

Prepared by MediaJustice

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Take Back Tech III Report Out

FOR OUR SPONSORS

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Our movements are facing a corporate-state merger happening in real time across infrastructure, media, and surveillance. Despite unchecked power, Big Tech is shaken by the grassroots resistance.

Data center organizing has stopped or stalled \$156 billion in projects, creating space for democracy to unfold locally, like in Monterey Park and state wide, like in New York. there is a winning blueprint.

The political conditions are shifting. Just weeks after take back tech, WIRED reported a new formal terrorism designation, "anti-tech violent extremism," which can include data center organizers, harkening back to the "black identity extremist" designation mediajustice fought in a lawsuit in 2019.

As public sentiment turns against the oligarchs, tech is turning toward litigation and criminalization of our fight. But We are ready. We are stronger as a united front, and we built that in Atlanta.

The Moment



MediaJustice

@MEDIAJUSTICE

Number of Followers: 48,000

MediaJustice builds power to challenge how corporations and governments use media and technology to shape our collective future. They organize communities to govern tech policies and infrastructure, like surveillance tech, data centers, and information ecosystems for the benefit of immigrants and people of color.

mijente

@CONMIJENTE

Number of Followers: 123,000

Mijente is a grassroots and digital hub for Latinx and Chicanx people to build independent political power to fight for racial, gender, economic and climate justice while striving to achieve collective wellbeing and self-determination for their communities.

Key Metrics

TBTIII AT A GLANCE

570

REGISTERED ATTENDEES

We had to cap attendance with over 200 people still on the waitlist

222

SCHOLARSHIP RECIPIENTS

39% of all attendees received some form of financial support via the Solidarity Fund

36

WORKSHOPS

Including strategy sessions, campaign report-backs, workshops on tech alternatives, and artistic exhibits

4

KEYNOTES & PLENARIES

Naomi Klein on technofascism, an international data center panel, a people's AI debate, and a media ownership panel

