

Artificial Intelligence: A Survey for Policymakers

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January 31, 2023 - Lecture 3

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One of the main tasks of this course is to start you on the path of creating in some detail *your vision of the future*.

To what extent history does or does not repeat itself is a moot question. But it is one of the few guides you have, hence history will often play a large role in my discussions — I am trying to provide you with some perspective as a possible guide to create your vision of the future.

In forming your plan for the future you need to distinguish three different questions:

What is possible?

What is likely to happen?

What is desirable to have happen?

In a sense the first is science — what is possible. The second is engineering — what are the human factors which choose the one future that does happen from the ensemble of all possible futures. The third is ethics, morals, or whatever other word you wish to apply to value judgments. ... Again, you can see why having a vision is what tends to separate the leaders from the followers.

Richard Hamming

Today

- Review of Week 2 reading
- NYC government - context for Week 3 readings
 - Overview of NYC government
 - Algorithms Management and Policy Officer (AMPO)
 - AI Strategy
 - Reflections on NYC government experience

New York City by the numbers

8.8 million

population

39

states with smaller population

13%

of US AI workforce

~1.1 million

students in NYC public schools

~1 million

New Yorkers living with a disability

260,000

CUNY students (Ivy League: 146K)

~\$1.7 trillion

GMP (NYC metro area)

~9%

of US GDP

200 million

emergency meals distributed during first year of pandemic

3.2 million

foreign-born residents (~40%)

~50%

residents who speak a language other than English at home

~25%

not English proficient (1.8M people)

100

languages available for telephonic interpretation (311)

10

“official” (Local Law 30) languages

40%

digitally underconnected New Yorkers

18%

lacking access to both home and mobile broadband (1.5M people)

