Jackson Maxfield Brown

Diversity Statement

I believe the best method for public technology creation is one in which transparency and open collaboration allow for all members of a community to contribute in the process. This can only be effective however, if we first solve the existing, systemic problems in open source technology creation.

Open source technology is historically dominated by a single group: wealthy individuals, typically white men, who have the financial stability and resources to create these technologies and conduct this work.

I understand that I am incredibly privileged simply based off of the color of my skin, my biological sex, my socio-economic status, and more, and that I have had opportunities that others simply have not been given or intentionally excluded from. Lack of diversity, equity, and inclusion in technology and research are structural problems that I want to help address in my work.

To create technologies that best serve the public, the teams assembled to create public interest technologies must first be representative of the communities in which they serve. Researchers cannot study or create in a vacuum, and we must encourage and support more diversity and inclusion not only in the development of civic technology, but prior to its development, in the open source technology and research process.

In my professional roles, I have been vocal and continue to advocate for using multiple methods for finding, hiring, and supporting new team members in their own growth and development. In the tools I create, I ask and seek to understand the implications of the technology as it relates to the communities in which the technology is deployed. And in my free time, I spend multiple hours a week educating newcomers to open source technology and attempting to reduce the technical barriers for participation in open source collaboration. I want to understand how to reduce these barriers on a larger scale, but these are systemic problems. For open source to be a tool for improving democracy, we must build coalitions to solve these problems together. We can do better and I am committed to using my time and effort to ensure that we do.