



## Sloan Snags Major Awards in Theater, Film, Television, and YouTube Programs

### \*THEATER:\* Sloan/MTC Broadway Play *Eureka Day* Wins Tony Award



[Eureka Day](#), a Sloan-supported Broadway play by Jonathan Spector that opened at Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC), [won the Tony Award for Best Revival of a Play](#) on June 8. The award was accepted by playwright Spector (at the mic) and MTC artistic director and longtime Sloan partner Lynne Meadows (in pink). *Eureka Day* lead Jessica Hecht was also nominated for *Best Performance by an Actress in a Featured Role in a Play*. *Eureka Day*, which opened on December 16 at the Samuel J. Friedman Theatre, previously won the prestigious Drama Desk Award in the *Outstanding Revival of a Play* category. The hit play takes place at a private elementary school in Berkeley, California where an outbreak of the mumps challenges the Trustees and their liberal policy of inclusion. The story is set one year before the COVID-19 pandemic and touches on

public attitudes towards vaccines. *Eureka Day* received positive reviews in [The New York Times](#), [The Guardian](#), and [TheaterMania](#) among others. The Broadway production of *Eureka Day* is supported by a 2024 production grant to MTC and Sloan played a key role in the final revisions of the play. MTC is one of Sloan's two flagship theater partners.

### \*FILM:\* Sloan Film *Join or Die* Nominated for Two Emmy Awards

[Join or Die](#) by award-winning documentary producer Rebecca Davis and author Pete Davis was nominated for two Emmy Awards in the *Outstanding Writing – Documentary* and *Outstanding Graphic Design – Documentary* categories. The feature-length documentary follows the 50-year story of America's civic unravelling through pioneering Harvard social scientist and *Bowling Alone* author, [Robert Putnam](#), as he explores major trends in community engagement, culture wars and economic inequality. *Join or Die* features Hillary Clinton, Surgeon General Vivek Murthy, and prominent scholars such as Eddie Glaude Jr. The winners of the Documentary Emmy Awards will be announced on June 26. The film is available to stream on Netflix and was supported by a 2020 Sloan grant.





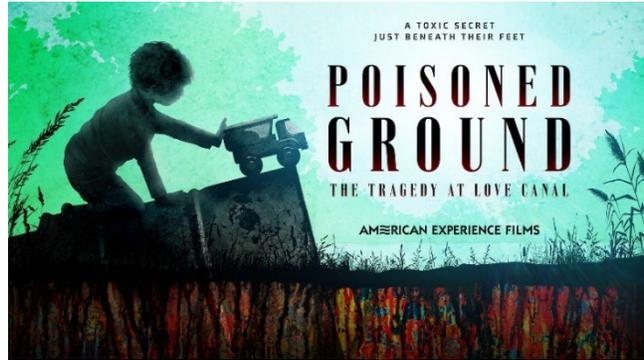
# ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

June 2025

Program Updates from VP and Program Director Doron Weber

## **\*TELEVISION:\*** American Experience's *Poisoned Ground* Nominated for Three Emmy Awards

[Poisoned Ground: The Tragedy at Love Canal](#), a two-hour documentary in the Sloan-supported American Experience series, was nominated for three Emmy Awards in the *Outstanding Crime and Justice Documentary*, *Outstanding Writing – Documentary*, and *Outstanding Direction – Documentary* categories. The film tells the story of the residents of Love Canal, a working-class neighborhood in Niagara Falls, New York, who in the 1970s discover that their town was built on a chemical waste dump leaking toxic substances and causing extensive health issues. Primarily led by housewives-turned-activists, the residents of Love Canal created a grassroots movement that led to the landmark Superfund Bill, which established a program to investigate and clean up sites contaminated with hazardous substances. The film is available to stream on the [American Experience website](#) and [YouTube](#). The winners of the Documentary Emmy Awards will be announced on June 26. *Poisoned Ground* was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.



## **\*YOUTUBE & TIKTOK:\*** *Howtown* Wins Creator Award from International Center for Journalists



[Howtown](#), a Sloan supported YouTube channel hosted by Adam Cole and Joss Fong, received the [2025 ICFJ News Creator Award for Excellence in Independent Video Journalism](#) on April 7. The award “recognizes excellence in the work of independent journalists and news creators who produce high-quality and reliable information.” Launched in May 2024, *Howtown* produces longform science videos that answer the question

“how do we know this?” Sloan supported videos include “The truth about Hot Ones sauces” with 2.5 million views and “Mapping Earth, a billion years ago” with 600K views. With Sloan support, the channel has grown to amass 896K subscribers. *Howtown* is supported through the YouTube Incubation Program in partnership with the Independent Media Initiative, which received a Sloan grant in 2024.