#1

in number of billionaires (107) among global cities

#1

in income disparity among US cities

44%

of income goes to the top 1%

43%

of income tax paid by the top 1% of residents

~39,000

(general-purpose) governments in the US

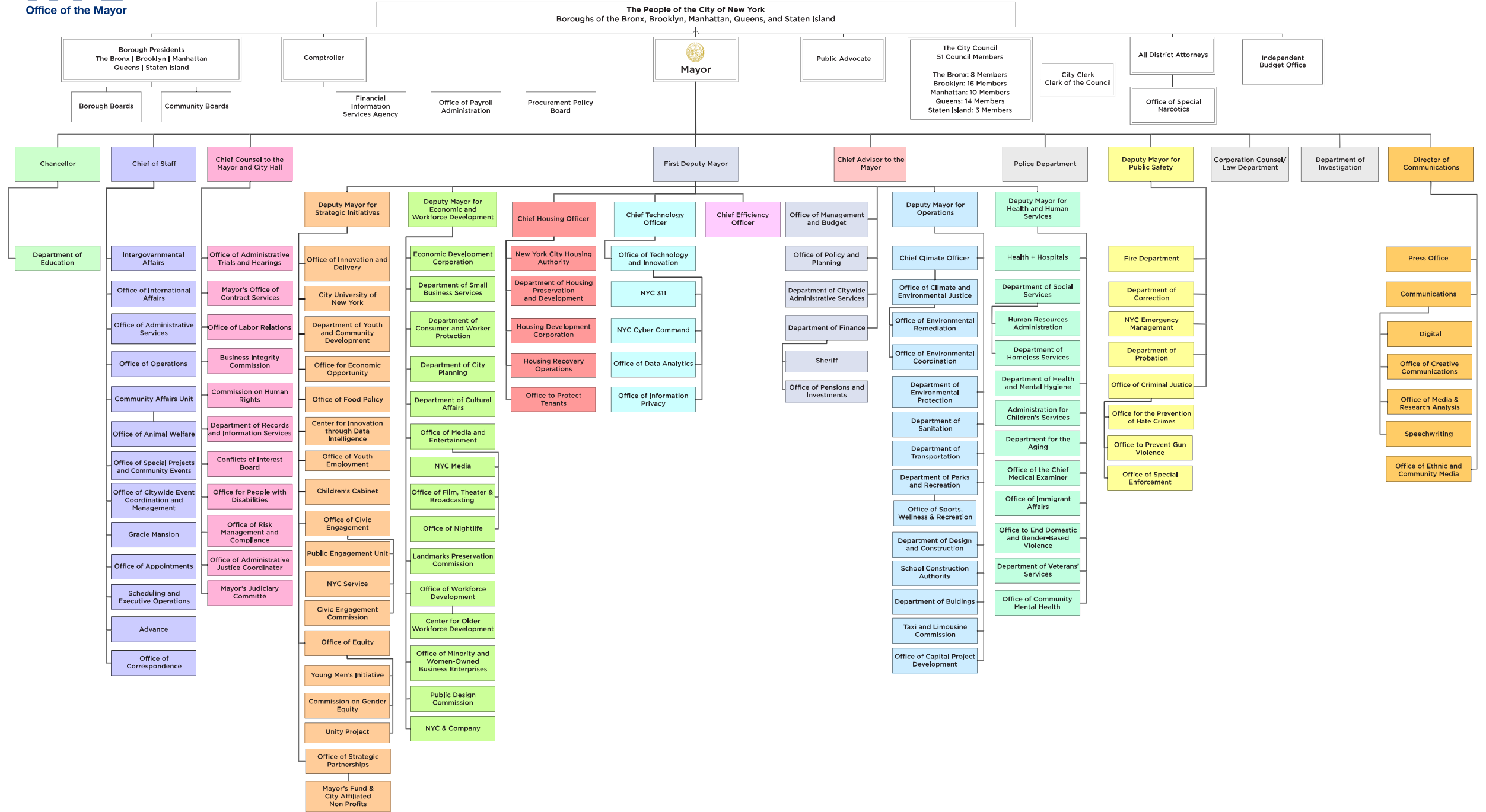
~300,000

NYC government employees

~\$100 billion

NYC budget

Who's in charge of
New York City?



Examples

Trash and sanitation	Department of Sanitation, Parks Department
Airports	Port Authority (1921 interstate compact), US Department of Homeland Security
Power grid	Consolidated Edison (investor-owned public utility)
Subways	Metropolitan Transportation Authority (NYS) (public benefit corporation)
Criminal justice	District Attorneys, NYPD, Courts, CJA, ...
Elections	Board of Elections
Public schools, housing, hospitals, colleges, ...	Department of Education, NYCHA, H+H, CUNY, ...

Tech Challenges

Three Contractors Sentenced to 20 Years in CityTime Corruption Case



Give this article



By Benjamin Weiser

April 28, 2014

MTA

“There are people who do not work here who we are paying,” said Feinberg.

“It’s crazy ... I absolutely believe there are a lot of people wandering around and no one knows who they report to.”

NYC Transit chief Sarah Feinberg says MTA has no organizational chart, vows to cut fat out of agency

