



ALFRED P. SLOAN FOUNDATION

June 2026

Program Updates from VP and Program Director Doron Weber

YOUTUBE & TIKTOK

Inaugural Science Creator Camp For YouTubers Kicks Off in Canada



The first-ever Science Creator Camp for STEM YouTubers, scientists, and science communicators was held in British Columbia, Canada to provide networking opportunities and share insights and ideas about engaging with science on YouTube. Kicking off on June 19, the three-day retreat included thirty YouTubers such as representatives from Crash Course, David Goldenberg (@MinuteEarth, @MinutePhysics), Sage Magee (@SageTheBadNaturalist), and

Joe Hanson (@BeSmart) as well as scientists such as anthropologist Wade Davis and astronaut Cady Coleman. Hosted by Pathos Labs, the program included improv comedy exercises, creator-led workshops on platform-native science storytelling, and tours of the two-acre farm garden where the retreat was held. The Science Creator Camp is part of Sloan's new effort to support artists on YouTube and TikTok who engage with science and technology and received a 2025 Sloan grant.

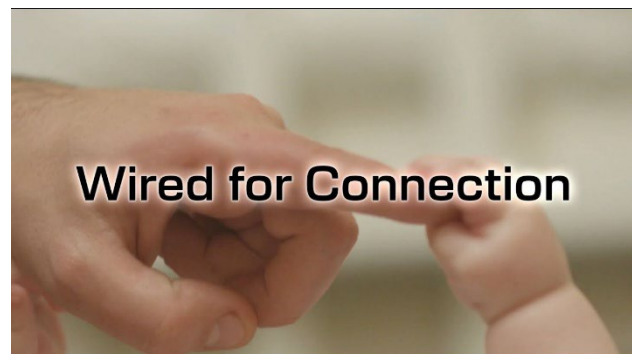
TELEVISION

***Wired for Connection* Premieres on PBS**

[*Wired for Connection*](#), an hour-long documentary directed and produced by Kiran Kapany, premiered on PBS on June 1.

Blending science and storytelling, the film explores the biology, sociology, and neuroscience of human connection and the vital role it plays in our mental and physical health. It traces the decades-long collaboration between scientists across

disciplines and continents to explore the evolutionary origins of our craving for human connection and provide an intimate perspective on how human connection affects us at every stage of our lives. The documentary is based on the Sloan supported book *Friendship: The Evolution, Biology, and Extraordinary Power of Life's Fundamental Bond* by Lydia Denworth published in 2020. *Wired for Connection* was supported by a 2021 Sloan grant.





THEATER

Manhattan Theatre Club Celebrates 25-Year Sloan Partnership at Annual Spring Gala

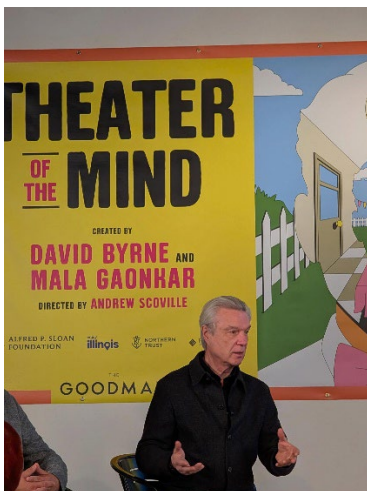


Manhattan Theatre Club (MTC), one of Sloan’s two flagship theater partners, honored the Sloan Foundation and more than two decades of the Sloan/MTC partnership at their [2026 Spring Gala](#) on May 18. Hosted by comedian Amber Ruffin, the night included a cocktail reception, seated dinner, and a one-night-only show featuring performances from the season’s most exciting musicals, including “The Book of Mormon,” “Cats: The Jellicle Ball,” and “Phantom of the Opera: Masquerade.”

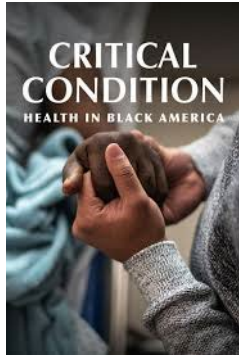
Since the inaugural Sloan-supported production of *Proof* by David Auburn in 2000, the Sloan Initiative has enabled MTC to commission, develop, and produce hundreds of new plays and musicals exploring science and technology and has launched the careers of numerous emerging playwrights. MTC’s most recent Sloan-supported production of Jonathan Spector’s *Eureka Day*, about vaccines and public health, debuted on Broadway and won a 2025 Tony Award for “Best Revival of a Play.” The gala is supported by a 2025 Sloan officer grant.

