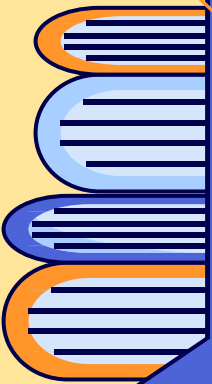
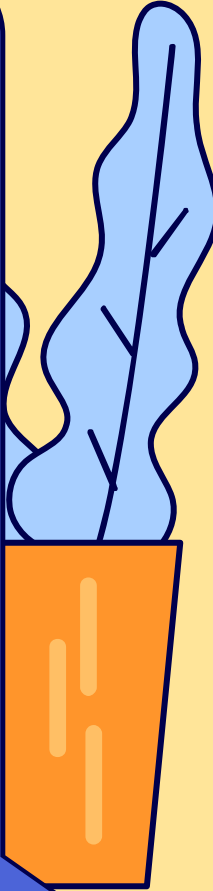


# Bias & Exclusivity in the Digital Humanities

Emily Lopez, Graham Galloway, Hannah  
Shlesinger

Digital Humanities 101 | Dr. Brooks Jessup | June 2021





# Presentation Overview

**01**

**Historical Context of  
Computing Systems**

Hannah

**02**

**Grassroots movements  
& Current Discourse**

Emily

**03**

**Maps, Maps, Maps!  
How Bias Impacts GIS**

Graham

**04**

**Conclusions**

Graham

# “Why Are Digital Humanities So White? Or Thinking the Histories of Race and Computation”

1960's:

- UNIX, an early operating system, developed in Bell Labs
- Civil Rights Movement



Dr Tara McPherson

Source: USC Cinematic Arts

## Lenticular Lens 3D Postcard



partitions and divides,  
**privileging fragmentation.**

Source: 4Over4

## Stereoscope



Merges two images into an  
**imagined whole**

Source: UNC Library

# Modular Thinking

## In UNIX:

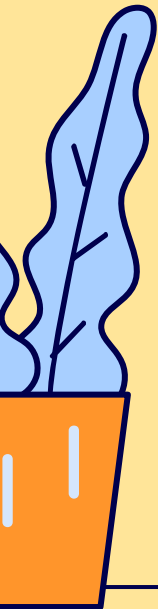
- The 'pipeline'
- The kernel is hidden behind the shell

## In 1960s & 1970's politics:

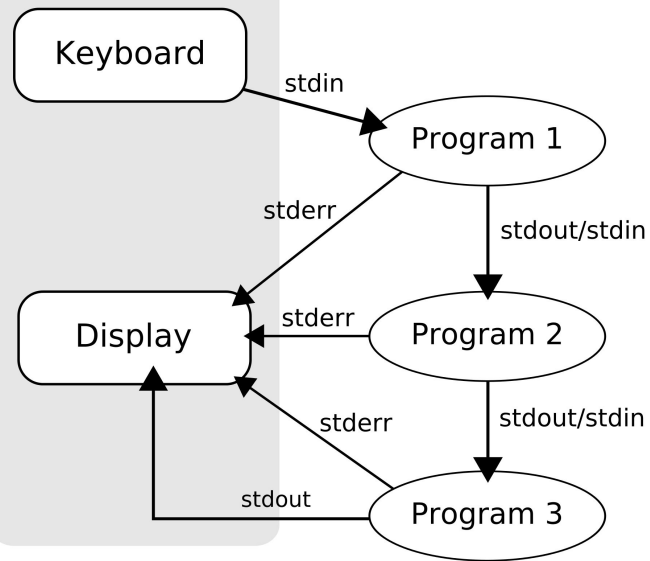
- Identity politics
- The emergence of covert racism
- rhetoric of color blindness

## In The University:

- New Criticism
- Specialization



## Text terminal



Source: [Wikipedia](#)



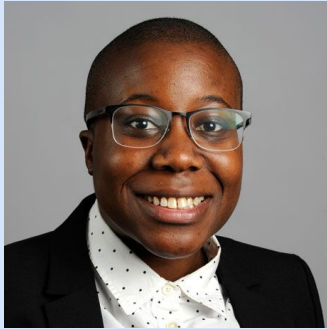
## **“So if we are always already complicit with the machine, what are we to do?”**

- We must historicize and politicize code studies.
- Our investigations must incorporate race from the outset
- We must understand and theorize the deep imbrications of race and digital technology even when our objects of analysis (say UNIX or search engines) seem not to be about race at all.”

