

Black Tech Agenda

Advancing Equity and
Reimagining Technology

Presented By:



Foreword



I see technological advancements continuing to bolster power structures that disadvantage Black communities with wide-ranging results — from our criminal legal system to our financial system, from our elections to our energy infrastructure. Corporations thrust new technologies upon us under the guise of adding value to our communities, promising to make our lives easier and more efficient. While the global narrative praises technological advancement as the great equalizer, Black people know all too well that these advancements often come at the expense of our safety and humanity. While I believe AI and other forms of technology have the potential to improve our lives, the reckless adoption of technologies developed in shadows — evading testing and regulation — magnifies the risks to Black communities. Technology is not inevitable. We must rewrite the rules and demand accountability from Big Tech — both for the harms that are already inflicted and those that will emerge as these technologies evolve and expand their reach into our daily lives.

The harms done by both new technologies and the mostly white, wealthy individuals and corporations who champion them are far-reaching and well-documented. From risk assessments that decide whether people receive bail or rot in jail to facial recognition that is ill-equipped to recognize Black faces, these technologies have permeated daily life from the mundane to the high-stakes.

When I trace the lineage of surveillance from the era of slavery to today's digital surveillance, I see a continuous strategy of racialized control where technology is wielded as a weapon of oppression rather than a tool of empowerment.

Despite this ongoing oppression, few entities have put forward an affirmative vision on how to reduce the harms of technology for Black communities. Color Of Change (COC) sought to fill this gap. In 2022, we pioneered the first Black Tech Agenda, aiming to advance racial equity within technology by dismantling entrenched racism and promoting greater Black representation in technological decision-making roles. As the impact of technology on Black people continues to evolve, it is clear that our agenda must also evolve. With the advent and proliferation of artificial intelligence tools, it is critical to reassess the Black Tech Agenda within today's technological framework.

The Black Tech Agenda is not merely a set of principles and policies — it is our blueprint for mobilizing action and securing real accountability in technology.



Until Justice Is Real,

Portia Allen-Kyle
Interim Executive Director,
Color Of Change

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Introduction



Color Of Change, the nation's largest online racial justice organization, is well-positioned to set the stage for an affirmative vision of artificial intelligence (AI), privacy and technology that protects Black communities. **Our commitment to racial justice and to understanding the role technology, particularly AI, plays in the lives of Black people means that it is our duty to hold corporations accountable and to shape policy.** Our approach combines targeted campaigns, policy advocacy, member activation, and coalition building to drive meaningful change.

In 2022, Color Of Change pioneered the first Black Tech Agenda, which aimed to foster racial equity within technology by dismantling entrenched racism and promoting greater Black representation in technological decision-making roles. As **the impact of technology on Black people continues to evolve rapidly**, particularly with the advent and proliferation of AI tools, it has become clear that the agenda must also evolve.

We are introducing an expanded Black Tech Agenda to deepen our engagement with the digital challenges ahead. This agenda recognizes that technology is intricately woven into every aspect of our existence, shaping access to education, employment, health care and financial services. **Our agenda calls for a forward-thinking approach that both safeguards civil rights and actively enhances the social and economic well-being of our communities.**

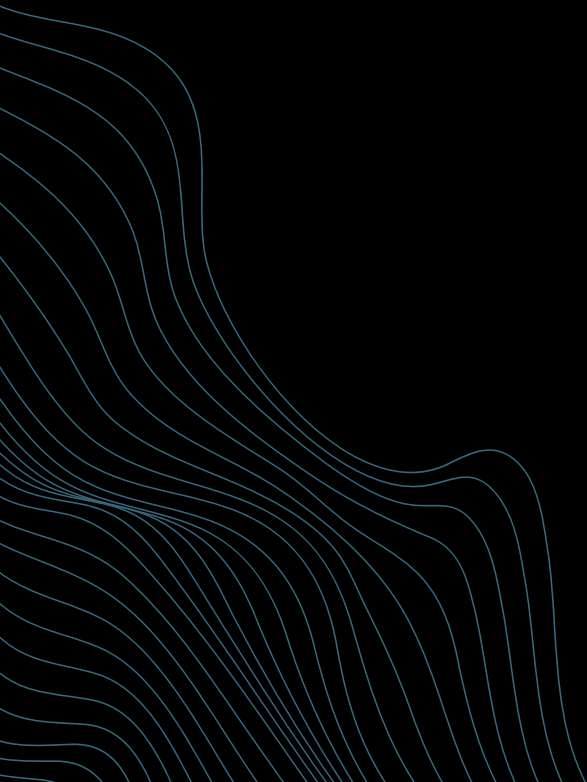
Our updated agenda advocates for real solutions at the state and federal levels of government to address systemic discrimination in the technology and telecommunications industries. Recent events have shown how unregulated AI systems can perpetuate racial discrimination — from biased facial recognition leading to wrongful arrests of Black individuals, to discriminatory lending algorithms denying loans to qualified Black applicants, to hiring algorithms that disadvantage Black job seekers.

In the current underdeveloped regulatory environment, where government inaction and foreign regulatory bodies make the rules on AI, Color Of Change's role is crucial in defending and furthering the interests of Black communities. We see AI systems perpetuating racial discrimination through biased facial recognition that has led to wrongful arrests, automated hiring tools that screen out qualified Black candidates, and lending algorithms that deny mortgages to Black applicants with similar qualifications as white applicants who are approved. We reject the notion that AI and technology are neutral resources. Instead, they reflect those in power and the data used to build them.

Our vision isn't about creating new technology, but **ensuring AI follows clear principles of fairness and justice that uplift rather than harm Black people and society's most vulnerable communities.** This makes the development and regulation of AI a critical battleground in the fight for civil rights and social justice.



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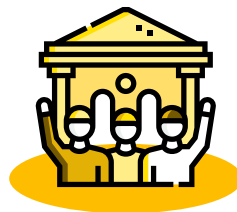




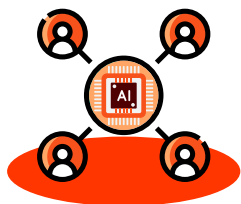
We Imagine a Future Where



Technology promotes equity and well-being for Black people. AI systems are designed to benefit and uplift Black communities, communities of color and other underrepresented groups. Regular audits and community oversight ensure equality in the digital sphere.



Data empowers and represents all communities. AI development draws from inclusive, representative information that honors and respects Black voices and experiences. Communities maintain ownership over their information, protected by strong federal and state data protection laws that uphold individual rights, especially the right to exclude their information.



AI is accessible and understood by all. People of every race, ethnicity, background and class understand how technology and AI shape their lives. Educational programs enable communities to make informed decisions about technology's role in society.



Communities are always at the center of the conversation. Black communities and their representatives actively shape the development and implementation of technology. Community review boards and oversight mechanisms complement civil rights protections, ensuring technology serves the public good.



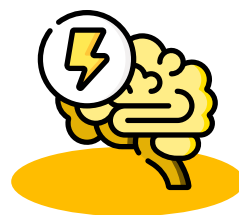
Technology advances environmental justice. AI development aligns with environmental sustainability, particularly protecting Black communities most impacted by climate change. Strong e-waste and carbon reduction standards guide corporate responsibility. The power used to support this development does not further pollute the environment.



We Imagine a Future Where



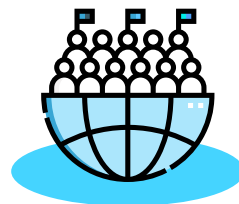
Technology serves the public through transparent accountability. Tech companies and developers proactively assess and address their systems' impacts. Strong antitrust frameworks and consumer protections ensure technology benefits all communities equitably.



AI enhances human wisdom and judgment. Technology augments and strengthens human decision-making, especially in critical areas like criminal justice, health care and social services. Human insight remains central to life-changing decisions.



AI bridges social and economic divides. The benefits of AI flow equitably to all communities, actively reducing income inequality. Black entrepreneurs, business owners and workers thrive in an inclusive digital economy.



Technology enriches everyone's daily life. High-speed broadband and device repair are affordable and accessible in all communities. Rural and urban areas have robust internet infrastructure, and communities create innovative solutions for universal connectivity. Black communities fully participate in and benefit from technological advancement.



Creative works and cultural knowledge are honored and protected. Artists, writers, academics and cultural knowledge holders maintain ownership over their creations. AI systems respect intellectual property rights, compensate creators fairly and preserve the integrity of original works. Traditional knowledge, cultural expressions and artistic innovations — especially from Black creators and communities — are protected from unauthorized use and appropriation.

The Role of Color Of Change



Color Of Change is uniquely equipped to lead the fight for a just AI future. With our deep history in racial justice advocacy, we understand how technology, especially AI, can reinforce existing inequalities. Our expertise in holding corporations accountable and shaping policy ensures that we can address the civil rights challenges posed by AI, particularly for Black communities and other marginalized groups.