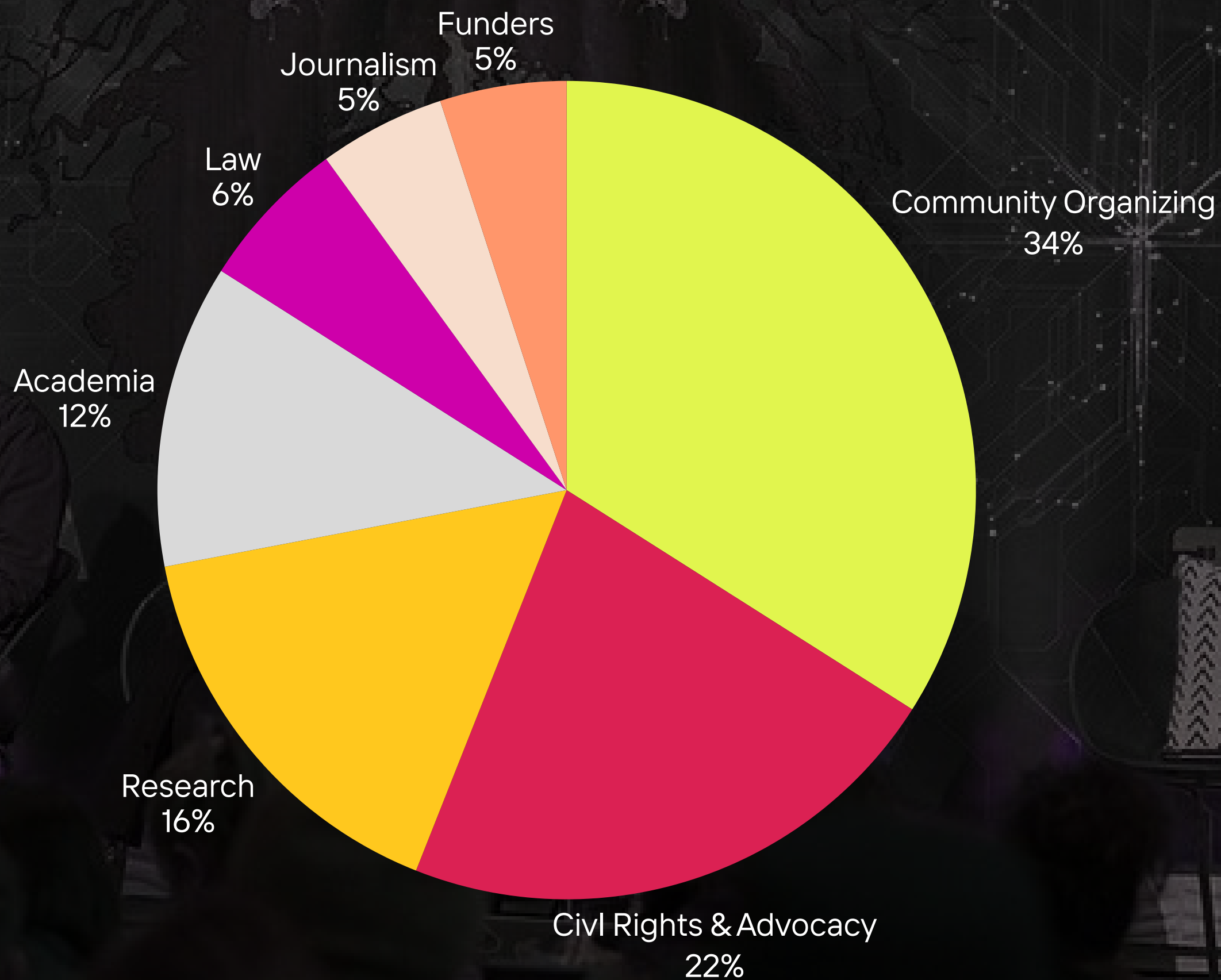
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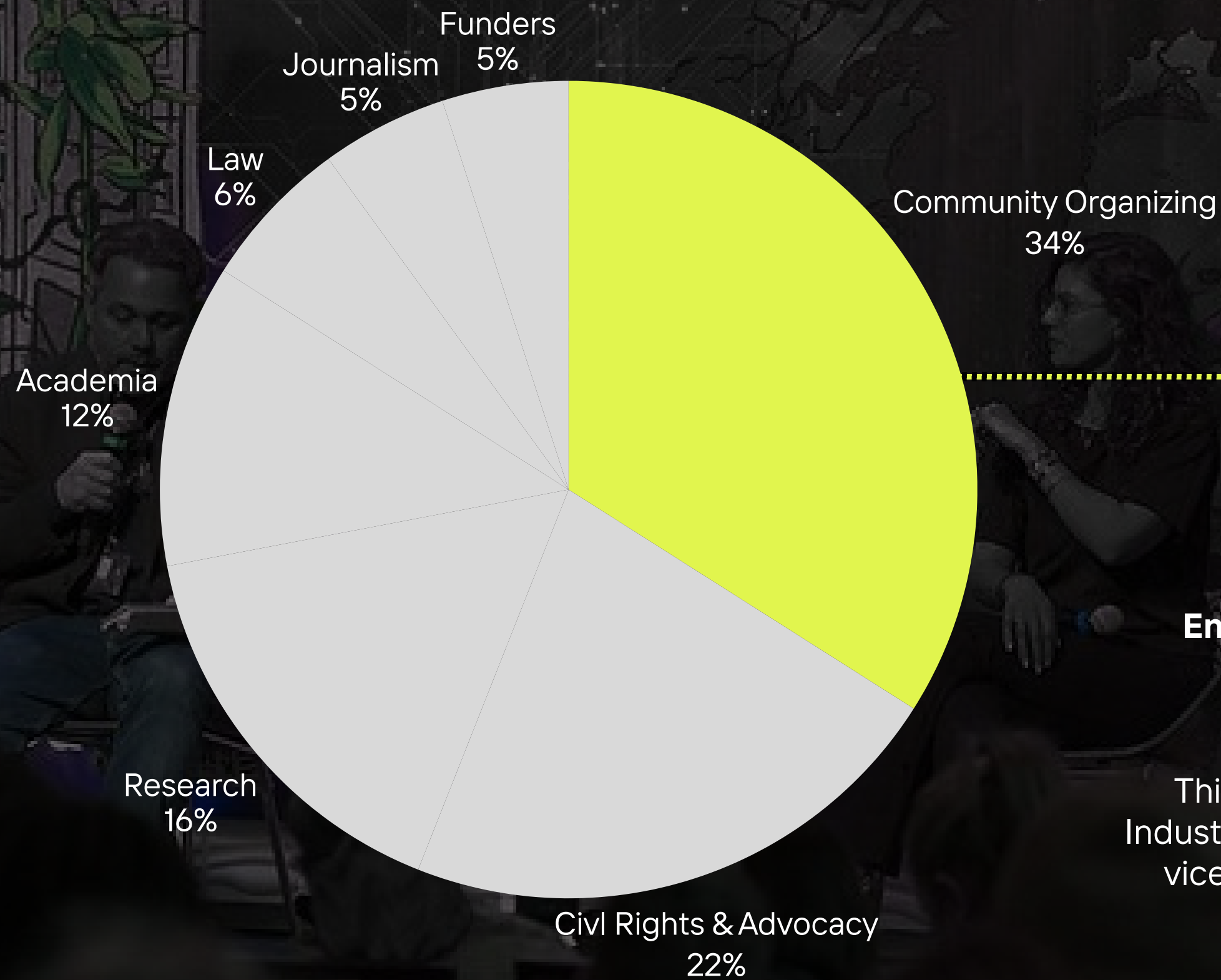
DIRECT ACTION

