

Charles Berret, Ph.D.

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Education

- 2011-18 Columbia University. New York, NY.
MA, MPhil, PhD in Communications.
Dissertation: *The Cultural Contradictions of Cryptography: A History of Codes and Ciphers in Twentieth-Century America*.
Advisor: Michael Schudson.
- 2009-10 Northwestern University. Evanston, IL.
MS in Editorial Journalism.
- 2003-07 University of Michigan. Ann Arbor, MI.
AB in Philosophy (High Distinction, Phi Beta Kappa).

Experience

- 2022– Postdoctoral Fellow. Critical Data Visualization.
Linköping University, Sweden.
- 2020–22 Postdoctoral Fellow. Department of Computer Science.
University of British Columbia. Vancouver, BC.
- 2018–20 Visiting Assistant Professor. School of Journalism, Writing, and Media.
+ Department of Computer Science (Affiliated Faculty).
University of British Columbia. Vancouver, BC.
- 2018 Writer-in-Residence. Department of English, program in Media Studies.
Yeshiva University. New York, NY.
- 2016-18 Research Fellow. Brown Institute for Media Innovation.
Columbia University. New York, NY.
- 2015-16 Research Fellow. Tow Center for Digital Journalism.
Columbia University. New York, NY.

Book Project

Berret. *Cryptographic Amnesia: Code, Power, and the Algorithmic Mediation of Everyday Life*.

– Manuscript in development for MIT Press series in History and Foundations of Information Science. Expected completion: Summer 2024.

Articles and Conference Papers

- 2023 Kasica, Berret, and Munzner. “Dirty Data in the Newsroom: Comparing Data Journalism and Data Science.” ACM Computer Human Interaction (CHI) conference.
- 2022 Berret and Munzner. “Iceberg Sensemaking: A Process Model for Critical Data Analysis and Visualization.” <https://arxiv.org/abs/2204.04758>

- 2022 Berret. “If Communication is a Bridge, Cryptography is a Drawbridge: A Stage-Based Model of Communication Processes.” ICA 2022 (Philosophy, Theory, and Critique Division).
- 2020 Kasica, Berret, and Munzner. “TableScraps: An Actionable Framework for Multi-Table Data Wrangling From An Artifact Study of Computational Journalism.” IEEE Transactions on Visualization and Computer Graphics. Proc. IEEE InfoVis Special Issue (27:2). <https://arxiv.org/abs/2009.02373>
- 2019 Yu and Berret. “Knowing Together: An Experiment in Collaborative Photogrammetry.” ACM SIGGRAPH Art Gallery and Art Papers. Special Issue of *Leonardo* (52:4).
- 2017 Berret. “Walter Benjamin and the Question of Print in Media History.” *Journal of Communication Inquiry* (41:4).
- 2016 Berret. *Guide to SecureDrop: An Emerging Platform for Secure and Anonymous Communication in Newsrooms*. Report published by the Tow Center for Digital Journalism, Columbia University.
- 2016 Berret and Phillips. *Teaching Data and Computational Journalism*. Report published by Columbia Journalism School and the Knight Foundation.
- 2014 Brideau and Berret. “A Brief Introduction to Impact—The Meme Font.” *Journal of Visual Culture* (13:3).
- 2014 Berret. “Sensors and Sensibilia: A Historical Survey.” Chapter in *Sensor Journalism*, edited by Fergus Pitt. Published by the Tow Center for Digital Journalism.

Talks and Panels

- 2021 “Newsroom Sensemaking: A Process Model for Epistemic Humility in Data and Computational Journalism.” Computation+Journalism Symposium, Northeastern University (virtual).
- 2020 “Information, Entropy, and Play: The Ludic Cybernetics of Claude Shannon and John Cage.” What Is Information? Conference, University of Oregon (virtual).
- 2019 “Two Varieties of Digital Utopianism.” What Is Technology? Conference, University of Oregon.
- 2017 “Collecting Randomness for the Vernam System: The Cryptographic Use of Noise at Bell Labs.” Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) Annual Meeting, Philadelphia.
- 2017 “Whistleblowing in the Digital Newsroom: How Wikileaks and Edward Snowden Prepared Journalists for the Age of Trump.” Public lecture as writer-in-residence at Yeshiva University.
- 2017 “Scraping Text and Analyzing Social Media.” Two guest lectures (with Alexandre Gonçalves) for the Stabile Program, Columbia Journalism School.
- 2016 “Teaching Data and Computational Journalism: Lessons from a Nationwide Study of Journalism Education.” Presentation (with Cheryl Phillips) of study results at the Association of Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC) Conference, Minneapolis.
- 2016 “On the Bubble: An Internet Scale Investigation into Location-Based Algorithmic Filtering of Political Content.” Paper accepted but not delivered (with Rebecca Weiss). International Communication Association (ICA), Seoul.