# Grassroot Movements and Current Discourse on Bias & Exclusivity in the Digital Humanities



**“All the Digital Humanists  
Are White, All the Nerds Are  
Men, but Some of Us Are  
Brave”**



**Moya Bailey**  
Assistant Professor at  
Northeastern University

<https://cssh.northeastern.edu/faculty/moya-bailey/>


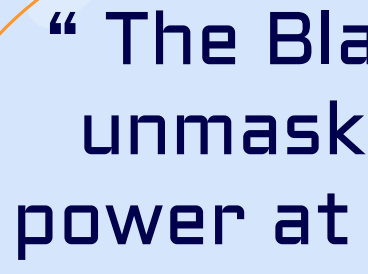
**“Making a Case for the  
Black Digital Humanities”**



**Kim Gallon**  
Associate Professor at  
Purdue University

<https://cla.purdue.edu/directory/profiles/kim-gallon.html>





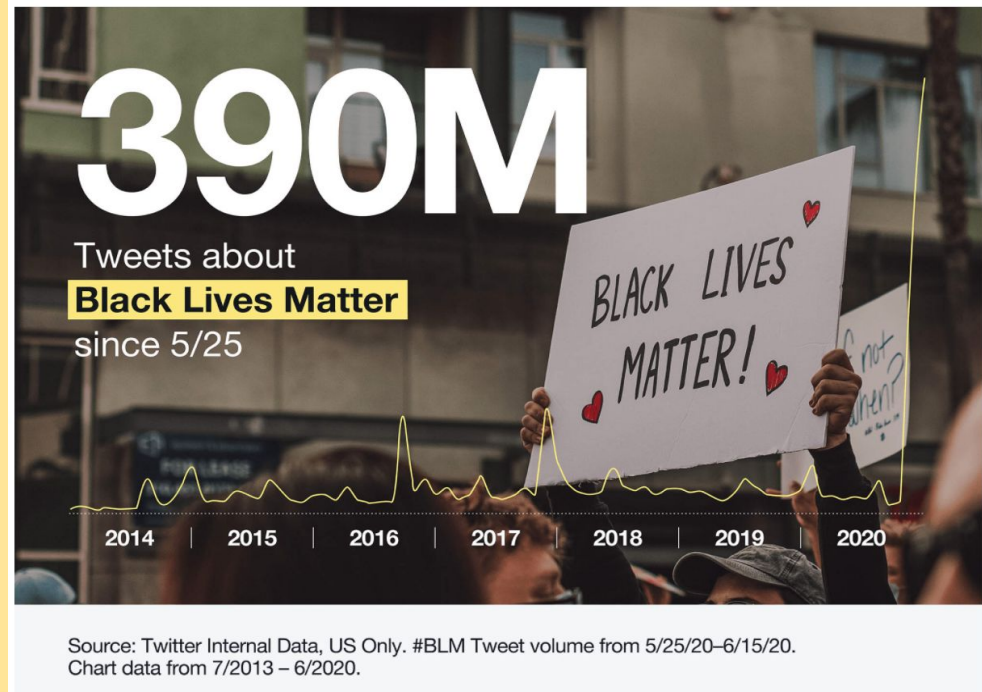
“ The Black digital humanities helps  
unmask the racialized systems of  
power at work in how we understand  
the digital humanities as a field and  
use its associated techniques.”

