

## A Roadmap for Collaboration on Technology and Social Cohesion

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### **Abstract**

This report was commissioned by the [Council on Tech and Social Cohesion](#) in preparation for the February 2023 conference [Designing Tech for Social Cohesion](#). Based on research with nearly 60 interviewees from large and small tech companies, and human rights, development, and peacebuilding civil society groups, this report is one of several resulting from a year-long research project funded by the Toda Peace Institute's program on Social Media, Technology and Peacebuilding. This report maps the kinds of activities that could help to build a movement for prosocial technology to support social cohesion.

### **Introduction**

The tech sector wields enormous power over the thoughts and actions of billions of people. Toxic polarization stymies governments from helping to solve pressing problems from Covid to the climate crisis. Technology designed with affordances and algorithms optimised to capture human attention and feed an advertising-based profit model are motivating and amplifying humanity's worse behaviours, from hate speech to disinformation.

Humanity needs technology that builds trust and civic health rather than outrage and division. We need people who understand how to build bridges in divided communities to be better equipped to use technology. Global peacebuilders and community bridge builders

have expertise in fostering connections and bridging divides at a community level but cannot reach people at the scale of tech platforms. These groups need technology to scale their work toward social cohesion. The field of peacebuilding and community bridge building has been building bridges in regions across the world for decades. Peacebuilding and bridge building processes and skill sets can inform the tech product development process. Together, tech designers and peacebuilders can innovate technology platforms that improve social cohesion.

In 2020, a working group formed to explore a Council on Technology and Cohesion to bring practitioners who heal division together with people who design technology. The working group included the Center for Humane Technology, Search for Common Ground, the Toda Peace Institute, Braver Angels, More in Common, the University of Notre Dame, and the Alliance for Peacebuilding. This group commissioned this report and organised a conference on [Designing Tech for Social Cohesion](#) to help launch the Council.

### **What is the Council on Technology and Social Cohesion?**

The goal of the Council is to provide a forum for exploring how technology can amplify and scale social cohesion. The Council facilitates networking and collaboration between tech sector leaders eager to improve the impact of technology platforms on social cohesion, and peacebuilders who are experts at building social cohesion and eager to better leverage the innovation and scale of the tech sector.

The Council hopes to improve the positive impact of technology on social cohesion by providing accurate framing and analysis of the issues and establishing metrics for digital contributions to social cohesion. The Council hopes to facilitate partnerships and matchmaking to ensure practical experiences in peacebuilding and community bridge-building inform the designs of technology products.

The Council also hopes to facilitate innovation by matching tech developers with groups working on social cohesion in conflict-affected communities. This could include externships for tech developers to work on-the-ground with peacebuilding organisations, fellowships for peacebuilding practitioners and experts to work within tech companies, and access to funding for matchmaking intended to fuel innovation.

### **Typology and Examples of Tech-Supported Social Cohesion**

The Council will seek to develop, test, and learn from technology-supported approaches. Tech-supported social cohesion includes the following:

1. Tech to enhance *individual agency*, including opportunities to participate in civic life including:
  - Opportunities for meaningful online civic engagement (e.g., [Ushahidi](#), [Kazm](#), #IamHere movement, Lithuanian Elves, Braver Angels)
  - Measures of impact so people view civic action as worth their time (e.g., petition sites that report policy changes and impacts)

