

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (00:00):**

All right! So, before I introduce our esteemed interlocutor, I want to reiterate- I've said this a couple of times now that we started this series- this webinar series last year as an effort to provide a forum for applicants to directly engage with former reviewers of our Digital Grants program. So, this includes the current Digital Justice Grants program, our sun-setted Digital Extension Grants program, and also even reaching very far back for those of you who remember, we had a Digital Innovation Fellowship. And so, the idea behind these webinars was that not everyone obviously has access to the kinds of informal information sharing networks that can determine whether one writes a proposal that gets funded. And so, these webinars sought to unveil some of that hidden curriculum of grant writing and to provide some insight into the specific aspects of this program and although our reviewer pool changes with each competition, you know, the general justice-oriented ethos of the program does not.

So therefore, you know, there's incredible value in getting insight into how prior reviewers have evaluated and assessed the various components of these applications. Today we're aiming to get even more concrete and talk about how one operationalizes digital humanities projects. Largely, because the logistics of a project can either support or undermine some of the larger social, political, and intellectual ambitions of those projects. And we're also trying to have a more direct conversation about those concrete elements so here I'm talking about the budget, the timeline, and the work plan because they directly inform how viewers understand feasibility. Which I would remind folks is one of the evaluation criteria that we use in the peer review process.

Today we are joined by Professor Andre Brock, who is an Associate Professor in the School of Literature, Media, and Communication at the Georgia Institute of Technology. Dr Brock is one of the preeminent scholars of Black cyber culture. His work bridges science and technology studies and critical discourse analysis showing how the communicative affordances of online media aligned with those of black communication practices. His scholarship includes published articles and books on racial representations in video games, black women and web blogs, whiteness, Blackness and digital techno-culture as well as groundbreaking research on Black Twitter, including the award-winning text *Distributed Blackness: African-American Cyber Cultures*, which I have with me. I keep it next to my desk because it informs a lot of how I have sort of thought about my place in this field and especially with administering a program like this. And so, before we get started in that conversation, I want to sort of quickly go through an agenda of what to expect for today.

There we go. So for those of you familiar with the structure of these sessions you'll recognize that we're following a similar format and that will start this session with about 30 minutes of discussion between me and Professor Brock related to today's topic. That discussion and the questions that will animate it have been specifically curated around how you might more strategically and intentionally use the budget, the work plan, and project timeline to strengthen some of the arguments you make in the prompts. It's also meant, like I said, to shine a light on how some reviewers consider these elements beyond the application prompts in terms of assessing the justice orient-oriented values of the project. So given that we have one interlocutor today we'll stay in the main room after that discussion and those who are interested can stick around for a more interactive active discussion with Professor Brock about any of the topics we surface during the first half of the session or that's also the space where you can get feedback from him about these elements for your specific project.

As a reminder the first half of the general session will be recorded and posted to the ACLS site and the second half will not- will not out of respect for everyone in this space I want to name that we expect full confidentiality in terms of this the discussion we have in the second half, you know, folks are sharing details and information about their projects and applications and there's a lot of value in the collective learning that happens in that broader conversation, but we should also be mindful of maintaining the integrity of that space so folks feel empowered to-to get the feedback that they want and that they came for. We'll conclude with some closing remarks particularly, just some housekeeping around upcoming deadlines and things to be aware of as we head towards the end of the competition. So, I'm going to stop sharing my screen so that way we can all see each other, and we can get started with our conversation.

So, I know that I-I wanted to sort of organize this talk around the sort of concrete elements of these-of the-of the application, right? So thinking about budgets, timelines, and work plans and that's really how we're going to sort of move through this discussion and so the first thing I want to-to ask Professor Brock to get this conversation started is really to think about budgets right? And when you are assessing the budget of a proposed project and whether that be as your experience as a Digital Justice reviewer for former competitions or even you know perhaps other competitions that you've reviewed for: What are one to two green flags that you look for in terms of an appropriate use of funds?

