

# That's Why I'm the Law-Talking Guy

Information Science PhD Visit Day

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THAT'S WHY YOU'RE  
THE JUDGE AND I'M THE  
LAW-TALKING GUY.

# My timeline

- 1995–1999: computer science major
- 1999–2001: professional programmer
- 2002–2005: law student
- 2007–2016: law professor
- 2016–now: law professor *at Cornell Tech*

# My mission statement

“I study how laws regulating software affect freedom, wealth, and power. I try to help lawyers and technologists understand each other. My research interests include content moderation, digital copyright, generative AI, digital property, and other topics in computer and Internet law.”

# My scholarly lane

- I do *original research* in law
- My work is *heavily informed* by computer science
- I *arbitrage ideas* from IS into law: “The first task of technology law is always to understand how people actually use the technology.”
  - NB: I am not trained in IS research methods
  - I am a consumer of IS research, not a producer

Some recent projects

# Generative AI and copyright

- *Talkin' 'Bout AI Generation* (2025) (with Katherine Lee and A. Feder Cooper) + *The Files are in the Computer* (2025) (with A. Feder Cooper)
- Combination:
  - Technically accurate but accessible (to lawyers) descriptions of generative-AI technology
  - Legally accurate but accessible (to technologists) descriptions of the copyright doctrine

# Generative AI and legal interpretation

- *Generative Misinterpretation* (2026) (with Ben Sobel and David Stein)
- Scholars and judges are using LLMs to interpret terms in contracts and statutes. But!
  - Their results are highly sensitive to minor implementation details
  - How would we know whether an LLM-generated result is correct?

# Content moderation

- *Listeners' Choices Online (2025)*
- Taxonomy of speech intermediaries:  
broadcast, delivery, hosting, & selection
- Listener-oriented regulation to protect access  
to speech while giving users effective filters

# Open source governance

- *How Licenses Learn* (with Madiha Zahrah Choksi)
- Four case studies of open-source community disputes over license choice
- Theoretical framework of licenses as a form of governance infrastructure

Working with law

# Law as part of an information science PhD

- Law as *data* for computational analysis
- Law as *doctrine* that regulates technical systems
- Law as *policy* that implements privacy, transparency, participation, etc.
- Law as source of *concepts* for use in other fields

# Roles I can play

- ~~Advisor~~
- Committee member for dissertations with a significant legal component
- Seminar teacher (LAW 7710 and LAW 7688) for engaging with legal scholarship
- Law-talking guy for introductions and pointers into the legal literature

# Discussion