

PUBLIC INTEREST TECHNOLOGY

I'm a hacker. For good.

This transcript is from a video featuring Matt Mitchell, a hacker working at the intersection of social justice and technology. It's part of the *Public Interest Technology* series, celebrating Ford-supported visionaries working at the intersection of art, design, and technology to help shape a future that serves justice and the public interest.

Transcript begins.

MATT MITCHELL: On the internet we start with fairness, we start with equality. The inequality that we see in the technology space today all has the same drive. Money. Make money. People want to bring things from this physical space—privilege, bias, positioning—into it to derive money and to recreate something that doesn't belong in this new amazing place.

[Matt Mitchell, Ford-Mozilla Open Web Fellow, Color of Change. A Black man wearing a black T-shirt, a black chain necklace, and a black baseball hat with a gold brim.]

Hi. I'm Matt, and I'm a hacker. A lot of time alarm bells ring when you hear the word hacker. The difference between me and a person who breaks into your bank and takes your money or breaks into your computer and takes your secrets is really not that much, except for my motivation, which is to serve and to help people. What brings me to this work is my commitment to social justice, racial justice, and the intersect of technology and how that affects all people, but especially people of color.

At Color Of Change I didn't write code. I didn't build applications, even though I had the ability to do that. Instead, I delivered to them an understanding of the digital threats. It's important that people know that it's not a matter of if you will be hacked as an organization, it's a matter of when. If you were Malcolm X or Martin Luther King today, you wouldn't get very far without an understanding of the digital threats that are out there. If you're Harriet Tubman, uh-uh, no Underground Railroad. So it's understanding that everything we do is intercepted and analyzed. Technology's role is a defensive role to protect, and planning before problems occur. When your website goes down or your emails don't work or someone's sending tweets out but it's not anyone that works there. Which is why, as an organization, you need to have an incident response plan. And it should be, in my opinion, a checklist. "If this happens you must do this, and then if this happens you bring it back down a step."

Color Of Change is at the vanguard of technology, but now they're at the vanguard of technology and defense of their organization. The internet is like the DNA of civilization of all people on this planet. We all had a part in this mosaic that is the modern, free, public internet, and it's for us to defend that.

[Ford Foundation logo: a globe made up of a series of small, varied circles. Mozilla logo.]

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End of transcript.