**Professor Andre Brock (06:04):**

Green flags that I look for are whether, and this isn't strictly budgetary, but whether the grant writer outlines that they have previous experience with the technology and while that's not specifically budgetary it does highlight that the-any unexpected financial

complications that may come up with accessing a type of technology will have-may be already accounted for in the way that they write the budget. And so, by that to be less obscure right? Say you're doing something with a coding software-Deduce or something like that right if you have experience with that software that means that if you have an unexpected hiccup in terms of whether your data didn't load or whether you can't necessarily keep a stable connection and you keep losing data you've already prepared for those eventualities and that will somehow be clearer when you talk about how to allocate funding for a budget. So any budget that's talking about accessing any online technology cloud-based or actual technological hardware and software needs to be needs to be able to tell us as reviewers that you are aware that technologies aren't perfect, that people aren't perfect, and that there sometimes will be a mismatch and so have a little bit of wiggle room in case something happens so like I've seen not with ACLS but I've seen where people are talking about purchasing expensive equipment that is digitally connected but not necessarily being clear on how they will maintain and support the needs of that equipment above and beyond what their project needs are if that makes sense.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (07:39):**

Yeah, it definitely does. I mean it reminds me of a question that we often get in the Digital Justice inbox where people ask, you know, for example are they allowed to sort of allocate funds that will extend beyond the grant term. So even thinking about subscriptions for things you know you'll purchase the subscription with the grant funds during the term but it will last you for, you know, if you buy a package that's for, you know, five years, for example, and that's always something that I think we absolutely encourage people to do just in terms of like thinking about the long-term sustainability of the project and also like having definitive temporal points around what you mean by sustainability too.

**Professor Andre Brock (08:17):**

Correct.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (08:18):**

And so you know I think you kind of hinted at the converse of that in terms of thinking about one to two red flags but if you could say a little more about some glaring red flags that you've seen with respect to budgets that you've looked at.

**Professor Andre Brock (08:34):**

Um I see- I've seen people who are reliant upon supposedly open-source projects uh that they don't necessarily have a responsibility or capacity to maintain and so they're dependent on whether or not the developer keeps that particular repository or technology

up to date and sometimes you know that involves whether or not it will be able to work on your computer during the length of your project. Other things are where people are suggesting using technologies, but they are kind of caught up in the licensing or purchasing agreements with those technologies and outsource privately identifiable data to those third-party providers right? And while it may be cheaper because they're offering it as a package deal you have to be mindful even if you're a community organization that doesn't have to go through IRB that you're exposing people's private information to people who will sell it for their own gain not the gain of the people who you're working with right? So that's an additional thing. And then the third thing goes back to whether or not this technology that you're proposing is actually something that is-has a substantial- is a substantial resource for the type of project that you're taking on right? It's one thing to say I'm a documentarian and I need these digital cameras and these monitors to do this type of documentary work to highlight how communities you know portray themselves aesthetically through murals or whatever it's another thing altogether to say I need the most powerful computer I can get because I want to type in transcripts from interviews that I have like we- we- we you know we not crazy we mindful right and so we also pay attention to-we have some idea of the types of technical requirements for the types of projects that you do and so you know not-not saying don't ask for the stars and hope to get the moon but also be mindful that we are aware of the some of the technological requirements and so don't get don't get carried away. [Laughter]

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (10:36):**

We-we like when people ask for their-the things though right because we try to try to provide the things um but I think I think that's a good consideration and um you know a following question a follow-up question that I have to that in terms of like potential red flags because this is hands down one of the consistent red flags that I see again in my role as someone who reads all of the applications and then makes determinations around eligibility but also facilitates the panels, you know, where folks are discussing what they see in applications and hands down one of the biggest red flags in terms of budget that I see is usually people underestimate and un-account for a lot of different kinds of costs and labor is often one of them. So I'm wondering if you could talk a little bit about you know how you think about the labor that's required to support a project and you know how you go about because the creating a budget is literally an exercise where you have to assign specific value to things and I think that can be deeply uncomfortable, especially when you are sort of operating within a framework of like I have \$50,000 to allot, I have \$100,000 to allot um and so how do you sort of go about doing that valuation work you know for-for the labor.