- 2016 “Data, Computation, and Journalism: Skills to Innovate in a Changing Media Landscape.” Invited lecture. Hariri Institute for Computational Science & Engineering, Boston University.
- 2016 “Guide to SecureDrop: An Emerging Platform for Whistleblowing in the Newsroom.” Report launch talk and panel at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism, Columbia Journalism School.
- 2015 “Understanding SecureDrop: Information Security and Emerging Journalistic Platforms.” Paper delivered at the Society for Social Studies of Science (4S) Conference, Denver.
- 2014 “Mesh Nets, Journalism, and the Umbrella Protest in Hong Kong.” Panel discussion for the ‘Journalism After Snowden’ series at the Tow Center for Digital Journalism, Columbia Journalism School.
- 2013 “The Quantitative Turn in the History of Technology.” Talk and workshop (with Kevin Gotkin). Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) Annual Meeting, Portland, Maine.
- 2012 “The Techniques and Aesthetics of Phototypesetting.” Paper delivered at the Society for the History of Technology (SHOT) annual meeting, Copenhagen.
- 2012 “Media Analysis and Social Pedagogy.” Keynote panel (with Madiha Tahir, Jonah Bossewitch, and Travis Mushett) at the Technology and Education Symposium, American University in Cairo.

Workshops & Invited Lectures

- 2020 “Knowing Together.” Critical Visualization for Humanities Research: Designing for People, Context, and Politics. UBC Peter Wall Institute for Advanced Studies.
- 2020 “Information Security and the Information Society: The Birth of Digital Cryptography as an Instrument of Dissent.” UBC Science and Technology Studies Colloquium.
- 2019 “Data Visualization, the Press, and Public Opinion.” VIZ@UBC lecture series.
- 2019 “Digital Security and Social Media.” Guest lecture for “Decoding Social Media” course at UBC.
- 2017-9 “Scraping Data From the Web: Free Resources For Storytellers.” Annual workshop for ‘Data+Narrative’ at Boston University.
- 2016 “Teaching Data and Computational Journalism.” AEJMC pre-conference workshop on Teaching Algorithmic Transparency.
- 2016 “Sensors for Journalism” (with Mark Hansen and Tom Igoe). Two workshops at Columbia Journalism School on physical computing as a reporting method.
- 2014 “Encryption for Journalists.” Guest lecture at Pace University.

Grants and Awards

- 2020 Canadian Association of Journalists — Data Journalism Award.
For the “Tainted Water” series by the Institute for Investigative Journalism (I managed the work of six reporters and served on the IJ editorial board; reporting was conducted by a team of 120 professional journalists, university instructors, and student reporters).
- 2019 McConnell Foundation — Research Grant (\$250,000).
Project: Investigative journalism on topics such as contaminated drinking water, the impact of Covid-19 in indigenous communities, and mass surveillance in Canada. (Awarded to the Institute for Investigative Journalism, comprising 12 applicants on the editorial board.)

- 2015 Tow Center for Digital Journalism — Research Grant (\$30,000).
Project: One-year study to understand how journalists use the encrypted whistleblowing platform SecureDrop. Research methods combined in-depth interviews with data scraped from the web.
- 2014 Brown Institute for Media Innovation — Research Grant (\$120,000).
Project (with Cecilia Reyes and Max Tucker da Silva): SearchLight, a tool to help investigative journalists report on algorithmic bias in search engines.
- 2011-14 Columbia University — Doctoral Fellowship (full tuition and stipend).
- 2009-10 Northwestern University — Medill Scholarship (partial tuition).
- 2004-07 University of Michigan — James B. Angell Scholarship (partial tuition).

Courses Taught

- 2023 “Gender and Diversity in Engineering.” Undergraduate lecture and lab (13 students). Linköping University, division of Gender Studies (Tema-Genus).
- 2020 “Journalism Practices & Standards.” Graduate research methods course (35 students). UBC Journalism, Writing, and Media.
- 2018-20 “Investigative Journalism.” Graduate capstone course (3-5 students). UBC Journalism, Writing, and Media.
- 2018-19 “Data Visualization.” Graduate skills module (20 students). UBC Journalism, Writing, and Media.
- 2018-19 “Integrated Journalism.” Graduate intensive in basic reporting methods (35 students, teaching team of 6). UBC Journalism, Writing, and Media.
- 2018 “Journalism Ethics and Leadership.” Graduate lecture course (35 students). UBC Journalism, Writing, and Media.
- 2018 “The Digital Newsroom.” Upper-level undergraduate seminar/workshop (5 students). Yeshiva University, English and Media Studies.

Journalism, Writing, and Editing

- 2019-21 Digital Security Lead. Global Reporting Centre. Vancouver, BC, Canada.
- 2018–21 Data Editor. Institute for Investigative Journalism. Montreal, QC, Canada.
- 2017–18 Writer. Google Fonts and Google Design. New York, NY, USA.
- 2010–11 Book Review Editor. *TriQuarterly*. Evanston, IL, USA.
- 2007–08 Assistant Editor. *Egypt Today*. Cairo, Egypt.

Scholarly & Professional Associations

- International Communication Association (ICA)
- Society for the History of Technology (SHOT)
- Society for Social Studies of Science (4S)
- National Institute for Computer-Assisted Reporting (NICAR)

Technical Skills

Code Python, Bash, R. Working knowledge of Ruby, JavaScript, PHP, Java, Processing, C, C++ and creative libraries like D3, Cinder, and OpenFrameworks.

Markup XHTML, CSS, Markdown, Pandoc, LaTeX.

Dev Git, Docker, Vagrant.

Admin Linux/Unix, Apache, Nginx, Ansible, SaltStack.

DB MySQL, PostgreSQL, MongoDB.

CMS WordPress, Omeka, Jekyll.

Hardware Physical computing, sensors, basic circuit design.

Languages

English (native).

German (advanced written and spoken).

Tibetan (basic written and spoken).

French (basic written).

Arabic (basic spoken).