated with the latest rumor and targeted at those most susceptible. Fraudulent video is already a problem in **human rights investigations**. As fake videos become common the veracity of all videos will be questioned, with implications for communications strategies across the board.

## MESH NETWORK

Low-cost, low distance communications networks that allow information transmission over community owned networks are popular in places with lousy or unaffordable broadband, rural areas, and within in communities that don't trust the cable or telecommunications companies.

## MIDS

MIDS is an acronym for Mediators of Individual Data. It describes new associations (unions, nonprofits, collectives, cooperatives, etc.) that will negotiate with big corporate data powers on behalf of their (voluntary) membership. Along with data trusts and data unions MIDS represent an emerging part of civil society. There's already a lot of **press** about the idea, which is being heavily promoted by **Glen Weyl** and **Jaron Lanier**. You'll hear the buzz – and might even join a MID in 2019.

## NORM

This used to be the kind of word you'd only hear on college campuses and usually only in the social science quad. A "norm" is a standard of behavior such as putting your napkin in your lap at the dinner table or not selling products out of the White House. The frequency with which members of the current U.S. administration violate the norms of public service are why the term is now a buzzword – reporters use it almost every day to describe the latest events. Civil society might take a moment to examine the norms that shape it, those that are holding it back, and those it might be worth doubling down on, or, dare I say, even codifying.

## PUBLIC INTEREST TECH

There's an effort underway to train and attract engineers and software designers into public interest fields – think government service and nonprofits. Modeled on the movement that created public interest law several decades ago, the **public interest technology** movement is just getting started.

### **STEWARDSHIP**

An old idea that needs to come back into fashion – or at least back into jargon. A few years ago nonprofits were itching to hire data scientists. In the coming year, as governance issues hit home, they'll be talking about data stewardship.

### **SURROUNDABLES**

Wearable technology is so last year. Omnipresent networked digital devices mean that we are now **surrounded by sensors**. Many of them exist to “sense” other things, like traffic or building access. Of course, Amazon, Google, and Apple have already moved in with their versions of this technology (Echo, Alexa, Google Home, and Siri). Nonprofits need to consider how this tech affects their missions (and not just their fundraising: See predictions from *Blueprint* 2018).

### **SYSTEMS CHANGE**

This goes in and out of fashion, but it's definitely back. Whether because climate change is wreaking havoc, tens of millions of people are migrating, social entrepreneurs have taken the glory, or because democracies are struggling, **foundations and other big funders** are calling for “bigger,” “bolder,” strategies that purport to change whole systems.

### **ZERO TRUST**

This comes from the data security world and represents a model of designing technology systems that verify identity and use at every step. It's gaining ground. It's also a phrase that (sadly) seems to describe the world writ large.

### **EXTRA CREDIT: SUPERPOWER**

This is the crowd-winner buzzword. My loyal band of conference going, report reading, RFP reviewing, proposal submitting, and funding readers tell me that this term earns the center box on the buzzword bingo card for 2019. My superpower is listening to them.



## PREDICTIONS FOR 2019

Making meaningful predictions seems to get harder every year. But I'll still try. We'll host an online conversation about these and others early in 2019. You can get more information and join us at [www.digitalimpact.org](http://www.digitalimpact.org).

### U.S.

- Funders will jump into funding census outreach – too late.
- Tech workers' opposition to their employers' work practices (either work conditions or certain types of government contracts) will lead to some form of unionization or formalized collective action.
- Aggregate U.S. giving will continue to rise, but the total number of givers will continue to decrease.
- Making sure your organization is in the vocabulary (database) of Alexa/Siri/Google Home will replace search engine optimization as a key marketing strategy for nonprofits.

- The U.S. Supreme Court will rule against affirmative action in higher education.

### GLOBAL

- An “Internet of Things” hack involving a nonprofit – drone, car, medical device – will cause significant damage akin to the ransomware attack on the U.K.'s National Health Service.
- Nonprofits will band together into Information Sharing and Analysis Organizations (ISAOs) to try to develop collective defense against online threats to their communities. Faith-based groups have already developed one for congregations.
- Government shutdowns of internet access will increase.
- Cyber insurance will become a budget line item for every nonprofit and foundation.
- Giving via video game platforms and streaming sites such as Twitch will get mainstream attention.