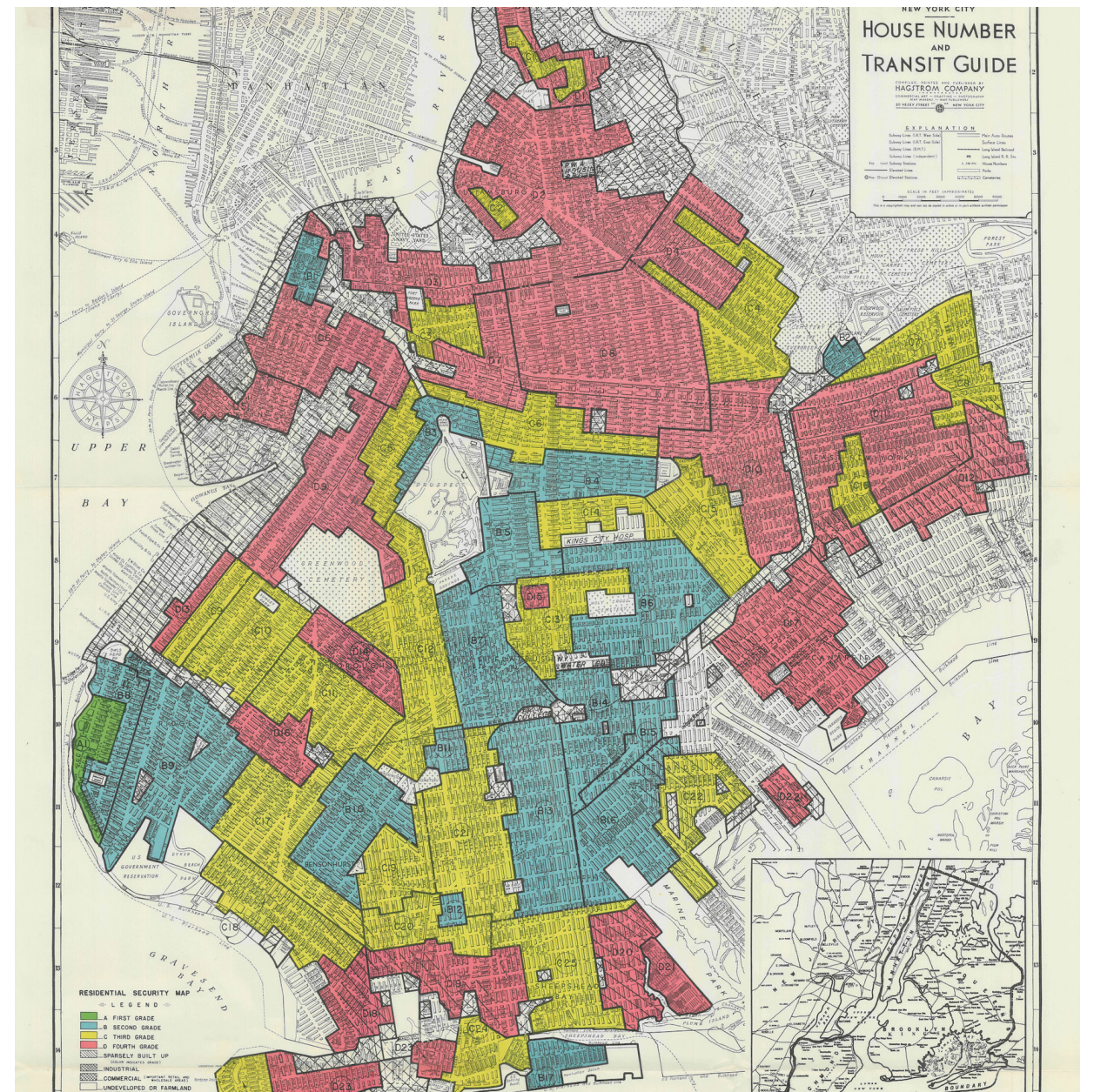
By Clayton Guse
Transit Reporter • Jul 13, 2020 at 12:01 am

MTA officials have run into a unique obstacle in their efforts to cut costs: The agency has no organizational chart detailing what each of its 70,000 employees do, or who they even report to.

Interim NYC Transit president Sarah Feinberg said in an interview with the Daily News Thursday that she was confounded last month when no one was able to provide her with a full breakdown of the workforce she’s led since March.