NEW MEDIA

David Byrne’s *Theater of the Mind* Opens in Chicago



[Theater of the Mind](#), an immersive theatrical experience inspired by neuroscience, opened at the Goodman Theatre in Chicago on March 11. Created by *Talking Heads* frontman David Byrne and Mala Gaonkar and directed by Andrew Scoville, *Theater of the Mind* takes viewers through a series of rooms over 75 minutes where they will participate in thought-provoking neuroscience experiences to show how perception and memory function. Examples of scientific phenomena explored include the tritone paradox and Adelson’s checkerboard, illustrating how our brains evolved to prioritize interpretation over absolute perception. The show has been extended through the summer. *Theater of the Mind* was supported by a 2025 Sloan grant.

FILM**Sloan Films Nominated for Six Emmys and One Peabody Award**

[Three Sloan films were nominated for six Emmy Awards](#) and one Peabody Award in this past awards season. *Critical Condition: Health in Black America* by Oscar-nominated filmmaker Stanley Nelson premiered on NOVA on April 30 and was nominated in the “Outstanding Science and Technology Documentary” category. 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.

The White House Effect by award-winning directors Bonni Cohen, Pedro Kos, and Jon Shenk premiered on August 30 at the 2024 Telluride Film Festival and was nominated in the “Outstanding Research: Documentary” and “Outstanding Editing: Documentary” categories. It was also nominated for a Peabody Award in the “Documentary” category. The feature-length documentary uses archival footage to recount the origin story of the modern climate crisis: from 1988 when scientists testified before Congress confirming global warming was underway, to the present day where climate change is highly politicized.

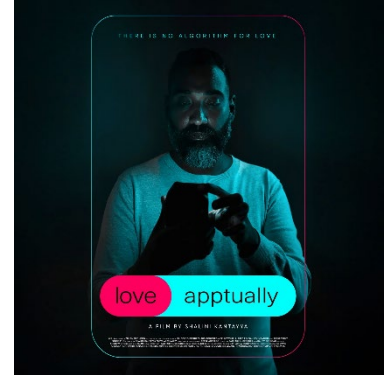


Sally by Cristina Costantini was the recipient of the 2025 Sloan Feature Film Prize at the Sundance Film Festival. The film was nominated in the “Outstanding Science and Technology Documentary,” “Outstanding Direction: Documentary” and “Outstanding Art Direction / Set Decoration / Scenic Design: Documentary” categories. The feature-length documentary follows the professional trajectory of the first American woman to go into space, astronaut and physicist Sally Ride, her battle against gender discrimination, and her 27-year closeted relationship with her life partner, Tam O’Shaughnessy.



Love Apptually Premieres at Canadian Film Festival

Love Apptually, a feature-length documentary by Shalini Kantayya, premiered at the Hot Docs Canadian International Documentary Festival on April 25. *Love Apptually* follows French journalist Judith Duportail’s journey from her early fascination with Tinder to uncovering the deeper truths embedded in its algorithm. Through her investigation, the film examines how a multi-billion-dollar tech industry is quietly reshaping desire, intimacy, and human connection. It also premiered in the US at the DC/DOX Festival on June 13. The film received positive reviews in [POV Magazine](#), [In The Seats](#), and [The Joy of Movies](#). Sloan previously supported Kantayya’s first film *Coded Bias*, about Joy Buolamwini’s investigation into the bias in facial recognition technology and algorithms. *Love Apptually* was supported by a 2024 Sloan grant.



Sloan Hosts Nationwide Virtual Film Summit



More than 70 award-winning Sloan filmmakers from the past five years gathered to network and celebrate at the third annual Virtual Sloan Summit on May 26. Hosted by Sloan with long-time partner [The Museum of the Moving Image](#), the Summit featured updates from all six Sloan film partners: Athena Film Festival, Film Independent, SFFILM, Toronto International Film Festival, The Black List and Sundance Institute. The evening also included a

filmmaker spotlight on Sloan grantee Noam Argov, who received a 2024 Production Award at NYU for her script “Verse,” about a seventeen-year-old who is violated in a virtual reality game and must confront the real-world fallout with his gamer girlfriend. The event also offered updates and networking opportunities for other attendees from Sloan’s 22 film partners. The Summit was supported by a 2025 Sloan grant to the MoMI.