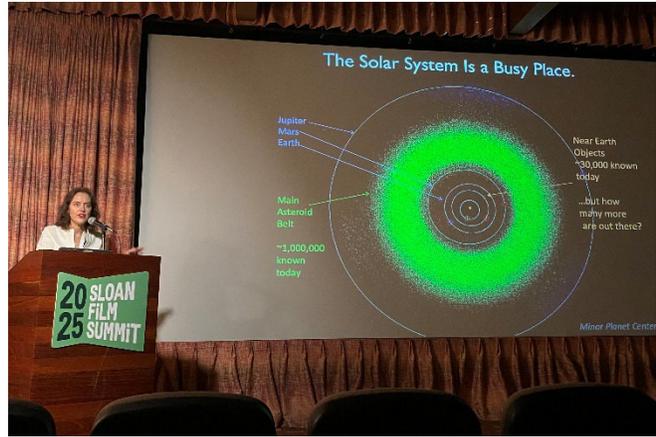


## Other Updates

### FILM

#### Sloan Gathers Award-Winning Filmmakers in Los Angeles to Celebrate Film Program

100 award-winning Sloan filmmakers from the past three years gathered at The Garland Hotel and event space in Los Angeles to celebrate their work at the [2025 Sloan Film Summit](#) from May 9 to May 11. Co-hosted by Sloan partner Film Independent and held only once every three years, the Summit featured three days of screenings, panels, staged readings, project updates, networking opportunities, and community building for Sloan film grantees representing 21 film



program partners. Day one kicked off with a screening of the 2025 Sloan SFFILM Science on Screen Prize winner *Magma* by Cyprien Vial followed by a panel with two seismology and geology experts. The keynote address was from *Don't Look Up* science advisor, UCLA Professor and Principal Investigator of NASA's NEO Surveyor mission to track near-Earth objects Dr. Amy Mainzer, who discussed the science of asteroids, planetary defense, and the challenges of communicating potential cosmic hazards. The weekend closed out with a screening of the 2024 Sloan Sundance Feature Film Prize winner *Love Me* by Sam & Andy Zuchero and post-show panel with a computer science and AI expert.



In addition to Sloan-supported filmmakers, attendees included representatives from Sloan's theater partners as well as grantees from Sloan's brand-new YouTube & TikTok program. The Summit featured panels such as "Reality Augmented: AI, Machine Learning and the Future of Cinematic Expression," "Beyond Screens: How Podcasts and Social Media Are Democratizing Science Storytelling," and "The Consultants' Cut: Scientific Accuracy in Storytelling," which

featured science consultants from hit shows *The Big Bang Theory*, *The Pitt*, *The Resident*, and *Star Trek*. Other highlights included updates from all 100 filmmakers on their award-winning Sloan projects, staged readings of seven Sloan-supported screenplays, screenings of five short films supported by Sloan production grants at partner film schools, and a tour of the Academy Museum. The Summit was supported through a 2024 grant to Film Independent.



Sloan Film Prizes Go to *Twisters* and *Magma* at SFFILM Festival



[Lee Isaac Chung's \*Twisters\*](#) and [Cyprien Vial's \*Magma\*](#) won two prizes recognizing the compelling depiction of science in a narrative feature film at the San Francisco Film Festival on April 20 and 21. *Twisters*, a standalone sequel to the hit 1996 film *Twister*, stars Daisy Edgar-Jones and Glen Powell as a meteorologist

and social media storm chaser who team up to test a theory that would reduce the intensity of deadly tornadoes. Along with a \$20,000 Science in Cinema cash prize, *Twisters* was honored at the Festival with a panel discussion about the role and accuracy of the science in the film with director Chung; Kevin Kelleher, director of Global Systems Laboratory and a consultant for the original 1996 film *Twister* as well as *Twisters*; Tapio Schneider, an environmental science and engineering professor at Caltech Division of Geological and Planetary Sciences; Al Nelson, supervising sound editor and sound designer for *Twisters*; and Florian Witzel, Industrial Light and Magic visual effects supervisor.

