



ADVOCATING FOR THE
PUBLIC INTEREST IN A
DIGITAL WORLD:

A CRITICAL

NEED FOR

TRAINING





BUILD A NEW

GENERATION

OF LEADERS

Technology is changing almost every aspect of human life. Homes and offices are interconnected, monitored, and automated. Cars will soon drive themselves. People shop and share on digital platforms, and students learn online. While technology is revolutionizing our lives and bringing us new opportunities, it may also result in circumvention of laws that protect basic rights and police the marketplace.

Public interest advocates must ensure that the digital economy evolves to support new competitive markets. Our digital future should be sensitive to civil rights and consumer protection, and not serve as an incubator for dangerous monopolies.

For decades, advocates have fought for consumer rights like an open and accessible internet, privacy, competitive choice, and media diversity. Now, as technology changes the landscape, a new generation of public interest advocates is needed to join, and ultimately lead, the fight to keep individuals at the center of laws governing the digital world.

Lawmakers will have to decide if and how to regulate large online platforms, internet service providers, media conglomerates, artificial intelligence, connected homes and

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cars, and online entertainment, education, news, and social networking. Ultimately, advocacy needs to penetrate into Washington D.C. in a manner that effectively engages the policymakers who write our federal laws and regulators who enforce them.

The best way to attract and train diverse public interest advocates to influence federal policy is through fellowships offering direct on-the-job experience in Washington, D.C. In the past five years, Public Knowledge has hosted 15 fellowships where graduates from college, advanced degree programs, or law school learn and work side-by-side with advocates formulating policy proposals, making arguments to federal agencies like the Federal Communications Commission and to lawmakers on Capitol Hill, collaborating with coalitions, devising strategy, and working with the media.

Fellows have gone on to roles as a senior advisor to a congresswomen, attorneys at boutique firms, advocates at non-profits, advisors in the U.S. government, and to law, business, and public policy school.

Resources are critically needed to provide on-the-job training and mentoring for early career advocates who are committed to building a fair and just digital marketplace. Building a skilled insider advocacy pipeline can translate grassroots aspirations into tangible federal policy. Public Knowledge needs ongoing support to pass the torch to a new generation of diverse defenders of human and consumer rights in our digital economy. Please join our efforts to make digital markets work for everyone!

A circular photograph of Dallas Harris, a young man with glasses, smiling while sitting at a desk in a recording studio. He is wearing a dark polo shirt and holding a pair of headphones. The desk has a computer monitor, a microphone on a boom arm, and speakers.

DALLAS

HARRIS

Dallas Harris, GW Law Fellow, 2015-2017. Dallas became an expert on low-income internet access, speaking on panels and to the press, and engaging with the coalition on strategy. Dallas is now an attorney in the General Counsel's Office of the Public Utility Commission in her home state of Nevada.

“ The issues that PK works on (access to broadband, open Internet, and others) are at the core of the technology policy debate, and PK is at the forefront of those discussions. I was able to work on modernizing the FCC's Lifeline low-income telephone subsidy program to include broadband, copyright reform, and the transition of the legacy telephone network. A few of the best parts of the fellowship are the opportunity to learn from leaders in the public interest technology space and the chance to meet directly with decision makers. As a fellow, I got to make an impact on the lives of consumers while learning how to become a better public interest advocate.”

A circular photograph of Alisa Valentin, a woman with dark hair, smiling. She is wearing a dark, sleeveless top and is sitting at a desk in an office. The background shows a computer monitor and some office equipment.

ALISA

VALENTIN

Alisa Valentin, Communications Justice Fellow, 2018-2019. Alisa holds a Ph.D. in Communications from Howard University and focuses on digital inclusion policies for communities of color and policies that diversify media ownership.

“ I applied for the Communications Justice Fellowship at Public Knowledge in hopes of making meaningful contributions to tech policy through a social justice lens. My fellowship has given me the opportunity to be a voice for marginalized communities in areas like digital inclusion, artificial intelligence, and intellectual property. Currently, I'm focused on a project related to rural broadband access and racial justice. I'm also working on policy solutions to address the bias in artificial intelligence that has impacts on communities of color in the criminal justice system, the future of work, and government surveillance. This fellowship has allowed me to tie my passion for social justice to the digital space—and it has exceeded my expectations.”



COURTNEY

DUFFY

Courtney Duffy, Fractured Atlas-Deutsch Foundation Arts and Technology fellowship, 2015-2017. Courtney is now enrolled in a concurrent degree program at the Tuck School of Business at Dartmouth (MBA) and Harvard Kennedy School of Government (MPA), with plans to advocate for creators at the intersections of government, business, and technology.

“Public Knowledge afforded me the opportunity to engage my beloved arts community in discussions of federal technology policies that do not typically include the artist perspective. I was empowered with the skills and resources to feature artists in Capitol Hill events on vital policy issues such as 3D printing, STEM education, and arts entrepreneurship. PK preaches the importance of building coalitions, even between unlikely bedfellows from different industries and sides of the aisle. Because PK grooms the next generation of advocates with a mentality of “bridge building” rather than “rock throwing,” its fellowship program is more important today than ever.”



YOSEF

GETACHEW

Yosef Getachew, GW Law Fellow, 2016-2018. Yosef played a key role on internet service provider privacy issues and is now Director of Media and Democracy Program at Common Cause.

“I wanted to work at the intersection of law, policy, and politics, and was immediately immersed in all of Public Knowledge’s work. Ultimately, the fellowship gave me the opportunity to take a leadership role in issues like privacy, tech transitions, rural broadband, and a media merger. I led coalition calls and developed strategies with allied organizations. Hill staffers reached out directly to me with questions or advice on a particular issue, and I fielded questions from the press through phone, radio, and TV interviews. I represented PK on panels, legal webinars, and podcasts (often as the only public interest representative). The amount of autonomy I was given by the end of my fellowship gave me the confidence to carry out advocacy work independently, and was critical in helping me develop my own strategies.”



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