Our approach combines targeted campaigns, policy advocacy and coalition building to drive meaningful change. Following backlash in 2023 when Black travelers discovered they were being booked into former slave plantations, we collaborated with Airbnb to develop and implement new policies prohibiting the renting of former plantations or slave quarters. Those policies ensure that people cannot use the platform to profit off of the pain and atrocities enacted against Black people under chattel slavery.

We also recognize the importance of proactive measures in the rapidly evolving AI landscape. Recently, we achieved a significant policy victory by persuading AI companies Anthropic and ElevenLabs to expand their election integrity policies. These changes better account for the ways AI can be exploited to specifically target Black voters, showcasing our foresight in anticipating and mitigating potential threats to democratic participation. Our impact extends beyond individual company policies. The Stop Hate for Profit campaign, which Color Of Change co-led, resulted in a boycott of Facebook by more than 1,000 companies due to the platform's inadequate response to the proliferation of anti-Black hatred, bias and discrimination on its platforms. This large-scale action forced Facebook to release its final Civil Rights Audit report and commit to creating a Vice President of Civil Rights position, illustrating how we leverage collective action to drive systemic change.

The current regulatory environment for AI is underdeveloped, often failing to protect the rights of those most at risk. Color Of Change's role is crucial here. We are not just observers; **we actively shape policy, ensuring that AI development prioritizes justice and equity.** Our theory of change involves identifying specific harms, mobilizing public support, leveraging the power of our members and prominent community voices to engage with tech companies and policymakers on the Hill and advocating for policy changes that protect Black communities and other vulnerable groups in the AI era.

Black Communities Need Clean Digital Access



The Crisis

Black communities must have access to affordable, sustainable broadband infrastructure that enhances our economic, educational and social well-being. However, the infrastructure that supports our digital world also brings heavy environmental problems that disproportionately impact Black communities. While ensuring access for our communities, we must also make sure this digital infrastructure is environmentally sustainable, with responsible placement of data centers, proper e-waste management and requirements to use clean energy.

While internet access is essential for education, jobs and opportunities, **38% of Black people in the rural South still don't have internet at home, compared to 23% of white residents.**¹

This gap reflects decades of neglect and corporate exploitation that have created “digital deserts” in Black neighborhoods. This digital redlining creates new forms of technological exclusion that mirror historical patterns of racial discrimination.² The human cost of this lack of internet became painfully clear during the pandemic. In the 2020-2021 school year, students in mostly minority school districts learning online lost about 0.8 grade levels in math — almost double the 0.45 grade-level loss in mostly white school districts with similar remote learning time.³ This wasn't just about technology — corporate greed and systemic inequality have made reliable internet too expensive for many Black families. The environmental harm extends worldwide. As our digital lives expand, the energy demands

of data centers grow exponentially — **they currently use 1% of the world's electricity, a number expected to more than double by 2026, mainly due to AI development.**⁴ These facilities strain local resources, with water use projected to reach over 1 trillion gallons each year by 2027.⁵ Companies like X (formerly Twitter) have installed fossil fuel generators without permits in heavily polluted Black communities like Memphis to power AI data centers, perpetuating a long history of environmental racism that treats our neighborhoods as sacrifice zones for corporations.⁶ The Three Mile Island nuclear power plant, the site of the worst nuclear accident in U.S. history, may reopen in 2028 to support Microsoft's AI systems.⁷

About 80% of U.S. electronic waste is sent to countries in the Global South or dumped in low-income areas, often affecting Black and brown communities both at home and abroad.⁸ This creates a cruel irony:

Many of the same communities that lack access to digital resources bear the toxic burden of the tech industry's waste.⁹





Black Communities Need Clean Digital Access

The Vision

We need universal, affordable high-speed internet that reaches every home, school and business. But the technology that works behind our digital connections must act responsibly.

Tech infrastructure should be sustainable and data centers must reduce the impact on our communities. Proper e-waste management is essential to prevent harmful materials from polluting our neighborhoods. Corporations must strive to not only be carbon neutral, but ethically sustain the resources and minerals that build their products.

Collectively addressing these challenges will unlock new potential for education, jobs and better living conditions — all while safeguarding the health of our residents and our lands.

The Path Forward



BUILDING POWER & CAPACITY

- **Public Education and Awareness**
 - Illustrate how many Black communities don't have access to affordable, clean internet. Focus on both internet issues and environmental problems like electronic waste and pollution from carbon emissions.
 - Collect and share personal stories to show how poor internet access and environmental dangers make it harder to learn, get health care and find jobs.
- **Coalition Building**
 - Bring together civil rights groups, environmental organizations, tech companies, schools and community leaders to push for affordable, clean internet access at the federal and state levels.
 - Amplify the voices of communities that are being left behind so they can speak up about their needs to decision-makers and Big Tech.
- **Narrative Development**
 - Create a clear and engaging narrative framework that links poor internet access and AI development to environmental justice issues, showing how Black communities face all of these challenges at the same time.
- **Community Organizing**
 - Hold meetings and workshops to get local residents involved in advocating for better internet access and to teach them about the connection between digital equity and environmental sustainability.
- **Resource Development**
 - Create accessible guides on environmental impact assessments and how to engage in them.
 - Provide toolkits and resources to help communities advocate for protection from tech pollution.

TAKING ACTION THROUGH

- **Policy Change**
 - **Advocate for Legislation**
 - I. Push for the approval and full funding of the Digital Equity Act to make affordable, high-quality internet available to more people.
 - II. Urge Congress to renew the Affordable Connectivity Program.
 - III. Support a national E-Waste Disposal Bill to encourage sustainable tech practices and reduce environmental risks. There is no Federal E-Waste Disposal program telling Big Tech how to dispose of technology in an environmentally friendly way.
 - IV. Support laws to ensure that energy used for developing AI is carbon neutral, and push for transparency about new fossil fuel or nuclear power sources that support AI development.
 - V. Lobby for mandatory environmental impact studies — and Title VI analyses for projects receiving federal assistance — before tech projects are approved.



Government Accountability

- I. Ensure state and local governments have equitably distributed Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) funds to all communities, particularly Black communities, in both urban and rural areas.
- II. Encourage local governments to enforce environmental laws and get community input on tech development projects. Title VI of the Civil Rights Act requires agencies that receive federal funding to prevent discrimination. Local governments must ensure tech projects don't unfairly burden Black neighborhoods with environmental hazards.

Enforcement Mechanisms

- I. Ensure environmental agencies check that companies follow e-waste and pollution laws, and exercise oversight authority to adapt to new regulation and environmental circumstances.
- II. Advocate for penalties against companies that ignore community consent or break environmental rules.
- III. Prevent companies from having the ability to buy carbon credits to appear environmentally friendly and to "offset" their consumption.

- **Corporate Accountability**

Demand Corporate Action

- I. Push internet providers to offer affordable, high-speed internet in underserved Black communities.
- II. Require tech companies to create programs for safely handling e-waste and to reduce environmental damage in their supply chains, and expose bad actors who hide the real impacts of their decisions.
- III. Advocate for companies to set and meet carbon reduction goals, reduce the intensity of their energy needs, and switch to renewable energy, with clear and open reporting on their progress.
- IV. Create accountability for executives and other leaders who fail to act, or actively work to undermine progress.
- V. Push companies to conduct environmental impact assessments and make the results public.

Effective Pressure Tactics

- I. Use public campaigns, consumer pressure and shareholder activism to make companies follow through on their commitments.
- II. Mandate transparency in supply chains to communities, ensuring that the components that make up their devices and appliances are ethically sourced and sustainably produced.

- **Community Solutions**

Local Initiatives

- I. Organize e-waste recycling events to safely get rid of old electronics and reduce environmental risks.
- II. Create state and federal programs to provide refurbished devices and affordable internet to people who need them.

Alternative Models

- I. Help communities fund and build their own local networks that offer shared, low-cost internet access and promote digital inclusion.

Know Your Opposition



WHO BENEFITS FROM MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

- 1. Large Telecommunications Companies:** By maintaining monopolies and prioritizing profits over people, these companies benefit from high prices and limited competition, which limits availability of affordable options for Black communities.
- 2. Internet Service Providers (ISPs):** ISPs opposing net neutrality can implement paid prioritization or “fast lanes,” allowing them to charge more for better services while marginalizing low-income users who cannot afford premium rates.
- 3. Hardware Manufacturers Creating Obsolete Devices:** These companies profit by designing devices that become obsolete quickly, forcing consumers to purchase new products regularly, which is financially burdensome for under-resourced communities.
- 4. Tech Companies Resisting E-Waste Regulations:** By avoiding stricter environmental regulations, these companies reduce costs associated with responsible disposal and recycling, often at the expense of poorer countries where e-waste is dumped.
- 5. E-Waste Exporters:** Companies exporting electronic waste to countries with lax environmental laws profit by sidestepping the costs of proper e-waste management, contributing to global environmental injustice.
- 6. Mining Companies Resisting Supply Chain Audits:** By avoiding audits, they continue harmful environmental practices and exploit labor without accountability, keeping production costs low for tech manufacturers.
- 7. Fossil Fuel Suppliers to the Tech Industry:** These suppliers profit from the continued dominance of non-renewable energy sources for data centers, making a transition to sustainable alternatives all that more difficult.
- 8. Tech Billionaires Prioritizing Profits Over Access:** Mark Zuckerberg, Elon Musk and Sundar Pichai continue to prioritize shareholders profits and data collection over ensuring equitable access and environmental sustainability in Black communities.