*Magma* follows two scientists in Guadeloupe who must balance science with community needs and local politics to determine how to respond to a potential volcanic eruption. The film received a \$5,000 Science on Screen cash prize and was screened at the Festival, followed by a panel discussion featuring director Vial as well as Michael Manga, a professor at UC Berkeley's department of earth and planetary science. SFFILM's Sloan Science in Cinema Initiative at the Festival also included a screening of Cristina Costantini's *Sally*, recipient of the 2025 Sloan Feature Film Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. Both SFFILM awards and related programming are supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.





TELEVISION

***Critical Condition: Health in Black America* Premieres on NOVA**

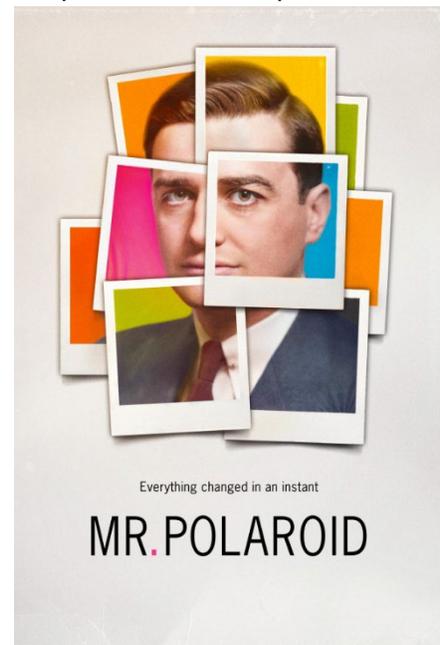


[Critical Condition: Health in Black America](#) by Oscar-nominated filmmaker Stanley Nelson premiered on NOVA on April 30. The two-hour documentary investigates health disparities in the US, such as the disproportionately high rates of elevated blood pressure, diabetes, and heart disease and lower life expectancy among Black Americans in comparison to White Americans. It also debunks pseudoscientific theories about biological

differences between races that still permeate modern medicine and explains the latest research on the impact of experiencing discrimination on the body's genetics and overall health. *Critical Condition* is available to stream on [PBS](#), Hulu and Amazon Prime. It was supported by a 2022 Sloan grant.

***Mr. Polaroid* About Inventor Edwin Land Premieres on American Experience**

[Mr. Polaroid](#), a documentary in the Sloan-supported American Experience series, premiered on PBS on May 19. The film tells the little-known story of Edwin Land, the eccentric and brilliant inventor of the Polaroid camera whose mystique and innovative company culture inspired today's Silicon Valley tech leaders. *Mr. Polaroid* dives into the scientific process that led to the invention of instant photography and the impact it has had on popular culture for over 50 years. The one-hour documentary is available to stream on the American Experience website and YouTube. On May 14, American Experience also hosted a virtual PAST FORWARD conversation discussing Land and his legacy, which featured an extended preview of the film followed by a discussion and audience Q&A with producer Amanda Pollak, science educator and author of *The Alchemy of Us* Dr. Ainissa Ramirez, and New York magazine city editor and author of *Instant: The Story of Polaroid* Christopher Bonanos. This documentary is the first of two produced through a major Sloan production grant to the WGBH Educational Foundation in 2024.



## BOOKS

### National Book Foundation / Sloan Science + Literature Winners Celebrated



In a novel partnership with the National Book Foundation that honors fiction and poetry for the first time, the fourth annual [Sloan Science + Literature Award Ceremony](#) was held at The Cooper Union on March 19. Winning titles included Ed Yong's *An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us* (nonfiction), Ramona Ausubel's *The Last Animal* (fiction), and Claire Wahmanholm's *Meltwater* (poetry). The selected works were chosen by a committee of scientific and literary experts who focused on books that

celebrate excellence and diversity in science writing.

The National Book Foundation received a three-year grant from the Sloan Foundation in 2024 to continue these prizes, after they were established in 2021. The three winners discussed their work in three individual events across the country (see below).

#### POETRY: Claire Wahmanholm: Eco-Poetics and the Modern Apocalypse

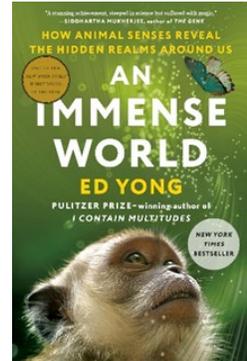
Claire Wahmanholm received the Science + Literature award in the Poetry category for her book *Meltwater*, which dissects the parallels between the vulnerability of parenthood and the natural world. The book has received positive reviews in [Racket Minnesota](#) and [Minnesota Women's Press](#), among others. On March 31, Wahmanholm joined author Donika Kelly for a reading and discussion on eco-poetry as a rallying cry and source of inspiration. The event was presented in partnership with University of California, Riverside as part of their annual Writer's Week.