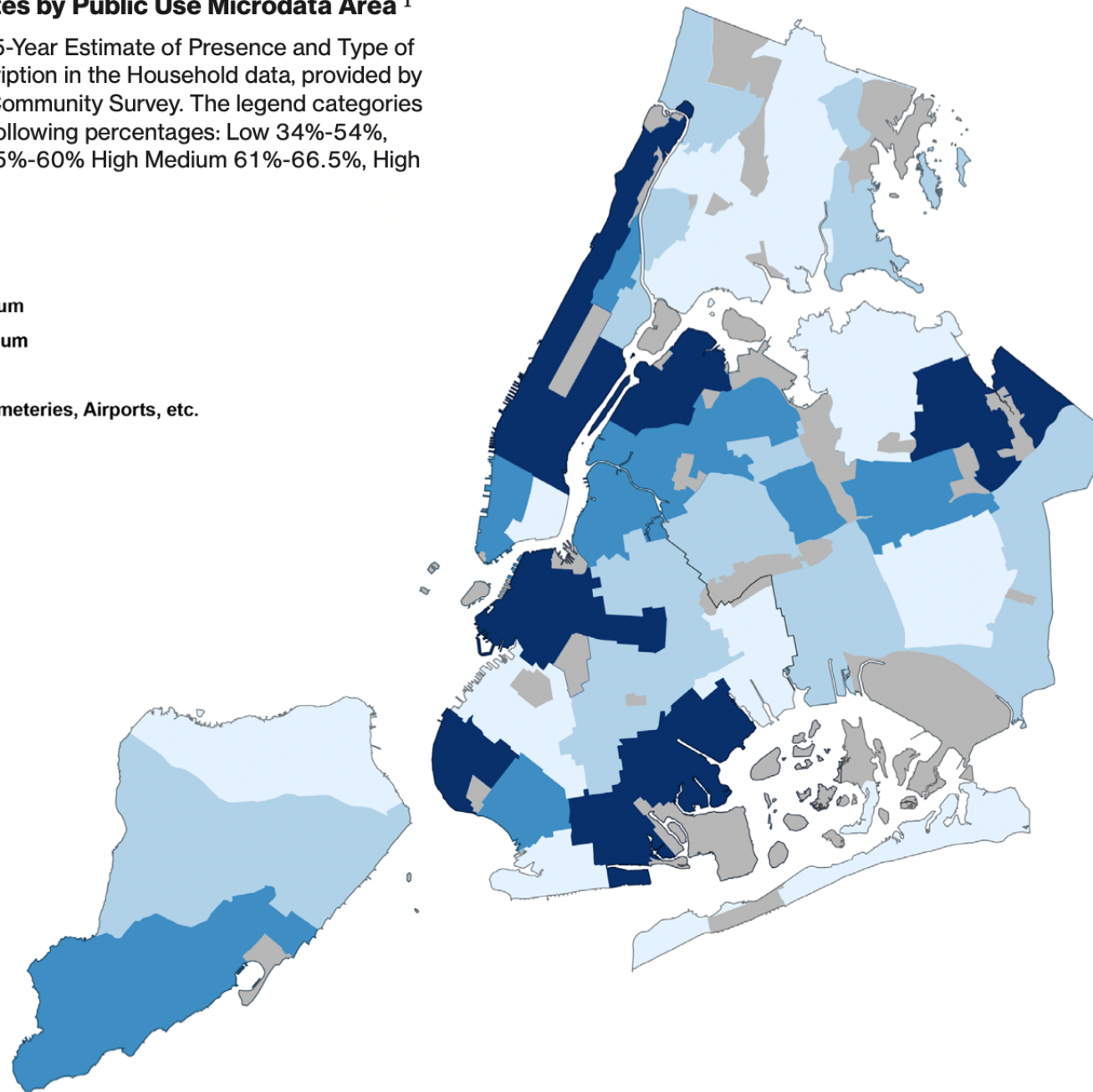
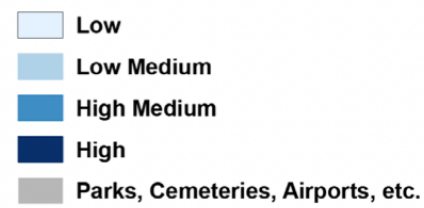
Some managers maintain a chart of their own employees, but there is no unified document for the whole agency, Feinberg said.

Redlining



**Map 1: Combined Home and Mobile Broadband
Adoption Rates by Public Use Microdata Area ¹**

Source: 2017 5-Year Estimate of Presence and Type of Internet Subscription in the Household data, provided by the American Community Survey. The legend categories represent the following percentages: Low 34%-54%, Low Medium 55%-60% High Medium 61%-66.5%, High 67%-81%.





Amazon Doesn't Consider the Race of Its Customers. Should It?

By David Ingold and Spencer Soper
April 21, 2016

Update 1 — Following the publication of this story, Boston Mayor Martin J. Walsh and Massachusetts Senator Ed Markey called upon Amazon to provide Prime Free Same-Day Delivery to Boston's excluded Roxbury neighborhood. On April 26, Amazon agreed to expand the same-day delivery area to include all Boston neighborhoods. On May 4, all Boston ZIP codes were included. [Read More](#)

