



25 YEARS OF
NEW AMERICA



OPEN
TECHNOLOGY
INSTITUTE

Open Technology Institute at 15

IMPACT REPORT

SEPTEMBER 2025

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Celebrating 15 Years of Impact

A Letter from the Head of OTI

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Since its founding in 2009, the Open Technology Institute (OTI) has worked to ensure that technology serves the public interest and defends the core values of an open, secure, and accessible internet. As we mark OTI’s 15th anniversary, I am proud to reflect on how far we’ve come and our commitment to confronting the road ahead.

At a time when digital technologies impact nearly every aspect of our lives, OTI continues to champion the policies, practices, and tools that uphold equitable access, transparency, and the fundamental rights of a democracy. Over the years, we’ve fought for strong net neutrality rules, expanded affordable broadband access, defended encryption, challenged surveillance overreach, and pushed for robust consumer protections. Through it all, OTI has remained dedicated to ensuring that technology serves every individual and community equitably.

Today, OTI’s work is more urgent than ever. From emerging technologies like artificial intelligence and quantum computing to balancing responsible data use with the fundamental right to privacy, we are confronting new challenges that demand bold ideas and principled actions. We are proud of OTI’s legacy and how it has supported and incubated the work of so many over the years who have shaped tech and telecom regulation and governance; advanced new technologies and new ways of thinking about the challenges associated with them; and filled knowledge and research gaps for users, advocates, policymakers, and many other stakeholders. But as we celebrate this milestone, we are clear-eyed about the need to adjust our trajectory as new forces shape our digital landscape. To guarantee equitable access to technology and its benefits, we must meet this moment with renewed purpose and a clear vision of the future we want to see.

As we look ahead, we are committed to making the next chapter of OTI as impactful and visionary as the last 15 years. Alongside communities, technologists, policymakers, and advocates, we will continue to shape a future in which technology supports equity, transparency, and human dignity.



With gratitude and determination,

Lilian Coral

Head of the Open Technology Institute
Vice President, New America’s Technology and Democracy programs

Our Mission

OTI works at the intersection of technology and policy to ensure that every community has equitable access to digital technology and its benefits. We’ve stayed true to this mission throughout our history, promoting universal access to technology—particularly the internet—while advancing the right to user privacy and confronting the social harms caused by disruptive digital systems.

The “open” in our name refers to hardware and software with characteristics that promote equitable access, experimentation, and adaptation. These include the ability for communities and individuals to use and benefit from open-source software as well as individuals having means of communication that are free from censorship and embrace freedom of expression. We promote the principles of a “free and open” internet—where users decide where they go and what they do online, unfettered by corporate gatekeepers.

But merely expanding equitable access to technology is not enough. Truly unlocking the opportunities of digital technology for every community means confronting the social harms caused by disruptive new tech. We want to keep users and their data safe—from unwanted intrusion, unwarranted surveillance, corporate exploitation, and other online and offline threats that manifest in the digital world. Data must be collected and shared responsibly so that all Americans can flourish while their privacy is protected.



Our Story

Where We Started

OTI’s story began in 2009 with a focus on developing and supporting hands-on community-based connectivity projects to empower those communities and support their development. Our team, led at the time by OTI founder and public interest advocate Sascha Meinrath, was composed primarily of technologists with experience developing networking firmware and other software, as well as staff who engaged with users and practitioners in the field. At the same time, we began to develop our policy acumen by focusing on regulatory reform at the Federal Communications Commission around internet access and related issues.



How We’ve Grown

Until 2014, OTI focused on internet access; affordability; adoption, particularly for marginalized or underserved communities; and the ability for users and communities to build and maintain their own connectivity needs. Meinrath was succeeded as director in 2014 by Alan Davidson and later Kevin Bankston, whose tenures reflected a desire to grow OTI’s footprint and depth of focus in policymaking while staying true to its tech-oriented roots. Bankston’s deep expertise in federal surveillance and free expression coincided with Edward Snowden’s revelations on the mass surveillance of Americans by the NSA, which spearheaded an expansion of OTI’s work to respond to these incursions.