- Coaching in effective communication strategies to support human dignity (e.g., [eBay](#), [Angry Uncle Bot](#))
2. Tech to improve intergroup *horizontal relationships within and between groups* including:
    - Audio and video affordances that humanize others and discourage harmful content by design (e.g., [Marco Polo](#), [Gatherround](#), SlowTalk, [Soliya](#))
    - Guardrails to minimise trolling and harmful content by removing the possibility of harmful personal responses in comment sections on public issues (e.g., [Pol.is](#))
    - Affordances to enable “listening at scale,” and to enhance “perspective taking” to better understand the views and interests of diverse groups (e.g., [Pol.is](#), [Remesh](#), and Reddit’s [ChangeMyView](#))
    - Reality testing on perception gaps to improve accurate understanding (e.g., More in Common’s [Perception Gap Quiz](#))
    - Visualisation of shared interests and common ground between people (e.g., [Pol.is](#) and [Remesh](#))
    - Envision positive future coexistence with Virtual Reality
  3. Tech to build public trust with *vertical relationships between public institutions and society* to support accountable governance institutions, advance computational democracy, and improve public-interest news journalism including:
    - Incentives to develop build trust and develop innovative policy solutions on polarized public issues that take into consideration the core interests of others ([Pol.is](#) and [Remesh](#))
    - Transparency on institutional performance such as [blockchain tech products](#) that increase confidence and public trust in governance
  4. Tech to *analyse digital polarization and information ecosystems*
    - Offer affordances to identify polarized content, trending topics, hashtags, and key influencers (e.g., [Phoenix](#) and [Sparrow](#))

Interviewees for this report confirmed that there is emerging interest and support for a [Council on Tech and Social Cohesion](#) to create opportunities for tech designers and funders to collaborate with *practitioners and experts in social cohesion, peacebuilding, and bridge building* – a task not being met by other initiatives to address harmful digital content and promote healthy digital public spheres. Interviewees identified a range of potential areas for partnership. The research methodology for this report can be found in Appendix 1. While unique in its focus, this Council is a subset of other initiatives that are exploring the broader impact of technology on society. See Appendix 2 for a short mapping of related initiatives.

## A Roadmap for Collaboration on Technology and Social Cohesion

Interviewees for this report identified a range of areas where greater collaboration and coordination among tech companies, governments, and civil society could support tech-assisted social cohesion. This Roadmap is a starting point for discussion. It aims to inspire partnerships and collaboration among diverse stakeholders. Each of the nine categories of collaboration includes examples of what could be done. In cases where some efforts already exist to build upon, this report attempts to map a sampling of these initiatives.

### 1. Institutionalize the Cohesive Tech Movement

There are many organisations working to reform tech to address toxic polarization, many new tech start-ups focused on pro-social designs, and civil society and UN efforts to promote social cohesion through peacebuilding and bridge-building efforts. Synergizing these efforts requires building a shared vocabulary and ongoing coordination.

- **Map relevant stakeholders:** Identify relevant stakeholders including tech, civil society, government, funders, and other relevant actors supporting tech roles in social cohesion. The [Global PeaceTech Hub](#) in Florence, Italy, and the [GovLab](#) at New York University are working on a [global mapping of peacetech initiatives](#).
- **Create a Shared Calendar of Relevant Events:** Identify relevant conferences, trainings, workshops, webinars, and other spaces
- **Host Matchmaking Forums:** Create opportunities for peacebuilding and bridging movement organisations to create partnerships with tech engineers, start-ups, and companies.
- **Host Cross-Company Forums for Tech Companies:** Create opportunities or a forum for information-sharing related to measuring polarization and social cohesion online, and demos of tech affordances and algorithms that support social cohesion.

### 2. Promote Public Awareness of Tech Roles in Social Cohesion

While media outlets rightly give significant attention to digital harms, there is less attention to how technology improves individual agency to participate in civic life, increase horizontal cohesion between groups, and boost public trust between citizens and governing institutions.

- **Create Compelling Digital Content:** Create a repository of visual and audio content that offers case studies and discussions of the role of technology in supporting social cohesion.
- **Publish Articles** that explain how technology is supporting social cohesion, both advanced tools as well as case studies of how community organisations and local governments are using easy-to-use technologies. Interviewees noted that tech companies are always looking for a good news story. If there is a way their product can help bridge building and peacebuilding processes, they are going to be especially interested in partnership or helping to promote awareness.

### 3. Incubate Prosocial Tech

While there is a variety of efforts to support “tech for good” or “tech for social impact,” there is only a handful of places that incubate tech for social cohesion or peacebuilding.