Nicolas Ma’s *Mabel* Released in Theaters and on Streaming

Mabel, a film about a lonely young girl who befriends a potted plant, was [released in theaters on April 17 and is now available to stream](#) on Apple TV and Amazon. Directed by Nicolas Ma and co-written by Ma and Joy Goodwin, the film follows a young Callie as she develops an experiment raising chrysanthemums in darkness and leverages her love for botany to propel herself into adolescence. *Mabel* originally premiered at SFFILM as part of Sloan Science on Screen Programming at the Festival in 2024. The film also received the Sloan \$100K Feature Film Production Award at NYU in 2019 and the Sloan Screenplay Award from the Tribeca Film Institute in 2020.





***Silent Friend* Wins Science on Screen Prize at SFFILM Festival**



Ildikó Enyedi's *Silent Friend* won the [Sloan Science on Screen Prize](#) at the SFFILM festival on April 25, an award recognizing the depiction of science in a narrative feature film. The film starring Tony Leung and Léa Seydoux is about a Ginkgo biloba tree that silently observes and is observed by humans as they seek to understand it over three time periods at a botanical garden in a German university. The screening was followed by a Q&A with the writer/director and Dr. Benjamin Blackman, an associate professor in the Departments of Plant & Microbial Biology and Integrative Biology at UC Berkeley, moderated by SFFILM's Director of Programming Jessie Fairbanks.

Four Sloan Screenwriting Projects Honored at SFFILM Festival

The Festival also celebrated [two Sloan Science in Cinema Fellowship](#) and [two Sloan Stories of Science Development Fund](#) winners. Recipients of the Sloan Science in Cinema Filmmaker Fellowships receive a \$35,000 cash grant and access to the FilmHouse, SFFILM's creative hub for local and visiting independent filmmakers. This year's winners include Justin Kim WooSök for his script "The Green Corridor," about an extinct tiger's reappearance in Korea's demilitarized zone, and Destiny Macon's "Talk Black," about a timid engineer's battle against urban renewal in her historically black neighborhood. The SFFILM Sloan Stories of Science Development Fund includes an award of up to \$20,000 for writers in the early stages of developing screenplays inspired by discoveries from the Stories of Science Sourcebook. The Stories of Science Sourcebook is composed of significant scientific and technological discoveries made in recent years. This year's winners include Sid Gopinath and Aditya Joshi's "One Inch From Earth," about a group of scientists trying to prove that life exists on a distant moon of Jupiter, and "Hello Neighbor" by Lane Unsworth, about a woman on NASA's public relations team. SFFILM's Science in Cinema Programming is supported by a 2025 Sloan grant.





Next Generation of Filmmakers Honored at Sloan Awards Reception and Reading



The [winners of the Sloan Grand Jury and Student Discovery Prizes](#) were celebrated at a reception, reading, and Q&A at the Museum of the Moving Image (MoMI) on April 9. The Sloan Grand Jury Prize celebrates the “best of the best” winning screenplays submitted by Sloan’s six film school partners. The 2025 winner was Quinn Spicker from the American Film Institute. His feature script *God Makers* tells the fictionalized true story of the battle between academic researcher Helen Toner and OpenAI CEO Sam Altman over the future of AI. An honorable mention for this Prize was also awarded to Carnegie Mellon University’s Ellie Melick for her script *SLEDHEAD*, about an athlete who risks her career to help investigate brain damage caused by sports.

The Sloan Student Discovery Prize celebrates an exceptional science or technology script from one of six public universities added to the program in 2019. Nora Kaye from Brooklyn College won the 2025 award for her feature script *The Head Cases*, which follows two brilliant women scientists who overcome their differences to test an unorthodox Alzheimer’s treatment.

Both winners will receive a \$20,000 cash prize as well as year-round mentorship from film and science professionals. The Sloan Student Prizes are supported by a 2025 Sloan grant.

RADIO & PODCASTS

WNYC Hosts Health Convening on *The Brian Lehrer Show*

WNYC hosted its annual [Sloan-funded Health Convening](#) virtually on June 16. 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 former Commissioner of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration Dr. David Kessler, former Senior Investigator at the National Institute of Health Dr. Kevin Hall, and Chair of the Division of Nutrition Epidemiology and Data Science at Tufts University Dr. Fang Fang Zhang, the roundtable discussion focused on ultra-processed foods, including what they are, their impact, and how public policy can improve health outcomes. The 2026 Health Convening was supported by a 2024 grant to WNYC for 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.





