

CONGRESSIONAL HACKATHON 7.0

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<speaker of the house="mike johnson">  
<house democratic leader="hakeem jeffries">  
<acting chief administrative officer=  
  "anne m. dressendorfer binsted">
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INTRODUCTION

The seventh Congressional Hackathon, hosted on September 17, 2025, was a resounding success, bringing together over 300 passionate participants eager to innovate and modernize Congress. This year's bipartisan event, co-hosted by Speaker Mike Johnson, Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries, and the Office of the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO), continued the tradition of fostering technological advancements within the legislative process.

Over 50 attendees dove into the first-ever intensive eight-hour coding session, which kicked off the event and culminated in presentations on creative solutions. The proposals included building a map of the U.S. by district to show household impact on the SALT deduction abolition proposal, creating a data pipeline from [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) to score legislative votes against campaign

promises, generating hearing transcripts within minutes using large language models (LLMs), and building interactive dashboards to identify missing YouTube event IDs for committee events. The coding session won the most popular breakout group presentation by all attendees at the end of the event.

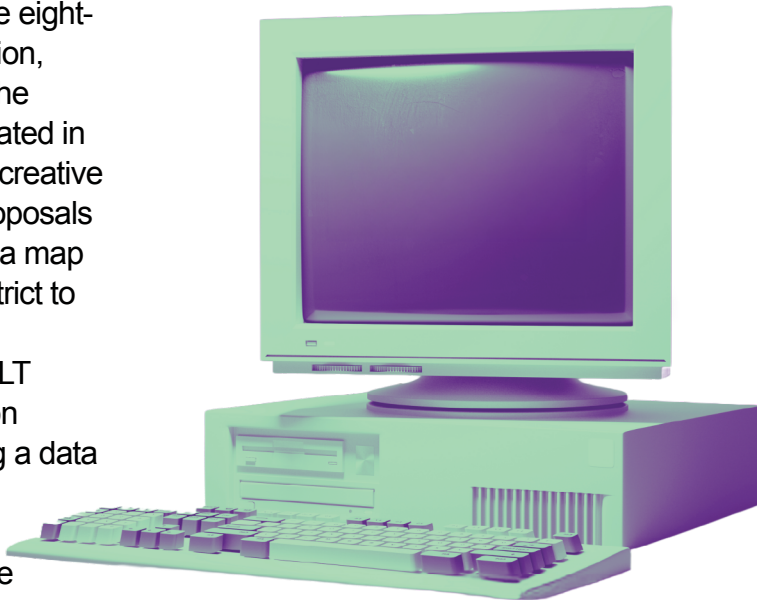
This year's Hackathon featured breaking news as well. During his remarks, Speaker Johnson announced that "we will deploy artificial intelligence across this institution" and that the House had recently purchased 6,000 Microsoft Copilot Premium licenses and would advance other AI technologies as well. Thanks to the

work of the CAO and the Committee on House Administration Modernization and Innovation Subcommittee, House staff are now using Copilot and other AI tools, making workflows more efficient and helping offices better serve the American people.

Hackathon 7.0 was also distinguished by a series full of notable firsts. We witnessed active bicameral participation, with a Senator speaking at the event for the first time — South Dakota Speaker Mike Rounds who shared analog

frustrations from the upper chamber. We also had a lightning round highlight collaborative efforts between the House CAO and the Senate to digitize the Capitol lights and bells system, updating Members and staff on the Floor status of both chambers. Another first was an official Hackathon partnership with the Office of Cybersecurity

team, leading to a unique inaugural breakout group session featuring interactive phishing exercises and a cyber-focused closing reception that doubled as a Cyber Fair. And finally, we had our first special breakout group run by a committee with a specific problem area to work on. Staffer Jennifer Hernandez with the House Appropriations Committee led this special subgroup on Modern Committees, collaborating to enhance the appropriations process. Discovery efforts were conducted with actual committee staff and other attendees around how to improve that process.



<INTRODUCTION>

The Hackathon has consistently delivered groundbreaking projects that have increased accessibility across the Hill. Last year's highlights included LegiDex, a centralized House staff directory that launched in July 2024, which has since been an unqualified success with 8,000 active House users and 112,000 sessions that average five minutes each.

Innovative advancements in constituent services emerged in breakout groups during Hackathon 7.0, including publishing a taxonomy and descriptions for categorizing congressional casework via CaseCompass.

The ModCom Subcommittee also added new data and privacy redaction options and increased messaging ahead of the 119th Congressional Transition. Additionally, the Congressional App Challenge, modeled after the popular Congressional Art Competition, returned as a partner, further engaging young tech enthusiasts in the legislative process.

As we reflect on the innovative ideas and collaborative spirit of Hackathon 7.0, it is evident that this event remains a vital platform for driving technological progress in Congress, ensuring that our legislative practices evolve to meet the needs of the American people.



TOP RECOMMENDED ACTION ITEMS

Artificial Intelligence

- 01.** Convene regular forums where staff can share and demonstrate how they are using AI in their offices, fostering an exchange of best practices (*Lightning Round, Zach Johnson*).
- 02.** Develop immersive augmented reality and AI-powered tools that allow the public to experience congressional activity in real time, while also enabling staff to use agentic workflows and retrieval-augmented generation (RAG) to automatically summarize conversations, prepare briefing materials, and generate context- rich reports.
- 03.** Increase transparency through Members' publishing and promote how they are using AI in their work.
- 04.** Streamline administrative tasks, including automated batching and categorization of legislative correspondence, tagging and routing casework to the appropriate agency or staff, and verifying the accuracy of documents and images

to guard against misinformation.

- 05.** Explore advanced applications such as facial recognition for relevant media and security purposes, and the creation of custom GPT models trained on member perspectives to simulate caucus-style deliberations on complex policy issues.

Modern Committees

- 01.** Establish a centralized scheduling system for Senate chair-people to coordinate and deconflict committee meetings, ensuring more efficient use of time and resources. (*Senator Rounds*)
- 02.** Restructure hearings to prioritize subject matter experts over performance, with improved use of media, presentations, and digital tools to enhance the quality and accessibility of the hearing process.
- 03.** Experiment with joint committee hearings across related jurisdictions, such as CHA

<TOP RECOMMENDED ACTION ITEMS>

and legislative branch appropriations, to foster collaboration and streamline budget discussions.

04. Implement metadata standards for hearings, including clear tracking of topics, transcripts, invited witnesses, and prior committee participation.

05. Modernize witness tracking by simplifying the truth-in-testimony process and creating a centralized repository of witnesses, replacing the current email-based system with a more efficient and searchable platform.

Legislative Data

01. Implement a mobile notification system that delivers real-time alerts for House Floor bells and Senate Webster signals, ensuring Members, staff, and the public can stay informed of votes, quorum calls, and procedural actions directly on their devices.

02. Create a centralized legislative data ecosystem that incorporates standardized metadata tracking across the entire data lifecycle, including amendments, hearings, and reports, ensuring information is traceable.

03. Modernize committee reports by publishing data in machine-readable formats such as CSV, alongside traditional PDFs, so that tables and figures are accessible to developers, researchers, and the public.

04. Publish legislative data with version control, including diffs and comprehensive data dumps at the end of each Congress, to support developers in building pipelines without struggling against fragmented APIs.

05. Improve budget transparency by sharing clear, accessible information on how funds flow within accounts, supported by standardized intake tools that map submissions to accepted appropriation.