- **Conduct Pilot Projects with Peacetech:** Public-private partnerships could test tech products in a variety of contexts to explore how they can support social cohesion efforts.
- **Support to PeaceTech Startups:** A variety of spaces already exist to help coach and support tech innovators creating products that support bridge building and peacebuilding efforts. [The PeaceTech Lab](#) in Washington DC and the [Grebel PeaceTech Incubator](#) in Waterloo, Ontario, both run robust programs to support tech startups. Another example is:
- **SharkTank for PeaceTech:** A space for entrepreneurs of peacetech could offer feedback from seasoned tech experts. Caterina Fake’s podcast “[Should this exist?](#)” explores the value and potential of new startups and explores the place where “radical technology meets humanity.” In each episode, the show takes a single technology and asks: What is its greatest potential? And what could possibly go wrong? One interviewee suggested asking someone like Reid Hoffman, who has a reputation for analysing why something will or will not work, to host a forum for peacetech entrepreneurs.

### 4. Explore Prosocial Funding Models

A new ecosystem of funding models exists for tech companies designing to social cohesion.

- **Foundations:** A variety of foundations are investing in tech related challenges such as disinformation and hate speech. To date, few are investing in tech for social cohesion.
- **Governments and International Organisations:** Some international organisations like the United Nations Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs (DPPA) are creating their own digital tools to support peace, democracy, and sustainable development. Others imagine a system of peace credits that tech companies could earn from products that build social cohesion.
- **Cooperative and Open Source Funding Models:** Founders of new tech startups are also exploring alternative funding models, including volunteer-led open source tech products, donation and fee-based tech products, and worker cooperatives. [Zebras Unite Coop](#) describes itself as a founder-led movement creating the culture, capital, and community for the next economy. The article “Zebras Fix What Unicorns Break” critiqued “unicorn” tech companies that use “move fast and break things” approach in hopes of rapid growth. The co-founders of the Zebras Unite Cooperative offer a “Zebra manifesto” [laying out](#) the values, principles, and commitments to equity, transparency, collaboration, and sustainable growth.<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Jennifer Brandel, Mara Zepeda, Astrid Scholz & Aniyia Williams. “[Zebras Fix What Unicorns Break.](#)” *Medium*. 8 March 2017.

- **Venture Capital Funding:** Finding investors for peacetech is a key challenge. A new set of VCs are interested in both profitability and social impact. [HigherGround Labs](#) is a venture fund investing in technologies to support political participation and civic engagement. The [Emerson Collective](#) is one of the oldest venture capital funds investing in social cohesion. [B Corps and B Lab](#) are investing in developing certification for businesses to contribute to make business a force for social cohesion. [Bloomberg Beta](#) is a new venture fund interested in “making the startup world welcoming.” [Homebrew](#) is a VC fund broadly investing in tech for good. [Globant](#) launched the [BeKind.Tech Fund \(BKTF\)](#) to attract global startups seeking support developing apps, products, and platforms focused on mitigating the negative effects of technology, with a special focus on polarization and social cohesion.
- **Making a Market Case for PeaceTech:** Tradition venture capital (VC) funds require groups to find the market and profitability for new tech products. A startup needs a charismatic leader with a keen insight into some problem or challenge that can make life easier through tech. Colin Rule reports on how he made the case for online dispute resolution to traditional VCs for Ecommerce sites. He brought in the data to show that people who have disputes and do not feel like they have procedural justice end up taking their business elsewhere. But if you can solve that dispute, this will increase their loyalty over people that never had an issue in the first place. Rule told the VCs, “give me \$10 million, and I can save you \$150 million.” Rule notes the importance of trying to monetize the damage that comes from these negative social impacts like polarization. A startup needs to be able to quantify the business opportunity to create the incentive to learn and understand how to build socially cohesive tech platforms.

## 5. Train & Build Capacity on Tech & Social Cohesion

While a variety of initiatives exist to improve tech staff’s appreciation for human rights and ethics, there are no standing efforts to support tech staff’s understanding of toxic polarization and social cohesion. While there are initiatives to improve the digital literacy of civil society groups, there are only a handful of efforts to support civil society’s adoption of existing easy-to-use “low-tech” products or of more advanced tech products useful to scale social cohesion.