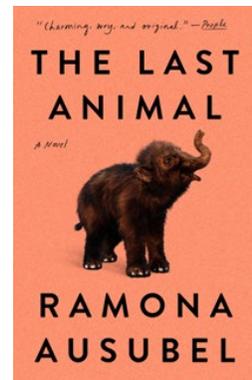
NONFICTION: Ed Yong: Perceiving One Another

*An Immense World: How Animal Senses Reveal the Hidden Realms Around Us* by Ed Yong received the Science + Literature Award in the nonfiction award. The book examines the sensory experiences of birds, bugs, dogs and other animals and how they differ from our own. *An Immense World* was named one of The New York Times' [Best Books of 2022](#) and won the [2023 Andrew Carnegie Medal for Excellence in Nonfiction](#). On April 21, author Ed Yong joined previous Science + Literature Award winner Sabrina Imbler in Oakland, California for a conversation on the importance of science writing and what inspired his award-winning book.

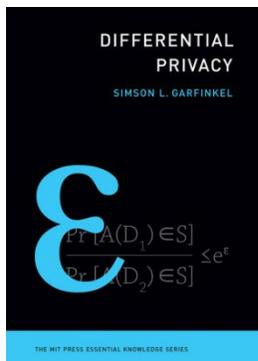


FICTION: Ramona Ausubel: Fighting Extinction

Ramona Ausubel, author of *The Last Animal*, received the Science + Literature Award in the fiction category. *The Last Animal* follows two teen sisters who join their paleontologist mother on a scientific expedition. The book received positive reviews in [NPR](#), [The Washington Post](#), and [Kirkus Reviews](#), among others. Ausubel joined 2025 Science + Literature committee member Dr. Beronda L. Montgomery at Metropolitan Community College in Nebraska on May 13 to discuss science as an inspiration for fiction and the role of women in science.



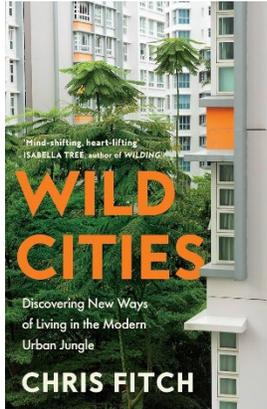
Differential Privacy by Simson L. Garfinkel Published on March 25



Differential Privacy by computer scientist Simson L. Garfinkel was published on March 25. The book provides an accessible introduction to the idea, history, and key applications for differential privacy, a popular approach to protecting personal data. Still considered a controversial technique but recently adopted by Google, Apple, Microsoft, and the US Census Bureau, differential privacy adds carefully calibrated random numbers to confidential data. Garfinkel argues that differential privacy is critical as a privacy protection mechanism. The book is part of The MIT Press Essential Knowledge series and received a Sloan grant in 2023.

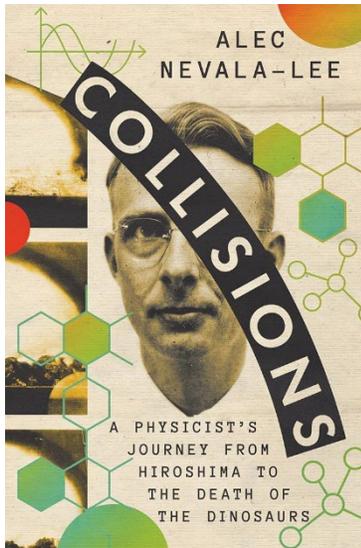


***Wild Cities: Discovering New Ways of Living in the Modern Urban Jungle* by Chris Fitch  
Published on April 10**



[Wild Cities: Discovering New Ways of Living in the Modern Urban Jungle](#) by travel and science writer Chris Fitch was published on April 10. From Tokyo and Flagstaff to Munich and Nairobi, the book explores cities around the world and the cutting-edge technology they employ to preserve nature in urban areas. With two-thirds of humanity living in towns and cities by 2050 and the critical value of nature for our health and wellness, Fitch provides readers with a look into the cities of the future. Excerpts of the book were featured in [The Independent](#), [Geographical Magazine](#), and [The Times](#), among others. *Wild Cities* was supported by a 2022 Sloan grant.

