

DAVID G. ROBINSON

Safety Systems | OpenAI (202) 730-9726 • david@robinsonian.com

EDUCATION

Yale Law School | *J.D.* | 2009-2012

Knight Law & Media Scholar, Information Society Project • Submissions Editor, Yale Journal on Regulation

Balliol College, Oxford | *B.A., Philosophy and Politics* | 2004-2006

Rhodes Scholar

Princeton University | *A.B., Philosophy, magna cum laude* | 2000-2004

Class of 1869 Prize in Ethics • Gregory T. Pope '80 Prize in Science Writing

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Faculty Director, Apple University | *April 2022–present*

Develop and teach seminars at the intersection of technology and liberal arts as part of Apple's company-wide education organization. Collaborate cross-functionally on "inclusive products" efforts in machine learning.

Consultant, White House OSTP | *March 2022*

Worked with Dr. Alondra Nelson and the Science and Society team on the AI Bill of Rights.

Visiting Scholar, Social Science Matrix, UC Berkeley | *2021–2022*

Research fellowship while completing book *Voices in the Code*.

Faculty, Apple University (Contractor) | *2020–Feb 2022*

Visiting Scientist, Cornell University CCIS | *2018–2021*

MacArthur Foundation-funded research on algorithmic decision-making design and governance. Focus on stakeholder engagement in algorithmic systems oversight.

- Redesigned and taught "Ethics and Policy in Data Science" (Fall 2020)
- Co-Chair, ACM FAccT 2021 Program Committee

Managing Director & Co-Founder, Upturn | *2011–2020*

Co-founded Washington D.C. non-profit advancing equity and justice in digital technology design and governance. Partnered with major civil rights organizations (Leadership Conference, ACLU, NAACP) to drive design changes at Facebook, Google, Airbnb. Multi-year funding from Ford, Open Society, MacArthur, Omidyar foundations.

- Led automated criminal justice decision-making research and policy work
- Authored "Civil Rights Principles for the Era of Big Data" - first major civil rights intervention in big data policy debate, influencing White House report conclusions

Adjunct Professor of Law, Georgetown Law Center | *2017–present*

Designed and taught "Governing Automated Decisions" seminar exploring automated decision-making governance challenges and emerging legal/policy responses.

Visiting Fellow, Yale Law School Information Society Project | *2012–2017*

Participated in cyberlaw research center's intellectual community and research initiatives.

Associate Director, Center for Information Technology Policy, Princeton | *2007–2009*

Launched joint venture between Engineering and Wilson School as founding staff member. Managed operations, developed interdisciplinary research, recruited talent, created public programs ("Future of News" conference, cloud computing workshop), built Washington policy relationships.

Managing Editor, The American | *2006–2007*

Launched national business/economics magazine at American Enterprise Institute. Designed and managed American.com daily website (1.5M+ unique viewers in first year). ## PUBLICATIONS

Books

Voices in the Code: A Story About People, Their Values, and the Algorithm They Made

Russell Sage Foundation, 2022

Examines transparent public debate over algorithmic ethical tradeoffs through the U.S. kidney allocation regime redesign (2003-2014). Applies lessons to other policy domains for making high-stakes software more transparent, inclusive, and democratic.

Reclaiming Who We Are (*in development*)

Explores how people-judging algorithms shape individual and social narratives. Integrates social psychology, Buddhist philosophy, feminist theory, history, and sociology to argue for wiser use of algorithmic labeling systems.

Selected Articles

Roles for Computing in Social Change | *ACM FAT 2020**

(with Rediet Abebe, Solon Barocas, Jon Kleinberg, Karen Levy, Manish Raghavan)

Argues computing can support social change as diagnostic, formalizer, rebuttal, and synecdoche despite risks of reinforcing existing inequalities.

Danger Ahead: Risk Assessment and the Future of Bail Reform | *93 WASH. L. REV. 1725 (2018)*

(with John Logan Koepke)

Examines pretrial risk assessment “zombie predictions” and inadequate public scrutiny. Advocates for recent local data, clear outcomes, data infrastructure, and inclusive governance.

The Challenges of Prediction: Lessons from Criminal Justice | *14 I/S: J.L. & POL’Y 151 (2018)*

Identifies three key challenges in predictive analytics adoption: measurement vs. importance gaps, historical vs. current goal differences, and public vs. private expertise tensions. **Accountable Algorithms** | *165 U. PA. L. REV. 631 (2017)*

(with Joshua A. Kroll, Joanna Huey, Solon Barocas, Edward W. Felten, Joel R. Reidenberg, Harlan Yu)

Proposes cryptographic governance strategy for automated decisions from “black box” systems. **Winner: Future of Privacy Forum “Privacy Papers for Policymakers” Award (2016)**

The New Ambiguity of “Open Government” | *59 UCLA L. REV. DISC. 178 (2012)*

(with Harlan Yu)

Distinguishes between political transparency and technical “open government data,” showing how repressive governments can claim openness through technology alone. Featured on syllabi at Columbia SIPA, Toronto Munk School, Hebrew University, and Fundação Getulio Vargas.