Sundar Pichai
CEO, Alphabet

Mark Zuckerberg
CEO, Meta

Elon Musk
CEO, Tesla





COMMON TACTICS USED TO RESIST CHANGE IN THIS AREA

- **Lobbying Against Regulations:** Companies have invested a lot of money to influence decision-makers like the FCC to prevent passage of rules supporting digital fairness, net neutrality or environmental protection.
- **Spreading Misleading Narratives:** Promoting the idea that the biggest problem in Black communities is a lack of digital skills distracts from the real issues like not having enough access to money or the infrastructure to thrive.
- **Greenwashing Initiatives:** Products and services often are advertised as environmentally friendly, but little or no real effort is made to reduce harm to the environment that corporations inflict.
- **Opposing Net Neutrality:** Companies and politicians have supported policies that allow certain companies to control or limit internet access instead of keeping it open and equal for all.
- **Exporting E-Waste:** We've been sending e-waste to countries with weaker environmental protections to sidestep the proper disposal of our own waste.

SURFACE-LEVEL FIXES THAT DON'T ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES

- **Ambiguous Carbon Neutral Commitments:** Large corporations have made vague promises to become carbon neutral. The problem is, there aren't always clear deadlines or plans for how they'll actually achieve it.
- **Recycling Programs That Export E-Waste:** Tech companies often claim to recycle electronics, but evidence shows the waste is shipped to countries with weak environmental protections.
- **"Green" Data Centers With Hidden Costs:** Big Tech has been building gigantic data centers, sometimes in drought-prone areas, consuming massive amounts of valuable water that local communities need.
- **Purchasing Carbon Credits as Offsets:** Companies buy carbon credits to appear environmentally friendly and to "offset" their consumption. This doesn't actually reduce their emissions or energy use.
- **Smart City Initiatives Increasing Surveillance:** Cities and tech companies have been introducing "smart city" technology that provides insights and services to the wealthy, while increasing surveillance and selling the data without consent.
- **Job Training Initiatives Without Addressing Systemic Bias:** Some large corporations offer job training programs, but don't offer employees the resources that would allow them to meaningfully contribute and stay in their roles. Just hiring Black people or other underrepresented communities will not result in change if they are highly incentivized to uphold the corporation's structures.

Black People Need Individual Control Over Their Digital Lives



The Crisis

The situation felt like a nightmare in Detroit when, in February 2023, six police officers burst into Porcha Woodruff's home. Eight months pregnant, she was handcuffed and arrested in front of her children because a facial recognition system wrongly identified her as a carjacking suspect.¹⁰ Sadly, her story isn't unique. In 2020, Robert Williams also was wrongfully arrested by the Detroit police due to flawed facial recognition technology.¹¹ This is part of a pattern of **false arrests driven by biased technologies that put Black lives at risk and reinforce racist policing practices.**¹²

The modern surveillance of Black people extends a long historical pattern of technological control and monitoring.¹³ Public pressure forced the Los Angeles Police Department to end programs like Operation LASER and PredPol after it became clear they discriminated against people of color.¹⁴ In New York, the police are accused of collecting DNA samples from Black and Latino residents, including children, without their consent or knowledge.¹⁵

The attack on Black peoples' digital rights goes beyond surveillance. It also includes targeted misinformation campaigns designed to weaken our political power and health. During the 2020 presidential election season, bad actors spread false claims that mail-in ballots from mostly Black neighborhoods would be invalidated.¹⁶ **During the COVID-19 pandemic, disinformation targeting Black people contributed to lower vaccine uptake and higher infection rates compared to national averages.**¹⁷ This targeted disinformation exploited historical medical traumas and ongoing healthcare inequities in our communities - from the Tuskegee Syphilis Study to contemporary

experiences of medical racism - to fuel distrust in public health systems and preventive measures.¹⁸

In 2024, misinformation tactics now include AI-generated robocalls and fake videos that threaten fair elections and Black political participation.¹⁹ The unchecked collection and misuse of information about our bodies, biometric data, is another serious threat. In 2019, residents of Detroit's mostly Black public housing communities protested the installation of facial recognition systems because they understood the dangers of constant surveillance.²⁰ Their concerns were confirmed when reports showed that companies such as Clearview AI had scraped billions of social media images without permission to build facial recognition databases — tools that disproportionately misidentify and criminalize Black individuals.²¹ **Across the country, public housing has deployed facial recognition without residents' consent or oversight, fueled by grants from the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, which threatens privacy, reinforces biases and criminalizes poverty.**²²

These connected systems of surveillance, biased algorithms and targeted misinformation create a digital cage around Black communities. Breaking free requires major changes: Strong data privacy laws that protect individual rights, strict rules on collecting biometric data and using facial recognition, guaranteed rights to have data deleted and real consequences for platforms that profit from harmful misinformation. Black people must have full control over their digital lives, protected by strong laws that safeguard personal data and shield them from digital harms.



Black People Need Individual Control Over Their Digital Lives

The Vision

We must fight for strong data privacy protections that allow individuals to determine what is collected about them and how it is used — and give them the power to delete that information.

Companies should only collect the bare minimum information they need, and they should have to ask an individual before sharing or selling that information to anyone else. Congress should create an independent consumer protection agency, much like the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, to assist people if their data is misused. Protecting information about our bodies and biometric data is crucial to prevent misuse of sensitive information like facial recognition and emotion detection. We must also prevent companies from charging extra or reducing any necessary features for individual consumers to protect their data.

We must ban discriminatory facial recognition technologies, especially those in law enforcement. We need to change Section 230 of the Communications Decency Act of 1996, which protects online platforms from liability for what their users do on it. We need changes in the act to hold platforms accountable for how their design choices encourage and amplify targeted disinformation and dehumanizing narratives. It's important to protect free speech online, ensuring that Black voices can fully express themselves without undue censorship or suppression.



The Path Forward

BUILDING POWER & CAPACITY

- **Public Education and Awareness**
 - Campaign to educate Black communities about their data privacy rights and the dangers of data exploitation. In addition, elementary school curricula must modernize to ensure that children are brought up in classrooms that prepare them for a digital world.
 - Share powerful stories that show how data misuse and biased algorithms harm Black people.
 - Use social media, community events, and easy-to-understand materials to raise awareness.
 - Galvanize support for individual digital privacy rights with community members.
- **Coalition Building**
 - Bring together community members, civil rights groups, tech experts, community leaders and activists to fight for digital rights.
 - Organize forums and workshops to plan strategies and share resources.
 - Mobilize coalitions and supporters to put pressure on lawmakers and tech companies for real reforms.
- **Narrative Development**
 - Establish narratives that link digital rights with racial justice and facilitate a broad-based understanding of people as products in this digital age.
 - Highlight real examples of how a lack of control over digital data has hurt Black people and communities.
- **Community Organizing**
 - Support grassroots efforts to get community members involved in advocacy.
 - Offer training on how to push for policy changes and hold companies accountable.

TAKING ACTION THROUGH

- **Policy Change**
 - Advocate for Legislation**
 - I. Push for a federal bill such as the Algorithmic Accountability Act, which mandates transparency and requires companies to review and fix harms caused by automated decision-making systems, allowing for fairness and accountability in areas like employment, housing and credit. The federal government also should create a new class of federal employees to support the hiring of algorithmic auditors.
 - II. Advocate for the introduction of federal legislation similar to California's Delete Act, enabling individuals to remove their personal data from corporate databases.
 - III. Congress should pass the Digital Consumer Protection Commission Act to create a new federal agency that would regulate online platforms and protect people from harmful data practices. The Fourth Amendment Is Not For Sale Act also should be re-introduced and passed by the Congress to restrict government purchase of personal data.
 - IV. Platforms should lose Section 230 protection when their paid ads or targeting tools harm Black communities, such as through voter suppression or blocking access to housing or jobs. Similarly, if a platform's recommendation algorithms (group or friend recommendations, or "watch next" recommendations) connect users to hate groups or anti-Black content, that,



too, should be exempt from Section 230 protections. Finally, platforms should share data with independent researchers, allowing them to study any discrimination.

- V. Congress must introduce and pass a federal general privacy law that contains civil rights protections at its core.

