

Student: Aubra Anthony

Placement: Center for Democracy & Technology

Program: Hatfield DC Scholars in Public Service

This summer's experience with the DC Summer Scholars Program gave me invaluable insight into the world of technology policy and dramatically increased my desire to contribute to the field in the future. Through my work at the Center for Democracy & Technology, I experienced first-hand the thrills and the frustrations inherent in the policy making process, and I carved out a clearer picture of what a career in the field entails. I gained an education this summer that would never have been possible without immersing myself in the tech policy culture of D.C.

Over the summer I worked primarily with CDT Senior Staff Technologist Joe Hall on an engaging mix of technical and legal research. My main project at the summer's outset supported a central CDT focus of reforming the Electronic Communications Privacy Act of 1986. As the summer progressed, this project evolved to adapt to unfolding events, as NSA electronic surveillance tactics were made public. The chance timing of current events related to the NSA leaks offered a unique opportunity to witness the competing tensions involved when working to regulate emerging technological capabilities; balancing privacy and security is a precarious struggle in the face of technologies that don't neatly fit into any existing regulatory scheme. I also contributed to projects on international net neutrality research and mobile app regulation, giving me a solid appreciation for the far reach of tech policy.

Throughout the summer I got to attend both Senate and House committee hearings, ranging from spectrum issues (Commerce) to oversight of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Court (Judiciary). In June I attended the Computers, Freedom & Privacy conference at the Newseum – quite possibly the first conference I've ever left feeling more energized *after* days of talks than before. In July, I witnessed CDT's Vice President Jim Dempsey represent the presidential Privacy and Civil Liberties Oversight Board at a public workshop on the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act and NSA surveillance. I saw the democratic process unfolding firsthand, and I learned the validity of truly weighing the often-competing positions of different stakeholders.

Thanks to all of the panels, workshops and social events in town this summer, I also got the chance to connect with several long-admired tech policy 'greats'. I met FTC Commissioner Julie Brill at the Microsoft-sponsored "Privacy in a Digital World" forum at the Washington Post, and I was also fortunate enough to share a coffee with the person who first inspired me to pursue the DC Summer Scholars program, Paul Ohm, before he finished his appointment at the FTC. Attending Tech Policy Happy Hours, organized by Ashkan Soltani, gave me the opportunity to network with people from various journals, firms, and U.S. agencies, establishing valuable ties that I hope to cultivate in the future.

The people I had the great pleasure of working with at CDT were phenomenal resources across the board, and they made me feel welcome and valued – something I was absolutely not anticipating. The environment at CDT allowed me to ask questions and advance in my understanding of the issues to the point where I felt I was actively contributing work that was valuable to the broader CDT cause. In addition to my truly amazing co-workers at CDT, I met several inspiring figures throughout the summer who provided an "insider's" perspective by sharing their impressive professional stories at the

Monday night WBK seminars. Gene Kimmelman's Thursday-evening advocacy sessions served as a weekly highlight, giving those of us involved in public interest work the chance to step outside of daily deadlines and focus on the bigger picture, examining motivations and strategies. This created an opportunity that was only possible to experience with Gene's incredible trove of knowledge and insight, and from the vantage point of D.C.

Having a front and center seat – sometimes literally, at panels, workshops, and conferences – gave me a perspective that I never could have hoped for had I stayed in Colorado and observed from afar. This was a truly invaluable experience, and I'm thrilled and grateful to have had the opportunity.