

News and Updates from October 2020

Grantee Report on Trump Administration Suppressing Energy Study Leads to Its Release — and Reveals Much Wider Pattern



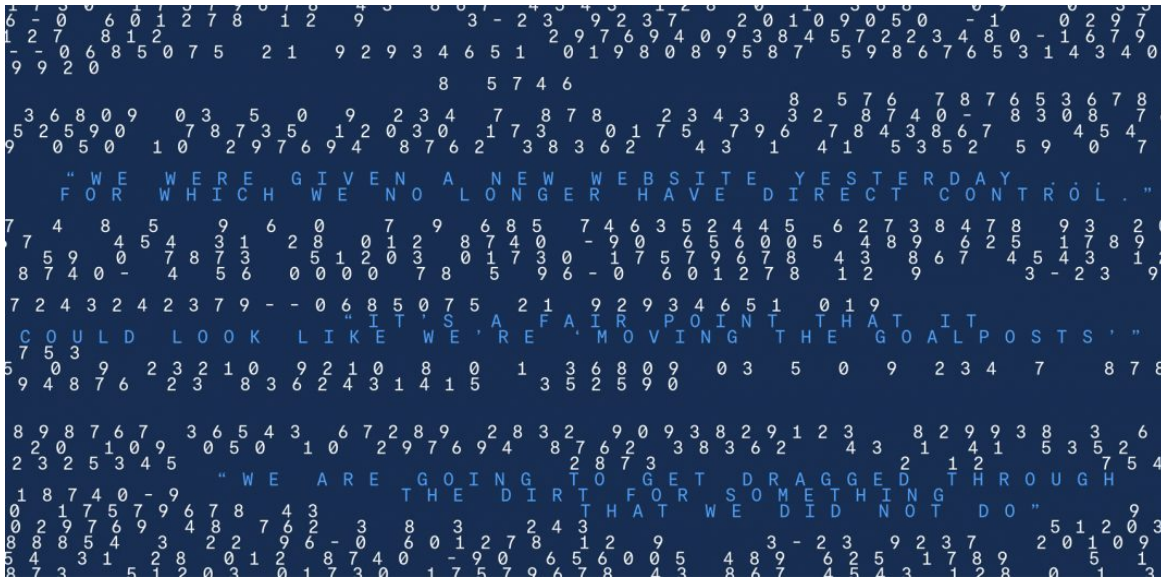
Peter Fairley broke national news when he reported for [InvestigateWest](#) and [The Atlantic](#) that the Trump Administration was blocking the release of a study showing that modernizing the U.S. power grid could reduce reliance on coal and increase the growth of renewable energy.

With a grant from the Fund for Investigative Journalism, Fairley reported that a National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) study, known as Seams, showed that a “supergrid” capable of shipping bulk power across the U.S. would accelerate the growth of renewable energy. But, as Fairley reported, the study was politically dangerous territory for a federally funded lab while coal-industry advocates — and climate change deniers — reigned at the White House. Officials at the Department of Energy removed key references in the study to coal and CO₂, and the report sat unreleased for two years.

After Fairley’s report was published, the U.S. House of Representatives passed legislation with an amendment requiring DOE to release the study. In October, the Trump Administration finally [released the report](#), and this week Fairley uncovered at least 40 more studies on clean energy that have been buried. [Click here](#) to read more about the impact of Fairley’s reporting.

Grantee Finds Health Officials Were Sidelined by Politicians in COVID-19

Pandemic



In the early months of the COVID-19 pandemic, Georgia was widely pilloried for a series of high-profile errors related to its bungled COVID-19 data dashboard, and for its early reopening based on the data it displayed. The site's problems damaged the state health department's credibility, threatening its ability to effectively manage later stages of the pandemic.

However, as grantee Keren Landman revealed in her [story for Atlanta Magazine](#), her review of thousands of interagency emails and documents showed the dashboard wasn't under the health department's control: The governor's office had outsourced its creation and maintenance to a private company, but had publicly allowed public health officials to take the blame.

Play Romina Ruiz-Goiriena's Video Game as Part of Her New Investigation



Fund for Investigative Journalism Diversity Fellow Romina Ruiz-Goiriena's four-part report, "[Gaming the System](#)," was published this month, detailing how wealthy people navigate around U.S. immigration barriers while the other 90 percent are detained or deported.

You can view the full report, published by the Miami Herald and el Nuevo Herald [here](#).

Ruiz-Goiriena's fellowship was a unique partnership among the Fund, el Nuevo Herald and the National Association of Hispanic Journalists, supported by the Jonathan Logan Family Foundation. The finished story includes an [innovative video game](#), which allows the audience to simulate the experience and navigate obstacles.

WATCH: Full Discussion on Investigative Journalists Covering Stories Related to Education

Our "Impact Investigations" series continued this month with Fund Advisory Board Member James V. Grimaldi leading a discussion about covering education with several grantees who have published stories on the topic. The webinar was sponsored by The Smith Family Foundation and provides insights, lessons, and tips for reporting on the complexities and human dynamics of education.



Check Out Our New Website

We have been working to overhaul our website, with the goal of better highlighting our grantees' work, as well as the opportunities we offer for investigative journalists. We hope you like what we've done and invite you to [take a look](#)!

FIJ Engages Journalists at Two Key Virtual Conferences

The Fund sponsored two Journalist of Color Networking Events at this year's IRE conference, which included individual Q&A sessions afterward for journalists to get feedback on potential grant proposals and learn more about the Fund. The virtual conference set an attendance record of 2,987 people. If you missed the conference, you can still register to receive access to all of the recorded sessions, including panels, discussions and hands-on training. [Register here](#).

We were honored to partner on this year's [Double Exposure Investigative Journalism festival](#), the United States' first and only festival dedicated to investigative reporting on film. Special thanks to Diana Jean Schemo, who leads the festival and serves on the Fund's board of directors.



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