

17 INNOVATIVE PROJECTS TO SHARE \$2 MILLION IN INAUGURAL DIGITAL MEDIA AND LEARNING COMPETITION

Chicago, IL (February 21, 2008) – A mixed reality game for high school students in Los Angeles and Cairo to learn about the real-time impact of air pollution in their neighborhoods. A web application that aggregates news and nonprofit needs, where every news story is linked to real-world actions that users can take. A mobile musical laboratory that allows students to explore new ways of making music with laptops and local area networks. These are three of the 17 projects that will receive up to \$238,000 in funding as part of the first ever Digital Media and Learning Competition funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and administered by HASTAC (the Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Advanced Collaboratory). Selected from a pool of 1010 applications, the winning projects are expected to produce promising innovations in the use of digital media for formal and informal learning.

“The ubiquitous nature of digital media has profound implications for learning that we are only just beginning to understand,” said Jonathan Fanton, President of the MacArthur Foundation. “An open competition was an excellent way to inspire new ideas and collaborations, and the amazing number of applications we received speaks volumes about the untapped potential in the field of digital media and learning. The 17 winners represent some of the best thinking from many disciplines and professions working to harness the power of the web for learning, and we look forward to the insights they will provide.”

Two types of projects were considered for the awards, which range from \$30,000-\$238,000. First, those that use digital media - such as cell phones, computers games and virtual worlds – to create both formal and informal learning environments. Second, those projects that use digital media to connect, mobilize, circulate or translate new ideas related to the growing field of digital media and learning. The competition is part of MacArthur’s five-year, \$50 million digital media and learning initiative designed to help determine how digital technologies are changing the way young people learn, play, socialize and participate in civic life. Winners receive funding for a year of work and will share their results on a public website as well as at a conference next year. A full list of winning projects is attached.

“We are at a crucial historical juncture where technological, scientific and cultural changes leave us with both great responsibility and great opportunity,” said Cathy N. Davidson of Duke University, co-founder of HASTAC along with David Theo Goldberg of the University of California’s Humanities Research Institute. “BB King once said that the beautiful thing about learning is that no one can take it away from you,” Goldberg noted. “These awards, and the competition generally, have identified inventive technologies by which learning is

networked, expanded, interactive, and engaged. This is the give and take of learning at its very best.”

The selection process was highly competitive. Fifty distinguished judges scored the applications, with the winners selected by a panel of ten judges that included entrepreneurs, educators, academics, and journalists.

Competition winners will be celebrated at an event in Chicago on February 21. As part of their prize, awardees will receive special consultation support on everything from technology development to management training. They will be invited to showcase their work at a conference that will include venture capitalists, entrepreneurs, educators and policy makers seeking the best ideas about digital learning. Detailed information about the competition is available online at www.dmlcompetition.net.

About the MacArthur Foundation: The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation is a private, independent grant making institution dedicated to helping groups and individuals foster lasting improvement in the human condition. More information is available at www.macfound.org or www.digitalllearning.macfound.org.

About HASTAC: A consortium of humanists, artists, scientists, social scientists and engineers from universities and other civic institutions across the U.S. and internationally, HASTAC is committed to new forms of collaboration for thinking, teaching, and research across communities and disciplines fostered by creative uses of technology. More information is available at www.hastac.org.

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