**Professor Andre Brock (11:59):**

Um so for those in university settings I find that a lot of faculty are all too willing to assign technical capacities to undergraduate and graduate research assistants without necessarily accounting for the fact that those populations are transient and I'm not saying it like we're going to get rid of them but students graduate, students leave, students can't take the can't work with you for a semester but they don't necessarily have a way to account for that transfer of institutional knowledge, right? And so, something needs to be indicated in the budget where you have-how do I say this uh succinctly? There needs to be an acknowledgement that there is a requirement to build and take advantage of institutional knowledge around the technology you want to use that powers your project, right? So it can be an advanced graduate student but let us know how you're planning on compensating that graduate student in order to keep them around for the length of the project or as long as you can. And if you can't then there should be some-some mention not necessarily in the budget line items directly but in your narrative about how you will handle if something like that occurs. So that's a complex one and I probably shouldn't have started there. The other piece is there are other things to consider with respect to budgeting that don't necessarily get captured by line items one of the things that I've run into problems with as a person who has chosen received grants is accounting for administrative overhead right and administrative overhead simply sounds like you'll have an office manager but that's also a technology manager that's also someone who does your scheduling right and ACLS according to the guidelines that we have as reviewers it does allow an honorarium for office administrative help but I find that many faculty don't necessarily budget for that and that's one of the things that can actually help you manage your time more efficiently especially with regards to when you need to take on an additional technical debt working with the hardware-the software that you want to use that makes your project happen or and this is something we'll discuss later when you need to get further in interaction with your community partners, right? So being able to budget for the additional assistance that ACLS will allow you to have actually saves you time in the long run both with your technology and with the ways in which you administer the grant and truthfully in the execution of your-your goals overall right and so that's something to keep in mind it's something that not-not enough people pay attention to or budget for and in part that's because many universities either don't offer clear-clearcut support for people chasing grants I come from a unit where we don't even actually have a grant program officer we have to rely on a college level and sometimes institute level uh and so that's not necessarily something you would know ahead of time. Also, if you're new to the grant game you might not know this ahead of time as well so that's something to keep in mind.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (14:52):**

Yeah, I will say that for this program we don't allow indirect costs in terms of universities being able to take a significant chunk of the grant to like funnel it into the void but, you know, with that said I think this question around I wanted to surface this question around labor because we do allow for those kinds of costs in the budget and so I think um you're exactly right and this is also a concern that I've heard from current Digital Justice grantees it's just like the sheer amount of project management labor that you as a PI have to do and so even the exercise of thinking about how many hours you have to spend sort of navigating your university infrastructure to get paid, designating tasks, all of that is something that you know you should absolutely think about. How to articulate that in the budget but also if there are areas where you can pay people via an honorarium to like specifically do that kind of kind of work um and I'm always really surprised when I don't see that kind of um sort of project dimension or project management dimension like very clearly laid out in the um in the budget or even in the project staffing. I think it's just sort of one of those baked in assumptions that people have you know about the role of the PI which is fair but again if a budget is a sort of exercise in naming and placing value on certain kinds of underestimated and unaccounted for costs like that's the area certainly where-where to do that. Um.

