

# AARON BREZEL

## Computational Journalist & Software Engineer

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📍 New York, New York

🌐 <https://github.com/aaronbrezel/>

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## JOURNALISM & ENGINEERING

### The Brown Institute for Media Innovation

#### Lead Engineer for The Local News Lab

📅 Dec. 2024 — Present 📍 New York, New York

- Building metrics, statistical models and user interfaces that translate web analytics into editorial strategy for small-to-mid-sized newsrooms.

### The Washington Post

#### Reporting Tools Engineer 2

📅 June 2021 — Dec. 2024 📍 Washington, D.C.

- Pushed the boundaries of technology-assisted reporting as a founding member of the Reporting Tools team.
- Collaborated with the newsroom on both enterprise journalism and the creation of force-multiplying reporting tools.
- Day-to-day responsibilities included full stack software engineering, product planning and technical meetings with other journalists.
- Contributed to high-impact projects including the Peabody award-winning Fatal Force database on police killings, "Hot Topic" — a templated system for reporters to create cloud-hosted social media scrapers, and Haystacker — an AI-powered visual forensics tool.
- Developed best practices for injecting journalistic rigor in to the engineering process. Resulted in a unique team culture at The Post.

### Consumer Reports

#### Researcher & Data Journalist

📅 Oct. 2020 — Summer 2021 📍 New York, New York

- Contributed to CR investigative report on Amazon warehousing impacts on environmental justice communities.
- Authored white paper on the emerging field of "participatory journalism". Conducted literature review. Interviewed academics, journalists and community organizers. Documented and codified strategies for reader engagement, newsroom partnerships and citizen science.

### Tow Center for Digital Journalism

#### Adjunct Research Scholar

📅 March — May 2021 📍 New York, New York

- Developed cutting-edge computer vision software package for extracting tabular data from scanned IRS 990 forms.

### Miami Herald

#### Investigations Team Intern

📅 Summer 2019 📍 Miami, Florida

- Three front page stories: expanded Herald coverage of Jeffrey Epstein, FIU bridge collapse and Mar-a-Lago security probe.
- Published investigation into criminal connections and real estate fraud of Grenada's ambassador to Russia.

## EDUCATION

### Columbia University

#### M.S. in Journalism and M.S. in Computer Science

📅 Aug. 2018 – May 2020 📍 New York, New York

- One of six candidates following unique combined curriculum.
- **Journalism coursework:** reporting (*Honors*), narrative writing (*Honors*), computational journalism, news products
- **CS coursework:** artificial intelligence, natural language processing, SQL databases, deep learning and data visualizations, advanced software engineering, machine learning

### Washington University in St. Louis

#### Major: Economics, Minors: Computer Science & Writing

📅 Aug. 2014 – May 2018 📍 St. Louis, Missouri

## ACADEMIC PROJECTS

### Memery: a master's thesis project

- Co-created platform for journalists to track the origin of memes in far-right internet communities. Awarded Brown/Tow Award for Excellence in Computational Journalism.
- Developed listener scripts to watch for new meme formats. Implementing pHash & DBSCAN clustering to allow users to search for similar images on web interface.

### Autalog

- Designed and pitched machine learning-powered organization tool for journalists. Won \$10,000 grant to conduct user research and build technical prototype.

### Analyzing protests on Reddit

- Developed methodology for tracking social activity on Reddit radiating from "seed" posts.
- Designed D3.js visualization to track protest movement.

### Right to Counsel mapping & reporting package

- Used R and Mapbox JavaScript API for interactive map on eviction orders across New York City zip codes. Companion to reporting package on new legislation guaranteeing legal representation for low-income tenants facing eviction.

## SKILLS

### Frontend

- Typescript React Nextjs Storybook D3.js

### Backend & DevOps

- AWS Docker Python Serverless SQL
- Ruby On Rails Django Vector databases

### Data, Design & AI

- Dagster Pandas & Numpy Figma R
- Prompt engineering Label Studio Scikit-learn