Advocate for Federal AI Disclosure Requirements

- I. Push for comprehensive legislation requiring clear, accessible disclosure of AI use. This means that there should be:
 - Real-time notification when people interact with AI (like chatbots or virtual assistants)
 - Standardized labels for AI-generated content (text, images, audio or video)
 - Visible indicators when AI systems are making or supporting decisions about:
 - Employment and hiring
 - Lending and financial services
 - Housing applications
 - Healthcare
 - Educational opportunities
 - Government benefits
 - Public registry of AI systems used by government agencies.
 - Mandatory disclosure of AI use in surveillance and monitoring systems.
 - Clear opt-out mechanisms where legally permitted.

Ban Harmful Technologies

- I. Advocate for federal and state bans on using facial recognition by law enforcement.
- II. Advocate for strict bans on AI that:
 - Target and surveil protected classes of people on the basis of race or sex.
 - Make or influence criminal justice decisions including:
 - Predictive policing
 - Pretrial risk assessments
 - Sentencing recommendations
 - Parole determinations
- III. Make automated decisions about fundamental civil rights and civil liberties.
- IV. Prohibit the use of AI in crisis intervention service.
- V. Support strong federal biometric privacy laws similar to Illinois' Biometric Information Privacy Act (BIPA) that allows people to sue if their data is misused.

Government Action

- I. Work with federal and state lawmakers to introduce and support these bills.
- II. Urge regulatory agencies to enforce data protection and privacy laws effectively.

• **Corporate Accountability**

Demand Corporate Changes

- I. Require Big Tech to be clear and open about how they collect data, with easy-to-understand information for users.
- II. Push companies to create, and enforce, strong content moderation policies that protect targeted communities.
- III. Insist that companies are transparent about how they use algorithms, and regularly test for, and work to root out, bias and discrimination.



Effective Pressure Tactics

- I. Organize consumer campaigns to demand better data practices from tech companies.
- II. Use shareholder activism to push for stronger corporate policies on data privacy and accountability for algorithms.

Set Industry Standards

- I. Advocate for ethical data practices to be adopted across the tech industry.
- II. Encourage the creation of industry guidelines for the responsible use of AI and algorithms.

- **Community Solutions**

Individual Empowerment

- I. Teach community members how to protect their personal data.
- II. Offer resources and tools to help people manage and control their online information.

Alternative Models

- I. Promote open-source technologies that give users more transparency and control.
- II. Highlight platforms that prioritize user privacy and data protection.

Support Programs

- I. Set up workshops and training sessions to teach data privacy and security skills.
- II. Create support networks for people impacted by data misuse or digital discrimination.





Know Your Opposition

WHO BENEFITS FROM MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

- 1. Data Brokers and Tech Companies Profiting from Personal Data Collection:** Companies such as data brokers and Big Tech collect and sell people's data to make money. They do this without getting clear consent from users.
- 2. Advertisers Relying on Extensive Personal Data for Targeting:** Advertisers create detailed profiles of people from personal data so they can deliver highly targeted ads. They also sell this data without people knowing or giving their consent.
- 3. Surveillance Technology Companies:** Companies that make tools like facial recognition profit from selling them to law enforcement or private organizations. They don't always disclose how these systems work.
- 4. Law Enforcement Agencies Using Invasive Data Collection Methods:** Law enforcement agencies often use advanced surveillance techniques to collect information about people who haven't been suspected of a crime, claiming it keeps communities safe.
- 5. Social Media Platforms Resistant to Content Moderation Changes:** Social media platforms make money from people using them all the time, so they promote sensational content even when it may be misleading or completely false. Sometimes, this can lead to real life consequences.
- 6. Partisan Groups Benefiting from the Spread of Misinformation:** Certain political groups spread misinformation to manipulate people or create division among groups of people of a particular identity, creed, race or gender.
- 7. Companies Opposing Stricter Privacy Regulations:** Many tech companies claim to care about privacy and civil rights protections but fight against laws that would limit their ability to collect data because it would hurt their business.
- 8. Big Tech Leaders Resisting Transparency:** Executives like Mark Zuckerberg, Peter Thiel and Sam Altman actively fight against meaningful data privacy regulations while their companies profit from collecting and monetizing personal data, particularly from marginalized communities.

COMMON TACTICS USED TO RESIST CHANGE IN THIS AREA

- **Lobbying Against Regulations:** Big Tech has spent a lot of money to influence lawmakers to stop the creation of privacy laws, biometric protection and regulations that would limit or stop data collection and surveillance.
- **Promoting Self-Regulation Over Legal Enforcement:** Tech companies try to push for voluntary guidelines instead of legally binding regulations. They know self-regulation often lacks real enforcement or accountability.
- **Implementing Complex Opt-Out Systems:** Companies often design confusing ways of opting out of their products. This is by design, knowing that if it is a hassle to opt-out, many people won't try.
- **Algorithmic Content Moderation That Silences Marginalized Voices:** Platforms have been known to use automated systems that unfairly target and remove content from Black users, often without a way for them to seek clarification or a



remedy if they feel they've been unfairly targeted. This limits their voices while a company claims to be enforcing community guidelines.

- **Providing Vague Transparency Reports:** Big Tech sometimes release transparency reports without little or no detail, making it hard to hold them accountable for how user data is handled.
- **Complex Privacy Policies:** Companies tell us how they use our information in complex and hard to understand language, making it difficult to understand our rights or how our information is being used.

SURFACE-LEVEL FIXES THAT DON'T ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES

- **Voluntary “Ethical Guidelines” for Facial Recognition Use Without Legal Enforcement:** Big Tech may publish guidelines on how they use facial recognition. But without any legal enforcement, these rules can be ignored.
- **Fact-Checking Initiatives That Don't Address Root Causes of Misinformation:** Some platforms label false information, but don't fix the algorithms that promote sensational content. As a result, misinformation continues to spread to Black people.
- **Deepfake Detection Tools That Can't Keep Pace with Evolving Technology:** Companies continue to allow AI-generated content to spread on their platforms, with tools to detect such content not readily available or widely deployed.
- **Government Backdoors in Encryption:** Governments have been seeking access to encrypted communications to combat drug and human trafficking, but this would weaken everyone's ability to be safe and secure online.
- **Broad Content Removal Policies Used Against Activists:** Platforms use broad policies to remove content, often stifling the voice of activists and disproportionately impacting Black communities working for justice.
- **Tech Literacy Programs That Shift Responsibility to Users:** Companies that focus on educating Black people, but avoid fixing harm in their platform's practice, shift the blame for digital harms to our communities rather than systematically addressing the issue. Black communities need more resources and infrastructure when it comes to accessing technology. Automatically assuming that Black people need to be “educated” on understanding technology takes agency away from many communities and deflects from platforms' responsibility to fix systemic problems.

Black Neighborhoods Need Community Control



The Crisis

Black communities often are left out when decisions are made about using technology in their neighborhoods. This leads to **harmful patterns where tech infrastructure that benefits wealthier areas is built near Black communities and communities of color without their consent.** For example, in Louisiana's "Cancer Alley," chemical companies built many polluting factories in mostly Black neighborhoods, making people who live there much more likely to get sick.²³ Big Tech companies treat Black communities as places to dump their infrastructure, ignoring concerns about community health.

The right to repair crises makes these inequities worse. The Federal Trade Commission has shown that repair restrictions disproportionately hurt communities of color and low-income areas.²⁴ For Black communities, where many rely solely on smartphones for internet access, the lack of affordable repair options creates a significant barrier to staying connected. **With 21% of Black adults as "smartphone-only" internet users, compared to 12% of white adults, this unequal access to technology further compounds economic exclusion.**²⁵ In rural communities, the nearest authorized repair shop might be hours away, cutting off access to important services, education and job opportunities.²⁶ Black-owned small businesses that fix and maintain devices face a double threat. They risk losing their own livelihoods and their ability to help their communities.

The unchecked spread of tech facilities adds more burdens to Black neighborhoods. When tech companies build data centers and other structures without community input, they strain local resources.²⁷ These facilities use huge amounts of electricity and water, often in areas already struggling with high utility costs and weak infrastructure. These overlapping issues show how the lack of community control continues systemic racism today. **When Black communities can't decide how tech infrastructure enters their neighborhoods, they face a cruel choice: accept potentially harmful infrastructure without protections or risk being left behind in the digital world.**

This is about making sure Black communities can decide how technology shapes their lives, surroundings and economic opportunities. It means having a say about where data centers are built and ensuring local businesses can offer affordable tech repairs.





Black Neighborhoods Need Community Control

The Vision

We want Black communities to have complete control over technology and the infrastructure that powers it in their neighborhoods, and to make sure it meets their needs and respects their rights. We need policies that require real community input on all tech projects, from where infrastructure is placed to adopting new systems. This includes passing right-to-repair laws that empower people to fix their own devices, with companies providing access to affordable repair guides, tools and parts.