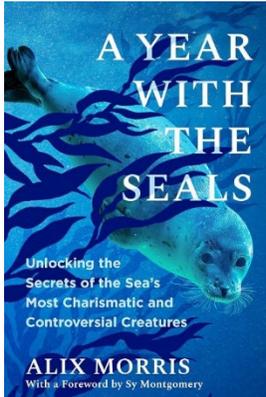
***Collisions: A Physicist's Journey from Hiroshima to the Death of the Dinosaurs* by Alec Nevala-Lee  
Published on June 10**



[Collisions: A Physicist's Journey from Hiroshima to the Death of the Dinosaurs](#) by award-winning biographer Alec Nevala-Lee was published on June 10. The book is the first comprehensive biography of Nobel Prize-winning physicist Luis W. Alvarez, who played a key role in the Manhattan Project and served as the lead scientific observer at the bombing of Hiroshima. It examines his tumultuous personal life as well as his wide range of accomplishments, from his revolutionary discoveries in particle physics with the hydrogen bubble chamber to his controversial theories about the Kennedy assassination and the extinction of dinosaurs. The book was listed as one of The Washington Post's "[30 Books to Read this Summer](#)" and received positive reviews in [Publishers Weekly](#) and [Kirkus Reviews](#). *Collisions* was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

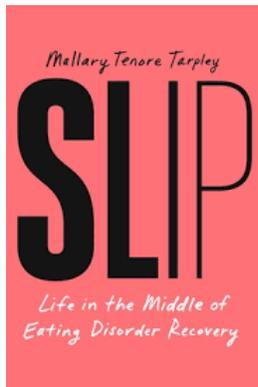


***A Year with the Seals: Unlocking the Secrets of the Sea's Most Charismatic and Controversial Creatures* by Alix Morris to be Published on July 15**



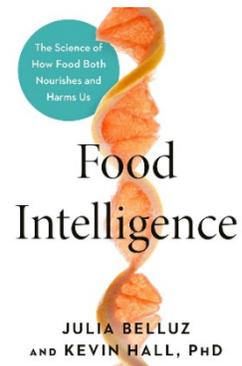
[\*A Year with the Seals: Unlocking the Secrets of the Sea's Most Charismatic and Controversial Creatures\*](#) by environmental journalist Alix Morris will be published on July 15. The book follows Morris as she spends a year with seals to learn more about their intelligence, their relationship with each other, their ecosystems, and the impact of climate change on their population. She also investigates the effects of their return from the brink of extinction on various populations, from local fisherman whose livelihood is diminished by competing seals to tribes who rely on seal-hunting for food, clothing, and medicine. The book has received positive reviews in [Publishers Weekly](#) and [Kirkus Reviews](#) among others. *A Year with the Seals* received a 2021 Sloan grant.

***Slip: Life in the Middle of Eating Disorder Recovery* by Mallery Tenore Tarpley to be Published on August 5**



[\*Slip: Life in the Middle of Eating Disorder Recovery\*](#) by journalist Mallery Tenore Tarpley will be published on August 5. The book weaves Tarpley's own personal narrative and childhood struggle with anorexia with insight from other patients, doctors, and researchers to provide a new framework for understanding eating disorder recovery. Backed by cutting-edge science, Tarpley proposes that there is a “middle place” between sickness and full recovery, where “slips” are accepted as part of the process toward progress. Tarpley's findings were featured in [The New York Times](#) and she has written about this topic in [Teen Vogue](#). *Slip* was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

***Food Intelligence: The Science of How Food Both Nourishes and Harms Us* by Julia Belluz and Kevin Hall to be Published on September 23**



[\*Food Intelligence: The Science of How Food Both Nourishes and Harms Us\*](#) by health and science journalist Julia Belluz and former NIH nutrition and metabolism scientist Dr. Kevin Hall will be published on September 23. The book combats misinformation on diet fads and “superfoods” by explaining how our metabolism works and how the world around us shapes our eating behaviors. Using the latest research on nutrition, *Food Intelligence* reveals how protein, fat, carbohydrates, and vitamins are broken down and impact our bodies and examines how current food systems have led to the rise in diseases such as obesity and type 2 diabetes. The book was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

