

# Data should enfranchise people, says the Democrats' head of technology | MIT Technology Review

By Tate Ryan-Mosley

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Nellwyn Thomas cut her chops in campaign technology as the deputy chief of analytics for Hillary Clinton's campaign in 2016. Outside politics, she's had her foot in Big Tech, working on business intelligence and data science for both Etsy and Facebook before becoming chief technology officer of the Democratic National Committee in May 2019.

The Democrats were the first party to bring big data to politics, but they came under serious criticism for a crumbling technology stack that may have contributed to Clinton's 2016 loss. Thomas will be under extreme scrutiny in the coming weeks and in the subsequent election post-mortems.

Attempts to return to parity with Republicans seems to be paying off. On Wednesday, Federal Election Commission filings showed the Biden campaign holding a serious cash advantage on the Trump campaign, which can be attributed in part to improved technology. Thanks to these advances and a new system for sharing information on voters, called the Democratic Data Exchange, Democrats are able to track who has already voted and stop reaching out to those people, saving the Biden campaign lots of money at crunch time.

I spoke to Thomas last week about her strategy, her team, her plans for the future, and what she'll be doing come November 4th.

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