



Adam Wiggins

# Technology, Creativity, and Psychedelics: An Interview with Adam Wiggins

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*Psychedelics and technology are inextricably linked in our culture. Psychedelics are themselves a technology, a tool we can use to foster greater creativity and innovation through mind expansion. In the early days of personal computing and digital technology, psychedelics helped inspire the likes of Steve Jobs, Doug Engelbart, Jaron Lanier, Kevin Herbert, John Gilmore, and other revolutionary innovators. Today, psychedelics are still widely used in a variety of ways by tech entrepreneurs including Adam Wiggins, founder of the cloud application platform Heroku and longtime supporter of MAPS.*

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## How did you first become involved with MAPS?

Like a lot of people, I discovered electronic music festivals which lead me to DanceSafe and Erowid to answer my questions about safe and responsible drug use. From there, I was introduced to MAPS through the MAPS and Dancesafe MDMA pill testing program in the early 2000s, which was my first foray into philanthropy .

## Did psychedelics influence your work with Heroku?

Yes, in a general sense, as they foster creativity. I've always been a structured, linear thinker. Psychedelics encouraged me to think bigger and get outside the box. When it comes to Heroku and other companies that I've built, they're careers but they're also a form of artistic expression. It's natural to me that something that helps you think creatively has impact on artistic expression. Heroku wouldn't exist or would be very different if I hadn't had the opportunity for psychedelic exploration earlier in my life.

## What role do you think psychedelics play in influencing technology and culture?

Psychedelics can encourage questioning assumptions and the status quo. It's notable to me that the Silicon Valley mindset is all about looking at established systems and disrupting them. Many people who work in the technology field consider their

work a form of art. The Silicon Valley community has a lot in common with musicians who have similar experiences with drug use. Drug use seems to be a natural fit with the technology culture that exists today. I'm not certain exactly what role they'll play, but it's pretty clear that there's a connection there.

## What do you see as the future for psychedelics?

Medical applications offer huge untapped potential. The future I'd like to see is addressing the splinter in the collective unconscious. On one hand, we stigmatize recreational drug use and on the other hand, we want to experience altered states. I think there will be a slow shift in the culture to accept benefits of recreational use. Like we saw with the adoption of exercise, yoga, or meditation, culture shifts to accept the benefits people experience. I hope that the same shift will happen with psychedelics, despite the additional legal barriers that exist for cannabis and psychedelics.

## What inspires you to support MAPS every year?

MAPS is at the forefront of psychedelics science. The organization, led by Rick Doblin, has been doing this work for a very long time, even during a time when the path was not so clear. MDMA as a prescription medicine is such an important project as it highlights the overlap between science and rigor and the cultural elements of the psychedelic movement. I think MAPS has done a really great job of living in both worlds and drawing in people and values from both the scientific and cultural communities. 🌱

*Adam Wiggins is a digital toolmaker, team builder, and drug policy nerd. He cofounded the cloud application platform Heroku which was acquired by Salesforce.com in 2010. Adam has been a MAPS supporter since 2003. Originally from California, he now lives in Berlin. Find him on the web: [about.adamwiggins.com](http://about.adamwiggins.com) or Twitter: @hirodusk.*

*Merete Christiansen is MAPS' Executive Manager and Assistant to Rick Doblin, Ph.D.*