**Professor Andre Brock (16:25):**

There's a there's a corollary to this as well, because we are pursuing-pursuing a mission of social justice right and because many of us are in nonprofit institutions we don't necessarily approach consultants in the same way that we would say if I was getting my house remodeled so if you're getting your house remodeled you will absolutely look at bids from multiple contractors to see which one can do the work and what type of work they do what kind of references they have but I-I found in multiple applications across multiple institutions that many people get convinced by a contractor who will take up literally 80% of their budget to provide a service, right? And I'm specifically thinking of website design right because uh website and front-end design is can be well done or terribly done but you often see a lot of people who come in with proposals that they're going to pay a consultant \$18-\$20,000 to build out their front end on their website and I feel like that's something that you should also treat as if you were remodeling right? Get multiple um uh proposals from different vendors to see who you can work with that will help you balance your budget in a way that you're not giving all your money to someone and then coming up short in other areas that you might need to pay for.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (17:41):**

Yeah and I think I mean this is just me sort of thinking aloud about potential considerations I know that in other contexts for example if you're planning an event at a university like there are specific contractors that you have to use for like catering or um for setup and so I

don't know if it's the case you know for other kinds of vendors so for example working with someone who might do website design if the university you know has control over who you can go to but I think that's certainly a consideration to keep in mind right? So, are there—since we've been talking about you know underestimated or under-accounted costs related to labor are there other sort of costs, other underestimated costs particularly related to digital tools and platforms that folks should be mindful of? I mean I know we talked a little bit a couple of minutes ago about how you can use grant funds to pay for subscriptions years out even if um it's beyond the grant term um or thinking about the the maintenance of the tech that you are hoping to buy but are there any other things that folks should be thinking about?

**Professor Andre Brock (18:48):**

Uh for those who are thinking of doing interview protocols or recording conversations with focus groups or the like the number of options have dramatically increased for transcription of those audio interviews. However every service is not the same right uh some of them promise uh cheaper prices uh without necessarily pointing out that they have trouble uh say when you're interviewing people for minoritized populations they struggle with accents, they struggle with slang, they struggle with softspoken people like myself and so you will end up having to do a lot more hand coding of those things than you anticipate based on what the price quoted to you from that software is. I'm thinking of Rev.ai, I'm thinking of Otter.ai, even folk who are using uh Open ai's open-source tool called Whisper right you still will have to expend some human labor in order to clean and verify and validate your transcript. So keep in mind that those tools will still require a human labor cost right to do those things and so that's something that will come up more often than you think particularly if you want to uh uh if you're talking about participatory design where you want to record the ways that your stakeholders are participating in the actual workings of the project you need to be able to be you need to be able to ensure that their words are being translated accurately and correctly. Um, similarly for other DH projects particularly the open source ones um consider in order to manage cost more effectively working with your librarians, working with— if they do have people who are digital humanists uh and that's not just librarians at academic institutions there are many uh public librarians who also can do this work as well. Again as another way to manage your technical costs uh a lot of places particularly more affluent libraries have incorporated maker spaces which work well with the types of technology that I've seen people say they want to utilize for digital justice and that's a resource you can tap into you can you know compensate them to a certain extent especially if they're public officials but you should always try to pay people for their time. Um digital tools and platforms, uh I think I'll stop there for now.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (20:52):**

Okay, uh we can- I think a lot of this is going to keep resurfacing giving the giving the questions but I think um as a side note I want to encourage folks to pop questions into the chat as they come to you. I myself as someone that is someone that needs to like write things out before I um sort of engage in conversations so feel free to use that space we'll be checking it occasionally and then when we open it up for discussion um we can sort of see what's happening in the chat. I do see a question though now about um checks and balances in terms of those partnering with informal groups like activism organizations or doing community projects or international projects. And this sort of leads me to my next question which is something we talked about in the last webinar "Cultivating Community Partnerships in DH projects" which is sort of what kinds of information about your community partnership can be articulated in something like the work plan or-or the budget?