Government Data and the Invisible Hand | *11 YALE J. L. & TECH. 160 (2009)*

(with Harlan Yu, William P. Zeller, Edward W. Felten)

Argues for simple, reliable government data infrastructure over limited APIs. **Key reference for Obama administration’s first “open data” policy.** Featured on syllabi at Stanford, NYU Wagner, Rutgers. Cited by Tim O’Reilly as Data.gov rationale.

Policy Reports

Civil Rights and Pretrial Risk Assessment Instruments | *MacArthur Foundation, 2019*

(with Logan Koepke)

Critical Issue Brief examining civil rights community opposition to pretrial risk assessment and concrete reform strategies to limit or avoid such instruments.

Public Scrutiny of Automated Decisions: Early Lessons and Emerging Methods | *2018*

(with Aaron Rieke, Miranda Bogen, Martin Tisné)

Comprehensive review of literature and interviews with global advocates, regulators, technologists on effective public governance of automated decision systems. **Data Ethics: Investing Wisely in Data at Scale** | *Upturn, 2016*

(with Miranda Bogen)

Examines philanthropic opportunities and risks in data collection, highlighting bias reinforcement and expertise concentration challenges.

Stuck in a Pattern: Early Evidence on “Predictive Policing” and Civil Rights | *Upturn, 2016*

(with Logan Koepke)

Survey of 50 largest U.S. police departments revealing gaps in public knowledge about predictive policing tools and potential civil rights impacts.

What ISPs Can See: Clarifying the Technical Landscape of the Broadband Privacy Debate | *Upturn, 2016*

(with Aaron Rieke, Harlan Yu)

Technical analysis showing ISPs can access significant subscriber data despite encryption. **Cited 12 times by FCC in broadband privacy rules.**

Civil Rights, Big Data, and Our Algorithmic Future | *Upturn*, 2014

(with Aaron Rieke, Harlan Yu)

Practical inventory of concrete examples where big data impacts civil rights decisions.

Collateral Freedom: A Snapshot of Chinese Users Circumventing Censorship | *Open Internet Tools Project*, 2013

(with Harlan Yu, Anne An)

Research on simple censorship circumvention methods that influenced advocacy funding strategies. ### Essays and Other Public Writing

The Kidney Transplant Algorithm's Surprising Lessons for Ethical A.I. | *Slate* | 2022

Reclaiming the Stories that Algorithms Tell | *O'Reilly Radar* | 2020

Pretrial Risk Assessments: A Practical Guide for Judges | *Judges' Journal* | 2018

(with Hannah Jane Sassaman, Megan Stevenson)

We're Rewiring the Internet for Freedom | *Medium* | 2017

Grounds for Optimism: New Digital Metrics for Government Responsiveness | *Public Administration Review* | 2017

Airbnb's Racism Problem Is Much Bigger Than a Few Racist Hosts | *Medium* | 2016

Are We Rushing to Judgment Against the Hidden Power of Algorithms? | *Freedom to Tinker* | 2014

How to Free the Chinese Internet | *Foreign Affairs* | 2013

Book Reviews

A Soft Spot for Hard Drives | *Wall Street Journal* | 2010

Review of Clifford Nass, *The Man Who Lied to His Laptop*

It All Happens So Suddenly | *Wall Street Journal* | 2009

Review of Bill Wasik, *And Then There's This*

Net Gains | *Wilson Quarterly* | 2008

Review of Lee Siegel, *Against the Machine*

What Were We Talking About? | *Wall Street Journal* | 2008

Review of Maggie Jackson, *Distracted: The Erosion of Attention and the Coming Dark Age*

The Keepers of the Keyboard | *Wall Street Journal* | 2006

Review of Jack Goldsmith & Tim Wu, *Who Controls the Internet?*

Internet Pirates | *Wall Street Journal* | 2004

PUBLIC AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE

Conference Organization & Program Committees

- Co-organizer, AI100 workshop on Prediction in Practice | *Cornell Tech* | 2019
- Co-Chair, ACM FAccT Program Committee | 2021
- Program Committee Member, ACM FAccT | 2018-2020
- Black in AI Workshop | 2019
- Fairness Accountability and Transparency in Machine Learning | 2016

Government & Policy Advisory

- Expert panelist, Open Government Partnership ministerial preparation summit | *French Ministry of Higher Education and Research* | 2016
- Resource Council member, Open Media and Information Companies Initiative | 2016-present
- Expert briefing on broadband privacy | *Federal Communications Commission* | 2016
- Expert participant, coalition meetings on big data and civil rights | *Senate, White House, FTC staff*