BOOKS

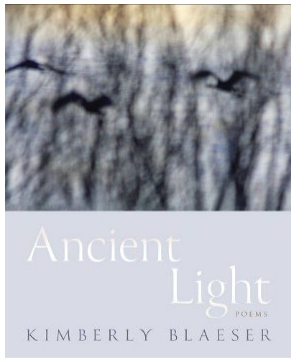
National Book Foundation / Sloan Science + Literature Winners Celebrated

In continuation of its partnership with the National Book Foundation honoring fiction, nonfiction, and poetry, the fifth annual [Sloan Science + Literature Award Ceremony](#) was held at The Cooper Union on March 11, 2026. Winning titles included Kimberly Blaeser's *Ancient Light* (poetry), Patricia Ononiwu Kaishian's *Forest Euphoria: The Abounding Queerness of Nature* (nonfiction), and Anna North's *Bog Queen* (fiction). The selected works were chosen by a committee of scientific and literary experts who focused on books that celebrate excellence in science writing.



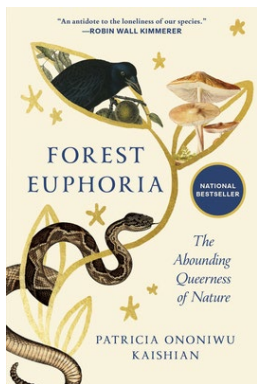
The awards are supported by a 2024 Sloan grant. The three winners also discussed their work in three individual events across the country.

POETRY: Kimberly Blaeser: *Ancient Light*



Kimberly Blaeser received the Science + Literature award in the Poetry category for her book *Ancient Light*, which explores environmental justice, Indigenous resilience, and pathways of healing through poetry. The book has received positive reviews in [Harvard Review](#) and [Chapter House Journal](#), among others. On April 23, Blaeser joined poet and 2026 Science + Literature selection committee member Sean Hill for a reading and conversation on the relationship between poetry, science, and the world around us. Presented as part of the Wisconsin Book Festival, the event highlighted the ways poetry can deepen our understanding of the natural world.

NONFICTION: Patricia Ononiwu Kaishian: *Forest Euphoria: The Abounding Queerness of Nature*



Forest Euphoria: The Abounding Queerness of Nature by Patricia Ononiwu Kaishian received the Science + Literature Award in the nonfiction award. The book combines the author's personal experience in the Hudson Valley with scientific exploration, particularly of fungi, to discuss race, gender, and identity. *Forest Euphoria* was named one of [Time's 100 Must-Read Books of 2025](#) and [Vanity Fair's 17 Best Books of 2025](#). On April 22, author Patricia Ononiwu Kaishian joined distinguished professor Katherine Coles at the University of Utah for a conversation on the surprising complexity of the fungal world and what it reveals about how we understand and categorize nature.

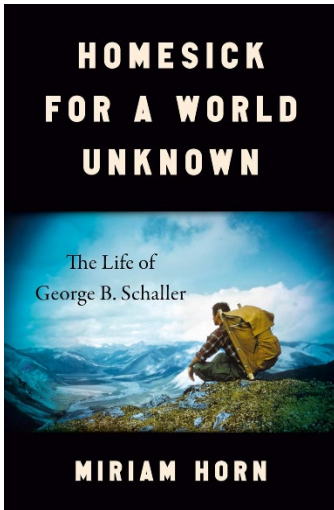


FICTION: Anna North: *Bog Queen*



Anna North, author of *Bog Queen*, received the Science + Literature Award in the fiction category. *Bog Queen* follows a forensic anthropologist investigating a preserved Iron Age bog body in England, whose story becomes entangled with the ancient woman she uncovers. The book was named one of the Best Books of the Year by the [New Yorker](#), [Publishers Weekly](#), and [Esquire](#). On April 15, North joined author and 2026 Science + Literature committee member Akil Kumarasamy at the Seaport in New York for a reading and conversation on the research behind *Bog Queen* and the impact of human ambition in art and science.