06. Establish mechanisms for local relevance by creating individual feedback loops that allow constituents to provide input and receive tailored

information about how legislation affects them. This should include official government forms where individuals can input demographic details to see projected impacts of legislation and later submit follow-up information on how they were actually affected.

07. Label all legislative data clearly and in a consistent structure to ensure usability, accuracy, and trust across stakeholders.

Constituent Services and Communications

01. Develop a standardized platform for constituents to submit casework requests.

02. Proactively engage with constituents by implementing regular outreach across districts such as calls or emails to check in on constituent needs and offering opt-in information services that notify individuals about changes relevant to them, such as polling place updates after voter registration.

03. Create a volunteer program to leverage civil society and subject matter experts in improving infrastructure and addressing low-hanging data challenges.

04. Disseminate data in formats that are useful to the public and ensure that document intelligence is modernized to be event-driven.

05. Standardize the appropriations intake process through Member websites, allowing the public to track submissions and map them against what is ultimately accepted, creating transparency and accountability in funding decisions.

Cybersecurity

01. Transition from user training to human risk management.

REMARKS FROM VIP SPEAKERS

Speaker Mike Johnson (LA-04)

Good afternoon, everyone. As Speaker of the House, it's my privilege to welcome you all to the United States Capitol for the 7th Annual Congressional Hackathon.

Let me begin by thanking Leader Jeffries and our Chief Administrative Officer, Catherine Szpindor, for their help in organizing this hugely important event — as well as Steny Hoyer for his support through the years.

The Hackathon brings together leaders in AI, data, IT, and industry — an extraordinary brain trust of innovation — to bring fresh perspective to some of the toughest and oldest problems in Congress.

This year's Hackathon could not come at a more important time. As the pace of technology ticks up every year, government has been slow to keep our pace.

In some respects, we've been crawling behind where industry has sprinted forward. Too often, government operates on a 10-, 20-, even 30-year lag when it comes to embracing the technology of today.

My friend and former colleague, Cathy McMorris Rodgers, once summed it up best:

"What we're seeing is a 19th-century institution often using 20th-century technology to respond to 21st-century problems. We need to change that." That point was driven home earlier this year when Bret Baier of Fox News conducted a great interview with the DOGE team.

It was eye-opening — and frankly a little embarrassing — to see some of the ways that government still operates in the Stone Age. Perhaps the most egregious example was the underground mine where millions of Social Security documents are sorted and filed by hand.



Now that's not to poke fun at the Administration. Congress is no model for efficiency, and there are many reasons for that. The historian, Robert Caro, alluded to this very point when he said that: "Congress has a deep, vested interest in its own inefficiency."

In many instances, we've maintained a status quo that runs counter to the interests of the American people. We all know and can see that fact for ourselves. But there's a business principle that if you're failing, you're not innovating enough. Some of the most transformative companies today live by that maxim. And I would submit that Congress would do well to learn from it, too.

The Constitution empowers the first branch to organize itself, to write its own rules, and to appropriate the money we need to do our jobs. But the truth is, government won't get there on its own. We won't be able to modernize from the inside out.

That's where you come in. We need the intellectual weight, the fresh perspective, and the practical expertise in this room to help us reimagine Congress into the 21st century.

So, as we begin today, I encourage you to look boldly toward the future, think outside the box, and challenge the status quo.

<REMARKS FROM VIP SPEAKERS>

Already you've helped us make congressional data publicly available, implement digital signatures for constituent releases, ease congressional pain points such as committee scheduling conflicts, and introduce the Library of Congress letter exchange.

In many ways, the Hackathon pioneered the DOGE model: bring together an outside brain trust to make government more efficient and effective.

I can tell you my colleagues and I are eager to see what ideas and solutions you bring to the table. If we do this right, the work you do has the potential not only to improve the way Congress works. But hopefully we can begin to restore trust among the American people with this precious institution.

One quick word on AI before I conclude. We hear about it constantly. It's one of the most transformational technologies in history, but also potentially one of the most dangerous.

In Congress, it's so important that we hear from the people who have the know-how and expertise to put this technology into use for the betterment of humanity.

One way we're doing that is by keeping an open and honest dialogue on AI. The Trump Administration appointed the first-ever AI Czar, David Sacks, to ensure the US wins the global AI race. And last February, Leader Jeffries and I launched the Bipartisan Task Force on Artificial Intelligence.

In Congress, we are examining the ways in which AI can help this institution operate more efficiently and help our offices effectively administer services to our constituents. Fortunately, from the outset, the House has been tracking developments with AI closely and has prepared to deploy this technology.

And here's why it matters: AI tools don't just make us faster or smarter. They unlock extraordinary savings for the government and add to Congress' capacity to better serve the American people.

So, I am proud to announce that this fall, Congress will make history. We will deploy artificial intelligence across this institution.

Thanks to the work of the CAO and the Committee on House Administration's Modernization and Innovation Subcommittee, 6,000 House staffers will gain access to Microsoft Copilot chat. This is an important moment in the history of this institution, and evidence that we mean it when we say that the U.S. can and must win the AI race.

But I want to be clear — this is not the finish line. We will closely evaluate this pilot program over the next year, and we'll continue dialogue with other AI developers on how their technologies can help Congress better serve our constituents.

We are extremely excited to begin this project, and we couldn't think of a better venue to announce it than alongside all of you — men and women who have volunteered your time and expertise for the betterment of this institution.

So, thank you all very much, and I wish you the best success today.

Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries (NY-08)

The Congressional Hackathon has for years served to bring together those who work inside the halls of Congress with outside experts passionate about the legislative process to ensure that, as new technologies are developed, we are equipped to innovate simultaneously.

This event is a unique opportunity to leverage technologies such as artificial intelligence to modernize Congress and make our work more adaptable, transparent and accessible for the American people. I am honored to co-host it once again alongside Speaker Johnson and Chief Administrative Officer Szpindor.

Chief Administrative Officer Catherine Szpindor

Welcome to the 7th Annual Congressional Hackathon. The CAO is proud to be co-hosting this annual event alongside Speaker Mike Johnson and Democratic Leader Hakeem Jeffries.

When the Hackathon was founded, it had a simple mission — bring innovation to the halls of Congress. Today, I can confidently say the Hackathon has stayed true to its mission. Throughout the history of this event, we have explored innovations in regard to artificial intelligence, cybersecurity, House committee proceedings, constituent data and services, and much more.

Earlier this year, after a successful pilot, we officially launched LegiDex. This centralized House staff directory, created by and for House staff, makes it easier than ever for staff to find their House colleagues, filter by specific interests and needs, create custom mailing lists, and update office contacts. This tool is the first of its kind here in Congress, and the idea started right here at the Hackathon.

Thank you again for making time in your busy schedules to be here today. I look forward to seeing all of the innovative ideas that are discussed today, and the impact they will have on this storied institution.

Next on our agenda, we are going to hear an update on the Congressional App Challenge, which is an official House program that is modeled after the highly popular Congressional Art Competition. I'd like to introduce the Director of that program, Joseph Alessi.

Joseph Alessi

Thank you to CAO Szpindor for the warm introduction. Thank you all for having me here today. As CAO Szpindor mentioned, I am Joe Alessi, I am the director of the Congressional App Challenge. In 2015, Congress created the



Congressional App Challenge, which is the official STEM competition of the United States House of Representatives.

Members host app challenges, coding competitions in their districts in unison each year for middle and high school students. Thousands of students compete annually. Every Member of Congress names a winner from their district to represent the district for a year, and it's grown into a major part of the congressional calendar, with enormous bipartisan support.