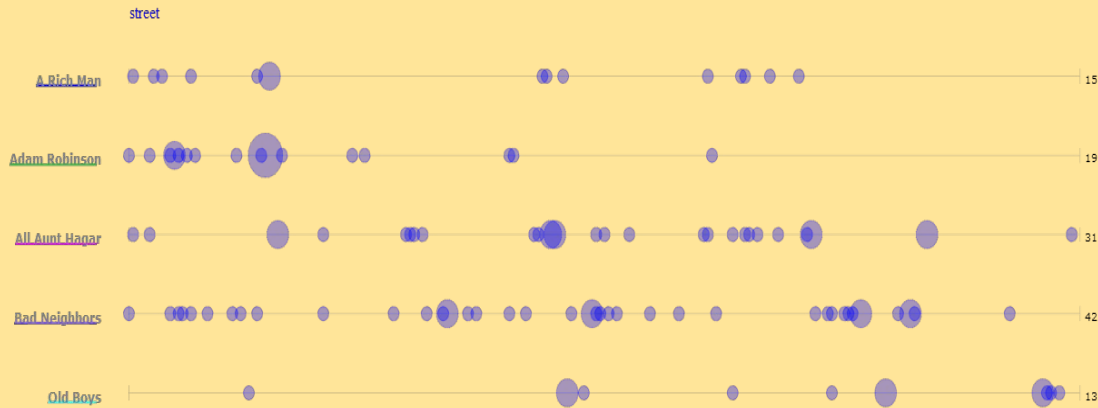
- Kim Gallon



## Projects & Technologies of Recovery in the Black Digital Humanities

- Recover alternate constructions of humanity that have been historically excluded
- It's also the recovery/restoring of black authors' and people's humanity
- Operate as the shared basis for black academic and nonacademic digital work.





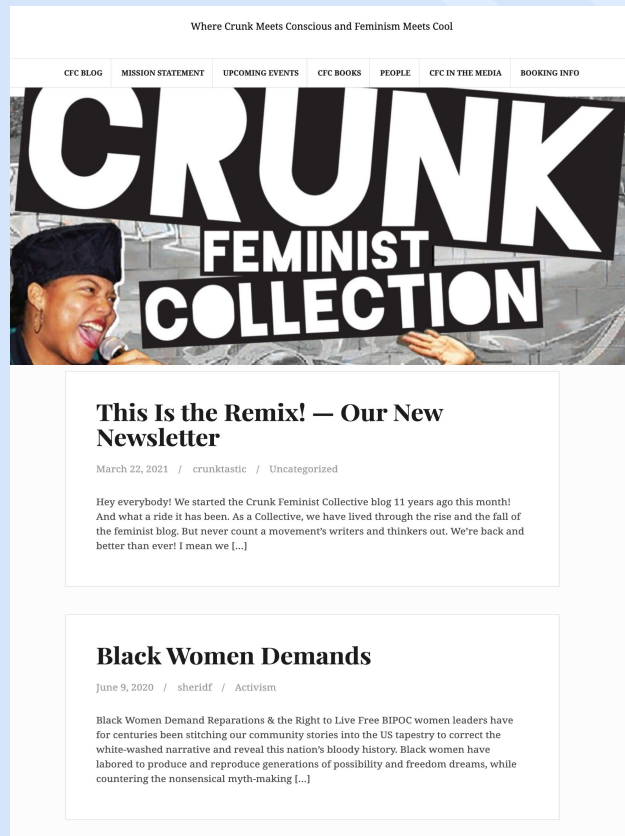
By Kenton Rambsy  
<https://www.culturalfront.org/2014/01/edward-p-jones-and-literary-geo-tagging.html>

Digital recovery projects that are either led by or heavily invoke black scholars are particularly impactful in how they expand what we understand the digital humanities to be



# “What counts as a digital humanities project?”

- By centering the lives of women, people of color and disabled folks, the developments/conversations in the digital humanities may shift
- Increased recognition of intersectional projects in the digital humanities is needed



“There is an elasticity to digital humanities that makes this a solvable problem, and people are already working through it.”

- Moya Bailey



Image from <https://www.blackgirlscode.com/>



## ABOUT #TRANSFORMDH

*#transformDH is an academic guerrilla movement seeking to (re)define capital-letter Digital Humanities as a force for transformative scholarship by collecting, sharing, and highlighting projects that push at its boundaries and work for social justice, accessibility, and inclusion." (#transformDH Tumblr)*

#transformDH began at the American Studies Association's annual conference in 2011. While we have a collective of core members, we aim to create a distributed network of scholars and creators inside and outside academia. If the hashtag is meaningful and useful to you, we consider you one of us.