In the years since 2014, OTI’s work transitioned from hands-on software development and direct engagement with community networks to policy development and direct advocacy. Both the public interest community and policymakers began recognizing OTI as an effective advocate, as we were able to successfully convene coalitions to strengthen policy advocacy campaigns. The makeup of our team empowered this success: Our positions and policies were informed by the deep technical knowledge of skilled technologists, who worked in tandem with staff members who had a background in policy. With this combination of talent, we could constructively serve as trusted, principled translators between government, researchers, public interest groups, technologists, and corporations. As the public conversation about technology and its impacts widened and grew more nuanced, OTI’s scope of work grew to encompass the breadth of that conversation. Sarah Morris, the first counsel to join OTI in 2011, continued to strike this balance between policy advocacy and technical expertise when succeeding Bankston as director in 2019.

Where We Are Now

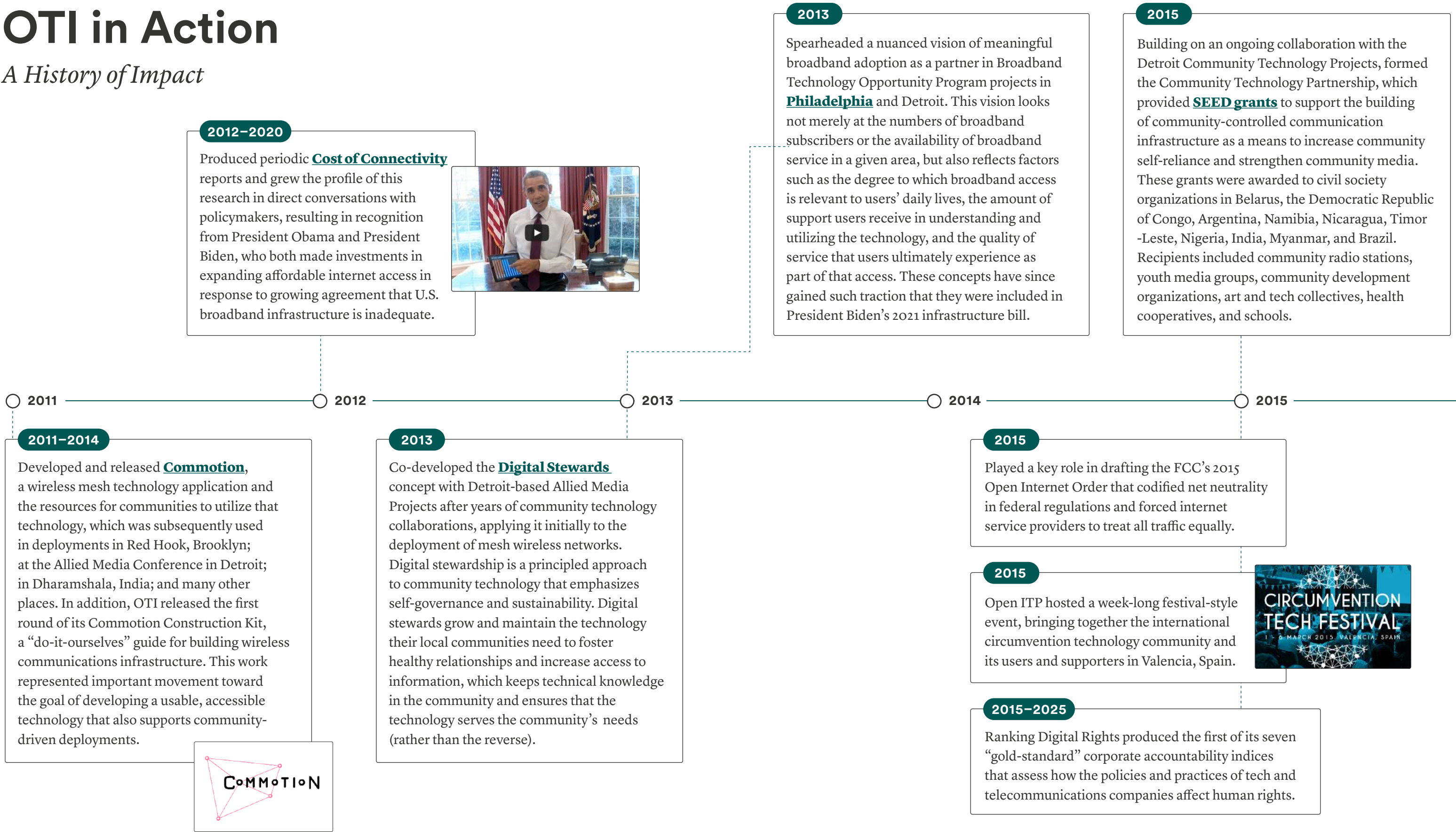
Even as OTI has evolved over the years, our core principles have remained constant: Individuals and communities know their own needs best; the equitable benefits of digital technology depend on universal access; and tech governance should stem from the premise that privacy and freedom of expression are fundamental human rights that should be protected. Today, we continue to engage with Congressional members and staff, regulatory policymakers, companies, and other public interest organizations to promote tech policy recommendations that protect people and foster an open and secure internet.