I'm thrilled to be here today at Hackathon 7.0, I know I believe this is the fourth Congressional Hackathon I've been to. Today also happens to be National App Challenge Day. Across the country and through the halls of Congress, young technologists and lawmakers are coming together to create solutions to real-world problems in their communities.

It happens to be the ten-year anniversary of the App Challenge, and it's grown into the largest and most prestigious STEM competition in the United States. 70,000 students from all 50 states have competed in the competition so far, with 15,000 apps created during that ten-year span.

This year, during this competition, 355 Members of the House of Representatives are hosting, which is a record for participation on the



House-side. There is a deadline for students to submit of October 30, so we are hoping to see some members and some more students between now and then.

One of the questions that we get most commonly at the App Challenge is, “You’ve been doing this for ten years – what are these students doing now?” Today, as part of National App Challenge Day, we’re also launching 25 for 25, which is an initiative to spotlight young Congressional App Challenge alumni who got their start in technology through the Congressional App Challenge. These outstanding 25 alumni are now leading tech companies in advancing research in shaping the future of technology.

In that spirit of innovation, I’m also happy to say that you’ll hear later from six outstanding Congressional App Challenge alumni who are pitching their ideas for how to use technology to improve Congress as a part of the Congressional Hackathon 7.0.

We hope that later this year or early next year some of you will decide to join us for our event in April called House of Code, which is the

winners’ celebration for the 2025 Congressional App Challenge that will take place in this same venue. Hundreds of district winners will be here from around the country to showcase their apps in the largest student demo day in the nation’s capital.

If you would like to learn more about the app challenge, if you would like to check out our 25 for 25 list, or learn more about National App Challenge Day, or just get involved, you can do so by checking out our website CongressionalAppChallenge.us. And with that I will lend the stage back. Thank you.

Representative Bryan Steil (WI-01)

Good afternoon and thank you so much for being here. I’m really excited to be part of the seventh Hackathon. I come from a business background before I came to Congress, and from that experience you see how the private sector leans in on technology to make sure that businesses are running efficiently and effectively. In many ways we’ve embraced new technology here in the House, but in other ways, we continue to do things the way we’ve always done.

And so, I wanted to start off by thanking each of you for coming and sharing your time and expertise to help us run more efficiently, more effectively, on behalf of the American people. I serve as the Chairman of the Committee on Administration which oversees operations of the House, and so these issues are front of mind. We have a Modernization Subcommittee led by Stephanie Bice, and as the Chairwoman of that Subcommittee, she’s been deeply engaged in these projects with me.

Now, there’s a handful of initiatives I think we have a huge opportunity on. I’ll close with AI, but first, let me highlight one great example of some of the recent work that’s been done by our Subcommittee. This year, we implemented new closed captioning technology to the House

community. That effort was all about making Congress accessible to all Americans. So, when you come in, if you're deaf or hard of hearing, you can now fully participate in real time in the House chamber, in addition to being able to watch different committees do their work.

Turning to AI, I frequently think about how this technology can root out waste, fraud, and abuse. It can analyze trends and identify ways that bad actors are trying to steal taxpayer money.

AI can also help lawmakers review large amounts of constituent correspondence when a major issue is being debated in Congress. It can help the public more easily locate information on legislation or specific committee activity. It can help Caseworkers navigate the complex federal bureaucracy. These are just some of the potential opportunities.

I'm proud to be involved in the efforts to help Congress better serve the American people, and I thank each of you for being here today to help us accomplish that mission.

Representative Suhas Subramanyan (VA-10)

Hi everyone, I am Congressman Suhas Subramanyan. It's not every day that I get introduced by the Speaker of the House, so thank you. I am so proud to be here. Thank you Speaker Johnson; let's give him a round of applause.

I am so excited about this Congressional Hackathon. I want to thank everyone for being a part of this. We should absolutely be leveraging technology to make our services see the American people better, but we should be leveraging the amazing talent we have, and that's you. Thank you so much for participating in something like this.

I know when I got to Congress in January, I had lots of ideas on things we could do to make



things easier for our office; I think I asked for a chatbot and an AI system for our phones because we had a lot of calls. I have lots more things I would like to see. I came from the tech world before and before that, I was in the CTO's office in the White House. I was actually just chatting with the Former Deputy CTO, and it's just an amazing time right now to be able to make services better to the American people.

I think in the end, if people have a bad experience with their government — with their Members of Congress — they distrust government vehemently. If you think about going to the DMV, and if you have a bad experience there, do you trust them to get your Medicaid benefits on time or anything else, right? I've been working my whole career on trying to make government services better, more efficient. You all are stepping up to the plate right now and helping us do that in a really big way.

I just want to thank you so much for being here, for doing this. If you want to hear some of my ideas I have them, but most of all I want to hear some of your ideas. I'm really excited to see some of the projects and learn about them and implement them in my office. Thanks again and stay in touch, we appreciate it. Thank you.

Senator Mike Rounds, South Dakota

Hey, good afternoon. Let me just begin by saying: thank you for everybody showing up and going to work again. I remember when I first got here — matter of fact, I wasn't quite here yet; I was elected in 2014. I started getting the request for information and the recommendations on how we were supposed to behave in the United States Senate. And after about three or four days of information coming at us, we decided we would start a thing called the Stupid File.

The Stupid File began with Volume One. We carried it forward until such time as we were sworn in in January, at which time we quit Stupid File Volume One and we started Stupid File Volume Two. We carried that forward for almost the next six months. During that time period, it was that point in which we were all housed in mobile homes or trailers out in the middle of the Russell courtyard. It took six months at that time for the Senate to have those of us who were new to move into our office, at which time we then started Volume Three.

We quit that particular volume on page five. The reason I share that with you is this is not something that is going to go away quickly, but when you start trying to analyze and figure out what it is that should be done and why we do things that we do, every once in a while you're going to look back and say I wish had started Stupid File a long time ago. Then you're going to start trying to figure out the things that need to get fixed.

I am going to give you one example: in the Senate, if we have five separate committees, I looked at it — at that point I think I had three committees — [and] I said, "You know what? They all want to meet at the same time. Why in the world is it we can't have some kind of a schedule, like most state legislatures do? Where whether than having everyone meet at 10 o'clock on Tuesdays and Wednesdays, why



is it that we simply can't have an agreement amongst the chairmen that they are going to meet at times where people could get to more than one committee at a time and not running around looking like you're dissing the people that are sitting in front of you?"

What I found out was that this was not a new idea. In fact, I went to one of the senior chairman and I said, "Look, I got this thing out back." He said, "I really like that idea. Why don't you go to work on that, and you let me know when you got a solution?," to which I found out he'd been working on it, and he decided about 15 years earlier there had not been a solution that the other chairmen were going to follow up on. But you have got to start some place.

Today you have a new tool, and that new tool that you have is Artificial Intelligence, which is clearly here and it's not going away. And for us, it's a matter of: are we going to use it to our advantage, or are we going to be used by it? Are we going to have our privacy invaded and are we going to find people that are utilizing it to take advantage of the time that you have and manipulate what you are trying to get done, or are you going to be using it as tool for good? And are you going to be using it to perhaps administer the roles that you have in an easier fashion?

