Civic Tech in a Time of Technopessimism | The Atlantic

By Alexis C. Madrigal

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> Pahlka wasn't alone in her initial technological optimism. In Mark Zuckerberg's 2012 [letter](#) describing Facebook's IPO, he said the company's tools for sharing "could lead to more direct empowerment of people, more accountability for officials, and better solutions to some of the biggest problems of our time." For most tech companies, that triumphalism continued all the way through the 2016 election, when revelations about misinformation and foreign meddling forced an industry-wide reckoning with its own power.
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> But it's not as if digital tools and services have become *less* important in the broader world. Nor does the national political situation obviate the needs of people in local communities all across the country. Code for America now has about 75 full-time employees and 22,000 active volunteers, and in the areas where Code for America has dedicated the most resources, there is huge room for improvement.
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> "If you are vulnerable to that cycle of poverty and incarceration, government services are awful to use and they don't work very well," Pahlka said. "It doesn't have to work that way."

Source: [Civic Tech in a Time of Technopessimism – The Atlantic](#)