**Professor Andre Brock (21:50):**

So the applications that go the furthest when people are talking about partnering with community organizations are ones that talk about compensating community organizations for their time and effort right? Uh many uh university-led initiatives parachute into communities, promise them the world, and then don't compensate them and then utilize that information to get tenure or uh research papers out of it, so I'm very much aware when I review I want to see that the individual and the organizational contributors to- in a community university partnership or yeah a community/ individual partnership that everybody gets compensated right? And compensation can take multiple forms right uh some people talk about leaving technologies behind uh so that they you know acquire say if they're doing a hip-hop project they'll acquire um recorders and multi-track uh uh midi interfaces and the like and they say oh well we're going to gift these to the organization but if you're going to gift them also make sure that they have resources to maintain them beyond the period past which you work with them right? Because if you just give them to them but they have no-and something happens to them as happens right then you've basically given them a trojan horse you've given them something that ends up not being useful to them further down the road so compensation is a major thing, right?

And also you know we could talk about non-financial modes of compensation uh but I find that those don't necessarily have as much weight with community organizations they don't really care if they're cited in your papers I mean it's nice but that doesn't necessarily move the needle for them in any particular way because that's not a form of social capital that will get them further right? And so, part of the ways you can talk about compensating them that are non-financial are introducing them to other resources within the university that

either complement the work that you do or that can advance the mission that they have, right? And so those are some ways you can uh think about and-and while that doesn't necessarily end up again as a budget line item when you're talking about your narrative for your budget that part becomes really important because where else do you talk about that right that's not necessarily something you talk about in the project conception that's not necessarily something you talk about in the CVs that you're having of your co-PI but it absolutely should be something where you talk about the ethos right? The ethical implication of you coming into this community say we can do this work with you, that part should absolutely be in there.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (24:04):**

Yeah that's a really wonderful point because I think in most of the budget narratives that I've read you know and-and it's to be expected like we ask people to explain what we see in the budget and so it's a rationale of like well it cost this much for this person to do this or that but I think sort of being more intentional about folding in those aspects of community relationships and the ethos around it as reflected in the budget is absolutely a space where applicants should feel free to talk about that, you know, that's what that that space can-function as. And so we have talked a lot about you know relative to sort of compensating community partners and working with community partners again one of the consistent pinpoints um that I see once folks get their grants um in terms of having to support them or figure out a way to troubleshoot you know how to not only move resources is um out of the academy if you're working with community partners but even like bringing folks in can be um you know it's a - it's a weighted task given the histories of our institutions relative to these communities right? And so, um one way that this shows up a lot is in time and that the way that we sort of think about time in the university is like according to semesters um according to tenure clocks. Like we have a way of thinking about time that like people outside of the academy don't actually operate within and so when you're building something like a project timeline how do you reconcile the fact that your community partners or people outside of your institution may be functioning on a very different way of thinking about time or working through time than- than what we have to navigate in the in the academy?

**Professor Andre Brock (25:50):**

What I look- what I look for uh I understand that many tenure stream academics are under a clock where they have to produce a certain type of work in a certain amount of time but if you're going to say that you're working with community organizations as Dr. Nurse says those orgs don't work on the same academic timeline that we do and if you're talking about- if you say you just moved to a new town right and you say well I want to continue

doing the type of community work that I've been doing in other places well how much time have you spent with that community organization before you start saying hey let me use my institutional connections to do something with you right? And so, time is not necessarily in terms of how long it takes to project to execute but I'm also looking as a reviewer to see if you already have a previous engagement with this particular organization. The things that are essential to community building are history and experience right and if you don't have those things then your project is not going to be as robust as it could be, it's not going to be as just as it could be because basically what you're doing is taking advantage of those people's time and energy in order to produce something that's of value to you right? And this is to this is even when the organizations are eager to work with a prestigious university that's in their area because they've been looking for those type of partnerships but it still requires you as a researcher, you as a um a grantee, you as a activist to still- and activists know this already right?-to still spend that time with that organization to get to know them, their people, their circumstances so that you can better tailor the tools that you say you're going to use to help them build out a digital humanities social justice project make sure that they're in line with their values with their needs with their information uses and behaviors.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (27:30):**

So I have a a question you know related to that that's specific to like the seed grant and I think that you know we are in the space with the seed grant of trying to obviously bring more folks um who are interested in doing this work as like a starting point um to really develop a project and oftentimes like you do need time right to build those relationships uh before you get started on your work or as you as part of the doing of the work and so I guess my question to you as a reviewer sort of thinking about a startup project: where is the line for you in terms of thinking that okay this person has done enough preliminary work to be able to apply for this grant or they've not done enough work at all and are I guess at the precede phase in a lot of ways?