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I really believe that since it's not going away; we have got to be doing everything we can to make it work for us and to manage it. If we don't do that, somebody else is going to. The fact that you are here, the fact that you are working on it and so forth is telling me that we are moving in the right direction. I don't know how many different ideas we have had, but let's put it this way: you're right in the middle of it. It's the people that are actually operating the House and the Senate, the folks that know the day-in and day-out routines. You are the best people to be able to look at what the challenges are and figure out what it is that might help you. It's not going to change everything overnight. But every time you come up with a new idea to simplify things, you make things better.

There was a guy who used to be a governor in South Dakota — his name was George Mickelson. He was governor back in the 1980's and early 1990's. He died in a plane crash, on his way back from an economic development tour, but he had a saying. I never forgot it because I thought it was so true. He told us that things get done by people who show up.

It makes a lot of sense. Today you're here. You're not going to solve all the problems of the world, but pick out the ones you think you can and make them better, because you are showing up for the day. With the talents you have, the experience that you got, and the opportunities ahead of you that AI may very well deliver if we do it correctly, you could make a difference.



And that difference will mean a better form of government, and one that'll actually do a better job at delivering in a timely fashion for the people that have entrusted us and think that we should be doing a better job than what we are just in the time that we've got here.

I want to say thank you; I appreciate the time that you got in it. Don't give up. Don't quit. And remember that if it was easy, it would have been done a long time ago. Thank you.

HACKATHON OVER THE YEARS

2011 2015 2017 2022 2023 2024

<the big idea> App to track tour requests.

<the big win> Bill introduced by Rep. [Name] and Sen. [Name] in 2017.
Congressional [Name] used the track team in 2018.

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<breakout group>
ARTIFICIAL
INTELLIGENCE

SUIT UP.
HACK ON.

LIGHTNING ROUNDS

01. "CongressWizard"

Rishaan Desai

*(BASIS Independent
Silicon Valley)*

Congressional offices often struggle with processing the large amount of information needed for effective decision-making, which is often spread across social media, news outlets, legislative platforms, and calendars. This results in inefficiencies and delays.

CongressWizard addresses this issue by creating smart summaries of trending social media topics, key news stories, legislative changes, and calendar events; they are then aggregated into a single, intuitive dashboard that is personalized to each member and staffer, adapting over time based on how they use it.

By significantly reducing time spent gathering information and surfacing what matters most to each office, this solution has the potential to help streamline the legislative process, allowing Members of Congress to focus on what matters most.

02. "AI Phone Agent"Akshay Akula (*Vonar.ai*)

We presented a voice AI platform that delivered human-sounding, human-thinking agents on House support lines and member office phone lines.

These agents did not just take calls — they listened, understood, and acted. They identified issues, routed callers intelligently, answered common questions instantly, and captured structured details for next steps. Most importantly, they helped constituents feel heard, ensuring every concern including casework, service needs, feedback, or policy input was



logged, tracked, and surfaced as actionable takeaways instead of getting lost in voicemail.

We also showed how staff gained a real-time operational picture of what their communities were asking for, revealing patterns, pressure points, and emerging needs. In addition, the platform functioned as a copilot for staff; it assisted with drafting responses, summarizing conversations, suggesting next actions, and accelerating follow through without adding workload.

The result was no dropped voices, no lost information, and a clearer, faster path from constituent call to constituent impact.

03. "Eli Works Brings the AI Revolution to Constituent Communications"

George Holman (*Eli Works.ai*)

Constituent communication is stuck in 2004. Newsletters and surveys don't make people feel heard, and they don't meet constituents where they are. Eli Works brings the AI revolution to constituent outreach, helping Congress spark authentic conversations with constituents at scale through a trusted, human-managed service. Here's how it works:

Each Eli begins with a headline question from a congressional office. One tap on Eli's smart emoji prompts will launch a 90-second conversation, using native digital cues that drive higher response rates and opt-ins. A brief, brand-safe chatbot exchange — human-managed and trained on each office's unique voice and policy positions — creates genuine one-on-one dialogue. Offices receive clear, actionable reports with constituent insights and follow-up suggestions. These reports can be shared publicly, creating a feedback loop that shows constituents they're heard. For additional information, please visit: www.EliWorks.ai

04. "AI-Native Constituent Engagement"

Aubrey Ottenstein (*Hilltop*)

Hilltop's product, CivIQ, is an AI-powered constituent engagement platform that addresses one of the toughest challenges on Capitol Hill: the overwhelming volume of unstructured constituent messages. Offices receive thousands of emails each week, and staff spend significant time manually sorting, tagging, and extracting positions on bills.

CivIQ integrates directly with existing constituent services systems and uses AI to automatically identify bill numbers, issue areas, and

constituent sentiment, delivering messages in clean batches with clear summaries. This reduces repetitive administrative work and gives staff more time for policy, casework, and direct service. By improving the speed and accuracy of how constituent voices are processed, CivIQ helps strengthen the relationship between lawmakers and the people they represent.

05. "Lights and Bells"

Craig Butler and Pat O'Brien
(*CAO House Digital Service and Sen. Chuck Schumer*)

The Capitol lights and bells system is a longstanding auditory and visual indicator of the current status of the House and Senate Floors. Parliamentarians control these signals through an application operated by the Architect of the Capitol (AOC) on an isolated network. However, the clock buzzers and lights are notoriously difficult to interpret.

We decided to translate the clock signals from analog electrical signals to digital data, making them accessible to Members and staff in a user-friendly manner. In collaboration with AOC electrical engineers, we developed an appliance that converts these analog signals into digital data, which is then made available through an API and calendar applications (e.g., Webster in the Senate, HouseCal in the House).

At a glance, users can now see the current state of the lights and how much time has elapsed since the status changed. This innovation empowers members and staff with real-time information about the House and Senate Floors.



06. "AI and Security: The New Battleground"

Densmore Bartly

(CAO Office of Cybersecurity)

AI technology advancements have significantly impacted the House business and cybersecurity landscape. There is an ongoing race against adversaries seeking to exploit AI integrations in House IT systems, services, applications, and security tools. The House is diligently working to identify and mitigate AI-related vulnerabilities before malicious actors can exploit them.

With the rapid emergence of new AI-powered technologies, cybersecurity efforts must continually evolve to stay ahead of threats.

To protect Congress against emerging threats, House cybersecurity has undertaken several innovative security initiatives and is evaluating various tools to secure new business models and architectures leveraging AI technologies.

07. "YouTube ↔ Congress.gov"

Abigail Haddad

(Data Research Partners LLC)

Congress posts hearing videos on YouTube and hearing records on Congress.gov. Some of these are already linked together, but most aren't. So, if you're watching a video and want the official record (or vice versa), you're often stuck doing manual detective work.

This project automatically matches YouTube videos from congressional committee channels to their official Congress.gov hearing records. It pulls structured data from the Congress.gov API and video metadata from YouTube, then uses a combination of date matching, fuzzy title comparison, and LLM assistance to figure out which video goes with which hearing.

The pipeline works like this: download meeting data from Congress.gov; parse video info from saved YouTube pages; fetch exact upload dates for each video (YouTube only shows "2 months ago" in the page source, so a separate step grabs the real dates); then, run the matching algorithm. Results get displayed in an interactive HTML viewer, where you can browse matches and see what didn't match.

Right now, it's set up for the House Energy and Commerce Committee with over 900 videos matched, but it's configurable to handle any House committee.