- **Workshops on Social Cohesion for Executive and Tech Staff:** Capacity building workshops could support tech staff to understand and prioritise elements of social cohesion (e.g., conflict analysis, intergroup dialogue, and participatory decision-making) in tech product cycles. The Center for Humane Technology’s [Foundations for Humane Technology](#) already offers workshops that include some of these themes. The [Global PeaceTech Hub](#) is exploring the possibility of offering executive education workshops for tech leaders.
- **Tech Workshops for Peacebuilding and Bridge Building Groups:** Workshops are also necessary for civil society to build capacity to use digital tools to support social cohesion efforts. The PeaceTech Lab’s [PeaceTech Exchange](#) program offers capacity building workshops to empower human rights activists, students, social entrepreneurs, journalists, and local governments with low-cost, easy-to-use technology. [SwissPeace](#) offers a course for practitioners on Digital Peacebuilding. [TechChange](#) offers training in

technology skills for social change organisations. The [University of Notre Dame](#) offers a graduate course in Digital Peacebuilding and PeaceTech. The [Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism \(GIFCT\)](#) offers a model for such trainings in its workshops for civil society to learn about using tech to prevent violent extremism. [Google Digital Garage](#) hosts a wide range of free capacity building training online.

## 6. Measure Tech's Impacts on Toxic Polarization and Social Cohesion

While there are several indexes<sup>2</sup> and metrics for measuring offline social cohesion, there are only nascent metrics for measuring social cohesion online.

- **Refine Digital Indicators and Metrics for Social Cohesion:** This report presented a rudimentary framework on what to measure (indicators) and how to interpret the data gathered on those indicators (metrics). New partnerships could expand and refine this list.
- **Develop a Framework to Reward and Sanction Tech Impacts:** Such metrics would enable governments to tax companies for harmful content or “information pollution” and to reward companies for contributions to social cohesion.<sup>3</sup> Comparisons include the metrics for the proposed carbon tax and LEED building standards.
- **Build the Hague Peace Data Standard:** The Stanford University Peace Innovation Lab is leading the [Hague Peace Data Standard](#), a movement to identify a set of metrics by which companies would be rewarded for their impacts on positive peace. Mediating technologies that can sense and quantify intergroup engagement across group identity boundaries could create market signals for peace by rewarding businesses for the positive impact on intergroup relations.
- **Form Data Analysis Partnerships:** Research partnerships between tech companies granting access to data to humanitarian actors, conflict researchers, and peacebuilding experts could improve both content moderation and the design of digital interventions to prevent violence. While there is wide caution among civil society groups about such research partnerships with Silicon's Big Tech,<sup>4</sup> new data analysis partnerships are necessary to reduce polarization.

## 7. Improve Content Moderation with Social Cohesion Insights

Bridge building and peacebuilding practitioners and processes can improve content moderation on tech platforms to reduce harmful content in several ways.

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<sup>2</sup> See for example, SCORE (Social Cohesion and Reconciliation Index) at <https://www.scoreforpeace.org/>; Jeeyon Kim, Ryan Sheely, Carly Schmidt. [Social Capital and Social Cohesion Measurement Toolkit for Community-Driven Development Operations](#). Washington, DC: Mercy Corps and The World Bank Group, 2020; IPSOS. [Social Cohesion in a Pandemic Age: A Global Perspective](#). October 2020.

<sup>3</sup> See for example, Lisa Schirch, *Social Media Impacts on Conflict and Democracy: The TechTonic Shift*. Sydney: Routledge, 2021. p. 227-228.

<sup>4</sup> Seetheraman, Deepa. "Jack Dorsey's Push to Clean Up Twitter Stalls, Researchers Say; Company Blames Employee Turnover, Shifting Priorities for Delays; 'it's Disappointing,' Academic Says." *The Wall Street Journal. Eastern Edition*, 15 March, 2020.