- **Testimony before U.S. House Committee on Oversight and Government Reform** | 2009
- **Lead Drafter, USACM Recommendations on Open Government** | 2009

Presentations & Guest Lectures

- **From Facial Recognition to Moral Recognition** | *McGill University* | 2018
- **Law 2.0: How Technology is Changing Practice and Ethics** | *University of Calgary Faculty of Law* | 2016
- **When Machines Decide: The Promise and Peril of Living in a Data-Driven Society** | 2016
- **The New Ambiguity of Open Government** | *World Bank* | 2012 (*with Harlan Yu*)
- **Cyber-Disasters seminar** | *Yale Law School* | 2012
- **Attention, Distraction, and Information Glut** | *Princeton CITP Future of News Workshop* | 2008 ## SELECTED PANELS AND PRESENTATIONS

Book Talks - *Voices in the Code* (2022-2023)

- **Stanford HAI** | 2023
- **Berkeley** | 2022 (*with Deirdre Mulligan, Iason Gabriel*)
- **Ada Lovelace Institute** | 2022 (*with Shannon Vallor*)

Academic & Research Presentations

- **Governing an Algorithm in the Wild** | *Data & Society Research Institute* | 2020
- **Technology Expertise in Law and Policy** | *Berkeley Center for Law and Technology* | 2020
- **The Morality of Risk Assessment and Preventative Detention** | *Rebellious Lawyering Conference, Yale Law School* | 2018
- **Zombie Predictions and the Future of Bail Reform** | *Yale Law School Information Society Project* | 2018
- **Zombie Predictions and the Future of Bail Reform** | *Data & Society Research Institute* | 2017
- **Predictive Analytics: Cross-Cutting Issues of Law** | *I/S Symposium, Ohio State University Moritz College of Law* | 2017
- **For the People, By the Robots? Democratic Governance in a Machine-Learning Era** | *University of Pennsylvania Law School* | 2017
- **Big Data and Civil Rights: A Field Report from Washington, DC** | *Vanderbilt Law School* | 2016
- **The Anti-Botnet Cases** | *Law and Computer Science Conference, University of Pennsylvania* | 2013
- **Collateral Freedom: Chinese Users Circumventing Censorship** | *Yale Law School Information Society Project* | 2014

Industry & Policy Events

- **Mistakes with AI in Criminal Justice: Early Lessons for Googlers** | *Google internal presentation* | 2018

- **Data-Driven Innovation and Machine Learning as Tools for Social Justice** | *Google Next Generation Leadership Summit* | 2016
- **Big Data** | *Democratic Attorney General Association Fall Policy Conference* | 2017
- **Automated Decisions and the Quantified Society** | *Mozilla Festival private workshop* | 2017
- **The Intersection of Poverty and Data** | *Philly Tech Week* | 2016

Event Organization & Moderation

- **Weapons of Math Destruction** | *New America Foundation* | 2016
Organized and moderated fireside chat with Cathy O’Neill
- **From Mad Men to Mad Bots: Advertising in the Digital Age** | *Yale Law School Information Society Project* | 2011
Proposed topic, helped plan conference, hosted fireside chat with Edward W. Felten

SELECTED MEDIA APPEARANCES

Quoted or featured as expert in: The Wall Street Journal, The Washington Post, Science, Associated Press, FOX Business, Al Jazeera America, Haaretz, CNET News, OZY, Mic.com, The American Prospect, The Nation

Podcast & Radio

- **Who gets a kidney transplant? The algorithm that decides could be a model** | *Marketplace Tech* | 2022
- **Weapons of Math Destruction** | *Science for the People* | 2017
- **Ethics and Civil Rights in a Big Data World** | *Rewiring Government Podcast* | 2016
- **“Predictive Policing” Isn’t Just Science Fiction—It’s Real, and it’s Out of Control** | *WashingTech Policy Podcast* | 2016
- **When Computers Made Decisions, it’s Political** | *NetPositive Podcast* | 2016
- **The Sharing Economy’s Discrimination Problem** | *The Stream – Al Jazeera English* | 2016

REFERENCES

Prof. Jack M. Balkin

Knight Professor of Constitutional Law and the First Amendment, Director of Information Society Project, Yale Law School

Prof. Danielle Citron

Morton & Sophia Macht Professor of Law, University of Maryland Francis King Carey School of Law

Prof. J. Alex Halderman

Professor of Computer Science & Engineering, Director of Center for Computer Security and Society, University of Michigan

Prof. Edward W. Felten

Robert E. Kahn Professor of Computer Science and Public Affairs Emeritus, Princeton University

Prof. Karen Levy

Department of Information Science, Cornell University

Prof. James Grimmelman

Professor of Law, Cornell Tech and Cornell Law School

Mr. Eugene R. Fidell

Senior Research Scholar in Law and Florence Rogatz Visiting Lecturer in Law, Yale Law School