George Schaller Biography Published on April 21 in Partnership with Leon Levy Center for Biography

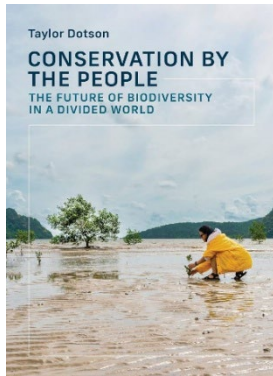


[*Homesick for a World Unknown: The Life of George B. Schaller*](#), a biography from Sloan's partnership with The Leon Levy Center for Biography, was published on April 21 by 2020 Sloan/Leon Levy Fellow Miriam Horn. The book captures the seventy years George B. Schaller spent living among wild animals in the world's remotest regions and his role as the founding father of modern wildlife conservation. Drawing on thousands of pages of Schaller's journals and letters and two journeys into the field with Schaller himself, Horn traces his life from a childhood upended by displacement and atrocity in wartime Europe to his groundbreaking methodology of immersive field research, his mentorship of Jane Goodall, and his decades-long effort to safeguard the habitats and species he spent a lifetime studying. The book received positive reviews in [The New York Times](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), and [Undark](#). The Sloan

Fellowship for Science Biography is an annual award for biographers working on books that elucidate the lives of scientists or technological innovators. Since 2018, Sloan has been supporting the Leon Levy Center for Biography at CUNY, the only academic institution in the country that awards a master's degree in biography and is devoted to promoting the practice of biography full-time.

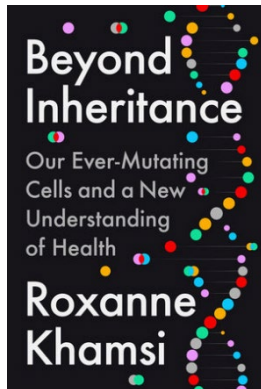


***Conservation by the People: The Future of Biodiversity in a Divided World* by Taylor Dotson
Published on March 31**



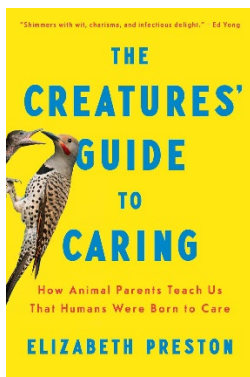
[Conservation by the People](#) by Taylor Dotson was published on March 31. The book challenges the catastrophic narratives often told about the world's ecosystems, exploring the complex scientific and cultural reasons why people disagree about conservation. Dotson argues that what a wilder, more biodiverse planet looks like – and how to get there – is not something scientists can decide alone, but requires collective discovery and experiments in ecological living. While scenarios, models, and meta-analyses can help, what humanity needs most is to nurture the exploratory spirit of our chronically restless species and reconcile the needs and desires of people and nonhuman species. The book was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.

***Beyond Inheritance: Our Ever-Mutating Cells and a New Understanding of Health* by Roxanne Khamsi
Published on April 21**

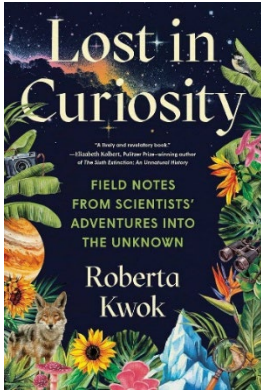


[Beyond Inheritance: Our Ever-Mutating Cells and a New Understanding of Health](#) by award-winning science journalist Roxanne Khamsi was published on April 21. Khamsi challenges the common misconception that our DNA stays fixed throughout our lives, revealing how our cells continuously mutate from conception to death. The book explores how these hidden genetic changes influence health and asserts that by letting go of the idea that every cell in a body has the same exact DNA, we can usher in a whole new era of medicine, including better vaccines and treatments that outsmart cancer. Khamsi wrote about this subject in [The Atlantic](#) and the book received positive reviews in [The New Yorker](#), [Undark](#), [The Wall Street Journal](#), among others. *Beyond Inheritance* was supported by a 2024 grant.

***The Creatures' Guide to Caring: How Animal Parents Teach Us That Humans Were Born to Care* by Elizabeth Preston
Published on May 5**

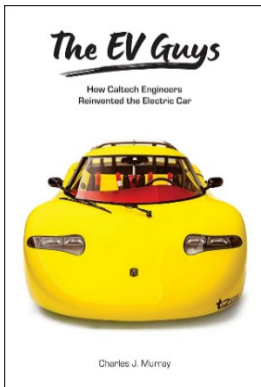


[The Creatures' Guide to Caring: How Animal Parents Teach Us That Humans Were Born to Care](#) by science journalist Elizabeth Preston was published on May 5. The book explores the evolution of caretaking on Earth across species, from poison frog dads carrying tadpoles on their back to killer whale grandmothers hunting to feed their adult sons. Using cutting-edge research, Preston reveals how and why animals care for our young and argues that humans evolved to raise kids in cooperative groups, and that the tools we've inherited for caretaking are the very foundation of human society. *The Creature's Guide to Caring* received positive reviews in [Science News](#) and [Dear Author](#), among others. The book was supported by a 2024 Sloan grant.