**Professor Andre Brock (28:19):**

Uh for me the line is if you haven't clearly identified an organization that you want to work with, but you have identified a-a cause that you want to support but you don't know who you're working-working with yet. Or if you are so interested in importing a tool that you have not necessarily considered the uh ethical and moral considerations of the tool above and beyond what the community organization has so this wasn't with-this wasn't with uh the group that we had Dr. Nurse but I reviewed a grant where somebody wanted to use uh drones to map a neighborhood to talk about uh possible route management for emergency responders right? Because that neighborhood was underserved by emergency responders,

and they felt if they were better able to map routes in a high traffic volume neighborhood then they would be able to serve that community better, but they had no intention of asking the community how they felt about being mapped and surveilled right? And I understand that it takes time to canvas the neighborhood do all that and undergrads and this is an undergraduate proposal have don't feel like they have that time because there have so much other stuff going on faculty may not either but it's crucial if you're talking about justice-justice has multiple dimensions and consent is absolutely one of those dimensions that I'm looking for in this particular instance.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (29:34):**

Yeah, that's a really powerful example and I think you know relates to a conversation we had about the platforms and tools around like you know being intentional that you don't pick a platform or a tool that you don't have also control of the data that's being collected and being sort of funneled to again into the void um as to what will happen with that with that data so you know that's a really good I think sort of consideration to have. I did want to circle back to when we were talking about funneling resources um whether they be compensation or non-compensation um forms of resources to community partners and the difficulty of doing that across institutional lines um and so this is again as your experience as a reviewer or even if how you have personally navigated that in your own work because it's incredible difficult um and this I always see this expressed as like the uh you know you can give gift cards to people but like how are people supposed to actually do substantial things with-with gift cards have you seen or come across any like really creative solutions um where people are able to like actually either compensate community members in a very easy way or like bring community-community members in to actually be able to take advantage of the resources that are in people's institutions.

**Professor Andre Brock (30:59):**

Uh one of the ways basically a Russian doll method so one of the grants I'm on after we got our grant from Mellon we then had application process to do seed grants to community organizations right um because Mellon affords us the capacity to grant small amounts of money up to say \$5,000 to different organizations to pursue the work that they want to do which doesn't necessarily require us to have a lot of oversight on them gives them the freedom to do the things that they want to do. Because I work at a public institution in Georgia right uh we are very much restrictive on the types of compensation we can give not only outside folks but our own students as well and so doing a granting process like that is helpful right again a technology grant in kind also may be something you can do provided you also talk about the ways in which you help them sustain that technology past the grants ending right? Um trying to think what else-gift cards sometimes work sometimes

don't. Like we can't even feed people like we're-we're just not on that we're not allowed to do those types of things uh unless we have certain pre-requirements set up we need an agenda we need action items we need a flyer we need all these types of things and that's easy that's easy to do right but it does require a certain amount of preparation before you can actually say we're going to do these things to help this community org out.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (32:13):**

Yeah um and you are you can to everyone in the in the uh the zoom room listening to this you can feed people with this grant funds in fact we encourage it. Food is care. Uh feed people with good food, seasoned food. We like that. Um and so I want to sort of switch gears a little bit in terms of sort of talking about the timeline because we have talked a little bit about like the way that people-different people where they're institutionally positioned have to navigate different timelines um but when folks are like actually writing out the timeline for this project and considering you know is this too ambitious is this actually feasible or is it not ambitious enough you know what are some red flags that you see when assessing a project timeline relative to the proposed activities like is there a clear indication if a timeline is too aggressive or too ambitious and then also are there indications of like ah this person could probably be doing a little bit more.