- **Experiment with Citizen Panels for Content Moderation:** Bridge building and peacebuilding dialogue processes can support content moderation. Instead of an elite, unelected “expert panel” or “oversight board” to help tech companies make decisions on content moderation, tech companies can help to operationalize “platform democracy” to determine moderation rules to build broader legitimacy by using trusted third-party rulings by representative “citizen panels” and “citizen assemblies.” Platform democracy would bring citizen assemblies made up of representative and diverse stakeholders who would deliberate together on key questions related to moderation.<sup>5</sup> This could create models for a wider digital public deliberation process on key polarized issues within societies.
- **Offer Procedural Justice for Content Moderation:** Research suggests procedural justice reduces harmful content on Twitter.<sup>6</sup> Individual group moderators could learn key skills in restorative justice and peacebuilding to better offer procedural justice by carefully explaining group norms and why they remove content to their community members. [For example](#), the moderator of the subreddit ChangeMyView community actively promotes group norms.<sup>7</sup>

## 8. Protect Information Ecosystems

Healthy information ecosystems are fundamental for social cohesion.

- **Partner to Analyse Harmful Content:** Local partnerships between tech companies, local governments, and local civil society could develop local hubs to identify digital risks such as disinformation and hate speech, coordinate interventions to improve information ecosystems, and create early warning systems to prevent violence. A shared understanding of online and offline information ecosystems can inform complementary interventions to boost accurate information and peace processes that [address the root causes](#) of hate speech and harmful digital content.<sup>8</sup> [Research](#) by Internews and Fondation Hirondelle identified the hybridity of information ecosystems in places like Kenya<sup>9</sup> [and the DRC](#)<sup>10</sup> where local radio and newsprint journalists often source news from social media. Local peacebuilding civil society groups regularly conduct conflict analyses. Local civil society groups have language and cultural capacity to understand local metaphors and words that might be used in hate speech. These “on-the-ground sensors” can identify local lexicons of hate speech, patterns of disinformation, and indicators of toxic polarization. They can also identify local

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<sup>5</sup> Aviv Ovadya. “Towards Platform Democracy: Policymaking Beyond Corporate CEOs and Partisan Pressure.” Harvard Kennedy School Belfer Center. Paper, October 18, 2021.

<sup>6</sup> Matthew Katsaros, Tom Tyler, Jisu Kim, and Tracey Meares. “[Procedural Justice and Self Governance on Twitter: Unpacking the Experience of Rule Breaking on Twitter](#).” *Journal of Online Trust and Safety* 1 (3). 2022.

<sup>7</sup> Shagun Jhaver, P. Vora, and A. Bruckman. *Designing for Civil Conversations: Lessons Learned from Change-MyView*, GVU Center Technical Reports. 2017.

<sup>8</sup> Lisa Schirch. “The Digital Space and Peace Processes.” Geneva, Switzerland: Principles for Peace, Fondation Hirondelle, and *ICT4Peace*, 22 May 2022.

<sup>9</sup> Chaacha Mwita. The Kenya Media Assessment 2021. *Internews*. 25 March 2021.

<sup>10</sup> Fondation Hirondelle, Demos, Harvard Humanitarian Initiative and ICREDES. “Influencers and Influencing for Better Accountability in the DRC.” July 2019. Found at: <https://www.hirondelle.org/en/our-news/1015-study-on-sources-and-circulation-of-information-in-north-kivu-drc>



influencers that could partner with tech companies to voice calls for social cohesion. The [Peacetechnology Labs “Hate Speech Lexicon”](#) project is an example of this type of tech-civil society partnership.<sup>11</sup> Drawing on their local knowledge and networks, civil society groups in different countries have helped to build keyword lists for the Hate Speech Lexicon necessary for classification schemes and machine learning models.

