

Nicholas Wagner

Arlington, VA, USA

[LinkedIn](#) | [Google Scholar](#) | [Substack](#) | [GitHub](#)

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Experience

Co-founder and CEO

[Learning Journey AI Inc.](#) | Arlington, VA

May 2025 - Present

- Building an online project-based learning platform for workforce AI skill development.

AAAS Science and Technology Policy Fellow

National Science Foundation (NSF) | Alexandria, VA

September 2024 – May 2025

- Led the development of program evaluation strategy for NSF's \$540M AI Institutes Program
- Developed prototype program overview dashboard using Python and Claude Sonnet 3.7.
- Provided NSF contributions to the National IT R&D (NITRD) AI Research and Development Interagency Working Group.
- Facilitated merit review process for AI Institute proposals and smaller AI programs.
- Provided strategic guidance to [AI Institutes Virtual Organization](#) on conference and website design.

Research Staff Member

[Institute for Defense Analyses \(IDA\)](#) | Alexandria, VA

September 2019 – August 2024

- Led a multidisciplinary team in developing comprehensive guidance for the evaluation of Large Language Model (LLM) systems for the Department of Defense's (DoD) Chief Digital and AI Office (CDAO).
- Conducted in-depth, independent cost-benefit analyses for various DoD and other agency programs using research skills and data analytics, avoiding millions to billions of dollars in waste.
- Authored reports on software acquisition, helicopter maintenance costs, electronic medical record modernization, tagging contract data with machine learning, electromagnetic spectrum issues, predicting personnel readiness, and more.
- Briefed senior leaders in DoD on analyses.
- Co-reipient of 2020 Extraordinary Achievement Award
- Created the "This Week in Generative AI" newsletter

Education

Northwestern University | Evanston, IL Doctor of Philosophy (Ph.D.), Materials Science and Engineering | 2014 – 2019

- Dissertation focused on combining machine learning with simulated and experimental materials datasets to predict new materials for computer logic and memory.

- MatSci + ML Internships at Google Accelerated Science and Los Alamos National Lab
- Taught two Python enrichment courses for 5th-7th graders through Northwestern's Center for Talent Development.

Arizona State University | Tempe, AZ Bachelor of Science and Engineering, Materials Science and Engineering | 2010 – 2014

- Laboratory research on silicon clathrates for lithium-ion batteries

Projects

- **Witness Witness**
 - 7th Congressional Hackathon project. Used OpenAI Codex to scrape witness lists from Congressional hearings into database and made a little app to view the data.
 - Demo: <https://nawagner.github.io/Congressional-Hackathon-2025/>
 - Code: <https://github.com/nawagner/Congressional-Hackathon-2025/tree/main/witnessWitness>
- **Materials Simulation Agent**
 - Participated with team in 2025 LLMs for Materials Hackathon. Our project called BASIS (Bulk And Surface Interface Simulations with Intelligent Systems) was designed to make setting up and running density functional theory calculations easier. I built the literature searching parts.
 - Demo: youtube.com/watch?v=fP5Z-wi7_FE&feature=youtu.be
 - Code: <https://github.com/abir0/dft-agent>

Organizations

- **AAAS STPF AI and National Security Affinity Groups** | Co-chair (October 2024 – May 2025)
 - Organized site visits, discussions, seminars with experts, and knowledge-sharing activities for professional development of fellows interested in Artificial Intelligence and National Security.
- **IEEE AI Standards Committee** | Responsible Subcommittee Voting Member (July 2021 – Present)
 - Contributing to the development and vetting of new AI standards by reviewing proposals for new working groups and tracking draft progress.
- **DC AI Dinner Series** | Organizer (February 2025 - Present)
 - Planning monthly dinners for DC area AI development and policy professionals to discuss issues in emerging technology.

Courses taken

- [Build Apps with Windsurf's AI Coding Agents](#)
 - Learned to develop code with a state-of-the-art AI coding application, which I then applied in the Special Competitive Studies Project + AGI House [AI Agents for Defense and Gov Hackathon 2.0](#).
- [Wilson Center AI Lab](#)
 - Seminar series with top technologists and scholars from the private, public, and non-profit sectors looking at major questions in artificial intelligence.