**Professor Andre Brock (33:10):**

So it's a double-edged sword right I'll go from the far side of the sword right in many cases we will see conceptual projects that talk about they're getting ready to plan to start to begin to consider technology options to pursue their social justice project but the timeline for the grant really indicates um a meeting period, a symposium, a discussion period, a writing up the things and then they'll actually think about getting to the technology and that stuff kind of gives me pause because it takes money out of the hands of people who are much more further along. Even for a seed grant who are much more further along and think about the implementation of digital tools so that's one side where you have this idea but you haven't necessarily done the pre-work necessary to start thinking about putting the rubber to the road where the technology is going to actually work for you and for the people you want to work for. The other side is, and I this is my uh my cliché an email never takes me five minutes you know like oh just answer this email it only takes you five minutes. It never takes five minutes, right? And so many people talk about building ambitious projects uh developing front ends, uploading content, cleaning data but their timelines are super unrealistic in part because uh they're not necessarily aware of the scale and the scope of the work. Cleaning data takes a long time, coding data takes a long time, writing up qualitative results takes a long time, and we don't always see people adequately account for the process of research right or even the process of working with organizations.

If you're conducting focus groups you still need to analyze and consider the outputs of those focus groups to then reapply it to your interaction with that group and that stuff takes time and there are several applications I've seen where people just don't leave themselves enough room to do that and this is particular for people who are talking about doing summer work uh which is fair because a lot of us don't get paid during the summer. That would be me, right? But the summer as a compressed time also requires that you focus a lot of energy and time in a very short uh space of capacity and you can't always get everything done that you want to get done in that time and if we're talking about care how are you caring for yourself during that process that that is not always clear either. I'm not saying put in that you got a pickle ball tournament during the thing [Laughter] but but if your schedule's too compressed it also looks it looks a little suspect right because I don't think you're granting yourself the space and the capacity to manage if something happens or if you happen right and so those things are especially crucial post-COVID because you never know when it's a cold or it's an allergy or it's a bronchitis like you always have to try to figure it out and that part becomes crucial too.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (35:45):**

Yeah I'm really I'm really glad that you brought up that sort of issue of care and also restoration right I know that we're not primed to think of the summer months as that because it's like okay well now I can get all the things that I wasn't that I didn't get done during the academic year I can do that during the during the summer and I think in sort of the human-centered spirit of this in terms of like obviously thinking about your community partners I-I personally want to allow people the space to put themselves to as part of the labor that constitutes of the the project and that is part of the upkeep and maintenance of the project you know? Um and so just being honest about, you know, what you need to do to take care of yourself during those moments um in addition to like the work that you could potentially do. Sometimes I follow very cut and dry sort of things for myself right even as I'm mapping out what you know the cadence of digital justice looks like with my colleagues it's like okay I think this will take a week so let me add on an extra week because perhaps I'm underestimating um, you know, how much time this might actually take with life and human beings um and so yeah just I want people to-to think about that as well. So the last question that I'm going to ask you before we open it up to-to folks um is sort of related to again work plans and thinking about project design and I know that when I was trying to think about how to frame this question around the ways that a project work plan can reflect you know these aspirations towards digital justice I was thinking about like where the project where the work takes place and the power that can come from like asynchronous work or decentralizing work that and work that doesn't take place on like university campuses. Um that was what I was thinking about as I was sort of reflecting on

this question but what are you know one to two concrete things that people can do in terms of like designing their project designing the work plan um that that in your mind get us better or that help us aspire towards that uh the digital justice ethos of this program.

**Professor Andre Brock (38:01):**

Say that question again.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (38:05):**

So thinking about one to two concrete ways that the project work plan um can reflect you know these aspirations towards-towards digital justice. And we've talked a little bit about this throughout the conversation so thinking about you know timeline and being realistic and caring for your body and caring for people around you, feeding people uh when you bring them together, thinking about compensating people- but is there any sort of final I guess thoughts um that you would offer in terms of how the work plan can reflect you know digital justice.