By making these big changes, **Black neighborhoods will have the power to shape how technology is used in their communities, improving their lives.**



The Path Forward

BUILDING POWER & CAPACITY

- **Public Education and Awareness**
 - Campaign to inform residents about their rights to control local tech deployments.
 - Educate communities on the importance of the right to repair and its impact on local economies.
- **Coalition Building**
 - Unite community groups, independent repair shops and environmental organizations to advocate for community control.
 - Collaborate with tech justice advocates to strengthen efforts toward local autonomy over technology.
- **Community Organizing**
 - Host local meetings to gather input on tech projects affecting neighborhoods.
 - Mobilize residents to participate in decision-making processes regarding local tech infrastructure.

TAKING ACTION THROUGH

- **Policy Change**
 - Advocate for Legislation**
 - I. Galvanize coalitions and communities to support legislation that prioritizes Black communities and not just tokenizes them.
 - II. Push for right-to-repair laws, like the Fair Repair Act, at both state and federal levels.
 - III. Support local laws that require community input before new tech projects are approved in neighborhoods.
 - Government Accountability**
 - I. Demand transparency from officials about decisions on tech infrastructure that affect neighborhoods.
- **Corporate Accountability**
 - Demand Corporate Changes**
 - I. Require tech companies to give repair manuals and affordable parts to consumers and independent repair shops.
 - II. Insist that communities have a say on AI governance boards and in decision-making processes.
 - Effective Pressure Tactics**
 - I. Organize consumer actions against companies that don't support the right to repair.
 - II. Use social media campaigns to call out companies that ignore community input.
 - III. Engage in shareholder activism to push for better corporate policies on community control.
 - Set Industry Standards**

Promote policies that give local communities control over tech infrastructure across the industry.



- **Community Solutions**

- **Community-Led Initiatives**

- I. Set up local repair workshops to help residents learn how to fix their own devices.
 - II. Create community committees to oversee tech projects and infrastructure in the neighborhood.

- **Alternative Models**

- I. Support communities in building community-owned tech infrastructure, like local internet providers or mesh networks.

- **Support Programs**

- I. Provide training for residents on how to maintain and repair technology.
 - II. Offer grants or resources to support community tech projects that focus on local control.





Know Your Opposition

WHO BENEFITS FROM MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

1. **Large Tech Corporations Preferring Centralized Control:** Big Tech prefers to control how technology is deployed and operated. They want to set the terms that boost profits and data collection without interference from government or communities.
2. **Manufacturers Opposing Right-to-Repair Legislation:** Big Tech has been restricting the ability to repair technology to force people to buy new devices or pay for expensive repairs and increase corporate profits.
3. **Telecom Companies Resisting Local Broadband Initiatives:** Telecom companies fight against community-owned broadband projects in order to protect their profits and market share, even if these projects could offer the same or better service at more reasonable rates.

COMMON TACTICS USED TO RESIST CHANGE IN THIS AREA

- **Promoting Corporate Partnerships as Beneficial:** Corporations highlight the supposed benefit of being involved in local communities, while ignoring the lack of power those communities have over the technologies in their lives.
- **Designing Non-Repairable Devices:** Companies have designed products that are hard or impossible to fix, so people have to buy new ones when they fail.
- **Opposing Right-to-Repair Legislation:** Manufacturers claim that letting people repair products themselves would compromise safety or intellectual property. They do this to maintain control.
- **Creating Legal and Technical Barriers:** Companies create complex legal and technical hurdles to prevent communities from taking control over the local infrastructure or technology in their lives.

SURFACE-LEVEL FIXES THAT DON'T ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES

- **Advisory Boards with No Decision-Making Authority:** Companies and/or governments have created advisory boards where members can share opinions, but these boards don't always have real power to intervene and curtail harmful practices.
- **Digital Literacy Initiatives That Ignore Systemic Issues:** Programs that focus on teaching tech skills fail to address larger problems like access to devices, affordability or local control over technology in communities. It also automatically presumes that a lack of understanding on the part of Black communities is fueling issues surrounding community control.
- **Pilot Programs with No Commitment to Full Implementation:** Companies or governments sometimes start small pilot programs to meet a community demand, but have no plans to expand them or ensure they last.

Technology Must Work Fairly For Black Economic Success



The Crisis

Biased technology continues to create new obstacles to Black economic success. Hiring algorithms, often built on biased data, exclude qualified Black candidates. In 2018, Amazon abandoned its AI hiring tool after discovering it unfairly penalized applicants connected to women's colleges and groups and minority groups.²⁸ This problem isn't unique to Amazon. The Brookings Institution showed that AI-driven hiring systems regularly disadvantage Black candidates, reinforcing and spreading existing biases across the hiring process.²⁹

Automated systems are not just reflecting bias; they're amplifying it under a lie of objectivity.³⁰

The damage goes beyond hiring; it affects the entire market. In 2019, a report by The Markup found that big banks used algorithms that denied Black people home loans more often than white people with similar credit scores.³¹ In 2022, Meta settled with the U.S. Department of Justice because its advertising system let housing advertisers exclude people based on race.³² In 2023, the Federal Trade Commission sued Amazon, saying the company's pricing algorithms manipulated the marketplace.³³ They pressured competitors to raise prices, which hurt Black consumers more because they already face economic hardships. Meanwhile, Black entrepreneurs face extra challenges: Unfair lending algorithms make it hard to get loans, biased advertising limits

their reach, and big companies create barriers that make it tough to enter the market.³⁴ In banking, mortgage algorithms are charging higher interest rates to Black customers compared to white customers with the same financial profiles, using ZIP codes as a stand-in for race to continue redlining practices.³⁵ These examples demonstrate that while developers claim algorithms are neutral in their use, they also are continuing old patterns of economic unfairness.

Automated systems also can take advantage of algorithms to silence Black voices and spread harmful content aimed at our communities. **During the 2020 Black Lives Matter protests, Black activists reported their posts often were removed or hidden.**³⁶ A 2021 report by the Brennan Center for Justice found that Black social media users often are not protected from hate speech and false information.³⁷

These systems need major changes.





Technology Must Work Fairly For Black Economic Success

The Vision

We are calling for required, independent checks of algorithms in areas including lending, advertising and pricing to find and eliminate racial biases. **Companies should be required to make their pricing algorithms transparent to prevent discrimination against Black consumers.** Setting up AI accountability systems — including public AI ethics boards that include Black voices and community members — is essential to hold companies responsible for harmful or biased results.

We are calling for officials to **properly enforce antitrust laws and break up monopolistic Big Tech companies that are preventing Black businesses from competing and thriving.** This includes working with existing Black businesses to create targeted programs designed to give funding, mentorship and access to markets for Black entrepreneurs seeking to develop their own AI systems. Involving Black business owners in designing these programs will ensure these programs meet the real needs of our communities.

The U.S. Department of Justice should, in coordination with Black communities, provide guidelines that require federally funded organizations to conduct fairness assessments and non-discrimination audits of AI systems used in education, health care and public services. By taking these steps, we can make sure that **providers are ethically developing AI technologies and respecting the rights and dignity of Black communities.** Technology should always empower us, and not discriminate or cause harm.



The Path Forward

BUILDING POWER & CAPACITY

- **Public Education and Awareness**
 - Launch campaigns to inform Black communities about AI bias, digital markets and how they affect access and fairness.
 - Share easy-to-understand information about discriminatory lending practices and the importance of supporting Black-owned businesses.
- **Coalition Building**
 - Build partnerships with civil rights groups, tech advocacy organizations, financial institutions and consumer protection agencies.
 - Work with Black business associations to promote economic empowerment and fair tech practices.
- **Narrative Development**
 - Create powerful stories that show how biased AI systems and unfair digital markets impact Black success.
 - Highlight positive examples where fair technology has helped Black communities thrive.
- **Community Organizing**
 - Host workshops and seminars to engage the community on AI fairness and digital opportunities.
 - Mobilize collective action to push for policy changes and corporate accountability.

TAKING ACTION THROUGH

- **Policy Change**
 - Advocate for Legislation**
 - I. Push for legislation that puts Black people's needs first. Since tech legislation rarely considers Black people from the start and often involves Black organizations only later to provide technical assistance, we want to advocate for Black-centered legislation that includes mandatory audits.
 - II. Push for federal and state laws to require transparency and audits of AI systems and ensure that the needs of Black people are taken into consideration during implementation.
 - III. At a minimum, re-introduce and pass the American Innovation and Choice Online Act to tackle tech monopolies and promote competition. Going further, Congress could mandate regular third-party audits of algorithms to detect bias and require platforms to publish transparency reports detailing how their algorithms make decisions that impact users, particularly for content moderation and recommendation systems. Any legislation also should include language explicitly prohibiting digital discrimination on platforms on the basis of race.
 - IV. Lobby for strong digital consumer protections, including fair lending and clear pricing.
 - Government Action**
 - I. Work with Congress and agencies including the FTC to enforce these regulations.
 - II. Encourage state governments to pass similar laws and give trade commissions the power to ensure compliance.



Enforcement Mechanisms

- I. Call for regulators to enforce independent audits of algorithms.
- II. Advocate for penalties against companies that engage in discrimination or anti-competitive practices.