Mobilizing in real-time in Atlanta to fight harmful tech

Key Metrics

WHO WAS IN THE ROOM





ORGANIZERS' AFFILIATIONS

Environmental Justice (1 in 3)
Immigration Justice (1 in 4)
Racial Justice (1 in 4)

Honorable mention: Labor

Environmental justice groups are newly integrated into Take Back Tech because of data center organizing.

This field's experience fighting Big Oil, Fossil Fuels, and Industrial Ag can help inform contemporary strategy - and vice versa. Data centers are, according to organizers on the ground, even harder to fight than a pipeline.

Key Metrics

WHO WAS IN THE ROOM

41

STATES AND TERRITORIES

Including Puerto Rico

10

COUNTRIES

Canada, Chile, Dominican Republic of the Congo, France, United Kingdom, United States, the Muskogee Nation, Ghana, Kenya, Mexico

"I am part of [an] organization in Spain. We investigate how technologies and AI are impacting in migrant and racialized populations. We are interested in participating in international debates and learning from the struggles of organizations like Mijente and Media Justice."

"I did really appreciate gaining local Indigenous context in the opening [...] and hope Indigenous + traditional culture worldviews will be integral to developing analysis/strategy into the future[.]"

The Solidarity Fund

337

APPLICANTS TO THE SOLIDARITY FUND

Between January and March. March alone accounted for 222 applications, or 66% of the total, and the single biggest application day was March 30, the last day, with 48 applications.

**2 in
3**

APPLICANTS CAME TO TBTII THROUGH THE FUND

The most common reasons applicants were waitlisted is because we could only offer partial scholarship support due to resources and attendees were unable to cover their own flight or hotel.

69%

OF APPLICANTS NEEDED FULL SCHOLARSHIPS - REG FEE, TRAVEL AND LODGING

Indicating that solidarity fund recipients truly would not have been able to participate otherwise. The most common reason applicants needed support was that they are a part of an organization or group with limited funds.

"The solidarity fund was absolutely epic. I think priority should be to expand it, if not sustain, and make it as intersectional and class conscious as possible."