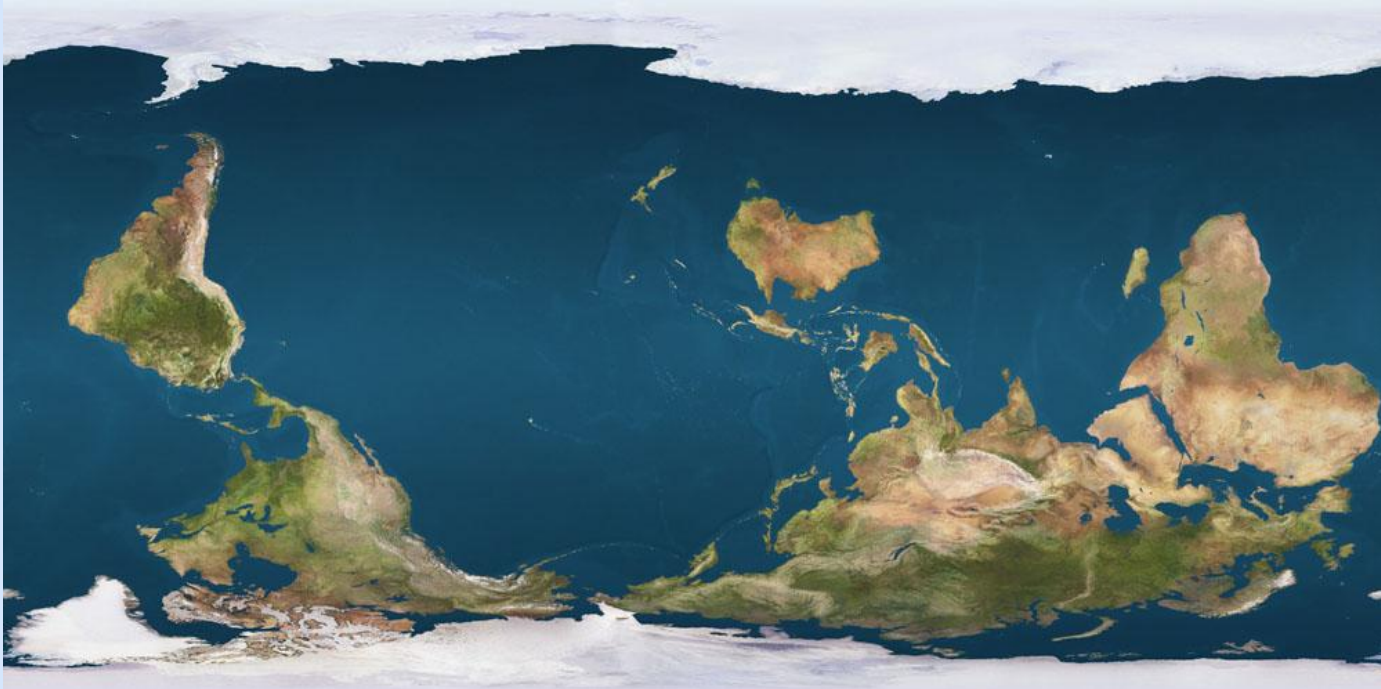
<https://transformdh.org/about-transformdh/>



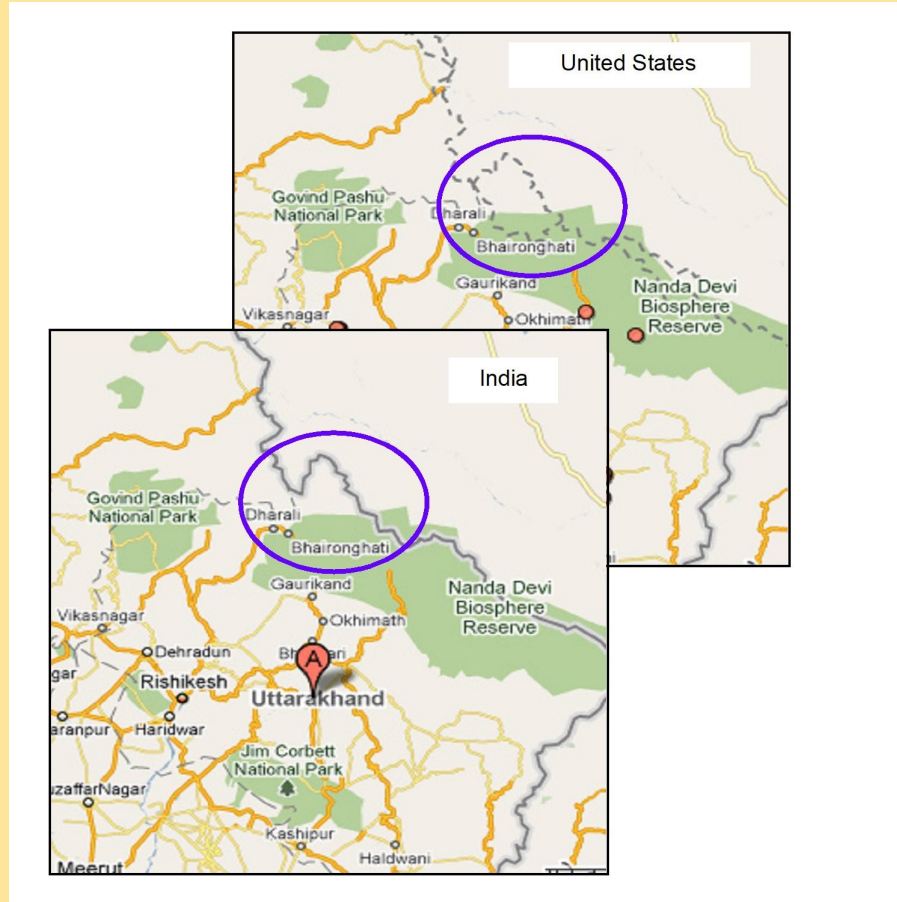
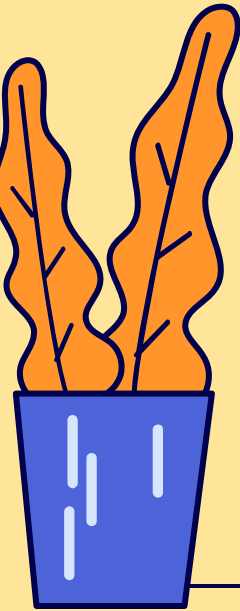
# Maps as a Tool For Social Change