08. "Congressional Data Task Force"

Daniel Schuman and
Steve Dwyer

*(American Governance Institute
and House CAO)*

The legislative branch generates a massive amount of information — bills, reports, Floor proceedings, agency expert analyses, spending information, correspondence, and more. Some of it is structured and published as data, some is locked in PDFs, some comes via APIs, and some is produced by outside groups like academics and civil society. The problem is there's no roadmap. Even experts don't know everything that exists and waste time trying to figure out what exists or duplicate efforts in trying to solve problems.

I started a list of congressional data sources — what's available, who owns it, and where it can be found. You can see it here: CongressionalData.org/A-Biased-Yet-Reliable-Guide-to-Sources-of-Information-and-Data-About-Congress. But it's dated and incomplete,

and the data ecosystem has grown a lot. Many participants at today's Hackathon will be expert in their domain that others will have no idea about. Let's use today's event as a unique crowd-sourcing opportunity to transform this starting point into a community-maintained map of congressional data sources: put it on GitHub, make it open, and keep it updated together.

With a shared, living guide to congressional data, we make it easier for members, staff, researchers, technologists, journalists, and the public to know what exists and use it. That means staffers can draw from better information, civic hackers can build smarter tools, and the public can better engage with Congress.

09. "Revere CMS+: Leveraging AI to Power Constituent Services (and more)"

Jon Kokot (*Civic*)

Congressional staff are drowning in constituent messages, casework backlogs, and outdated tools. Offices routinely face 100,000+ unread emails, scattered spreadsheets, and slow legacy systems.

Civic's Revere CMS+ is the first AI-native platform built for Congress. It automates inbox sorting, legislative research, constituent profile creation, and real-time district trend analysis. Offices using Revere will save hours of staff time per day, while understanding their constituents better.

Our traction to date includes 100+ design sessions with Hill staff and 19 live demos currently running in the House and Senate. We're launching two bipartisan House pilots in January. Revere is also the only CMS built on NIST post-quantum standards, protecting congressional data from emerging cyber threats.

The next step is deploying a fully AI-native casework system that modernizes intake, routing, document collection, follow-through, and agency oversight.





10. "Polis"

Michael Manda and
Rohith Mandavilli
(*Polis Technologies Inc.*)

Polis provides an improved legislative tracking and constituent engagement solution for Congress through:

A Non-social User Interface (UI): Our [Polisus.com](https://polisus.com) web app provides the most Gen-Z friendly and data-driven feed UI for legislative activity. We've developed the most comprehensive and real-time congressional data model available, and we also build and link pages for legislation, members, committees, and votes. An iOS app will follow.

Official Users: All House and Senate Members will receive free accounts with the ability to publicly comment on legislation or create original posts.

Citizen Users: Consumers may elect to set up ID-verified accounts, enabling secure mail with the members associated with their ID's address.

We support recommendations from the Select Committee on the Modernization of Congress (House Report 117-658) by developing a platform for constituents to offer their opinions on legislation and for committees to solicit public comment, improving the quality of constituent correspondence.

11. "Constituency-Level Tax-Benefit Impact Dashboard"

Max Ghenis (*PolicyEngine*)

PolicyEngine built a congressional district impact estimation framework showing how federal tax policy affects individual districts. Using machine learning and open-source microsimulation models, we created visualizations freely available at PolicyEngine.org, showing policy impacts by district.

As a proof of concept, we analyzed abolishing the State and Local Tax (SALT) deduction cap. The visualizations showed California districts experiencing the largest negative impacts, with some losing over \$1,600 per household annually. The tool includes static and animated maps showing affected regions.

This addresses a fundamental information gap. While the Congressional Budget Office and Joint Committee on Taxation provide national estimates, Members lack data on how legislation affects their specific constituents. The dataset integrates multiple data sources and calibrates them to each district's characteristics to enable accurate impact analysis. Congressional staff can use this tool to understand constituent impacts when drafting and voting on tax and benefit legislation.

12. "Bill Drafting With a Sprinkle of AI"

Shourya Jain

and Dhruv Kathuria

(Rep. Kevin Mullin and Rep. Jan Schakowsky)

Our tool helps legislative staff consolidate and apply stakeholder feedback to bill text, no matter how it arrives. Staff can upload an initial draft of bill text and then add feedback gathered from emails, meeting notes, phone call summaries, narrative memos, or partial redlines. The tool automatically organizes, interprets, and reconciles overlapping or duplicative comments, highlighting common concerns and unclear provisions. It then generates a clean Word document with suggested redlines that integrate all the uploaded feedback, reducing manual effort and minimizing errors.

13. "Congress.gov API"

Andrew Weber

(Library of Congress)

There have been many enhancements to the Congress.gov API since last year's hackathon including two major items added — the CRS Products and House Votes.

The Congress.gov API is developed and updated based on user feedback. The Congress.gov team reviews the issues created in GitHub. The team makes improvements to the API based on this feedback. The GitHub repository contains: a Change log listing, Python and Java sample client code, and user guides and documentation for API endpoints. Users can sign up for an API key at [API.Congress.gov/Sign-Up](https://api.congress.gov/sign-up).

As feedback is implemented, usage continues to climb. In October 2022, the first full month of availability for the Congress.gov API, there were



more than 7 million API requests. Less than three years later, in June 2025, there were more than 90 million API requests. Since the tool first launched, there have been over 1.3 billion total API requests.

14. "AI as an Experiential Learning Guide"

Zachary Johnson

(Rep. Henry Cuellar)

This presentation covered ChatGPT/AI's ability to guide us through learning new skills based on experience with learning very basic coding. I talked about my experience using ChatGPT to build a Quill letter archive mass downloader and Bureau of Trade Statistics API puller to Excel.

My main goal was to show that AI can be used to build powerful tools but more importantly, the importance of asking AI for help when you don't know how to go about something. We're used to not attempting something when we know it's not at all in our skillset. For example: coding. With ChatGPT, we don't need to spend dozens of hours learning to code, but rather we can just start making tools off the bat. While we build the tools using AI, AI can also teach us about the concepts it is using to develop its project.



15. "Making Public Comments Count"

Mike Deeb, Alma Trotter, Evan Tung, Andrew Shao
(Civic Tech DC)

Civic Tech DC is a volunteer community of technologists, designers, and civic-minded partners who build open-source projects for the public good. One initiative focuses on making public comments in the federal rulemaking process easier to access, analyze, and reuse.

Public comments are a core input to agency decision-making, but working with them at scale remains difficult. Access is fragmented, metadata is often inconsistent, and the technical barriers to bulk download and analysis are high,

even though the underlying submissions are publicly available through [Regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov).

In 2025, Civic Tech DC convened 80 civic technologists from government, nonprofits, and industry for a one-day hackathon to prototype 13 open-source tools that explored different ways of working with rulemaking data. These prototypes included utilities for downloading and structuring docket data, search and analysis tools, and early experiments with AI-assisted interfaces.

Building on those takeaways, Civic Tech DC is fostering an active project called SpicyRegs, an open data platform designed to lower the barrier to accessing regulatory and public comment data and to help turn the strongest prototypes into usable minimum viable products. We are consolidating lessons from the hackathon

into more robust, maintainable tools and partnerships to make rulemaking data genuinely usable for researchers, practitioners, and the broader public. A follow-up hackathon is planned to accelerate development, validate new ideas, and onboard additional contributors.

16. "AccessGov: AI Accessibility Auditor for Congress"

Sanjay Ravishankar
(*Carnegie Mellon University*)

Nearly 29 percent of Americans (about 70 million people) live with a disability, yet government information often remains inaccessible. A recent GAO report found that 48 percent of federal agencies lack structured accessibility programs for information and communication technologies, leading to barriers such as inaccessible PDFs, broken links, poor color contrast, and websites unusable by keyboard navigation.