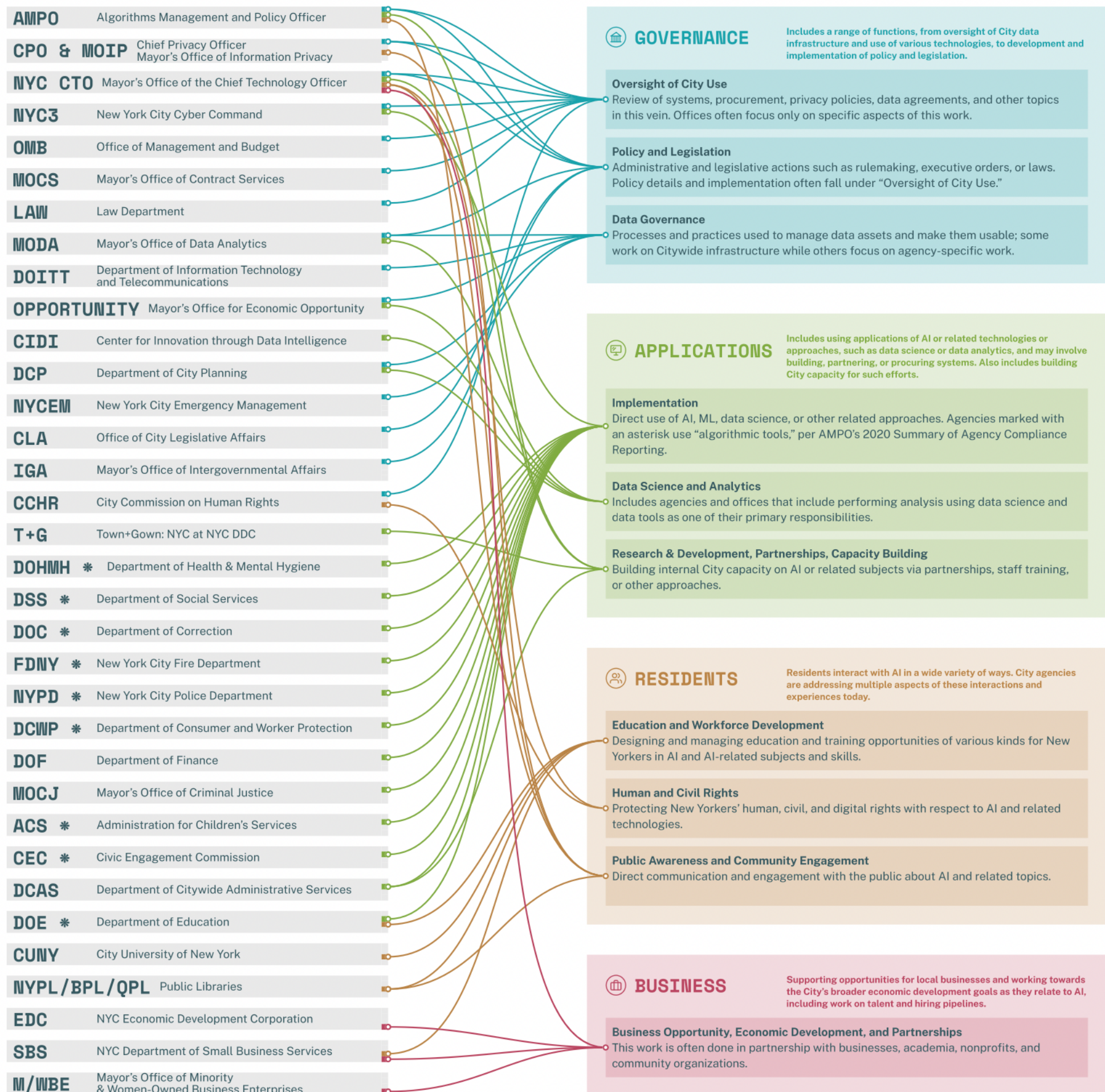
Update 2 — Following criticism from Bronx Borough President Ruben Diaz Jr. and New York State Assemblyman Jeff Dinowitz, Amazon announced on May 1 it will bring same-day delivery to every ZIP code in New York City in the coming weeks. Expanded coverage will include the Bronx, the only borough entirely excluded from the service. [Read More](#)

Update 3 — After demands from U.S. Rep. Bobby Rush, whose district covers excluded neighborhoods in Chicago's South Side, Amazon announced on May 2 it will extend the same-day service area to cover every ZIP code in Chicago in the coming weeks. [Read More](#)

