



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

## \$2 MILLION COMPETITION OPENS FOR IDEAS TO TRANSFORM LEARNING

*Durham, NC and Irvine, CA – December 16, 2009.* The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, in collaboration with the University of California, Irvine, Duke University and the virtual network HASTAC, today launched the third annual open-call competition that will provide \$2 million in awards to innovators shaping the field of digital media and learning. President Obama named the Digital Media and Learning Competition as part of his initiative to improve education in math and science in a speech on November 23rd. The competition is supported through a grant to the University of California, Irvine and administered by HASTAC.

The competition seeks designers, inventors, entrepreneurs, researchers, and others to build digital experiences—the learning labs of the 21st century—that help young people interact, share, build, tinker, and explore in new and innovative ways. In a new component for 2010, Sony Computer Entertainment America (SCEA) and Electronic Arts (EA), in cooperation with Entertainment Software Association and Information Technology Industry Council, will team with the competition to support the development of new science and math-related levels or adventures in popular existing games.

There are two types of awards. Detailed information about these awards can be found online at [www.dmlcompetition.net](http://www.dmlcompetition.net):

- Learning Lab Designer awards, which will range from \$30,000-\$200,000, are for learning environments and digital media-based experiences that allow young people to grapple with social challenges through activities based on the social nature, contexts, and ideas of science, technology, engineering
- Game Changers awards, which range from \$5,000-\$50,000, are for creative levels designed with either LittleBigPlanet™ or Spore™ Galactic Adventures that offer young people engaging game play experiences and that incorporate and leverage principles of science, technology, engineering and math for learning.

Each category will include several Best in Class awards selected by expert judges, as well as a People's Choice Award selected by the general public. The online application system will open on January 7 and will include three rounds of submissions, with public comment at each stage. In February 2010, a special competition will be opened up to youth from ages 12-17.

"Digital media provides an important opportunity to re-imagine learning in the 21st century," said Connie Yowell, Director of MacArthur's education grantmaking. "Through the competition, we may find that games such as LittleBigPlanet™ and Spore™, which offer opportunities for collaborative and complex problem solving, can be powerful tools to engage the next generation in science, technology, engineering and math - in and out of the classroom. By working with Sony Computer Entertainment America and Electronic Arts, the Digital Media and Learning Competition will be able to tap into the innovation and scale of private industry to advance teaching and learning."

Information about applying for the competition can be found online at [www.dmlcompetition.net](http://www.dmlcompetition.net). The website includes details about timeline, application requirements, project descriptions from the first two Digital Media and Learning Competitions, and opportunities for asking questions, following blogs and news feeds, and learning more about the competition.

“Learning labs promote learning together with others, by interactively doing, trying, sometimes failing. They help us to reimagine and expand our understanding of learning across all domains of knowledge,” said Cathy N. Davidson, Duke University Professor Davidson, along with David Theo Goldberg, Director of the University of California Humanities Research Institute, are co-founders of HASTAC and manage the competition as a team.

"We're thrilled by the opportunity to participate and support the Game Changers competition. If you provide creative people with the right tools, great technology, and a collaborative environment, amazing things can happen," said Jack Tretton, president and CEO of Sony Computer Entertainment America. "We're extremely excited to have LittleBigPlanet™ and PS3 serve as the vehicle for this national challenge and we greatly look forward to all the new innovations that will come out of this as a result."

"Video games from the Spore™ franchise innately embody the themes of learning, exploration and creation of scientific and educational curriculum," said Lucy Bradshaw, Vice President and General Manager of Maxis. "Thousands of Spore players have already re-created stunning gameplay around real science such as protein synthesis and dinosaurs using the Adventure Creator Tool within Spore™ Galactic Adventures. We look forward to offering this Adventure Tool in the Game Changer competition to provide an entirely new group of young minds with a new way to embrace science and education, but through a familiar avenue like video games."

The 2010 Competition winners will join an existing community of 36 awardees from 2007 and 2008, including a video blogging project for young women in Mumbai, India; a cutting-edge mobile phone application that lets children conduct digital wildlife spotting and share that information with friends; a project that leverages low-cost laptops to help indigenous children in Chiapas, Mexico learn by producing and sharing their own media creations; and an online platform for 200 classrooms around the world that allows young people to monitor, analyze, and share information about the declining global fish population.

The Digital Media and Learning Competition is funded by a grant from the MacArthur Foundation to the University of California Humanities Research Institute and Duke University and is administered by the Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Advanced Collaboratory (HASTAC), a virtual network of learning institutions. The competition is part of MacArthur's digital media and learning initiative, which is designed to help determine how digital technologies are changing the way young people learn, play, socialize, and participate in civic life. Answers are critical to education and other social institutions that must meet the needs of this and future generations.

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