AccessGov was introduced at the Congressional Hackathon as an AI-driven solution to address these gaps. The platform crawls congressional content from sources such as committee hearings, CRS, and [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov), ranking materials by importance and applying generative AI to improve accessibility. It integrates automated scans based on Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG), flags violations, and assigns tasks for human review.

Once corrected, documents are republished in accessible formats. AccessGov also provides each office with an accessibility score, creating accountability while ensuring that laws and public documents are usable by all citizens, regardless of ability.

17. "Civic Access: Hands Free Congress"

Dhanvinkumar Ganeshkumar and
Zoe Izzi
(*Swype AI*)

Congress' digital front door remains difficult to access for many Americans, particularly the 25 percent of adults living with motor disabilities. Navigating congressional websites often requires clicking through multiple pages, creating barriers to timely and effective civic engagement.

CivicAccess was developed to address this challenge by enabling constituents to interact with congressional data through voice commands and hand gestures rather than traditional mouse and keyboard inputs. The tool references information directly on the host computer, integrates with the [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) API, and allows users to map specific gestures to key functions. This approach streamlines access to legislative information, reduces the need for congressional offices to constantly redesign websites, and ensures faster, more inclusive engagement.

CivicAccess can also connect with external APIs, broadening its utility. The team is finalizing API integration and hopes to pilot the platform with congressional offices, advancing accessibility and transparency in government.

18. "BillTracer"

Ruzanna Gaboyan and
Philip Golczak
(*YouthUNITE and Johns Hopkins University*)

BillTracer is a tool that compares versions of congressional bills and automatically generates a red line, allowing users to quickly identify additions, deletions, and wording changes. The

tool places specific emphasis on appropriations, helping staff uncover funding shifts that may be difficult to spot in large, frequently revised legislation. Built on official GovInfo XML bill data and open Python libraries, BillTracer provides transparency, traceability, and an auditable workflow accessible to both staff and the public.

Users can filter changes by category, search across sections, and isolate funding language to shorten review time from hours to minutes. Future expansions may link edits to roll-call votes, trace legislative language across past bills, and connect to CRS fiscal analyses, evolving the tool into a broader legislative intelligence platform.

19. "CivicGraph: Mapping Congressional Impact"

Henry (Taeksoo) Kwon

(*Lyra*)

CivicGraph addresses the transparency problem in congressional data by unifying fragmented information about bills, votes, speeches, and committee activities into a single, interactive knowledge graph. Currently, congressional information is siloed across separate systems, making it difficult to understand influence pathways and broader legislative impact.

Using AI-powered mapping and natural language processing, CivicGraph automatically connects related topics across bills, speeches, and press releases, creating real-time visualizations of relationships between Members, issues, committees, and regions. The platform draws from multiple congressional data sources including [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov), voting records, committee rosters, and the Congressional Record.

Users can click on any Member to explore their legislative "constellation," revealing cosponsors, related bills, media amplification, and hidden influence networks. This deep exploration capability helps staffers identify potential coalition partners, improves transparency for the public, and reveals the ripple effects of legislative actions that would otherwise remain obscured.

BREAKOUT GROUPS

Artificial Intelligence (AI)

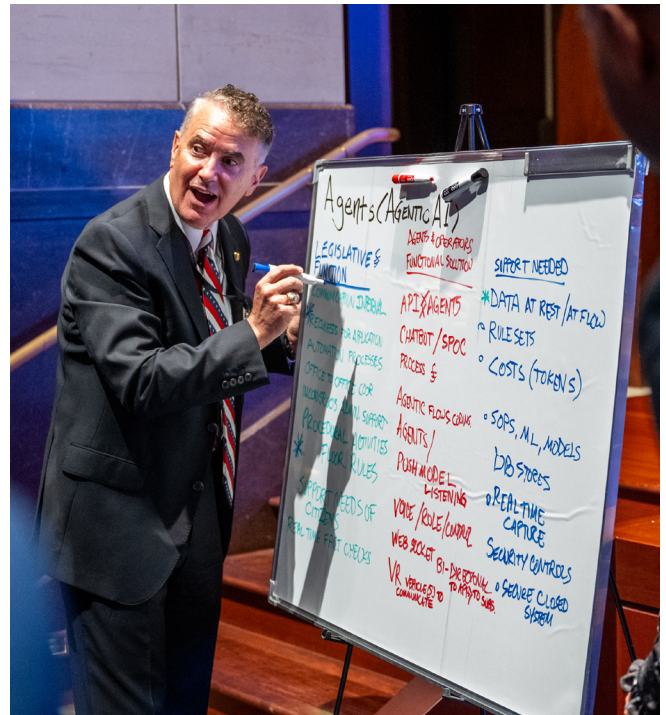
The group focused on empowering staff with AI discussed various responsible uses for the technology. They identified several ways AI could assist in tasks, such as drafting materials for research and committee hearings, simulating scenarios, and enhancing accessibility. Additionally, they considered the benefits of an AI chatbot for answering questions and the potential for AI to reduce staff burnout by detecting threatening messages.

Challenges associated with AI implementation were also thoroughly examined. This included the use of sensitive data, ensuring staff are educated on approved policies and procedures, and encouraging responsible adoption despite hesitations. Potential negative impacts were considered, such as AI-induced hallucinations that could reflect poorly on the office, workplace displacement, and limited growth opportunities for junior staff.

The group also explored future applications of AI for staff. These included small model bill drafting, member security enhancement through AI, and agentic use of AI for casework. They also discussed the need for more guardrails to prevent issues such as falsified images and AI-enhanced fraud and hacking.

Modern Committees

The discussions centered around improving the app submissions process, hearings, and witness management. Key topics included the need for unified data sources and a general feedback portal for congressional Members. The idea of creating issue-specific portals for feedback (similar to petition models in other countries) was explored. The importance of modern ideation platforms, where citizens can vote and prioritize concerns, was highlighted.



Oversight and hearing processes were examined, with suggestions to enhance constituent engagement and improve the efficiency and effectiveness of hearings. The possibility of utilizing a search engine to tag and categorize hearing topics for better accessibility was considered. Additionally, the challenge of tracking committee witnesses and improving the intake process for appropriations was addressed, emphasizing the necessity for systems integration to prevent data transfer errors.

Further, the idea of allowing constituents to vote on bills and appropriations was discussed, despite concerns about staff capacity to manage such a system. Leveraging technology to aggregate constituent input and influence committee direction was also suggested, similar to the Case Compass model. These discussions aimed at fostering better communication and feedback mechanisms between constituents and Congress.

Legislative Data

The Legislative Data group discussion highlighted challenges and solutions around data localization, large API sets, and data categorization. Clare Bayley emphasized the importance of localizing data to make it useful and understandable for constituents, citing a positive example of the New York Times' Tax Bill Calculator. She underscored the need for tools that assess policy impacts on communities and improve the feedback loop between members of Congress and constituents.

Alex Gurvich discussed the utility and limitations of the [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) API, particularly in historical analysis and response times. He proposed improvements such as the ability to download bulk data at the end of every Congress, which would aid developers and facilitate big data analytics. These enhancements would provide crucial snapshots for backup and analysis and ensure more comprehensive data accessibility.