OTI’s efforts have always been and continue to be reinforced and amplified by New America’s considerable media footprint and our relationships with colleagues across programs. Over the past few years, we have been a part of New America’s Technology and Democracy programs, whose collective work fosters a sustainable digital future that advances equitable opportunity, innovation, fundamental rights, and participatory governance—where democracy, human rights, and the planet flourish. From developing solutions for next-generation digital public infrastructure to elevating the Global South’s influence in AI governance, these tech-centered programs pursue practical solutions to the pressing challenges and opportunities of innovation.



OTI in Action

A History of Impact



2016, 2021

Developed the signature “**broadband nutrition label**” proposal to create greater price transparency for internet service in 2009, which was adopted by the FCC in 2016, abandoned by the Trump administration, and became law under President Biden in 2021.

2017–2025

Sued to reinstate the 2015 Open Internet Order after the Trump Administration rescinded it, **briefing** the case in 2018 and **arguing** it before the D.C. Circuit in 2019. The court’s **decision** didn’t restore net neutrality, but it did reinforce the right of states to issue their own net neutrality regulations and highlighted the public safety implications of the lack of net neutrality (something OTI pushed hard for). In 2024, after the FCC again **voted** to reclassify the internet as a Title II service, OTI **defended** it in the Sixth Circuit as intervenors, which **ruled** in early 2025 to strike down the most recent order.



2020

Proposed reforms to federal surveillance law, including the highly invasive Section 215 of the Patriot Act. Engaged with congressional committees to draft a reform bill, which ultimately led to the **successful passage of various reforms** in the House and Senate and a lapse of Section 215 authorities in early March 2020.

2021

Led a broad coalition of civil rights, civil liberties, and technology organizations in publishing a statement of **Civil Rights Concerns Regarding Law Enforcement Use of Face Recognition Technology**, which resulted in the reintroduction in Congress of legislation to place a moratorium on government use of facial recognition as well as a House Judiciary Committee hearing exploring the harm of facial recognition technology.

2023

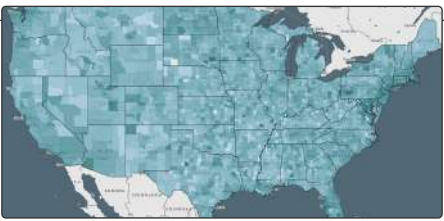
Wireless Future played a major role in shaping the Biden administration’s National Spectrum Strategy to emphasize more open and equitable wireless connectivity policies.

Broadband Facts	
Fixed broadband consumer disclosure	
Choose Your Service Data Plan for 50Mbps Service Tier	
Monthly charge for month-to-month plan	\$60.00
Monthly charge for 2-year contract plan	\$55.00
Click here for other plans and options including promotions and options bundled with other services. For cable, television and wireless services.	
Other Charges and Terms	
Data included with monthly charge	300GB
Charges for additional data usage – each additional 10GB	\$10.00
Optional modem or gateway lease – Customers may use their own modem or gateway; click here for our policy	\$10.00/month
Other monthly fees	Not Applicable
One-time fees	
Activation fee	\$50.00
Deposit	\$50.00
Installation fee	\$25.00
Early termination fee	\$340.00
Government Taxes and Other Government-Related Fees May Apply! Varies by location.	
Other services are not included.	

