ABOUT THE FELLOWSHIP

The Digital Civil Society Lab and the Program on Democracy and the Internet at Stanford PACS bring promising new scholars to Stanford University for 1 year appointments (renewable once, for total of two years) as postdoctoral fellows.

The following information applies to applications for the 2021-22 cohort of postdoctoral fellows. Applications for the PDI fellowship are due on February 1, 2021. Applications for the DCSL fellowship are due on February 15, 2021.

The annual fellowship stipend is $67,000, plus the standard benefits that postdoctoral fellows at Stanford University receive, including health insurance and travel funds. The fellowship program falls under U.S. Immigration J-1 Exchange Visitor Visa activities.

The start date of the fellowship will be September 2021, unless otherwise agreed. To assume a postdoctoral fellowship, scholars must have a PhD in hand by July 1, 2021. We cannot consider applications from scholars who earned a PhD earlier than September 1, 2018.

We encourage applications from candidates representing a broad range of disciplines including the social sciences, humanities, law, computer science and engineering.

ABOUT THE DIGITAL CIVIL SOCIETY LAB

The Stanford Digital Civil Society Lab seeks to understand, inform, protect and promote civil society in a digitally dependent world. Our goal is to foster a thriving and independent digital civil society rooted in a democratic commitment to freedom of association and assembly, freedom of speech and privacy. Our approach is interdisciplinary and cross-sectoral:

- We conduct and catalyze research across disciplines,
- We develop learning opportunities for civil society and philanthropic organizations,
- We support an emerging generation of community advocates, technologists and policymakers through teaching and fellowships,
- We promote efforts to better integrate civil society and digital policy advocacy.

The Digital Civil Society Lab is investigating key research themes that include:

- The key dimensions of digital infrastructure and data and how they influence the role of civil society in democracies;
- The challenges and opportunities for assembly and association in a world of pervasive data-collecting, digital infrastructure;
- The possibilities for decolonizing technology and developing alternative political economies around digital connectivity.
• The nature of digital data donations and/or the governance mechanisms, enterprise forms, or legal constructs that such donations require;
• Understanding interactions between global digital networks, digital activism, and traditional and emergent forms of association in civil society.

DCSL is an initiative of the Stanford Center on Philanthropy and Civil Society (Stanford PACS) and is led by Lucy Bernholz, senior research scholar at Stanford PACS, and Rob Reich, professor of Political Science and faculty co-director of Stanford PACS.

ABOUT THE PROGRAM ON DEMOCRACY AND THE INTERNET

The Program on Democracy and the Internet (PDI) envisions digital technologies supporting rather than subverting democracy by maximizing the benefits and minimizing the threats through changes in policy, technology, and social and ethical technological norms.

Digital technologies are having a profound impact on democracy in the United States and around the world. New communication platforms that give voice to the previously unheard also empower nefarious actors who seek to undermine democracy, silence journalists and minority groups, manipulate search engines, sow distrust, and more. Concerns about virality, deception, anonymity, echo chambers, and platform information monopolies pose new challenges for democracy in the digital age. Current research to understand these challenges and, on the basis of theory and evidence, craft solutions, remains nascent, fragmented, and incomplete. A strong knowledge base is critical for policy makers, corporate leaders, and technologists to make decisions that protect and promote democracy in the digital age.

The Program on Democracy and the Internet is investigating key research themes which include:

• Reform options for platforms to combat hate speech, bots, and disinformation.
• Algorithmic bias
• Deteriorating health of digital information ecosystems and its effect on democracy and civil rights
• Changes in the media landscape due to shifts caused by digital innovation.
• Impact of the internet on election campaigns and voting.
• The Program on Democracy and the Internet’s work draws from the social sciences, humanities, engineering, computer science, and the law to understand the challenges digital technologies pose to liberal democracies around the world.

The program is led by Principal Investigators Nathaniel Persily, James B. McClatchy Professor of Law at Stanford Law School and Co-Director of the Cyber Policy Center, Francis Fukuyama, Senior Fellow at the Freeman Spogli Institute, and PACS Faculty Co-Director and Professor of Political Science, Rob Reich.

TIMELINE

December 1, 2020: Application period opens
February 1, 2021: PDI fellowship applications DUE
February 15, 2021: DCSL fellowship applications DUE
February, 2021: Interviews with shortlisted candidates
March, 2021: Offers extended to finalist(s)

HOW TO APPLY
Submit an application via https://stanfordpacs.slideroom.com/

Applicants will be asked to include the following:

- Cover letter detailing the reasons for the applicant’s interest in the fellowship;
- Curriculum Vitae;
- Fellowship proposal detailing the research that the applicant would undertake while at Stanford, and how it fits within the research agenda of the specific initiative to which the applicant is applying. In this section, please disclose if you have additional funding arrangements.
- Writing sample consisting of either a dissertation chapter or a recent published paper. There are no specific page length or formatting requirements for this sample;
- Graduate transcript with proof that the applicant has completed all the requirements for the PhD, or a letter from their PhD advisor stating when they will do so;
- Two (or more) Letters of Recommendation. These should be submitted via the application portal.