

Resisting GenAI and Big Tech in Higher Education

Resource document for the International Panel Discussion, Nov 25, 2025

Our panelists today

Christoph Becker, PhD is Professor of Information, a recovered computer scientist and a Fellow of the SDG Scholars Academy at the University of Toronto in Canada. Christoph spent time in the IT industry, completed a doctorate in computer science and co-founded the Karlskrona Alliance for sustainability design in computing. He is the author of "Insolvent: How to Reorient Computing for Just Sustainability" published at MIT Press and leads the *Just Sustainability Design* lab at the University of Toronto, which early this year launched the *Save the AI* campaign.

Mary Finley-Brook, PhD is Professor in the Department of Geography, Environment and Sustainability, University of Richmond. She has decades of experience conducting participatory action research and collaborates regularly with community-based organizations and frontline populations to advance climate justice. Finley-Brook lives in Virginia, a data center hotspot, and her research exposes secrecy tactics utilized in buildout, including the use of non-disclosure agreements. She is co-author of the textbook *Climate Crisis, Energy Violence: Mapping Fossil Energy's Enduring Grasp on Our Precarious Future* (Academic Press 2024). [Slidedeck here](#).

Dan McQuillan, PhD is a Senior Lecturer in Critical AI at Goldsmiths, University of London. After a Ph.D in Experimental Particle Physics, Dan worked with people with learning disabilities & mental health issues, created websites with asylum seekers, ran social tech camps in Kyrgyzstan and Sarajevo and worked for Amnesty International and the NHS. He is the author of 'Resisting AI - An Anti-fascist Approach to Artificial Intelligence'. [Slidedeck here](#).

Paul Lachapelle, PhD is Professor in the Department of Political Science at Montana State University-Bozeman, USA. His publications include the edited book, *Addressing Climate Change at the Community Level* (Routledge 2019) and 2024 article in *Climatic Change* titled "Academic capture in the Anthropocene: a framework to assess climate action in higher education." He is one of the founding members of the National Extension Climate Initiative based in the United States and coordinates the Climate Smart Montana network.

Sinéad Sheehan, PhD is a postdoctoral researcher in the School of Psychology, University of Galway, Ireland investigating climate-related mental health and engagement in climate and environmental activism. She is a co-ordinating member of the Climate Justice Universities Union, a member of Scientist Rebellion and actively campaigns against fossil fuel and extractive infrastructures including data centre (over)development.

Jennie Stephens, PhD is Professor of Climate Justice (Ollamh le Ceartas Aeráide) at the National University of Ireland Maynooth and also co-convenor of the Climate Justice Universities Union. She is a feminist climate justice scholar-activist who focuses on revealing, exposing and resisting climate

obstruction by powerful actors, institutions and organisations - and facilitating societal transformation for more just and healthy futures, fossil fuel phaseout, and financial innovations for climate justice and a well being economy. She is author of *Climate Justice and the University: Shaping a Hopeful Future for All* (Hopkins University Press, 2024) and *Diversifying Power: Why We Need Antiracist, Feminist Leadership on Climate and Energy* (Island Press, 2020).

Infrastructure Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that some of us are living as settlers on ancestral Indigenous lands, continuing to benefit from past and ongoing colonial violence. At the same time, in our fossil-fuel driven and energy-intensive consumer economy, we are all participating in different kinds of invisible destruction, toxicity, and harm to frontline communities affected by the uneven effects of pollution, climate change, and resource extraction. Using a company like Zoom and the many other built-in technologies that many of us take for granted are part of these invisible forms of "slow violence." As a group the organizers decided that this conversation needed to take place and we needed to use existing infrastructure, but we acknowledge this and we are actively working to find ways to connect that do not contribute to inequality or climate harm.

Resources and Links

Resistance to generative AI:

American Association of University Professors. (2025, May). [Artificial intelligence and academic professions](#). Report on member experiences and priorities across 200 university campuses.

Bender, E.M. and A. Hanna (2025). The AI con: How to fight Big Tech's hype and create the future we want. Harper. 288 pp. <https://thecon.ai>. Related stream: [Mystery AI Hype Theater 3K](#) - see especially Episode 63 - [Three Years of Ridicule as Praxis](#). More on Alex Hanna at <https://www.esckey.co/ridicule-as-praxis-darling-alex-hanna-ai-hype/>

Climate Justice Universities Union. (2025, Nov). [Statement on AI](#)

Dair Institute. (2024-25). AI-Z. <https://zines.dair-institute.org/ai-z>. Zine on resistance and generative AI.

Denial, C. (2025, Aug). Against Generative AI. Cate Denial's resource list. <https://catherinedenial.org/blog/uncategorized/against-generative-ai/>

Guest, O. (2025). What is critical AI literacy? <https://olivia.science/ai>. Includes useful resources, a substantial bibliography, and links to two Open Letters:

- An open letter from educators who refuse the call to adopt GenAI in education. (2025, July). <https://openletter.earth/an-open-letter-from-educators-who-refuse-the-call-to-adopt-genai-in-education-cb4aee75>
- Open letter: Stop the uncritical adoption of AI technologies in academia. (2025, June). <https://openletter.earth/open-letter-stop-the-uncritical-adoption-of-ai-technologies-in-academia-b65bba1e>

Hernández-Garcia, A., A. Volohkova, E. Williams, D.S. Kabakibo. (2025, Sept). Irresponsible AI: Big Tech's influence on AI research and associated impacts. OpenReview.net. <https://openreview.net/forum?id=QwC3Q1erNe>

Jowsey, T. et al. (2025, Oct). We reject the use of generative artificial intelligence for reflexive qualitative research. https://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=5676462

Kelly, C., K. Bruisch, and C. Leahy. (2025, Sept 4). We are lecturers in Trinity College Dublin. We see it as our responsibility to resist AI. *Irish Times*. <https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/2025/09/04/opinion-we-are-lecturers-in-trinity-college-we-see-it-as-our-responsibility-to-resist-ai/> NB: This is behind a paywall. Use [archive](#) version.