Lindsay Young addressed the issues with data verification, delays, and fragmentation within congressional data sets. She pointed out the challenges in transferring constituent information when a member dies and the inconsistency in data retrieval. Solutions included grouping related data, ensuring accuracy and reliability in conclusions, and expanding data sets for broader utility. These measures would help users analyze, access, and utilize data more effectively.

Constituent Services and Communication

Constituent services emphasize the importance of being relatable and accessible to the public. Strategies include proactive communication, using AI to respond to concerns, and combining technology with physical interactions at places like the DMV and post office. Various stakeholders shared their experiences, including Caseworkers and Civic Service Managers,

who highlighted the need for knowledge and trust-building.

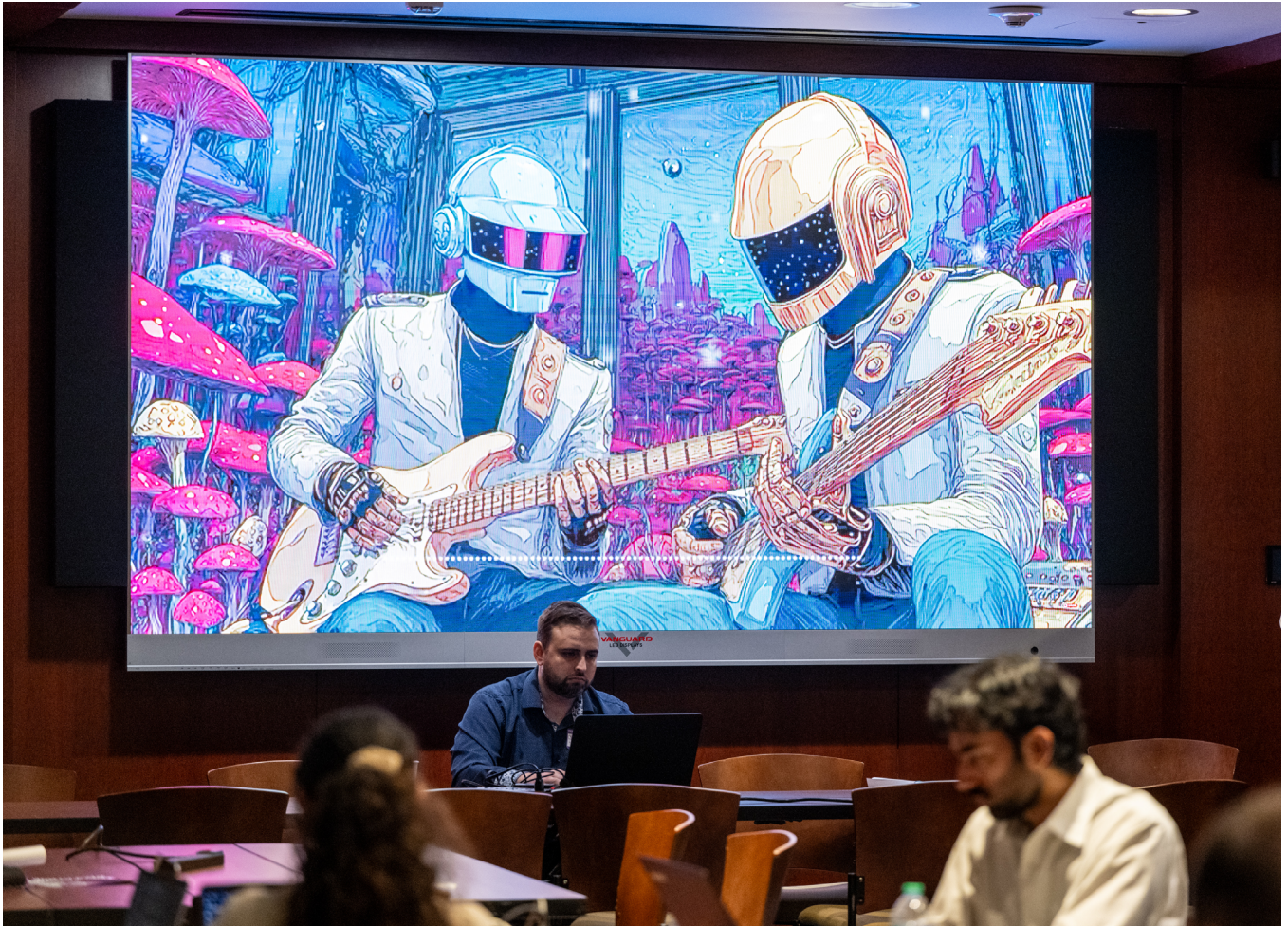
Solutions suggested included the proactive casework theory, where software checks in with constituents, and utilizing AI for administrative tasks and live transcription of calls. There was also a focus on bridging the digital divide by providing devices and using telecommunication companies and the postal service to reach people. Suggestions also involved leveraging IRS data to inform constituents about eligibility for programs and incorporating chatbots to provide relevant information.

In summary, the goals for improving constituent services involve narrowing down solutions, using technology effectively, and ensuring human interaction remains a crucial component. By integrating AI and proactive communication methods, agencies can better address constituent needs and build stronger relationships. The emphasis is on being relatable, accessible, and utilizing both digital and traditional means to connect with the public.

Cybersecurity

This breakout session on cybersecurity covered several key topics. Human Risk Management (HRM), now seen as an evolution of security awareness training, emphasizes a personalized approach to managing human risk. This includes tailored risk evaluations, education, simulation tests, and behavior modification. The session also discussed the rising role of AI in both cybersecurity defenses and attacks, predicting that by 2026, all cyberattacks will be AI-enabled. Notably, the use of AI bots and deepfakes to deceive individuals is becoming more prevalent, posing significant threats.

Another critical topic was the importance of effective training and awareness programs to combat phishing and social engineering attacks. This involves frequent, role-specific training and follow-up sessions for repeat offenders. The session also noted the benefits of AI-enabled



tools in enhancing cybersecurity measures. Organizations using AI agents are reported to be significantly better at managing security. The discussion included the growing sophistication of deepfake technology, which allows hackers to create real-time AI fakes for social engineering attacks.

Lastly, the session emphasized the necessity of protecting staff and Members through improved cyber hygiene and mindful email practices based on one's role. Training should start at home to ensure better protection at work, and there should be follow-up for those who make repeated mistakes. The session wrapped up with a presentation on the ClickFix attack methodology and the potential of crafting training around such AI-enabled attacks, stressing the continuous need for vigilance and updated security practices.

Coding Breakouts

At the end of an intensive coding session, participants shared a variety of projects on the main stage.