NYC Law Regulating AI Hiring Systems Needs Work

PUBLISHED APRIL 11, 2022

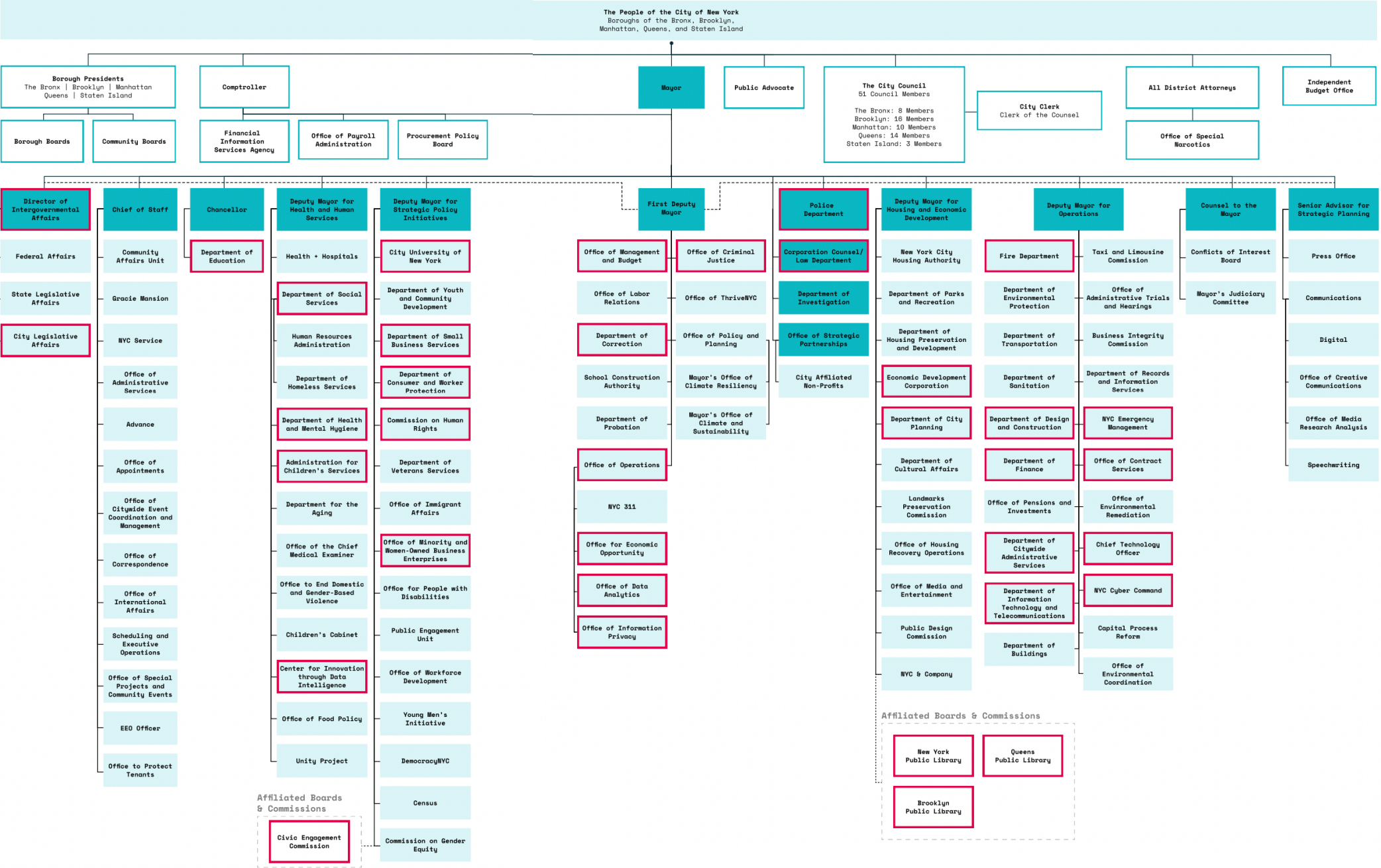
AI in NYC



* agency use described in 2020 AMPO report

RIGHT: Simplified organizational chart of the NYC government. Offices in darker blue report directly to the Mayor. Agencies highlighted in red have some relationship to the topic of AI, as described in the figure on the previous page.