Program Highlights

Keynotes and Plenaries

Watch
now on

Traitors to Creation Keynote
A Race for Our Future: International Data Center Panel

[YouTube](#)

- Naomi Klein and Jacinta Gonzalez
- KeShaun Pearson, MCAP; Jorge Lopez, Movimiento Socioambiental Comunitario por el Agua y el Territorio; Gina Mangham, Renew DeKalb; and KD Minor, Alliance for Affordable Energy



The AI Question: A Movement Debate

[YouTube](#)

- Moderator Tawana Petty, timekeeper Lindsay Harper, and debaters Aasim Shabazz, Adrian Reyna Chavoya, Sasha Costanza-Chock, Janet Vertesi, Sarah Hamid, Edith Romero, Veronica Moreno, and Jumana Musa



TechnoFachos: How Tech Power Became State Power

[YouTube](#)

- Ash-Lee Woodard Henderson, Movement Strategist; Marisa Franco, Mijente; Dr. Safiya Noble, UCLA Center on Resilience and Digital Justice; and Gil Duran, Nerd Reich Podcast



Program Highlights

The Night Market

HOSTED AT THE HISTORIC MUNICIPAL MARKET AT SWEET AUBURN WITH LOCAL VENDORS AND ATLANTA ORGANIZATIONS

"[Highlights were] being able to connect with my role models and leaders in the space that i've looked up to for a very long time! being able to host a workshop and promote the work my organization is doing + getting more eyes on our work at the night market tabling"

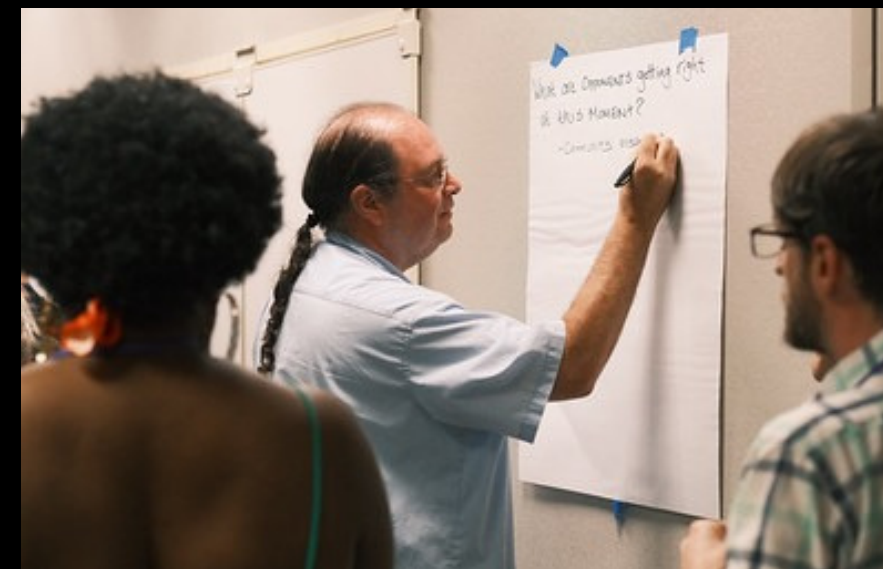
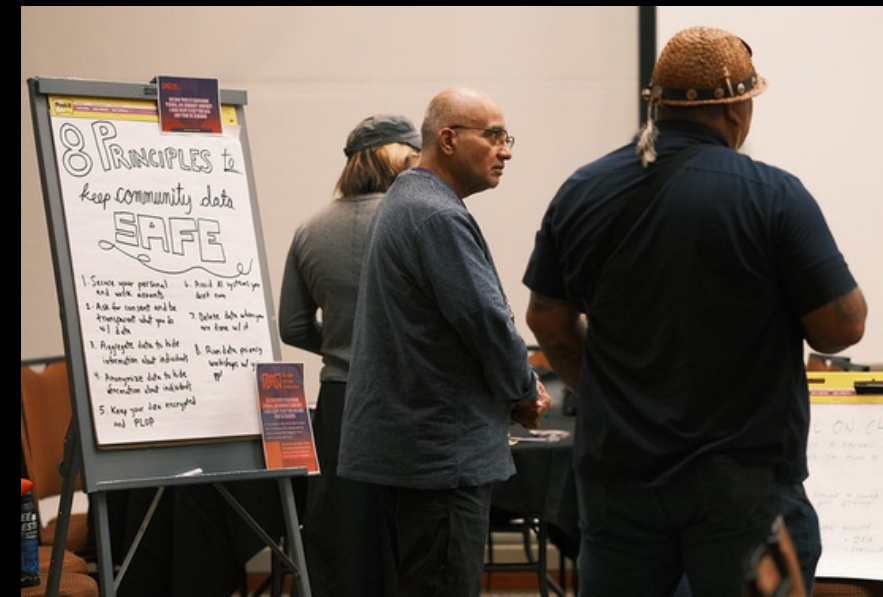