- **Support Public Interest Journalism Online and Offline:** Online polarization amplifies legacy media and offline political dynamics. Investments in public interest journalism is necessary to improve the online-offline information ecosystem. Partnerships between tech companies and civil society groups can help to build healthy information ecosystems.
  - **Protect Mediation and Peacebuilding Efforts from Digital Harms:** Partnerships between social media companies and peacebuilding efforts such as UN Missions involved in mediation are essential in key moments of elections and peace processes when there is high risk of disinformation. One example is the cooperation between Facebook and the UN in Libya to analyse disinformation’s impact on peace efforts.<sup>12</sup>

## 9. Explore Government Regulation to Incentivize Tech for Social Cohesion

Current tech regulation addresses issues like privacy and cybersecurity, but not the algorithms or profit models that drive polarization. The challenge of regulating algorithms and design affordances on tech platforms will likely be slower and more challenging. Governments will need to create incentives for tech companies to reduce harmful content amplified by their algorithms and design features. This may include changing their profit model and/or paying taxes on their polarization spills to help fund social cohesion efforts.

- **Convene Policy Expert Discussions:** Convene consultations and workshops to explore regulations to incentivize tech for social cohesion. This could include, for example, a framework of metrics that could reward tech companies by creating a market signal for social cohesion, and taxing or sanctioning companies for harmful content or information pollution.
- **Hold Policy Relevant Events:** Organise events including tech demos and training in peacetechnology for policy relevant staff to inspire government support for the design and adoption of technology products to support social cohesion.

## 10. Advocating to Tech Companies

While a variety of tech start-ups are experimenting and designing new products to support social cohesion, few are reaching the scale necessary to address toxic polarization. Big tech companies with the scale to shift societies away from polarization and toward social cohesion will need to learn from and adapt the design affordances and algorithms from smaller startup tech companies. For example, drawing on inspiration from Pol.is’

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<sup>11</sup> See <https://www.peacetechnologylab.org/hate-speech-lexicons>

<sup>12</sup> United Nations Support Mission in Libya (UNSMIL). [UNSMIL and Facebook Convene Roundtable on Misinformation in Libya](#). UN Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. 20 September 2021.

affordances and algorithms, Twitter staff developed a program called Community Notes (formerly Birdwatch) to empower Twitter users to add helpful notes to Tweets that might be misleading. [Wired Magazine](#) calls this “one of the most exciting content moderation innovations ever to come out of not just Twitter, but any major platform.”<sup>13</sup> Aviv Ovadya and Jonathan Stray have been writing about the potential of big tech companies to adopt the types of bridging ranking systems found in platforms like Pol.is and Remesh.<sup>14</sup>

- **Explore Options for Big Tech Adoption of Prosocial Affordances and Algorithms:** Explore how big tech companies could adopt bridging-based ranking: Convene platform designers and tech analysts with peacebuilding and bridging experts to explore the application of bridging algorithms that find common ground between people.
- **Promote Big Tech Experimentation with Prosocial Affordances and Algorithms:** A collective movement could urge tech companies to test the use of affordances and algorithms in divided communities.

## Conclusion and Next Steps

Scaling social cohesion requires partnerships between practitioners and tech platforms to design better platforms and improve how people use tech in democratic processes. This report has provided an initial agenda for this discussion.

At the February 2023 conference on [Designing Tech for Social Cohesion](#), over 200 people tech companies, peacebuilding, and community bridge building will gather to explore this roadmap. Using this Roadmap, a smaller group of 40 people with institutional commitments to tech designed to support social cohesion will chart the way forward. Check back at the Council on [Council on Tech and Social Cohesion](#) website to read the other reports that accompany this one and to read about the Council’s future activities.

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<sup>13</sup> Carl Miller. “Elon Musk Embraces Twitter's Radical Fact-Checking Experiment.” *WIRED Magazine*. 28 November 2022.

<sup>14</sup> Jonathan Stray. “[Designing recommender systems to depolarize.](#)” *First Monday*. Volume 27, Number 5 - 2 May 2022. Aviv Ovadya, “Bridging-Based Ranking: How Platform Recommendation Systems Might Reduce Division and Strengthen Democracy”, Belfer Center, Harvard Kennedy School, 2022.

## Appendix 1: Research Methodology

This section describes the research methodology and background for this research.

