IRGF Final Report
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Project Title: The Need to Rename Tech

1.1 Project Summary

The Need to Rename Tech is a book about words that fool us into thinking that the digital technologies we use every day are beautiful, benign, and consequence-free. The collection shows how metaphors used by Big Tech to promote digital technologies are reductive or misleading.

1.2 Student involvement

This grant supported one student.

1.3 Dissemination and Knowledge Mobilization

This grant supported the production of an edited collection titled, The Need to Rename Tech. The collection will be published by Palgrave Macmillan in early 2026. It counts 17 chapters contributed by 22 authors working in Brazil, Canada, Denmark, England, Scotland, and the United States.

1.4 Project Outcomes and Impacts

Research Contribution Technologies often bring about social and political harms, but these harms are concealed by language that obscures and obfuscates (e.g., the "cloud" and "Amazon"). For this reason, media and communication scholars have long called for new language to talk about technology. This book responds to this longstanding call. Each of the book's chapters subverts Big Tech's careful branding and rechristens popular technologies in ways that point explicitly to their problems. In doing so, The Need to Rename Tech is a useful tool for media and communications scholars whose research and teaching are undergirded by critical theory, technology studies, social justice, and scholarly activism. This project is an extension of work that I have been doing since 2019. Beginning with an award-winning paper written during my doctoral studies and continuing into my doctoral thesis, I have inquired into the performativity of language surrounding technology. Together, these projects have laid the groundwork for making the call-to-action we make in the book: a bottom-up adoption within scholarly communities of anti-ableist, anti-racist, anticolonial, and anti-extractivist language surrounding technology. As such, a course is now charted for me to solicit active engagement from local, national, and global scholarly communities. Community Support One way this project supported the scholarly community was by providing mentorship to junior scholars who authored chapters. For example, I received the following note from a TNRT contributor: "I sincerely want to thank you. Though the scale is different, this process has felt almost like writing a second PhD thesis—especially with the level of care and insight you've brought to it." Partnerships Developing relationships with scholars around the world and further solidifying an existing relationship with my co-editor, Robin Mansell,

a globally-renowned scholar in media and communication studies, will no doubt support future research projects and potentially open up opportunities for students. As one example, contributing author Dr. Gordon Gow from the University of Alberta and his colleague, Dr. Nicolette Little, are in touch with me following TNRT about co-organizing an annual conference for MRU, U of A, and University of Calgary students.