

Daniel J Wilson

Documentary filmmaker / artist → scientist / founder

SUMMARY

Applied AI and behavioral scientist with a PhD in decision neuroscience, building at the intersection of machine learning, human behavior, and real-world data. Research combines intensive longitudinal sensing (wearables, smartphones), predictive modeling, and behavioral science to develop personalized, data-driven tools for improving goal achievement and well-being. Former documentary filmmaker and artist (Emmy-nominated, FRONTLINE PBS) with a track record of shipping creative products and translating complex ideas for diverse audiences.

EDUCATION

Ph.D., Psychology (Decision Neuroscience)

2026

University of Toronto

Dissertation: *New Approaches to Understand the Intention-Behavior Gap: Testing the Validity of Domain-General but Person-Specific Models*

TECHNICAL SKILLS

Programming & Data: Python (pandas, NumPy, scikit-learn, SciPy), SQL, R, JavaScript, Git

ML & Statistics: Elastic Net, PLS regression, PCA, mixed-effects models, Bayesian mixture models, clustering, time-series analysis, causal inference, NLP

Data & Infrastructure: End-to-end pipelines (collection through modeling), multimodal sensor data, digital phenotyping, EMA, Tableau

Research Methods: Experimental design (lab & field), intensive longitudinal methods, psychometrics, fMRI, A/B testing

AI-Assisted Development: LLM-augmented research, coding, and product development workflows

Languages: English (native), French (native/bilingual), Spanish (conversational), German (basic)

RESEARCH EXPERIENCE

Doctoral Researcher

Graduating March 2026

University of Toronto · Decision Neuroscience Lab

- Designed and led a 12-week intensive longitudinal study (N=184, ~9,200 person-days) combining daily surveys, cognitive tasks, and continuous passive sensing via iPhone and Apple Watch
- Built individualized predictive models of goal achievement using digital trace data, demonstrating that person-specific models outperform population-level approaches

Graduate Research Fellow

2021–2023

Schwartz Reisman Institute for Technology and Society

- Conducted interdisciplinary research at the intersection of AI, data governance, and society
- Produced technical reports and decision frameworks used by policymakers and industry stakeholders

Visiting Researcher

2019–2020

University of Pennsylvania · Computational Neuroscience Lab (Konrad Kording)

- Built NLP pipelines to analyze millions of tweets, estimating the causal effect of Instagram's ad rollout on user well-being using difference-in-differences analysis

Visiting Researcher

2023

Max Planck Institute for Human Development

Research Assistant

2015

Princeton University · Niv Lab

INDUSTRY & APPLIED EXPERIENCE

Founder

2026–Present

Pairent

- Bootstrapping an AI/behavioral analytics product that helps families capture daily interactions and receive evidence-based, personalized feedback

Co-Founder

2015–2022

minutiae

- Co-created an “anti-social media” smartphone app; press in WIRED, Financial Times; presented at Centre Pompidou; acquired by Columbia University archive

Data Scientist Fellow

2021

Coding it Forward · NYC Mayor’s Office for Economic Opportunity

- Built dashboards and automated reporting pipelines for NYC poverty analysis used to guide government policy

Data Scientist

2020

Data Science for Social Good Foundation

- Built KPIs and an interactive dashboard for Chilean school administrators tracking student outcomes

Editor & Co-Producer

2011–2014

FRONTLINE PBS

- *A Death in St. Augustine* (FRONTLINE / New York Times, 2013): Co-producer and editor. **Emmy-nominated.**

Artist & Filmmaker

2010–2016

Self-Employed

- Work covered by New York Times, Wall Street Journal; exhibited at MoMA PS1; acquired by Criterion Collection and Columbia University

Co-Founder

2009–2010

MMX · Non-profit art space, Berlin

PUBLICATIONS

Wilson, D.J. and Hutcherson, C.A. (2026). Day-to-day fluctuations in cognitive precision predict the domain-general intention-behavior gap. *Science Advances*, 12(6), eaea8697. [DOI](#)

Wilson, D.J., HajiHosseini, A., and Hutcherson, C.A. (2023). Recruitment of dIPFC during dietary self-regulation predicts the transience of regulatory effects. *Social Cognitive and Affective Neuroscience*, 18(1), nsab088.

Wilson, D.J. and Hutcherson, C.A. (in preparation). A domain-general intention-behavior gap measure: Development, validation, and associations with well-being.

CREATIVE & MEDIA

minutiae (2015–2022) — Anti-social media app. Press: WIRED, Financial Times. Acquired by Columbia University.

The Circus (Showtime, 2016) — Editor on weekly documentary series on 2016 US primary campaign.

Separate and Unequal (PBS FRONTLINE, 2014) — Editor.

9Y40 (2013) — Performance artwork centered on NYC yellow cabs. Exhibited at MoMA PS1.

A Death in St. Augustine (PBS FRONTLINE / NYT, 2013) — Co-producer and editor. Emmy-nominated.

AWARDS & HONORS

2018–23 NSERC Postgraduate Scholarship — Doctoral

2021–23 Schwartz Reisman Institute Graduate Fellowship

2021–23 Apple Health Research Partnership

2017–18 Massey Junior Fellow, Massey College

2017–18 NSERC Canada Graduate Scholarship — Masters

2018 NSERC Michael Smith Foreign Study Supplement

2023–25 University of Toronto Doctoral Completion Award

2014–15 Media Artist and Scientist Collaboration, GRAND NCE & Canada Council (\$118K CAD)

FELLOWSHIPS & WORKSHOPS

2024 NeurIPS Creative AI Reviewer

2023 Summer Institute on Bounded Rationality, Max Planck Institute

2021 Oxford Machine Learning Summer School (acceptance rate: 6.5%)

2021 Civic Innovation Corps Fellow (acceptance rate: 3.6%)

2020 Neuromatch Academy

2019 Kavli Summer Institute in Cognitive Neuroscience

2018 European Summer School on Computational & Mathematical Modeling of Cognition

2017 Summer School in Social Neuroscience & Neuroeconomics, Duke University

2014–15 NEW INC, New Museum Incubator — Artist in Residence

2014 School for Poetic Computation

2013–14 UnionDocs Documentary Fellowship Program