Program Highlights

The DiscoTech

A DiscoTech is a Discovering Technology fair concept developed by the Detroit Digital Justice Coalition and taught to MediaJustice by Community Tech NY.

At the Take Back Tech DiscoTech, participants heard from seven community activists and community technologists while gaining hands-on experience with rapid response tools for communities facing raids and occupation, alternatives to Big Tech, digital tools to reshape our relationship with technology, and models for data sovereignty.





Popular Sessions

01

Young Organizers, Radical Elders, One Tech Agenda: A Cross-Generational Strategy Session

Guided by presentations, including a video of elders describing their current and future relationships with technology, breakout groups discussed what a Radical Elders program on technology should say.

02

Say What?: Narrative Listening Against Big Tech

ReFrame researchers presented two years of narrative research analyzing conversations and sentiment data to craft liberatory narratives rooted in the Global Majority.

03

Data Center Strategy sessions

MediaJustice organizers led strategy sessions to gauge alignment, interventions, and needs for the field organizing against data centers.

Participant POV

"I WORK WITH THE W.K. KELLOGG FOUNDATION (HAVE BEEN A CONSULTANT TO THEM FOR OVER 15 YEARS) AND MENTIONED TO THE PROGRAM OFFICERS I WORK WITH TODAY THAT IT WAS THE BEST CONFERENCE I'VE BEEN TO IN YEARS."

"I CAN'T PICK JUST ONE HIGHLIGHT OF TAKE BACK TECH, SO I'LL SHARE THE 4 CS:

CONTENT: NAOMI KLEIN
CULTURE: EGUN OMODE
CONNECTIONS: EVERYBODY
CONCLUSION: JOY"

"ONE OF THE BIGGEST HIGHLIGHTS WAS BEING IN A SPACE WHERE IT WAS CLEAR THAT PEOPLE ARE ACTIVELY WORKING TO SUPPORT HUMANITY. THAT FELT AFFIRMING. I CAME IN A LITTLE NERVOUS ABOUT SHARING MY INTEREST IN WORKING IN AI, SO I FOUND MYSELF LISTENING AND OBSERVING MORE DEEPLY."



Participant POV

"IT WAS SO INVIGORATING TO BE SURROUNDED BY SMART, THOUGHTFUL PEOPLE WHO SEE THE THROUGH LINES CONNECTING THE FORCES OF BIG TECH, FASCISM, PATRIARCHY, EXTRACTIVE CAPITALISM, NEOCOLONIALISM, AND THE MILITARY-SURVEILLANCE-INDUSTRIAL COMPLEX, AND ARE DEDICATED TO BUILDING A GRASSROOTS COALITION OF RESISTANCE BUILT ON SOLIDARITY AND SOVEREIGNTY."

"NAOMI KLEIN! THE AI DEBATE! THE "SAY WHAT" WORKSHOP! MEETING NEW FRIENDS! GETTING TO CONNECT WITH COLLEAGUES! SHARING SPACE WITH SO MUCH BRILLIANCE, PASSION, AND COMPASSION. ALSO SUCH A FOCUS ON ART AS A WAY TO GROUND US IN SPACE, CULTURE, AND COMMUNITY. TRULY APPRECIATE THIS SPACE, GLAD I'M AWARE OF IT NOW AND WAS ABLE TO BE HERE, AND SO EXCITED FOR THE NEXT ONE ALREADY."



Feedback

We needed more space to make the event comfortable for everyone.