2016

2016

Integrated a Measurement Lab **internet speed test functionality** into Google’s search results to drive more open internet performance data into the largest such collection of verifiable measurements of global network performance.



2016–2025

TechCongress sent the first two of 122 fellows to Congress to serve as technology policy advisors to Members of Congress in order to bridge the divide of knowledge and experience between politics and tech for better outcomes for both.

2018

2018, 2022

Worked in coalition to develop the **Santa Clara Principles**—a set of standards for online platforms to improve transparency and accountability around their content moderation efforts. The Principles have been widely influential in the tech policy community and were **updated in 2022**. At the same time, OTI regularly engaged directly with internet platforms around their content moderation efforts and produced accompanying research demonstrating what more these services could do to increase transparency and accountability. Our work helped directly shift the perception of “transparency reporting” among platforms, drastically improve the kind of disclosures companies make around their policies, and make such disclosures a standard practice.

2020

2020

Wrote and published a **white paper with the Harvard Safra Center for Ethics** related to emerging digital contact tracing systems and how to mitigate equity, privacy, and civil liberties concerns with rapidly developing public health technology.

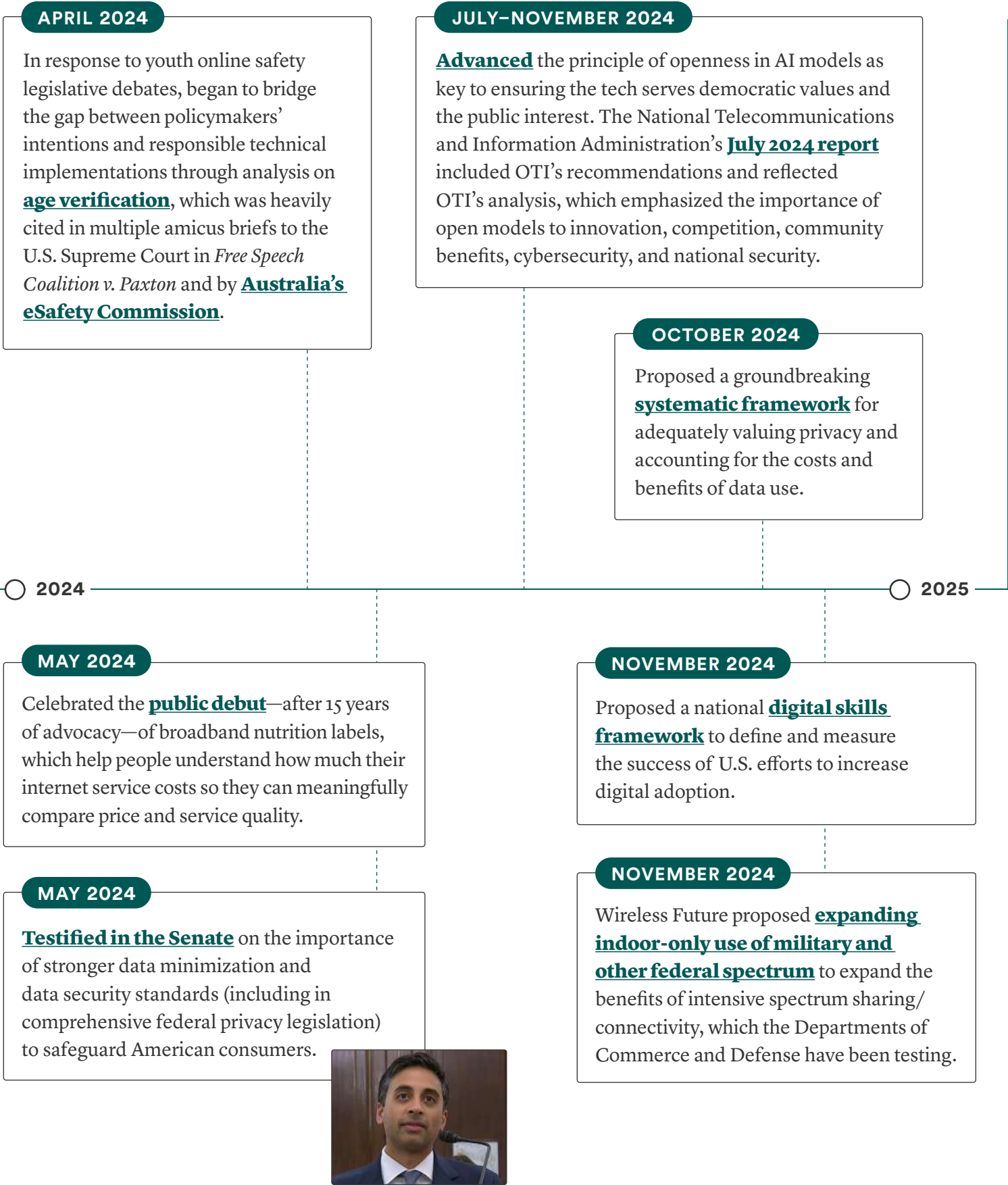
2020–2022

Instrumental in pushing the FCC to create the temporary **Emergency Broadband Benefit** in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and its successor, the Affordable Connectivity Program, which provided a model for how to craft and manage a successful federal broadband subsidy program. The **Affordable Connectivity Program** was part of the 2021 Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act, which also dedicated \$42 billion to state broadband deployment grants for unserved and underserved communities across America, a historic investment long sought by OTI.

2022

2022–2023

Wireless Future and the **Airwaves for Equity** coalition led efforts to advance the creation of a digital equity foundation funded by government auctions of the public airwaves, or “spectrum,” to create a long-term, sustainable, private, nonprofit foundation dedicated to promoting digital equity and inclusion nationwide. The Digital Equity Foundation Act was introduced in the House and Senate in 2022 and 2023.



Our Recent Work

In 2025, OTI has been working to achieve three key objectives:

- 

To protect data privacy of all Americans and ensure their data is responsibly collected and used.