From the reading by Denise Pacheco and Veronica Nelly Velez

# What's wrong with this map?



Source: Wikimedia Commons

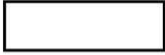


Source: Google Maps


- These two maps show the same area, but very different information
- Google maps shows different borders depending on in which country you're using it
- India is using Google maps to assert their claim over the disputed territory of Kashmir



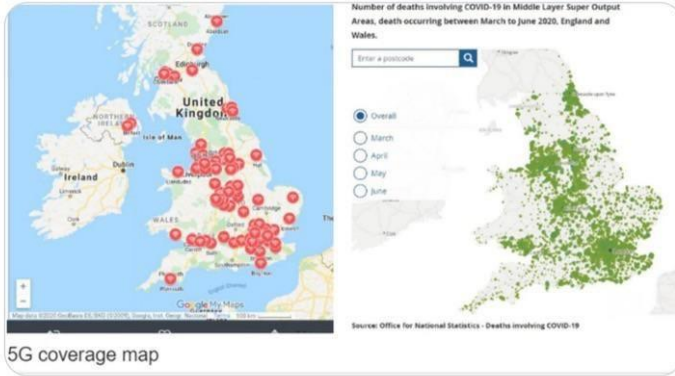




...

Replying to  and 20 others

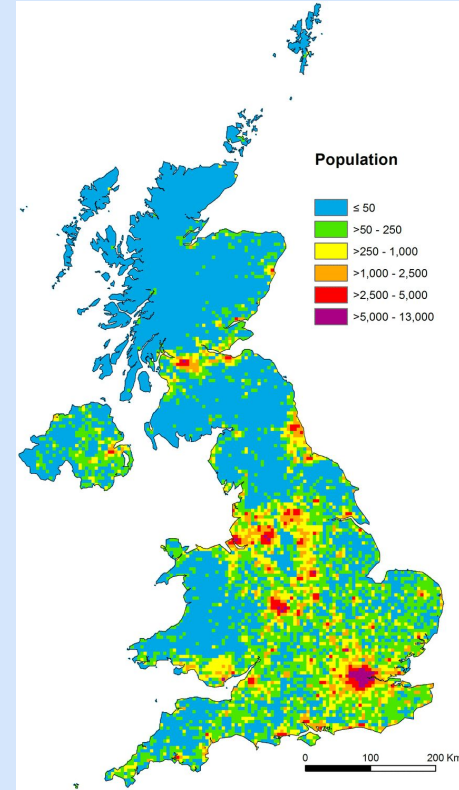
There is no INFECTION. There is a correlation of #5G roll out & COVID19 deaths.