• **Corporate Accountability**

Demand Corporate Changes

- I. Require tech companies to submit to independent audits of their AI and algorithms to find and remove bias.
- II. Insist on transparency in how companies use data, moderate content, target ads and set prices.
- III. Push for fair lending and pricing practices in the tech industry.

Effective Pressure Tactics

- I. Galvanize partnerships to organize consumer campaigns to pressure companies to make these changes.
- II. Use shareholder activism to influence corporate policies for fairness and transparency.
- III. Partner with media outlets to expose discrimination and increase calls for accountability.

Set Industry Standards

- I. Promote AI accountability frameworks across the tech industry.
- II. Advocate for industry-wide standards that ensure transparent pricing and fair access to digital markets.

• **Community Solutions**

Support Black Businesses

- I. Encourage support of Black-owned businesses and services.
- II. Provide money, resources and mentorship to help Black entrepreneurs succeed on digital platforms.

• **Alternative Models**

- III. Promote financial institutions that are committed to fair lending practices for Black communities.



Know Your Opposition

WHO BENEFITS FROM MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

- 1. Tech Companies Resistant to Transparency and External Audits:** Big Tech has preferred to keep algorithms and data practices hidden inside “trade secrets.” This allows them to avoid scrutiny over biases that harm Black communities so they don’t have to make changes that could hurt their profits.
- 2. Lobbying Groups Representing Tech Industry Interests:** Special interest groups work to influence laws in favor of the tech industry. They often fight against regulations that would enforce fairness and accountability in AI systems and digital markets.
- 3. Politicians Opposed to Increased Regulation of the Tech Sector:** Politicians who receive financial support from Big Tech may resist passing policies and laws that regulate them.
- 4. Law Enforcement Agencies Reliant on Algorithmic Tools:** Police departments and prosecutors’ offices using tools such as predictive policing and facial recognition may resist reforms that limit their use even if there is evidence of bias against Black people.
- 5. Big Tech Monopolies Resistant to Antitrust Measures:** Big Tech companies have done all they can to benefit from having little competition, including buying up smaller startups that threaten them. This allows them to control the market in ways that can disadvantage Black businesses and consumers.
- 6. Financial Institutions Benefiting from Biased Lending Algorithms:** Banks using biased algorithms continue discriminatory lending practices. This makes it harder for Black people and businesses to get loans.
- 7. Digital Advertising Platforms Profiting from Discriminatory Ad Targeting:** Advertisers profit by allowing their clients to target ads in ways that can be discriminatory, including excluding Black people.
- 8. Companies Using Opaque Pricing Algorithms to Maximize Profits:** Businesses use pricing algorithms to rapidly change when and how consumers are being charged, often unfairly charging Black consumers without them even knowing.
- 9. Venture Capitalists and Tech Leaders Maintaining Inequitable Systems:** Investors and executives including Marc Andreessen, Peter Thiel and Satya Nadella benefit from maintaining systems that exclude Black entrepreneurs from accessing capital while profiting from Black data and creativity.



Marc Andreessen
Venture Capitalist



Peter Thiel
Venture Capitalist



Satya Nadella
CEO, Microsoft



COMMON TACTICS USED TO RESIST CHANGE IN THIS AREA

- **Lobbying Against Regulations:** Big Tech spends exorbitant amounts of money on lobbying to stop laws that would require them to be more transparent, have their algorithms audited or disrupt any monopolistic behavior.
- **Promoting Self-Regulation Over External Oversight:** Big Tech often pushes for an internal ethics board or self regulation, neither of which has any real ability to make changes and aren't independent.
- **Vague Commitments to “Responsible AI”:** Big Tech makes broad promises to use AI ethically, but doesn't always set clear goals or timelines for when or how this can be achieved.
- **Offering Technical Fixes for Systemic Issues:** Small changes to algorithms can treat the symptoms of bias, but don't always get at the deeper, systemic issue of whether a feature or tool should be used at all.
- **Opposing Antitrust Measures: Big Tech companies have argued that breaking them up would hurt innovation and limit choices for consumers, despite evidence that they engage in monopolistic practices.**
- **Resistance to External Audits:** By rejecting independent audits of their algorithms and practices, Big Tech seeks to avoid the exposure of bias that could force changes.

SURFACE-LEVEL FIXES THAT DON'T ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES

- **Voluntary AI Audits Conducted Without Independent Oversight:** Companies that perform their own AI audits without external validation allow them to control the results and subsequent recommendations.
- **Token Diversity Hires Without Changing Decision-Making Processes:** Hiring a few Black employees that don't have decision-making power is not diversity.
- **One-Time “Black-Owned Business” Spotlights Without Sustained Support:** Companies briefly promoting Black-owned businesses, as for example in 2020, are not supporting Black communities. They must offer ongoing resources or address long-term barriers.

Black Workers Need Protection and Pathways in Tech



The Crisis

Big Tech has created a two-tiered system for Black workers: Exploitation in lower-level jobs and exclusion from top positions. **Black professionals hold only about 4% of technical and executive roles in the U.S. tech industry.³⁸ Meanwhile, Black workers make up nearly 25% of warehouse jobs, even though they account for just 12% of the overall workforce.³⁹** Big Tech simultaneously excludes Black talent from its highest-paying jobs while heavily subjecting Black workers to surveillance and monitoring.

This inequality extends to the gig economy, where Black and Hispanic workers are overrepresented but underprotected.⁴⁰ Gig workers, who often lack basic employment protections, can have their livelihoods suddenly terminated by automated systems without warning or recourse, facing “deactivation” from platforms that provide no transparency about their decision-making processes.⁴¹

Algorithms, not people, often manage many Black workers in warehouse jobs. In 2019, more than 300 workers at a single Amazon facility in Baltimore were fired by automated systems tracking their productivity; the terminations often were issued without human review or appeal.⁴² These systems govern the daily lives of Black workers, reducing individuals to mere data points rather than being valued as people. In doing so, **these systems create additional barriers in hiring, promotions and performance evaluations, making it even harder for Black workers to advance in their careers.**

The tech industry’s failure to diversify its workforce has consequences far beyond individual careers. With Black professionals holding just 4% of technical roles — a figure

that grew by only 1% between 2014 and 2021 according to the Kapor Center — the teams designing tomorrow’s technologies remain dangerously unrepresentative of the communities they impact.⁴³ When Black communities aren’t represented, it leads to biased systems and poor design choices that make existing problems in our communities even worse.

The World Economic Forum predicts that, by 2025, AI and automation will replace 85 million jobs but also create 97 million new ones.⁴⁴ Without action, this shift could lead to a more divided job market. Black workers may lose stable jobs while being shut out of new opportunities.

To prevent Big Tech from increasing existing inequalities in the workforce, we need strong reforms that tackle both immediate problems and long-term exclusion. This involves creating fairer systems for managing workers, ensuring gig workers have their rights protected and helping those who lose jobs due to automation. At the same time, we must meaningfully boost Black representation in tech, especially in leadership. Simply hiring Black people will not automatically eliminate bias. However, real career development that allows Black people to contribute and implement their ideas could have a positive impact on eliminating bias.

We need to acknowledge that the system isn’t broken — it’s working as designed to keep power and opportunity in the hands of the privileged. Real change means breaking down these barriers and building new paths for Black success in tech.



Black Workers Need Protection and Pathways in Tech

The Vision

We want the tech industry to offer fair opportunities and protect workers, making sure Black workers are empowered and represented at all levels. We call for strong protections for gig workers who often lack benefits or job security. **Laws should guarantee fair wages, benefits and rights for gig workers to prevent exploitation and promote fair treatment.**

We support employer-funded programs for workers who lose jobs due to AI, including retraining and financial safety nets. Setting up widespread digital training programs and career paths, although not the sole solutions, will **give Black workers the tools and skills they need in the digital age.** These programs should be culturally inclusive and designed with input from Black communities to address specific challenges.

We call for fairness and transparency in the use of algorithms in the workplace. We also call for government officials to hold corporations accountable and provide oversight over any AI systems that are making decisions about employees and customers. This should include clear and fair practices for pricing, so that no one is unfairly charged or taken advantage of.



The Path Forward

BUILDING POWER & CAPACITY

- **Public Education and Awareness**
 - Launch a campaign to inform Black workers about their rights, including protections for gig workers and those affected by AI.
 - Promote digital education opportunities that help with career changes and advancement in tech.
- **Coalition Building**
 - Build partnerships with labor unions, worker advocacy groups and educational institutions.
 - Work with community organizations to support displaced workers.
- **Narrative Development**
 - Share success stories of Black professionals in tech and Black people's role in the development of new technologies to inspire and educate others.
 - Highlight the challenges caused by unjust practices, showcasing how corporate greed drives layoffs and economic loss while amplifying tech workers' narratives of collective bargaining and unionization.
- **Community Organizing**
 - Host workshops and events to engage the community in advocacy efforts.
 - Mobilize grassroots support for policy changes and corporate accountability.