Note that this is not a comprehensive organizational chart of NYC government. For more details, see <https://www1.nyc.gov/office-of-the-mayor/org-chart.page>.



Algorithms Management & Policy Officer

Algorithms Management & Policy Officer

- AI and algorithmic registries and governance
- ADS Task Force
- Executive Order 50
- AMPO
- Adams administration reorganization

NYC AI Strategy

OCTOBER 2021

AI Strategy

The New York City
Artificial Intelligence
Strategy



Mayor's Office of the
Chief Technology Officer

nyc.gov/cto

Table of Contents

Executive Summary	6
Introduction	10
What is Artificial Intelligence?	14
Where is AI used today?	18
Building a Healthy AI Ecosystem for NYC	21
New York City's AI ecosystem today	22
AI in NYC government	32
Findings and Opportunities	36
1. City data infrastructure	38
2. City applications	45
3. City governance	55
4. Partnerships	61
5. Business, education, and the workforce	68
Next Steps	78
Supplement A: NYC AI Primer	82
The AI lifecycle	85
Ethics, governance, and policy	94
Conclusion	107
Further references	108
Supplement B: The Voices that Shaped this Strategy	112

AI Strategy process

- Concept and scoping
 - Structuring
 - Interviews and input
 - Writing and production
 - Review and approval approves
 - Press release and post-release process
-
- Policy vs politics
 - X-factors: budgets, elections

Observations and Takeaways

“AI policy” includes a huge number of important topics, but is too often narrowly interpreted as being about regulation and algorithmic fairness in specific government and corporate systems.

The long tail

The government often plays the role of an actor of last resort, and deals with people in the long tail that the market realistically will not address.

This long tail can include the disabled, ill, food insecure, undocumented, unbanked, non-English-speaking, poor, homeless, and digitally under-connected, in addition to various categories of minority groups.

These categories are often the *primary* groups of concern in government, rather than being excluded from the “addressable market” or otherwise an afterthought.

The United States *contains*
emerging markets,
and not just in rural areas.

Cities vs. other governments

Many issues that people care about are handled at the city level, not the federal level, but the field and tech media focus mostly on (inter)national debates.

“State and local” governments are often lumped together rhetorically, but states often play the role of adversaries to their cities.

Org charts

Org charts are policy
artifacts.

Good organizational design for
AI and AI policy is a huge and
under-explored open area for both
governments and other large institutions.

It is critical to figure out who is technically or de facto in charge of a thing in order to get things done or effect change. In emerging technology areas, this is often unclear.

Sources of challenges

Some key challenges in government technology implementation and policy are partly a result of democracy itself.

Many (needed) regulations are or likely will be bad, in part because they often fail to consider what happens when political valences reverse and market dynamics that policies may create.

The impediments to implementing better governance and oversight of tech and AI are often not ideological, but operational or financial, and work in AI ethics largely ignores this and often makes unimplementable or impractical suggestions.

Many perceived problems with technology implementation and policy are downstream effects of more “mundane” problems in civil service hiring procedures, union rules, the pension system, *etc.*

The skills and interests required to reform these mundane aspects of government are largely different from those represented in the AI, AI policy, or AI advocacy communities.

There has been a phase shift in AI ethics and policy from creating awareness about problems to operationalizing and engineering real improvements. This requires different skills and, in some cases, more willingness to accept incremental advances.

The (correct) recent emphasis on including a wider variety of fields in AI policy conversations has overcorrected — now often there are *no* AI/ML experts “in the room.”

*Communities, voters,
and advocates*

External experts or advocates pushing the government to act often lose credibility with otherwise sympathetic figures due to the form of approach and what can be a glaring lack of knowledge of the actual realities or basics of how government works.

Good regulations are sorely needed in some areas, but regulatory solutionism is also too common, and it is as limited and bankrupt a stance as techno-solutionism.

The lack of will
to confront and navigate inherent
trade-offs in systems and policies is a major
impediment to effecting positive change.

Technology policymaking in government often requires an entrepreneurial approach, since roles and responsibilities are typically not well-defined or codified.

**“The capital has its order,
the village its customs.”**

Japanese proverb