## 2019 Wildcards

Wildcards are meant to capture unlikely – but imaginable – events that could significantly shift the way we practice or understand the world around us (in addition to having all kinds of direct effects on real people). They’re mostly useful as both “reality checks” against prediction making (see above and below) and provocations – they’re sure to make you ask “What if?” Here are some to consider.:

- One of my 2018 wildcards – Britain won’t Brexit – happens.
- The President of the U.S. gets impeached by the House of Representatives.
- There’s a cryptocurrency charity scandal.

### SCORECARD: RENOVATIONS TO 2018 PREDICTIONS

Prediction	Right	Wrong	Notes
There will be more big-ticket philanthropic partnerships between foundations and individual donors to aggregate capital, similar to Blue Meridian Partners, the partnership between Warren Buffett and the Gates Foundation, and Co-Impact.	✓		Reid Hoffman, an individual donor, regularly participates in “challenges” with the Knight Foundation and Omidyar Network. The Edna McConnell Clark Foundation closed down but spun out Blue Meridian Partners.  There is a growing substrata of enormous (>\$100MM) funder collaboratives that involve both foundations and individuals. These need to be seen as a big and growing part of the philanthropy landscape – the growth of which no one can control (and I’m not sure anyone is monitoring...).
FinTech (financial technology) will be a shiny new interest area for philanthropy in 2018.	✓		
Now that it’s been used to store a copy of the U.N. Declaration of Human Rights, hype about <b>DNA as the storage unit</b> of choice will reach the social sector. This, even before the practice becomes familiar, has already been <b>hacked</b> .		✓	I jumped too soon on this.



Prediction	Right	Wrong	Notes
The giving split between “big and recognized” nonprofits and “DIY help” will get ever more interesting. Think of it as the <b>Red Cross</b> versus GoFundMe.	✓		
Voice-activated giving (“Alexa, donate \$10 to the Community Disaster Fund”) will make headlines.	✓		And I wish NPR would stop telling me to “tell my smart speaker to play NPR.”
The European Union will become the global standard bearer for digital privacy policy. Nonprofits everywhere will examine their privacy practices to abide by the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR).	✓		Examine yes. Change them? Well, not so much. Yet.
A nonprofit organization based outside of the European Union will violate the GDPR and be fined for its activities.		✓	The EU seems focused on fining the big tech companies. (“It’s where the money is.”)
Transparency advocates will demand regulation of political advertising on the web and social media networks. They won’t get it.	✓		We got voluntary archives of political ads from the social media companies instead.
A new giving index that includes crowdfunding platforms will emerge.		✓	Still need it.
Tech companies will increase their philanthropy and political giving as their reputations suffer.	✓		See Bezos’ Day One Fund.
Team communications tools that are slowly replacing internal corporate email will be hacked, drawing as much attention as email dumps did in 2016.		✓	I was looking for a “Slack” hack or breach. People hacking politicians’ Twitter accounts, such as happened to Beto O’Rourke in Texas, might count for ½ point. The bigger idea is “protect it all, not just your email.”
Donor advised funds will outpace all other vehicles for charitable giving in rate of growth.	✓		Although measured just by dollar value, those big ticket funder partnerships at the top of this chart are something to keep an eye on.



## WAIT, WAIT, THERE'S MORE!

More issues and ideas that matter to philanthropy and digital civil society.:

### ■ Count us

Getting an accurate count of the U.S. population is key to fairness, equity, and justice. There's good reason to be concerned about the conduct of the 2020 census, and many states and communities are stepping up to ensure an accurate and complete count. Some communities are taking the task on themselves: see the **Black Census Project** as one example.