We have been unlocking and demonstrating ways to use data that align with democratic principles, foster innovation, and strengthen public trust. In order to encourage good data sharing, we published a report providing guidance to policymakers, technologists, and data professionals seeking to implement privacy-preserving solutions in government data systems. In response to the challenges raised by the spread of age verification mandates across the country and the Supreme Court’s recent decision to allow age verification for online adult content, we produced a brief that explores a path toward implementation that protects a person’s privacy and data security through zero-knowledge proofs.

We have also been sounding the alarm on government surveillance and other misuses of data that disproportionately impact vulnerable groups. In order to raise broader awareness and a more concrete understanding of how DOGE is putting millions of Americans’ personal data at risk, we developed an interactive tool that anyone can use to discover how much of their own data DOGE has acquired. Additionally, we have urged civil society, industry, and policymakers to hold DHS accountable for its problematic surveillance of Americans and protect the rights and privacy of people nationwide.
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To ensure technologies with powerful impacts on society—such as artificial intelligence—serve democratic values and the public interest.

We have made the broader case that the continued importance of fairness and accountability in the AI ecosystem is essential and have encouraged continued commitments to the values of accountability, innovation, competition, and security. We have engaged with congressional staffers, with policymakers via comments on this administration’s AI Action Plan, and with academics supporting high-quality data sets and open ecosystems. Throughout our work, OTI has persistently focused attention on governmental and corporate applications of AI that disproportionately harm vulnerable populations.
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To promote universal access to digital technologies and their benefits for all Americans.

To close the digital divide and ensure Americans have access to the technology and skills they need to fully participate in society and benefit from technology, we have been advocating for universal affordable broadband access with an emphasis on both preserving the Universal Service Fund and regrounding it in the intended principle of universal service. We have also been developing policy recommendations to enable the use of low-earth orbit satellites as one of the solutions for the digital divide as well as developing and advancing a harmonized, interoperable vision for a seamless continuum of connectivity options that are fast, affordable, and broadly available.

Looking Forward

As democratic societies grow increasingly divided and authoritarian, we need to recommit to and reinvigorate an approach to technological governance rooted in human rights and a public-interest ethos that promotes fundamentally democratic values like transparency, competition, privacy, and free expression.