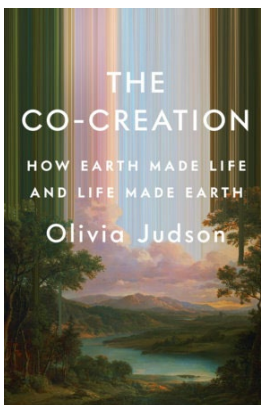
***Lost in Curiosity: Field Notes from Scientists' Adventures into the Unknown* by Roberta Kwok to be Published on July 21**

[*Lost in Curiosity: Field Notes from Scientists' Adventures into the Unknown*](#) by science writer Roberta Kwok will be published on July 21. The book follows scientists into the field and lab to reveal what discovery actually looks like — not a triumphant breakthrough, but a messy, often chaotic pursuit of truth. From tracking elusive frogs in Borneo to capturing signals from a distant moon, Kwok chronicles the struggles, hopes, and inner lives of researchers devoted to understanding our world. The book was supported by a 2023 Sloan grant.



***The EV Guys: How Caltech Engineers Reinvented the Electric Car* by Charles J. Murray to be Published on September 15**

[*The EV Guys: How Caltech Engineers Reinvented the Electric Car*](#) by author Charles J. Murray will be published on September 15. The book tells the true story of the Caltech engineers whose electric drivetrain revolutionized the automobile, tracing their journey from a California garage to the technology that became the foundation of Tesla Motors and forever changed the auto industry. The book was supported by a 2025 Sloan grant.



***The Co-Creation: How Earth Made Life and Life Made Earth* by Olivia Judson to be Published on October 13**

[*The Co-Creation: How Earth Made Life and Life Made Earth*](#) by Olivia Judson offers a sweeping new vision of planetary history, tracing how Earth transformed from a lifeless world 4.4 billion years ago into a planet of riotous life today. Dividing that history into five expansions — rock, light, oxygen, flesh, and fire — Judson reveals how lifeforms have acted as a transformative force on the planet itself, and where humans fit into that vast and ongoing story. This book was supported by a 2007 Sloan grant.



SPECIAL INITIATIVES

Senior Congressional Staff Seminar on Artificial Intelligence Draws Bipartisan Participation at MIT

MIT hosted a three-day seminar to educate 26 senior Congressional staff on the future of AI from March 31 to April 2. The program aims to improve the technological literacy of government staffers. The conference included panels on the current state of large language models, including their strengths and limitations, AI’s potential to transform transportation systems and healthcare, and the implications of AI for US national security. In tandem with the in-person program, MIT’s Open Learning division will publish online modules that will include short instructional videos from MIT experts, executive summary PDFs that explain key points, and infographics. This three-day seminar is the second of two supported by a 2024 Sloan grant.



Consumer Reports Study Reveals Predatory Algorithmic Pricing on Popular Rideshare Apps



A [recent investigation by Consumer Reports](#) revealed significant variations in prices for identical trips on Uber and Lyft, the two most popular ride-hailing apps in the country. By analyzing more than 30 routes across 17 states, researchers found that the median difference between the highest and lowest prices offered for the same ride to different customers was approximately 50%, challenging the common

assumption that such price differences are due to traditional surge pricing. The report also examined promotional discounts, with investigators finding that nearly all advertised discounts appeared to be based on inflated reference prices rather than genuine savings. This study is part of Consumer Reports’ broader Sloan-supported effort to protect consumers by elucidating opaque company practices such as algorithmic pricing and personalization. A 2025 investigation of the grocery delivery app Instacart found that the company used AI to group customers and charge them different prices for the same products, leading to the first state bans of personalized pricing in Connecticut and Maine. These studies are supported by a 2024 grant to Consumer Reports.



The Public Understanding Team Welcomes Valicia Browne!



Valicia Browne (left) joined the Public Understanding team as the new Program Associate on June 9. Browne previously served as Project Manager for the \$1 billion LifeSci NYC initiative at the New York City Economic Development Corporation, where she helped fund STEM workforce development programs and support life sciences entrepreneurship across the city. Before that, she worked at NBCUniversal as an Entertainment Coordinator, supporting production across

Universal Television Entertainment Group's unscripted portfolio.

Valicia will be taking over for Senior Program Associate Shriya Bhindwale (right), who will be departing the Foundation in July to pursue her MBA at NYU Stern School of Business.



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