**Professor Andre Brock (38:34):**

So let me get technical for a second and say that people who are proposing to use open-source AI models uh to uh work on data sets or do transcription be aware that the licensing fees and and terms of service for those serv-for those particular technologies require that you give up your data right? And so from a justice perspective you must get consent from the people that you're working with to know that the things that they're saying will end up in a data set somewhere right to be used right so that's a technical thing right? The other part I would say is that uh from a work plan perspective we are constantly being uh sold or they try to sell us on technologies that promise to make us more productive and more efficient and justice is not productive or efficient right? It's something that has a lot of fits and starts and so your work plan again should account for the fact that some things take time, right?

You might not have the time uh and the grant process might only give you a certain amount of time but be generous with the ways in which you designate how much time it will take to particularly coordinate with other people's schedules right? I did interview protocols for a project and the actual scheduling of the interviews took longer than the interviews themselves took right because people are busy, and they have time right and so that's another thing to consider. The other piece is um going back to a technical aspect: how exactly do the methods that you propose the tools that you propose advance a mission of digital justice right? Uh if you are-uh and this is my personal thing if you are saying that I can create a visualization of data that other people create how are you making that data available or that visualization available to people afterwards right? So think about ways to

make uh your scholarship or your findings public in a way that benefits and celebrates the communities that you work with or the causes that you're interested in working with so an example that's not from here uh where uh someone was using AI to assess the ways that eviction rates were happening in Fulton County here in Atlanta and uh you know it it was really horrifying the ways in which AI was being used to rapidly process these types of uh uh eviction applications and how they were rubber stamped but they then provided uh they did a symposium where they did both a poster presentation and a data visualization to show the number of evictions that were requested, how quickly they were processed, and how that affected occupancy rates here in in the city right and so that's a complex uh answer right but I think it-it falls in line with be aware of the public facing side of your project as a mission of promoting uh digital justice and the time it will take to mount a public facing side of your project above and beyond whatever your findings are right that part is crucial as well. Hope that answered- I feel like I'm floundering on that one but I hope that answers your question.

**Dr. Keyanah Nurse (41:29):**

No, that was that was a great mic drop moment at the end there. I appreciate that that answer um and with that now we are going to open it up to discussion um for folks let me stop this recording.

Otherwise, I just want to highlight that the deadline for applications is swiftly approaching. It is December 3rd at 9:00 p.m. Eastern Standard Time uh we will be on standby in the digital justice inbox all throughout up to the application deadline so if you have any questions or concerns particularly around um any technical problems that you may be encountering with the uh application portal uh please feel free to email us usually it's just a matter of people um uploading a file that's too big so that's just like a-a quick thing to check first but if you email us at like 8:00 pm we will respond. Uh the notification for the first round of review will occur on in February of 2025 so given the overwhelming volume of applications that we received last year we've changed our review process now we have um two rounds of review so that first round of review um will be a kind of pre-screening round where we'll have some reviewers in the field sort of assessing applications providing some feedback that will then pass along to everyone so you'll get a status update about your application in February and then you'll receive um notification of the final round of review in April.

So the other thing that I want to highlight is that we're having one final office hour with ACLS staff on Friday November 22nd from 11 am to 12:00 pm Eastern Standard Time, so this is also a chance where if you have any last minute questions about your project about the application about submission anything like that feel free to um come to the office hour

it's very very informal and so if you just have a quick question and you just want to pop in and pop out you know we certainly encourage that as well. So I want to thank you all again for coming, I want to thank uh Professor Brock for giving us his time and expertise I think this was a really really great conversation and I hope folks got a lot out of it if you have any additional questions you can feel free to email us at [digitaljustice@aclu.org](mailto:digitaljustice@aclu.org) and best of luck. Take care everyone!