Project Syndicate, [AI is hollowing out Higher Education](#) (Oct 2025) based on Guest et al. (2025, Sept) [Against the Uncritical Adoption of 'AI' Technologies in Academia](#)

Sano-Franchini, J., McIntyre, M. and Fernandes, M. (2025). Refusing GenAI in Writing Studies: A quickstart guide. Includes excellent bibliography. <https://refusinggenai.wordpress.com/>

Save the AI. (2025). <https://savethe.ai/> and <https://mastodon.social/@savetheAI>, Ridicule in practice – and plenty of AI “fun facts”!

WorkersDecide.tech/AI Chaos Prevention Committee. (n.d.) AI Workplace implementation bingo <https://www.workersdecide.tech/resources/2025-09-18-bingo/> Game – print your own cards!

WorkersDecide.tech/AI Chaos Prevention Committee. (n.d.) AI Workers Inquiry Toolkit <https://www.workersdecide.tech/resources/2025-09-19-inquiry/>

Opting out of Big Tech:

This is a very incomplete list but offers some starting points for leaving big tech:

- <https://disconnect.blog/getting-off-us-tech-a-guide/> - I'm in the process of dropping US tech services. Here's how I did it, and options you should consider.
- <https://thenewoil.org/en/> - Beginner Guide to Data Privacy and Cybersecurity: This site is designed to help readers take back control of their data and regain their privacy online.

- <https://www.optoutproject.net/> - Yes, you can live without Big Tech. If data is the new oil, then I'm here to help you go electric. Join the Resistance.
- <https://drive.scientistrebillion.de/>: DRI(VE): The purpose of this website is to support activists with digital tools and resources that respect privacy and that are community-built under FOSS principles. There are two main categories on this site: Tools and Resources.
- https://kokorobot.ca/site/remove_ai.html
- <https://prism-break.org/en/> - Opt out of global data surveillance programs
- Defund Big Tech, Refund Community: Another Tech is Possible
<https://techotherwise.pubpub.org/defund-big-tech>

Some alternatives:

By no means a perfect list, but a starting point that has worked for some of us:

Instead of...	You can use...
Audible	Libro.fm
Chrome	Firefox, Chromium, Tor
Evernote	Obsidian
Gmail	Proton Mail
Google Drive	CryptPad
Google Maps	OpenStreetMap (e.g. Organic Maps)
Google Search	DuckDuckGo, SearXNG
Windows 11	Stay on Windows 10 LTSC: https://www.theregister.com/2025/04/22/windows_10_ltsc/?td=rt-3a or move to Linux: https://endof10.org/
Microsoft Office Suite	LibreOffice
Spotify	Qobuz
Twitter/X	Mastodon, BlueSky
Instagram, Tiktok	Pixelfed, Loop
WhatsApp	Signal
Zoom/Teams, Google Meet	Jitsi (self-hosted), BigBlueButton
mailchimp	listmonk
squarespace	static site

Educational materials:

- Try Science Rebellion's Zotero library for a curated collection of articles, resources and manifestos on the topic of digital sovereignty.
https://www.zotero.org/groups/6038966/sr_drive/library
- Deceptive Patterns to arm employees with indisputable facts about deceptive patterns. Rather than just giving employees the means to point out deceptive patterns to their employers, this website will enable them to explain the specific laws broken and to present the fines that have resulted when other companies have done the same.
<https://www.deceptive.design/>
- The Search Engine Map where you will find all search engines which offer English-language results that the world has to offer, what type of search engine they are and where they get their organic results from. <https://www.searchenginemap.com/>

Organizations:

[Climate Justice Universities Union](#)

Scientist Rebellion ([wiki](#)) — [join here](#)

Links to the recent work of the speakers:

- Christoph Becker
 - Insolvent: How to Reorient Computing for Just Sustainability
<https://mitpress.mit.edu/books/insolvent> Open Access at
<https://direct.mit.edu/books/oa-monograph/5594/InsolventHow-to-Reorient-Computing-for-Just>
 - <https://justsustainabilitydesign.org/>
 - <https://discover.research.utoronto.ca/21004-christoph-becker>
- Dan McQuillan
 - Resisting AI: <https://bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/resisting-ai>
 - https://danmcquillan.org/decomputing_as_resistance.html
 - <https://berlinergazette.de/resisting-the-techno-fascist-takeover-are-we-ready-for-decomputing/>
- Jennie Stephens
 - [Climate Obstruction: A Global Assessment](#), Co-Lead Author of Ch 13 *Oxford University Press*, 2025
 - [Climate Justice and the University: Shaping a Hopeful Future for All](#), Open Access book. *Hopkins University Press*, 2024
 - [Universities, Polycrisis and Redistribution: The Need for Radical Transformation](#), *Review of Regional Research* 2025
 - [On Climate Change, Are Universities Part of the Problem or Part of the Solution](#), *Times Higher Ed.* 2025
 - [Fossil Fuel Industry Influence in Higher Education](#), *WIREs Climate Change*. 2024