Social research stands at a crossroads. On the one hand, new data sources and methods offer scholars unprecedented opportunities to understand and influence the social world. On the other hand, fiscal constraints, security risks, misinformation campaigns, and “post-truth culture” threaten both the funding and the credibility of this research. In this context, the Social Science Research Council (SSRC) launched the multidisciplinary, cross-sector To Secure Knowledge Task Force to consider optimal conditions for social science in this moment, including the infrastructure of social research, standards of inquiry, and the role that rigorous understanding plays in public affairs. In her talk, SSRC president Alondra Nelson will discuss the Task Force’s conclusions, including the development of a framework for researchers, nonprofit organizations, policymakers, and businesses to collaborate in an effort to secure knowledge in the 21st century. She will also reflect on the Council’s new work in areas of inequality, technology and democracy.

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