TAKING ACTION THROUGH

- **Policy Change**
 - Advocate for Legislation**
 - I. Congress should introduce laws to protect workers affected by AI systems. Passing a bill such as the No Robot Bosses Act would help by ensuring that employers don't rely solely on AI or bots to make critical employment decisions, giving workers fair treatment and more control.
 - II. Seattle has local laws that protect gig workers, which we believe should be adopted across the country. These protections require companies to give workers a 14-day notice before deactivating their accounts, allow for a human review, establish a process to appeal decisions and provide access to legal help through a union if a worker is unfairly deactivated.**
 - III. Colorado's Gig Work Transparency Bill should be introduced nationwide to protect gig workers' rights. This bill would improve transparency and gather important data to give us a clearer understanding of the gig work industry.
 - Government Action**
 - I. Urge the Department of Labor, Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, and state labor agencies to require employers to:
 - Disclose when AI systems are used in job candidate screening, hiring decisions, and performance evaluations.
 - Provide clear documentation of AI decision-making criteria and data inputs used in workforce management.
 - Report demographic impact data showing how AI tools affect different racial, gender, and age groups.
 - Allow workers to challenge AI-based decisions affecting their employment.



- Submit their AI systems for regular third-party bias audits.
- Notify employees when workplace monitoring uses AI.
- II. Urge the Federal Trade Commission and state consumer protection agencies to require companies to:
 - List all mandatory fees and surcharges alongside advertised prices.
 - Disclose variable pricing models and information that impact rates.
 - Provide itemized breakdowns of service costs.
 - Make pricing information easily accessible.

Enforcement Mechanisms

- I. Call for strict enforcement of labor laws to protect workers' rights in the AI era.
- II. Advocate for agencies to monitor and penalize employers who use AI unethically.

- **Corporate Accountability**

Demand Corporate Changes

- I. Require tech companies to publish ethical guidelines for using AI in the workplace for employees.
- II. Insist on transparency about how AI is used in products, services, hiring and performance evaluations.
- III. Push for more diversity in tech companies, especially in leadership roles.

Effective Pressure Tactics

- I. Organize campaigns with consumers and workers to pressure companies to make these changes.
- II. Use shareholder activism to influence corporate policies on diversity and fair labor practices.

Set Industry Standards

- I. Promote fair and transparent algorithmic management systems across the tech industry.
- II. Encourage companies to invest in diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives and to report their progress.

- **Community Solutions**

Direct Actions

- I. Offer digital education and skills training programs to help displaced workers and those new to tech transition into new careers.
- II. Set up sponsorship, mentorship and apprenticeship programs to create clear paths for career development.

Alternative Models

- I. Support the creation of community tech hubs that provide resources, training and networking opportunities.
- II. Develop worker cooperatives or organizations that focus on fair labor practices and worker protections.

Support Programs

- I. Provide resources and workshops to help gig workers understand their rights and protections.



Know Your Opposition

WHO BENEFITS FROM MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

- 1. Companies Prioritizing Automation Over Worker Retention:** Companies have continued to cut labor costs by using automation, even if it means displacing Black workers and other people from their jobs.
- 2. AI Developers Resistant to Bias Audits and Transparency Measures:** AI developers avoid having their systems audited for bias or harm so that they can continue deploying their systems and protect their data sources, which may have been illegally obtained.
- 3. Gig Economy Platforms Opposing Worker Classification as Employees:** **Companies including ride-sharing or delivery services save money by calling workers “independent contractors.” This lets them avoid paying for benefits, health care and worker protections.**
- 4. Corporations Benefiting from Algorithmic Management Systems:** **Companies that use algorithms to monitor and manage workers claim efficiency, but this often reduces fair labor practices, worker autonomy and, instead, supports harm.**
- 5. Industry Groups Lobbying Against Increased Worker Protections:** Industry groups work to block laws that would raise wages and better working conditions, keeping business costs down and endangering the lives of workers.
- 6. Tech Leadership Opposing Labor Rights:** Elon Musk, Jeff Bezos and Mark Zuckerberg have actively worked against worker organizing efforts while their companies implement algorithmic management systems.

COMMON TACTICS USED TO RESIST CHANGE IN THIS AREA

- **Lobbying Against Regulations:** Companies often spend money to block laws that would require better worker protections, transparency in AI and fair labor practices.
- **Promoting Self-Regulation Over External Oversight:** Companies argue that they can regulate themselves without government intervention or independent audits.
- **Offering Retraining Programs Without Job Placement:** Providing training programs that do not lead to actual employment gives the appearance of helping, but without any real outcomes.
- **Implementing Vague “Ethical AI” Commitments:** Some companies make general promises about using ethical AI, but don’t create specific policies or set measurable goals.
- **Shifting Responsibility onto Workers:** By insisting that workers should adapt to new technology through self-improvement, companies shift the issues of their own management onto workers.



- **Opposing Worker Classification Changes:** Gig economy platforms claim that making workers employees would hurt their business models or limit worker flexibility, despite increasing profits and a lack of protections for workers.
- **Implementing Automated Management Systems as “Objective” Tools:** Companies using algorithms to make decisions about hiring or firing without being transparent or accountable for biases in these systems.

SURFACE-LEVEL FIXES THAT DON'T ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES

- **Vague Commitments to “Ethical AI” Without Specific Worker Protections:** Companies make general statements about ethical AI, but do not put policies in place to protect workers from bias or expanding automation.
- **Retraining Programs That Don't Lead to Actual Job Placements:** Companies may offer retraining courses, but without support for job search, networking or removing other barriers to employment, these will provide little benefit.
- **AI Transparency Reports That Lack Meaningful Insights:** Publishing reports that do not provide actionable information about how AI impacts workers or perpetuates biases.
- **Automated Performance Review Systems Marketed as Objective:** Companies that use AI tools for worker evaluations are reinforcing the bias of the tool. Workers need ways to give feedback and challenge the decisions stemming from them.
- **Promises of Job Creation Through Automation That Don't Materialize:** Companies have claimed that AI and automation will create new jobs, or free people to seek other types of employment, when we know that companies use automation to eliminate jobs and offer no support to the unemployed.

Black Creators Need Control Over Their Expression



The Crisis

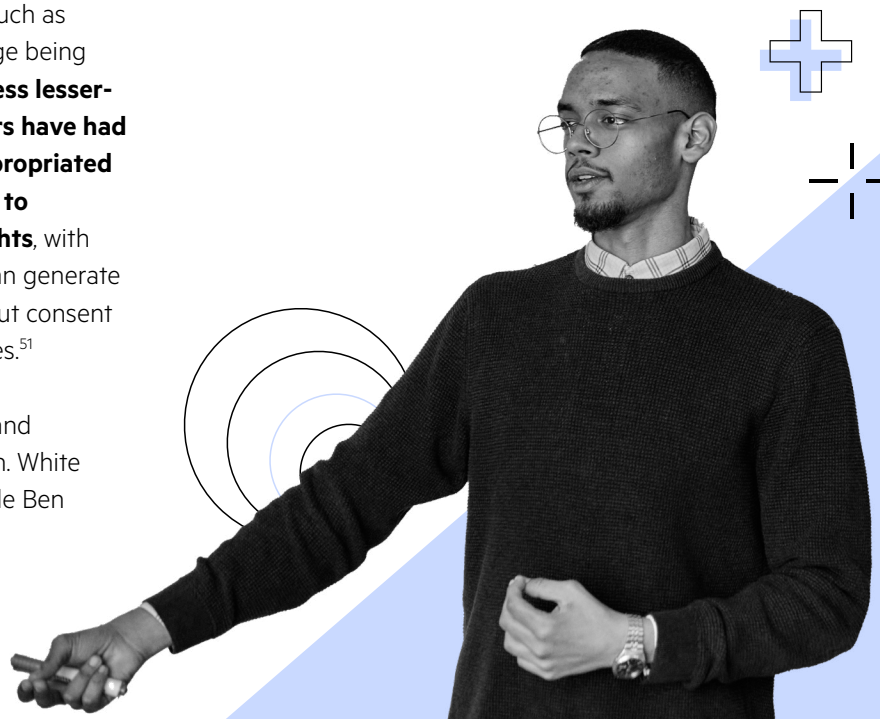
The United States has a long history of stealing Black creative expression. From jazz, blues and rock 'n' roll to the Black creativity embedded in today's AI models, we see a devastating pattern repeating itself. In academia and literature, Black scholars and writers historically have seen their intellectual contributions minimized or stolen outright.⁴⁵ **Corporations often steal and commodify Black culture and bodies for profit.** The case of Henrietta Lacks, whose cells were collected and used for widespread medical and scientific research and commercial purposes without her knowledge, exemplifies how Black bodies and data have been exploited without consent.⁴⁶ And every time, Black people have paid a high price.