Acknowledging that we made the choice to welcome more people to the space to meet demand, attendees with mobility needs needed more room, and folks reported feeling like the rooms were overcrowded.

Folks wanted live streams and recordings of the workshops. Participants didn't have the chance to take advantage of the robust agenda and wanted a chance to revisit content afterwards.

There's a need for smaller breakout spaces specific to geographies. Folks who organize near each other couldn't find one another organically and needed time set aside to connect and coordinate.

Field Assessment

Every level of organizing intervention needs resources. Local groups and national groups alike need funding. Data center organizers are concerned that hesitation from philanthropy will inhibit our ability to translate momentum into sustained power, because site fights have a long tail beyond initial wins. Relative to investments in research and policy, organizers are under-resourced for the needs of this moment.

Technologists are ready to play their part. Tech workers and technologists have specific insight into the ideology, power dynamics, and levers of influence within the tech industry and the field will be stronger by embracing them. They also understand the importance of language and nuance in describing which aspects of “AI” are design features versus flaws in how they are deployed by corporations.

International solidarity is present in theory, but nascent in practice. Despite understanding that organizing along the tech supply chain is important, at this point it is very nascent. The strongest points of connection exist within the just transitions framework, with indigenous sovereignty at the forefront, and in early stage coordination with data center fights. But the Global Majority is still lacking in representation and its presence in our analysis on Turtle Island.

Alternatives are emerging in the spirit of mutual aid and joy. Networks of people are developing apps, networks of care, and innovative ways to use large language models - their ability to reach folks is only limited by the channels for distributing and resourcing them. The discotech had more applicants than we had space to accomodate and each could have been its own workshop.

Field Assessment

Data centers are bringing in new actors to tech site fights. This includes, in places like West Texas, Republicans and even Trump supporters. There is not consensus about how to approach this on the ground. With documented TPUSA investments in utility justice fights in Arizona, MJ's assessment is that we need spaces for willing actors to direct their frustrations against Big Tech instead of turning to fascism. We can work in parallel to stop data centers or ICE facilities without sacrificing our principles or safety.

Eyes are on the AI PAC. Tech oligarchs are inside the federal government. They are reshaping immigration enforcement, media ecosystems, and public infrastructure simultaneously. And now, with the midterm elections coming up just as Elon Musk becomes the world's first trillionaire, they are positioned to buy our elections. Most Take Back Tech attendees were resonating with the framing from one of our participants that "everyone knows about AIPAC, but we have to talk about the AI PAC."

Our advantage is the coalition. People came into Take Back Tech feeling burned out. Being together, spending time with like minded people, and sharing strategy was a refresh. MediaJustice's organizers reported that one of the biggest benefits of the entire convening was the boost to well-being and community it provided to people who had the world on their shoulders, feeling alone in their fight.

What's next for MJ



01 THE PEOPLE V. BROBOTS

A campaign with actions in key cities, political education, and DIY engagement to call out politicians in Big Tech's pocket.

02 SMALLER CONVENINGS

Strategy sessions for organizers in specific regions like Southern California to support deeper coordination and leadership.

03 MAKE MEANING AT MIDTERMS

Pre- and post-election convenings with speakers and thinkers from Take Back Tech in September and February.

Let's Keep Building

The window is here, but it will not stay open.

Communities are organized. Coalitions are forming across unlikely lines. Local fights are producing real wins.

What determines whether this momentum becomes durable power, or dissipates like 2020, is whether the infrastructure exists to hold it - and whether or not the field has the money it needs to do this work. **Your partnership makes the difference.**

It brings scholarship applicants to the national convening.

It funds the regional meetups that scale local wins to state ones.

It builds the analysis and urgency that moves money faster.

It takes tech alternatives from fringe project to new venture.

We aren't looking for check writers. We are looking for partners who want to stay in the fight, brainstorm about how to move differently.

Contact our partnerships team at **casey@mediajustice.org**. Reach Mijente at **maricarmen@mijente.net**.



Thank You

MediaJustice expresses gratitude to the partners who made Take Back Tech III possible through sponsorships and donations.

Borealis Philanthropy

The Ford Foundation

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