In a highly constrained policy environment, OTI will focus in the coming years on building the **future internet we need** by advancing five interrelated tracks:

1



Openness as a Guiding Democratic Principle for AI and the Internet

OTI will continue to advance the concept of openness as a guiding principle for the public internet, the AI model ecosystem, and shared public data more generally. OTI’s work will continue to advocate for openness’s varied benefits to transparency and accountability, innovation, research, competition, security, and communities’ ability to tailor tools (like AI models) to define their own solutions. OTI also will partner with others to build capacity for openness to thrive, whether via compute resources, shared training data sets, technologies that break down black box algorithms, or protocols and standards that promote interoperability across the AI and broader internet ecosystems.

2



Pursuing Both Privacy and Pro-Social Data Use

Through research and advocacy, OTI will promote strong protections for —and an incentive structure that encourages—privacy and responsible data use. We will continue not only to advocate for elusive comprehensive federal legislation, but also to seek to strengthen privacy through other avenues. These avenues include the development of a method for valuing privacy and assessing the costs and benefits of data use; promoting adoption of privacy-enhancing technologies; and pursuing targeted partnerships with organizations (e.g., immigrant rights, reproductive rights, and LGBTQ rights groups) for whom OTI’s policy and technical expertise can help better protect the most vulnerable communities.

3



Reshaping an Internet Where All Communities Can Thrive

This work would explore in an open-minded, empirically rigorous way what it would take to advance policies that promote online safety from rights-respecting and social-emotional perspectives. We would connect empirical research from subject matter experts to the policy world to identify the right interventions for vulnerable populations, including children, women, and immigrants. This work will build on our research on age verification and rights-respecting approaches to digital identity as well as on empirical analysis we have begun on youth wellbeing online.

4



Internet Infrastructure Governance Matters, Too

OTI will articulate a coherent vision for governing the internet’s infrastructure layers as well as with its application and social layers. We can’t build the future internet we want by focusing solely on the applications and social interactions at the very top of the stack. We need to look at the whole picture—including players like ISPs, content delivery networks, DDOS service providers, and more—and identify levers for reform via technical standards, laws and regulations, and market forces.

5



Seamless, High-Quality Connectivity for the Future

In order to remain globally competitive and deliver the benefits of digital technologies to communities all across the nation, the United States needs an ambitious vision for connectivity and a practical plan for action. OTI will identify gaps in understanding and action that must be addressed to improve Americans’ access to and use of high-quality, ubiquitous, and affordable broadband internet.

By centering technology around the needs and rights of people and communities—through digital equity, principles-based governance, and innovation that serves the public interest—OTI works toward a world where everyone can access and share the benefits of open and secure technologies.

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newamerica.org/oti/subscribe

OUR SUPPORTERS

Thank you to everyone who has supported OTI and its programs and projects over the years!

Amazon	Luminate Group
Aphorism Foundation	Luminate Foundation, Inc.
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Code for America	Open Society Policy Center
Comcast	Open Technology Fund
Consumers Union	Organization for Security and Co-Operation in Europe
Corporate Human Rights Benchmark Ltd.	Partnership on AI
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Dropbox	Radio Free Asia
EarthLink	Robert Wood Johnson Foundation
Emerson Collective	Samir Kassir Foundation
Eric and Wendy Schmidt	Silicon Valley Community Foundation
European Union	Simmons University
Everyone On	Starry, Inc.
Facebook	Swiss Federal Department of Foreign Affairs
Fidelity Investments	T-Mobile
Ford Foundation	Tides Foundation
Global Partners Digital	Twitter
Google	Uber
Harvard University	U.S. Department of State
Havas Events	U.S. Agency for International Development
Internet Society	Voqal
Internews	Voqal Chicago
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Ligado Networks	

OUR PEOPLE

Our thanks to every staffer, fellow, and intern who has been a part of OTI over the last 15 years. OTI exists today because of the passion, curiosity, drive, and intellectual generosity of all of you.

