What is the role of technology and data expertise in supporting worker advocacy movements?

Hostile Ecologies and Barriers to Community-Led and Worker-Driven Technology Design

This project explores how the contemporary technology innovation ecology is hostile to worker-centered and community-driven design. These hostilities are important to understand if we want to intervene in the policy landscape of technology innovation to support viable alternatives to big tech consolidation and more democratic ways of developing and maintaining technology. We describe the challenges faced by transportation workers, community organizers, and allied technology researchers as they work toward building a cooperatively-owned taxi business with a digital dispatching technology.

The centralizing impact of data tools on worker advocacy organizations

This project explores the use of data technologies to manage membership relations within worker advocacy organizations. We explore how contemporary data tools shape the experience of work for staff organizers and the impact of the tools on the centralization of knowledge, expertise, and strategic decision-making within worker advocacy organizations. We approach these questions through qualitative research into the design, procurement, use, and maintenance of these membership tools through interviews with worker advocates, data coordinators and software designers, along with a historical investigation of the membership management strategies used in the past. Our goal is to create a set of best practices for worker organizations to manage their data and support member-driven decision-making.