### ■ Let us associate

Several states in the U.S. – and many other places – have been trying to limit people's rights to associate or freely assemble. These efforts come in many forms, from proposed regulations and assessing fees on certain public lands to internet shutdowns. Activists now take these digital threats seriously and are banding together to share practical steps to “**defend our movements.**”

### ■ Who gives?

Since 2000 the **percentage of Americans who give to charity has dropped** by 11%. Overall only 55% of households gave to charity in 2014.<sup>37</sup> This means that 20 million *fewer* households give now than did at the turn of the century. We don't know why this is or what those people may be doing instead (not giving at all or giving in other ways, such as political contributions or on crowdfunding platforms). Regulatory changes (tax reform) will likely accelerate these changes.

### ■ Let us control our identity

Linked to the data trusts discussion earlier in this *Blueprint*, there's a shift in focus underway from talking about data privacy to creating meaningful ways for people to

manage their digital identities. These ideas have been around for a long time but are beginning to attract attention outside the core circle of early advocates. Look for work on **self-sovereign identity, decentralization, and personal data management.**

### ■ Giving and activism built on data

Data – public and visible – have become an important input to activism and change. Here are just a few that caught my eye:

- **The Opportunity Atlas.** Based on the work of economist Raj Chetty, these data on economic mobility in the U.S. now underpin millions of dollars in giving from some big foundations.
- **The Eviction Lab.** The data that underpin the Pulitzer Prize winning book, *Eviction*, by Princeton scholar Matthew Desmond has been hailed by many housing advocates. It's also been criticized for not taking seriously the **sensitivity of the data** and for compiling it in ways that discount the work of grassroots activists.

### ■ Democracy reform

New ways to think about democracy are not just the purview of political science departments, people all over the world are building movements (and apps) to foster direct participation and challenge their governments to better represent their people. Here are a few:

- **Sovereign** software by **DemocracyOS**
- Augmented Democracy from the **Collective Learning Lab** at MIT vTaiwan

### ■ Climate Change

The future is here and the news is bad. However, the continued divestment of capital from fossil fuels (over **\$6 trillion** in committed funds as of September 2018) reflects an important, and accelerating commitment.

# DISCUSSION GUIDE



Over the years I've heard from people all over the world about how they've used the *Blueprint* to foster important discussions at their workplaces, where they volunteer, or around the board room table. To help with this, we've created this Discussion Guide to help you organize such conversations. Depending on your situation, these might be free flowing lunchtime chats about a single topic or you may want to pull out a series of the following questions and fold them into a strategic planning process.

We start with some suggested questions. Below, you'll find tips on how to organize a productive conversation. I'd welcome the opportunity to hear what you discussed, what you learned, and how you made it useful. Please share your experience via social media with the hashtag [#blueprint19](#).

## GETTING STARTED

**Option one:** Use the "What ifs?" on pages 29-30 to get a conversation going.

**Option two:** Some questions to use as conversation starters:

- How does your organization use digital data to achieve its mission? Are you doing all that you can to use it safely, ethically, and effectively? See pages 21-23 for discussion. Resources to help can be found at [digitalimpact.io](#).
- Do you know of any new institutional models popping up to manage digital data for public benefit? How do they relate to your work? See page 23 for discussion.
- In what ways is our organization digitally dependent? How does it help you? How does it make you (or those you work with) vulnerable? See page 24 for discussion.
- How is leadership changing at your organization? Are there ways for those in positions of power to "get out of the way" and share their stage with others? What could this look like? See page 33 for discussion.
- Do you think digital platforms are changing the ways we associate? If so, is this for better or worse from the perspective of our organization and mission? See pages 10, 19, and 40 for discussion.
- What, if any, digital policy issues (e.g. net neutrality, broadband access, data privacy, data costs) matter to how you do your work? Should you take action on any of these? If so, how? See page 10-11 for discussion.
- What does organizational effectiveness or capacity building look like in regards to digital data? What kinds of support does your organization need to get better at governing its digital resources? Resources available at [digitalimpact.io](#).

Share insights from your conversation via social media with the hashtag [#blueprint19](#).

**Option three: Develop your own questions.** A good conversation question is layered, open-ended, and full of possibilities. Use the space below to write your own. Avoid questions that can be answered with a simple yes or no.