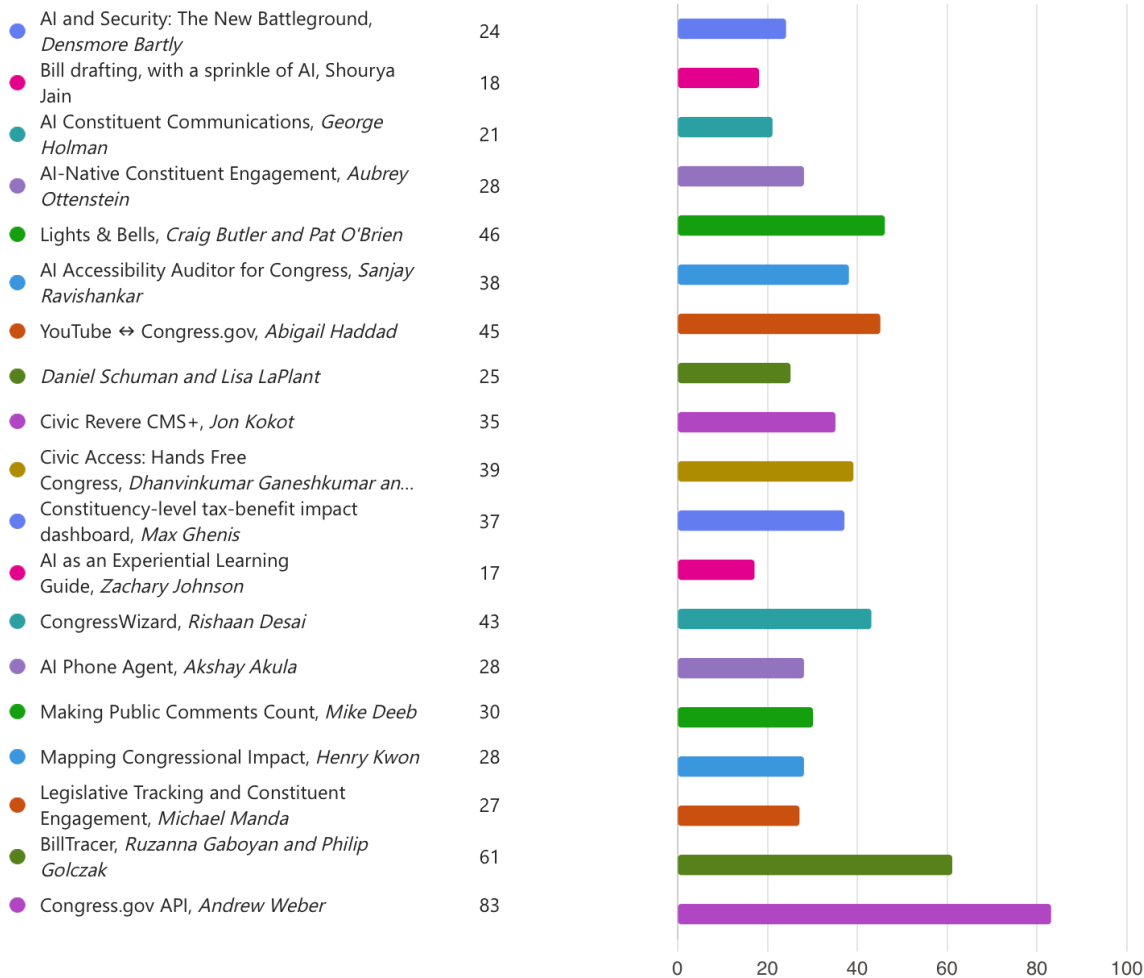
- **Policy Engine:** A map of congressional districts color-coded by household impact on the SALT deduction abolition proposal.
- **CongressTrack:** A data pipeline from [Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov) and Member campaign websites that runs data through a scoring website to see how much their votes on bills match their campaign promises in a dashboard (including a leader board).
- **Committee Companion:** A congressional hearings dashboard that ties in GAO reports and historical analysis of those topics.
- **Capitol Voices:** A tool that Since official transcripts from hearing take a long time

to come out, leverages LLMs to generate transcripts within minutes of a hearing's conclusion, including:

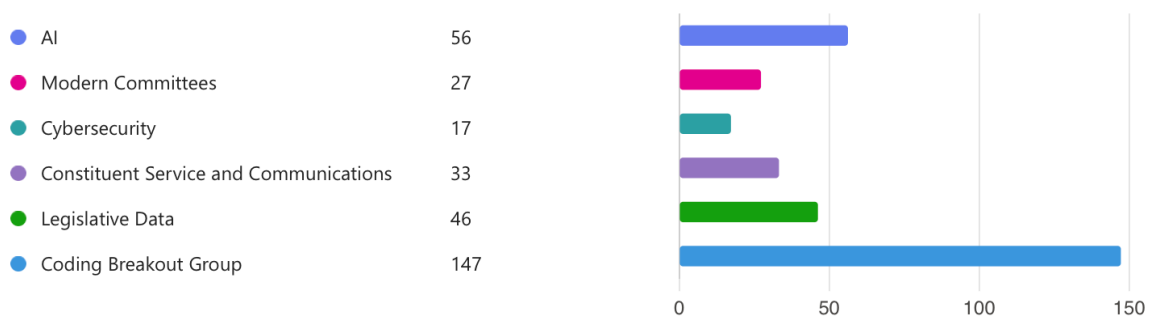
- Sentiment analysis.
- Critical points identification and overall theme extraction.
- Speaker participation analysis.
- Executive summary.
- **Who's Talking in Congress:** A tool that enhances diarized transcripts of congressional meetings to introduce each speaker.
- **Civic Tech DC:** An interactive dashboard identifying YouTube videos that are missing event IDs for committee events.
- **Tracker History:** A searchable database of congressional hearing witnesses.
- **Witness Visualizer:** A tool that redacts witness testimony and creates an interactive knowledge graph visualization.
- **Disbursements:** A tool that lets users search for, and query, House financial disbursements data and ask an LLM-related questions.

SURVEY RESULTS

Lightning Round Survey Results



Breakout Group Survey Results



<past events>

<2024: [Report](#), [Highlights Video](#), [Full Video](#), Photos (Albums [one](#), [two](#), [three](#))>

<2023: [Report](#) and [Highlights Video](#)>

<2017: [Report](#), [Highlights Video](#), and [CSPAN Coverage](#)>

<2015: [Report](#) and [Highlights Video](#)>

<2011: [Report](#) and [Highlights Video](#)>

WINS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS

2011 Hackathon

01. Idea: Bulk access to data from [Congress.gov](#).

Implementation: [Congress.gov](#) data published in bulk by the Government Publishing Office (GPO) in 2014.

02. Idea: Standard platform for committee video.

Implementation: Speaker Boehner directs all House committees to stream online in a uniform manner in 2013.

2015 Hackathon

01. Idea: Streamline online casework.

Implementation: The CAO and a Hill vendor delivered digital casework intake forms with e-signatures in 2017.

02. Idea: Public API for [Congress.gov](#) data.
Implementation: The Library of Congress released the [Congress.gov](#) public API in September 2022.

2017 Hackathon

01. Idea: App to track tour requests.

Implementation: A Hill vendor delivers a specialized app for Congressional offices to track tours in 2018.

02. Idea: Build a central, nonpartisan resource database for congressional staff.

Implementation: The CAO created the CAO Coach program with a website of staff resources by position in 2021.

<SURVEY RESULTS, WINS FROM PREVIOUS YEARS>

2022 Hackathon

01. Idea: Modernize ordering flags flown over the U.S. Capitol.

Implementation: The CAO launched the FlagTrack app in September 2024.

02. Idea: Digital Service for Congress.

Implementation: The CAO created the House Digital Service in 2022.

2023 Hackathon

01. Idea: Social media tracking of Members.

Implementation: The CAO launched the SocialStats app in the House network in September 2024.

02. Idea: Centralized online House calendar.

Implementation: The CAO launched the HouseCal app in the House network in July 2024.

2024 Hackathon

01. Idea: Casework categorization.

Implementation: The CAO published taxonomy and descriptions for categorizing congressional casework in September 2025.

02. Idea: Encourage departing Members to share constituent data with their successors.

Implementation: The Committee on House Administration added new data/privacy redaction options and increased messaging for the 119th Congressional Transition.

03. Idea: Official congressional online staff directory.

Implementation: The CAO launched the LegiDex app in the House network in July 2025.