David Jay from the Center for Humane Technology and Althea Middleton-Detzner from Search for Common Ground provided a list of and introduction to tech company staff who could be interviewed for this report. Funding to support the research came from two main sources. Search for Common Ground secured funding from KBF Canada to hire Althea Middleton-Detzner and the Toda Peace Institute supported research by Lisa Schirch, based at the University of Notre Dame. Researchers Althea Middleton-Detzner and Lisa Schirch conducted one-hour long interviews with key tech stakeholders including both developers and policy leaders between December 2021 and April 2022.

In addition, Schirch conducted research interviews with the UN and civil society groups and conducted a literature review. The research for this report draws on four sources of information, listed below. Schirch wrote this report receiving important feedback from colleagues and interviewees.

Silicon Valley Tech Insiders	Critics of Tech Product Harms	Civil Society and UN Offices	Funders
Interviews with 24 current staff at prominent Silicon-Valley-based tech companies as well as smaller tech start-ups	Books, articles, and report feedback from experts analysing tech harms, particularly informed by the Center for Humane Technology	Interviews with 32 stakeholders using technology to support social cohesion with staff at the United Nations and civil society organisations working on human rights, development, peacebuilding, and social responsibility.	Venture capital and funding organisations supporting startups working on social cohesion

### Research Questions

This research included a variety of topics and themes, outlined below. This report focuses on research questions 4 and 5. Other reports published out of this research focus on the other topics.

1. **History:** What is the evolution or history of tech company efforts to reduce digital harms related to polarization and to improve social cohesion?
2. **Incentives:** What are the incentives and disincentives to meaningful efforts to reduce tech harms and to improve tech contributions to social cohesion?
3. **Achievements:** What are design affordances, elements, and examples of tech contributions to social cohesion and/or to reduce harmful conflict? What are some of

the most significant achievements of these initiatives to prevent harm or to incentivize cohesion?

4. **Partnerships:** What are the opportunities and barriers to meaningful collaboration, partnership, and innovation between technology companies and organisations working on bridge building, peacebuilding, and social cohesion?
5. **Opportunities:** What recommendations for meaningful incentives and effective cross-sector partnership could be included in a “Roadmap for Collaboration on Social Cohesion” that will be responsive to the interests of the technology sector?

### **Geographical scope and limitations**

While there was an attempt to broaden the interviewees to include tech startups in other regions of the world, the scope of the research focused primarily on the “big tech” companies based in Silicon Valley. Interviewees primarily work for social media platforms and search engines. The limitations of this research include a lack of time and access to staff working in tech innovation hubs in other parts of the world, and in other sectors of technology.

### **Confidentiality**

The content of this report and any mistakes are solely the responsibility of the author. The organisations commissioning this research and the interviewees are not responsible for the content. The report identifies the interviewees but does not attribute any information in the report to any particular interviewee. The researchers promised anonymity to research interviewees in order to gain their confidential insights. This report captures patterns that emerged from the interviews but does not reveal which interviewees made specific statements. The author cites specific interviewees only when they have published their point of view in other venues. Interviewees were offered an opportunity to review the draft report to offer feedback and corrections.

## Appendix 2:

While unique in its focus, this Council is a subset of other initiatives that are exploring the broader impact of technology on society. These broader initiatives include, for example, [Center for Humane Technology](#), [New Public](#), [Unfinished Live](#), [All Tech is Human](#), [Data & Society](#), [Research4Impact](#), Harvard University's [Berkman Klein Center for Internet and Society](#), Cornell University's [Citizens and Technology Lab](#) and the bipartisan US Congressional [Council for Responsible Technology](#). Other initiatives focus on the challenges of addressing harmful content online. These initiatives include for example the [Trust and Safety Foundation](#), [Integrity Institute](#), [Stanford Internet Observatory](#), the University of Toronto's [Citizen Lab](#), Duke University's [Polarization Lab](#), New York University's [Stern School of Business](#), and the [Aspen Institute's Commission on Information Disorders](#).

## The Author

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