Austin Adams • Rachel Adler • Albert Ahn • Steph Alarcon • Ryann Alonso • Gus Andrews • Carissa Anderson • Maria Angel • Quinn Anex-Ries • Jasmine Arooni • K.J. Bagchi • Matthew Baker • Jonathan Baldwin • Christine Bannan • Kevin Bankston • Gem Barrett • Andrés Bascumbe • Elana Berkowitz • Alissa Black • Margerite Blase • Andrew Bolden • Amanda Borquaye • Summer Boucher-Robinson • Griffin Boyce • Josh Breitbart • Amy Brouillette • Sharon Bradford Franklin • Cathy Bryan • Georgia Bullen • Rachel Burstein • Greta Byrum • Michael Calabrese • Kistine Carolan • Kayshin Chan • Becky Chao • Harram Chaudry • Wesley Chen • Hailey Choi • Dorothy Chou • Lilian Coral • Alan Davidson • Pronoma Debnath • Jessica Dheere • Jess Dine • Meag Doherty • Meaghan Donahue • Bryan Dosono • Leila Doty • Brian Duggan • Utieyin Etchie • Kinga Farkas • Maggie Farry • Karl Fogel • Michelle Forest • Sarah Forland • Taliesin Gabriel • Raj Gambhir • Seeta Peña Gangadharan • Ryan Gerety • Thomas Gideon • April Glaser • Tom Glasier • Natalie Green • Jeremy Greenberg • Robyn Greene • Andy Gunn • Lisa Gutermuth • Andrea Hackl • Will Hawkins • Brynne Henn • Trey Herr • Darby Hickey • Emily Hong • Keerthana Hogirala • Sergei Hovyadinov • Sarabrynn Hudgins • Brooke Hunter • Hibah Hussein • Ciprian Iancu • Matt Ishimaru • Grady Johnson • Jo Johnson • Lisa Johnson • Evar Jones • Barakat Jooda • Chhaya Kapadia • Dragana Kaurin • Danielle Kehl • Lorelei Kelly • Aleena Khan • Gene Kimmelman • Josh King • Nathan Kinkade • Aden Klein • Kate Krauss • Tiffany Ku • Anu Kumar • Priya Kumar • Michael Lahanas • Kendall Lake • Jake Laperruque • Fernanda Lavalle • Ben Lennett • Chieh-yu Li • Hae-in Lin • Tim Libert • Mia Little • Mark Lloyd • James Losey • Patrick Lucey • Rebecca MacKinnon • Andrew Manley • Alvaro Marañon • Matt Marcus • Nathalie Marechal • Tim Maurer • Aurea Martinez • Alexandra Mays • Laurenellen McCann • Jordan McCarthy • Lawrence McDonald • Elinor McNamee • Candice Mendez • Dan Meredith • Sascha Meinrath • Nat Meysenburg • Travis Moore • David Morar • Rob Morgus • Sarah Morris • Ryan Morrison • Laura Moy • Jamar Myers-Montgomery • Amir Nasr • Coral Negrón • Kitior Ngu • Hoa Nguyen • Oana Niculaescu • Bincy Ninan-Moses • Eric Null • Sandy Ordoñez • Katherine Ortiz • Raza Panjwani • Eli Pariser • Claire Park • Negin Parsee • Irving Perez • Aditi Peyush • Lukas Pietrzak • Enrique Piracés • Michael Pizzi • David Post • Revati Prasad • Lin Rahman • Aliya Rahman • Laura Reed • Andrew Reynolds • Preston Rhea • Chris Ritzo • Zak Rogoff • Irene Ros • Kelly Ross • Carolina Rossini • Nick Russo • Hollie Russon-Gilman • Chris Ryder • Chris Sadler • Comfort Sampong • Tatev Sargsyan • Lauren Sarkesian • Hannah Sassaman • Sydney Saubestre • Ross Schulman • Ben Scott • Emma Semaan • Kashov Sharma • Eleanor Siatta • Martin Sigalow • Spandi Singh • Alyssa Smith • Morgan Smothers • Chris Soghoian • Erika Solis • Stephen Soltesz • Itir Sonuparlak • Paul St. Clair • Josh Stager • Dan Staples • Matt Steinberg • Isabelle Styslinger • Emily Tavenner • Loris Taylor • Nick Thieme • Brittany Thomas • Prem Trivedi • Tanyia Troutman • Seamus Tuohy • Maurice Turner • Ilana Ullman • James Vasile • Ashwini Velchamy • Sean Vitka • Cherie Vu • Maya Wagoner • Katie Watson • Andi Wilson Thompson • Todd Wolfson • Liz Woolery • Tiffanie Yakum • Joel Yong • Alison Yost • Anthony Youngblood • Jie Zhang

