

The Loss Of Public Goods To Big Tech | NOEMA

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July 2, 2020

For decades, the titans of technology have talked about human-centered artificial intelligence and its capacity to inform and improve the future of humanity. If there was ever a moment where the overstated promises of such technologies could be put to the test, it is now.

Much of the COVID-19 crisis response, including the disparate impact of the disease on African Americans and people who have been economically and politically abandoned, shows us the limitations, failures and potential harms of Silicon Valley promises. The consequences have been devastating. The inescapable truth is that the fragility and inequality of our social, political and economic systems have been laid bare.

We cannot automate the tough decisions, the redistributions of power and the everyday behavior it will take to make just societies. We will not compute our way out of these crises to the better future we want.

Tech companies profit off crises of many sorts. When prolonged historical racial injustice sustained by institutionalized racism, police brutality or state-sanctioned violence erupts into popular protests, tech companies and their investors [rush in](#) to capitalize. The tech sector stands poised and [ready](#) to sell its wares to law enforcement around the globe, just as it lines up to sell AI, robotics, predictive analytics, contact tracing and surveillance technologies in response to the COVID-19 crisis.

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