Biography

Dr. J. Nathan Matias (Jnatematias) studies digital governance and behavior change in groups and networks shaped by algorithms as an assistant professor of Communication at Cornell University. Nathan is founder of the Citizens and Technology Lab, which organizes citizen behavioral science and behavioral consumer protection research for the internet. CATLab (formerly CivisServant) has worked with communities of tens of millions of people on reddit and Twitter to test ideas for preventing harassment, broadening gender diversity on social media, responding to human/algorismic misinformation, managing political conflict, and auditing social technologies.

Before positions at Cornell, Princeton, and the MIT Media Lab, Nathan worked in tech startups that have reached hundreds of millions of phones, helped start a series of education and journalistic charities, and studied postcolonial literature at the University of Cambridge and Elizabethtown College. Nathan has published scientific articles in PNAS, CHI, CSCW, the International Journal of Communication, and Social Media and Society. His journalism has appeared in The Atlantic, PBS, the Guardian, and other international media.

Abstract

As the public ask questions about the power of technology in society and wonder how to create change, many people mistrust the technology industry to develop answers. How can we advance a world where digital power is guided by evidence and accountable to the public?

Citizen science currently plays a central role in the governance of complex systems involving powerful corporate actors, including the environment, product safety, and consumer protection. In this conversation, J. Nathan Matias will describe how citizen scientists collect data and test causal questions for change in our digital lives-on topics including harassment, pro-social behavior, misinformation, and algorithmic accountability. Designing citizen behavioral science requires advances in computer science and can lead to fundamental discoveries about human and algorithm behavior. Nathan will also present the work of the Citizens and Technology Lab at Cornell University (formerly CivisServant), which works alongside communities of tens of millions of people in citizen behavioral science for a flourishing internet.