

# **AVERY REYNA**

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**New America** | Digital Impact and Governance Initiative (DIGI) Intern

## **To the members of the DIGI team—**

The ever-evolving relationship between civil society and highly available public information has been a fascination of mine since I started my undergraduate education. While studying the likes of Political Science, Sociology, and Cultural Anthropology, clearly understanding how societies have been changed and even warped due to the advent of technology is foundational in almost all my coursework. Nevertheless, I want to apply my knowledge outside of the classroom. Whether this is through internships or on-campus activities, the work I have produced falls right in line with the responsibilities of a DIGI Intern.

Making sure others in the tech industry understand how their work deeply intersects with the livelihoods of everyday citizens is a passion of mine, and I decided to get an early start on campus. Serving as the Workshops Director for a student-run organization called “KnightHacks”, I introduce Computer Science students, both beginner and advanced, to the topics of ethics in AI, Machine Learning, and more. I methodically pick out quotes from academic papers, visualizations crafted by experts, and material from those that come before me in order to put together presentations that have an impact on how these students view technology in the upper-level classes and beyond. Pairing this with emerging technologies that are being produced by the likes of OpenAI, DeepMind, and R1 universities, we foster discussions in these workshops, as opening up to new perspectives in the tech landscape is crucial for the development of future engineers, politicians, and researchers.

I have demonstrated my organizational and research aptitude through prior internships outlined in my resumé, most notably my time spent at The Hub Project and Council on Foreign Relations. However, providing more context for these roles better illustrates the impact I can have on New America. Operating in small teams, I was given a large amount of autonomy over all sorts of projects, ranging from semester-long, public-facing factsheet endeavors to simply covering for a coworker by taking their role of notetaking in a meeting. Everything I did was intentional. Some of my work had to be directly judged by high-ranking staff members for approval and some of it was directly published on multiple websites for the public eye to decide if what I wrote was accurately displayed. Not only does this showcase my high attention to detail for the end result, but it especially highlights my ability to work and solve problems on my own, independent basis. These skills are also shown when I worked as a Research Fellow at UW Tacoma. There, I received firsthand experience with programming and writing code with a purpose. Operating at the intersection of Computer Science, Math, and Geography, I was shipping out code that analyzed the large sets of U.S. Census data we were working with, along with learning new languages and frameworks in order to fill in the gaps found within our research.

While these experiences display my vast interest in joining New America, this does not overshadow how much I believe in the mission of the think tank. All too often, those working in the tech industry and professions which heavily involve the STEM landscape have little understanding regarding their impact on the material world. Building large-scale technical projects require a level of care that is only received by researching topics about the potential effect you could have on the surrounding world. To me, this is where New America comes in. By publishing content that addresses problems in the public sector through the lens of digital governance, individuals and companies alike can now better their platform for everyone involved. I want to be a part of that, wholeheartedly.

Thank you for your consideration and I look forward to growing with you all.

**Avery Reyna**