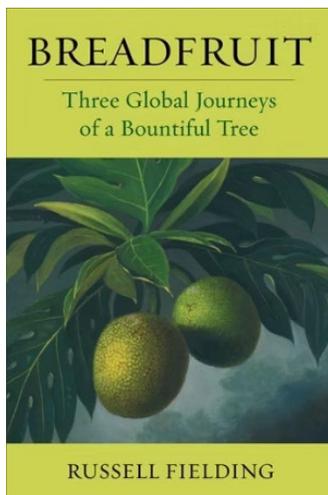


***Why Whales Sing* by Eduardo Mercado III to be Published on November 4**



[\*Why Whales Sing\*](#) by bioacoustician and cognitive scientist Dr. Eduardo Mercado III will be published on November 4. The book presents a novel theory about whale song, which after 50 years of field research has led most scientists to conclude that humpback whales sing to attract mates. Mercado posits that since whales are known to sing even when they are alone with no listeners nearby, whale song must serve as a tool for echolocation. *Why Whales Sing* provides insight into cetacean communication and behavior and challenges how we conceive of their intelligence and acoustic mastery. The book was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

***Breadfruit: Three Global Journeys of a Bountiful Tree* by Russell Fielding to be Published on November 5**



[\*Breadfruit: Three Global Journeys of a Bountiful Tree\*](#) by geography and food systems professor at Coastal Carolina University Dr. Russell Fielding will be published on November 5. The book explores the global history and present-day uses for breadfruit, a cantaloupe-sized, green-skinned fruit that resembles potatoes and is mainly grown in the tropics. Moving from the late 18<sup>th</sup> century British failure to introduce breadfruit to enslaved African laborers to its modern-day utility as a superfood and tool in sustainable development, Fielding brings together research and interviews with local chefs and scientists to tell the story of this relatively unknown fruit and speculate on its future potential. *Breadfruit* was supported by a 2021 Sloan book grant.



RADIO & PODCASTS

WNYC Hosts Health Convening on *The Brian Lehrer Show*



WNYC hosted its annual [Sloan-funded Health Convening](#) virtually on June 3. This year the convening took place live as part of *The Brian Lehrer Show*, an award-winning call-in program that connects listeners to top local and national officials and other experts. Featuring cancer researcher Dr. Otis Brawley, Science Executive Publisher Dr. Sudip Parikh, editor and publisher of *The Cancer Letter* Paul Goldberg, and Chief Washington Correspondent at KFF Health News Julie Rovner, the roundtable discussion

spotlighted the role of public funding in cancer research and the impact of recent federal funding cuts. The 2025 Health Convening was supported by a 2024 grant to WNYC to support story-driven healthcare reporting, which now reaches over 10 million listeners in the tri-state area and has won wide acclaim since the COVID-19 pandemic.

EFF Launches Sixth Season of *How to Fix the Internet*



[How to Fix the Internet](#), a Sloan supported podcast from the Electronic Frontier Foundation (EFF) that tackles the thorniest issues of the modern web, launched its sixth season on May 7. The first episode of the season, hosted by EFF’s Executive Director Cindy Cohn and Associate Director of Digital Strategy Jason Kelley and titled “Digital Autonomy for Bodily Autonomy,” featured the director of the Digital Defense Fund Kate Bertash (top left) and discussed how the digital era has blurred the line between public and private spaces and how this impacts our privacy. Other guests on this season include researcher and software engineer Molly White (top right), the

US Justice Department’s first Chief Science and Technology Advisor and Chief AI Officer Jonathan Mayer (bottom left), and author of *AI Snake Oil* Arvind Narayanan (bottom right). *How to Fix the Internet* is supported by a 2025 grant to EFF.



## SPECIAL INITIATIVES

### First Senior Congressional Staff Seminar on Artificial Intelligence Kicks Off at MIT

MIT hosted a three-day seminar to educate senior Congressional staff on the future of AI from April 16-18. The program brought together 25 bipartisan senior Congressional staffers and aims to improve the technological literacy of government officials, especially as popular technologies such as ChatGPT advance rapidly. The conference included panels on the current state of large language models, AI's potential to transform transportation systems and healthcare, and the implications of AI for US national security. The weekend also included a tour of MIT.nano, a state-of-the-art facility for semiconductor design. In tandem with the in-person convening, MIT's Open Learning division will publish online modules that include short instructional videos from experts, executive summary PDFs that explain key points, and infographics. This three-day seminar is the first of two convenings supported by a 2024 Sloan grant.



**Program Team:** Doron Weber, *Vice President and Program Director* | Shriya Bhindwale, *Program Associate* | Swan Griffith, *Program Coordinator*