There is a strong concern about Black talent being taken advantage of in sports and entertainment. Little Richard's "Tutti Frutti" was re-recorded by Pat Boone for white audiences.⁴⁷ Big Mama Thornton originally recorded "Hound Dog" in 1952, but Elvis Presley's 1956 version became the money-making hit.⁴⁸ Countless 20th century Black musicians have died in poverty while record companies made fortunes from their creativity.⁴⁹ Today, established artists such as Rihanna successfully sue for their image being used without permission.⁵⁰ Yet, **countless lesser-known Black athletes and performers have had their likeness and performances appropriated without compensation. AI threatens to scale this appropriation to new heights**, with companies developing systems that can generate deepfakes of Black performance without consent or compensation for artists and athletes.⁵¹

The commercialization of Black faces and identities has followed a similar pattern. White people often used caricatures like Uncle Ben

and Aunt Jemima — based on dangerous and toxic stereotypes — to sell products to our communities while promoting harmful, demeaning propaganda.⁵² These identities extracted profit from Black culture while reinforcing racist beliefs. While this exploitation is still happening, developers are now training AI systems to take things to the next level— generating endless imitations of Black people's unique voices and styles without their permission or payment. When AI can perfectly mimic a Black person's image and style, corporations gain further profit at the expense of our humanity.⁵³

This issue goes beyond just protecting intellectual property; it's about **preventing AI from automating systemic racism.** These same AI systems show clear bias against Black people when making decisions about jobs, health care and criminal justice.⁵⁴ **Without strong regulation, we could end up with a digital Jim Crow, where Black creativity is stolen, artists lose control of their work and the progress we've made on civil rights is erased by biased computer programs.**





Black Creators Need Control Over Their Expression

The Vision

Black creators and athletes need complete control over their work and images and deserve fair payment for their creativity. We call for the **strengthening of intellectual property laws to prevent the unauthorized use of Black artists' work in AI systems and on digital platforms.** This includes updating the Copyright Act to confirm that only humans can hold copyright and giving individuals the right to take action if their data is used to train AI models without their consent.

We believe AI developers should get clear permission from creators, especially Black artists and athletes, before using their likeness. AI models should transparently state whose work they include. We also suggest the creation of a royalty system so artists and athletes are paid whenever their style or likeness is used in AI-generated content, ensuring they are compensated whenever their likeness is used.

It's essential to protect people from deepfakes and the unauthorized use of their likeness. **We urge legislation for a federal cause of action for the right of publicity, allowing individuals to take legal action against the misuse of their likeness.**



The Path Forward

BUILDING POWER & CAPACITY

- **Public Education and Awareness**
 - Launch campaigns to inform Black creators, athletes and the public about unauthorized use of their work in AI systems.
 - Develop accessible materials explaining how intellectual property laws protect creators from exploitation.
 - Use social media, workshops and community events to highlight the importance of consent and fair compensation.
- **Coalition Building**
 - Unite Black artists, legal experts, tech professionals, athletes and advocacy groups to advocate collectively.
 - Collaborate with organizations focused on intellectual property rights and digital privacy.
 - Establish networks to support creators in understanding and exercising their rights.
- **Narrative Development**
 - Share stories of Black creators whose work has been used without permission or compensation.
 - Highlight historical and modern examples of cultural appropriation to raise awareness.
- **Community Organizing**
 - Host community meetings to discuss strategies for protecting creative works.
 - Provide training on legal rights and advocacy skills to give people the tools to engage with policymakers and corporations.

TAKING ACTION THROUGH

- **Policy Change**
 - Advocate for Legislation**
 - I. Push for updates to the Copyright Act to confirm that only humans can hold copyright, and require consent for AI training use.
 - II. Support legislation creating a private right of action for individuals whose data is used in AI models without permission.
 - III. Advocate for a federal Right of Publicity law to protect against unauthorized use of one's likeness.
 - Government Action**
 - I. Urge Congress and federal agencies to strengthen intellectual property laws and enforcement.
 - II. Promote the establishment of digital watermarking standards through regulatory bodies.
 - III. Enforcement Mechanisms
 - IV. Demand stricter penalties for companies violating intellectual property rights.
 - V. Encourage oversight and audits of AI training datasets for compliance.



- **Corporate Accountability**

- **Demand Change**

- I. Require AI developers to obtain opt-in consent from creators before using their work.
 - II. Insist that AI models declare content sources to ensure transparency.
 - III. Advocate for royalty systems compensating artists when their style or likeness is used.

- **Effective Pressure Tactics**

- I. Organize consumer awareness campaigns against companies exploiting Black creators and athletes.
 - II. Use social media to highlight corporate misuse of creative works.
 - III. Engage in shareholder activism to influence corporate policies.

- **Set Industry Standards**

- I. Promote ethical AI development standards prioritizing consent and fair compensation.
 - II. Encourage the tech industry to adopt guidelines for digital watermarking and content transparency.

- **Community Solutions**

- **Direct Actions**

- I. Educate creators and athletes on protecting their work using legal tools and technology.
 - II. Encourage the use of digital watermarking to safeguard content.

- **Alternative Models**

- I. Highlight platforms that prioritize artist rights and fair compensation.
 - II. Support the development of community-led AI projects respecting creators' consent and promoting equitable practices.

- **Support Programs**

- I. Offer workshops to assist with intellectual property issues.

Know Your Opposition



WHO BENEFITS FROM MAINTAINING THE STATUS QUO

- 1. AI Companies and Developers:** These companies make money by using large amounts of data, including creative work by Black artists, without asking for permission or paying to use it. They train their AI models with this data to improve their products, boosting value and profits.
- 2. Tech Platforms and Social Media Companies:** Platforms that host user content earn advertising revenue and collect data from creative work shared by Black artists. However, they rarely pay the artists fairly for their contributions.
- 3. Advertising Agencies and Brands:** These businesses often borrow elements of Black culture and style in their marketing without permission. They capitalize on the appeal of Black creativity to promote their products and services.
- 4. Employers of Artists and Designers:** Employers use AI tools because they cost far less than paying artists a fair wage, which incentivize companies to replace artists with AI.
- 5. AI Company Leadership Exploiting Creative Works:** Sam Altman, Satya Nadella, Sundar Pichai and Shantanu Narayen oversee companies training AI models on creators' work without consent or compensation, particularly impacting Black artists and performers.



COMMON TACTICS USED TO RESIST CHANGE IN THIS AREA

- **Lobbying Against Stricter Intellectual Property Laws:** Lobbyists representing corporate interests try to block laws that would require them to get permission and pay royalties to creators.
- **Claiming Technological Innovation Requires Freedom:** Companies argue that limits on data use slow down technological progress, presenting protective laws as barriers to AI advancement.
- **Implementing Opt-Out Instead of Opt-In Systems:** Designing systems where artists must opt out if they don't want their work used, knowing many might not be aware of or understand the process.
- **Creating Voluntary Ethical Guidelines Without Enforcement:** Establishing ethical guidelines that sound good but lack any real accountability or enforcement.
- **Downplaying the Value of Individual Contributions:** Asserting that AI-generated content is transformative enough to not infringe on the rights of any one creator.

SURFACE-LEVEL FIXES THAT DON'T ADDRESS ROOT CAUSES

- **Ineffective Content ID Systems:** Implementing detection systems that don't reliably recognize when an artist's work is used, often leaving artists responsible for tracking and reporting misuse themselves.
- **Opt-Out Mechanisms:** Artists can only remove their work from databases after it has already been used, rather than companies asking for permission first.
- **Educational Programs That Shift Responsibility:** Encouraging artists and athletes to learn how to protect their likeness and work, rather than addressing how companies themselves exploit this work.



Conclusion



The Black Tech Agenda is our vision of how we can ensure AI and technology do not harm Black communities. Technology and the digital economy intersect with the lives of Black people, communities of color and other underrepresented communities in complex ways. Understanding this is foundational to addressing inequity. **We must make sure that any form of AI or other technology upholds principles of justice and equity.** In order to achieve this, we will work with communities and partners to build power and support in support of our recommendations. We have much work ahead to convince lawmakers and corporate heads of the importance of protecting communities, particularly Black communities. But we intend to leverage our power to advocate for policies and practices that protect Black communities against exploitation and discrimination, while also making sure Black people have access, agency and ownership over their digital lives.

This agenda is a vision of a technological and digital world for Black people. There is great capacity for AI to do great good for Black communities. From making Black businesses more efficient to helping students complete their assignments, AI comes with a wide array of tools that will make our lives more efficient. However, we must be vigilant in ensuring the foundation of these tools is not biased. Biased algorithms cause significant harm in the lives of Black people, impacting our capacity to get a home, acquire a job and take care of our families.

Color Of Change promotes a Black Tech Agenda not merely as a policy initiative but a call to action. This agenda is a visionary reimagining aimed at dismantling the entrenched inequities within technological innovation and reorienting these powerful tools towards genuine empowerment and racial equity. By collectively and relentlessly pursuing this agenda, we can build a future where technological advancements contribute to the **dismantling of racial barriers rather than their reinforcement.**





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