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### **Host a Blueprint Conversation!**

We invite you to host your own conversation about the questions sparked by this year's *Blueprint*. Here are some tips.

#### **Step-by-Step Guide to Hosting Your Blueprint 2019 Conversation**

**1. Think about your who, what, when, and where.** Who do you want to talk to about these topics – are they coworkers, colleagues, friends? Do you have a colleague who might want to cohost or help start the conversation? What kind of tone do you want to set? Should you host happy hour with friends, coffee with coworkers, or a brown bag lunch in the conference room?

**2. Prepare your group.** Do you want people to read the whole *Blueprint* in advance, just certain sections, or will you share an excerpt at the beginning of the discussion? You can share a link to the *Blueprint* with everyone or download it and copy just the parts on which you want to focus. Between 5-15 people is often best for a rigorous and engaged discussion. A conversation is always more robust when you have people from different backgrounds and with different viewpoints. Invite someone you'd like to hear more from, or encourage your guests to bring a friend.

**3. Welcome people and set the ground rules.** Welcome your group and either lead a round of introductions or offer nametags. Set ground rules. Some common sense ones include: don't interrupt, agree-to-disagree, and give space for the quiet folks to speak up.

**4. Ask provocative questions but keep the conversation civil.** The questions on the reverse page will encourage you to discuss provocative ideas. As host, encourage the group to listen to each other and remain respectful.

**5. Thank everyone.** And let us know how it went. You can share insights or ideas via social media with the hashtag [#blueprint19](#).

Visit [www.digitalimpact.org](http://www.digitalimpact.org) for more information. You can also check the site for a schedule of virtual roundtable discussions on the *Blueprint*, and other topics, that you can join remotely. We also welcome your suggestions on topics for these discussions. Email us at [hello@digitalimpact.org](mailto:hello@digitalimpact.org).

Share insights from your conversation via social media with the hashtag [#blueprint19](#).

# ENDNOTES

1. Draftsmen don't really exist any more in the age of computer-aided design (CAD). This was just coming into practice at the time I'm referring to, and there were still people (the ones I knew were all men) who hand drew every draft of every blueprint. They've gone the way of typing pools.
2. These estimates are from Joseph Rosenberg and Phillip Stallworth, "The House Tax Bill Is Not Very Charitable to Nonprofits," *TaxVox, Blog of Tax Policy Center*, from November 2017, <https://www.taxpolicycenter.org/taxvox/house-tax-bill-not-very-charitable-nonprofits> cited in Howard Gleckman, "21 Million Taxpayers Will Stop Taking Deductions under New Tax Law," *Forbes*, January 11, 2018. Accessed on September 5, 2018: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/beltway/2018/01/11/21-million-taxpayers-will-stop-taking-charitable-deductions-under-the-new-tax-law/#692d8f33238f>
3. Russell James, "How the 2018 Tax Law Increases Charitable Giving Deductions," *Financial Advisor Online*, February 28, 2018. Accessed online September 5, 2018: <https://www.fa-mag.com/news/how-the-2018-tax-law-increases-charitable-giving-deductions-37426.html>
4. See David Pozen, "The Tax Code Shift that's Changing Liberal Activism," *The Atlantic*, November 27, 2018. Accessed online at <https://www.theatlantic.com/ideas/archive/2018/11/501c3-501c4-activists-and-taxcode/576364/>
5. On broadband access see, H. Trostle and Christopher Mitchell, "Profiles of Monopoly: Big Cable and Telecomm," Institute for Self-Reliance, July 2018, accessed online September 12, 2018, <https://assets.documentcloud.org/documents/4623274/Profiles-of-Monopoly-Report.pdf>
6. Anders Melin, "American CEO Pay Is Soaring, But the Gender Pay Gap Is Drawing the Rage," *Bloomberg*, August 21, 2018, Accessed online: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-08-21/american-ceo-pay-is-soaring-but-the-gender-pay-gap-is-drawing-the-rage>
7. New York Federal Reserve, *Household Debt and Credit Report*, Q2 2018, accessed online September 5, 2018: <https://www.newyorkfed.org/microeconomics/hhdc>
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