1:30 PM · Dec 9, 2020 · Twitter Web App

13 Retweets 5 Quote Tweets 17 Likes

Source: Twitter



Source: researchgate.net

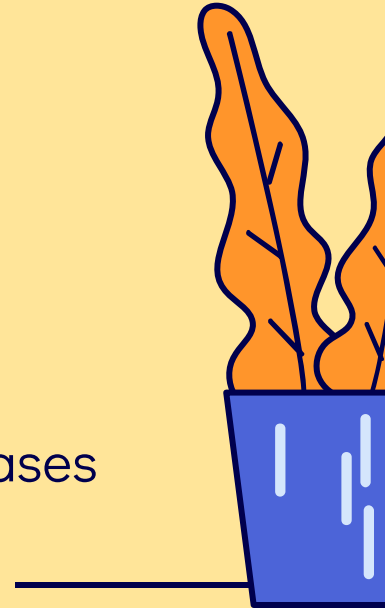
# I know what maps are, but what about GIS?

Short answer: A map featuring some kind of data.

Slightly longer: GIS, short for “Geographic Information System”, is a data visualization method that connects descriptive information and data to location.

Just about every map we see uses some form of GIS.

As with every form of data visualization, creation and interpretation of GIS involves conscious choices from the researcher and reflects aspects of their worldview and biases



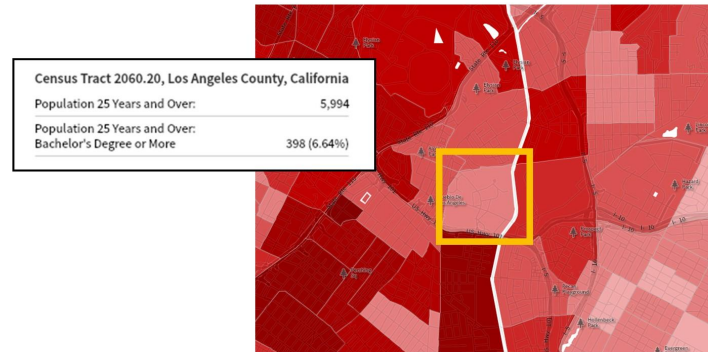
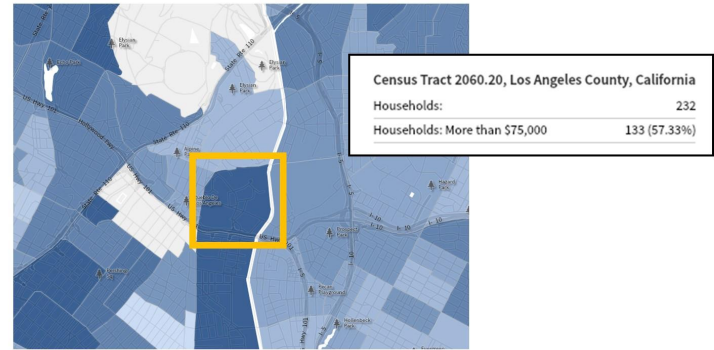
What story does this map tell us?

This map shows census data from the area including Twin Towers Correctional Facility and the Men's Central Jail in Los Angeles County.

The map above shows percentage of "high income households"

The map below shows education level

Normally, these two categories show high correlation, but why not here?



Source: [open.lib.umn.edu](http://open.lib.umn.edu)

# Pacheco and Velez



Veronica Nelly Velez  
Source: CalGIS 2018



Denise Pacheco  
Source: Daily Bruin

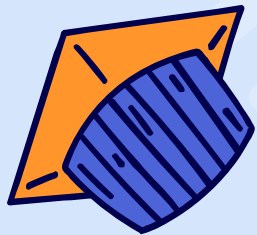
- In “Maps, Mapmaking, and Critical Pedagogy: Exploring GIS and Maps as a Teaching Tool for Social Change,” UCLA researchers Denise Pacheco and Veronica Nelly Velez talk about how GIS is involved in education
- How would public school district maps be different if students, teachers, and parents contributed to them?



# GIS and maps are used as tools for change

- Maps and GIS influence public opinion and policy decisions
- Mapmaking and GIS technology gives the mapmaker power to present their narrative in a clear, concise, and professional looking manner
- By teaching children from underprivileged and underrepresented backgrounds how to use GIS technology at an early age, you can empower them
- They can tell their own stories through GIS, rather than having someone else use GIS to tell a story about them





There's no  
such thing as a  
neutral tool or  
researcher



# THANKS!

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by **Slidesgo**, including icons by **Flaticon**, infographics & images by **Freepik**

