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MIT Press Releases Pathbreaking Series on Digital Media & Learning

December 12, 2007 (Cambridge, MA) The MIT Press today announced the publication of a new series on digital media and learning supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The new six-volume series examines the effect of digital media on how young people learn, play, socialize and participate in civic life. The series' release marks the launch of the new International Journal of Learning and Media, through which core issues facing young people in the digital age will be explored.

In a departure from traditional publishing, articles were subject to a robust review process that took place in a series of online conversations among the authors, editors, and the public. These open discussions were held in virtual worlds and on a wiki hosted by the Monterey Institute for Technology and Education.

"The series and the new journal are critical tools in providing a framework for the emerging field of digital media and learning," said Jonathan Fanton, President of the MacArthur Foundation. "Of equal importance is the way in which the articles were written and developed. In a field made up of diverse researchers and practitioners, the participatory and open online review process is helping to establish new collaborative approaches to scholarship."

The field-defining volumes were compiled by some of the best minds in digital media and learning—Lance Bennett, David Buckingham, Anna Everett, Andrew J. Flanagin, Tara McPherson, Miriam J. Metzger, and Katie Salen—and contain the ideas of 56 authors, an advisory panel of leading experts, and even the voices of the young people themselves. Beginning on December 12, 2007, all the books in The MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning will be available in bookstores as well as electronically at <http://mitpress.mit.edu/dml>.

Lance Bennett points out that the future of democracy is in the hands of the young people of the digital age in *Civic Life Online: Learning How Digital Media Can Engage Youth*. This volume looks at how online networks might inspire conventional political participation but also how creative uses of digital technologies are expanding the boundaries of politics and public issues. Stanford University's Howard Rheingold looks at using participatory media and public voice to encourage civic engagement, Kathryn C. Montgomery from American University looks at the intersection of practice, policy, and the marketplace, and Michael Xenox and Kristen Foot tackle the generational gap in online politics. As they point out, it's "not your father's internet anymore."

The contributors to *Digital Media, Youth, and Credibility* look particularly at youth audiences and experiences, considering the implications of wide access and the questionable credibility of information for youth and learning. Miriam J. Metzger and Andrew J. Flanagin and the contributors look at the implications of wide access and questionable credibility today. Specifically, R. David Lankes looks at how we trust the internet and a new approach to credibility tools, Frances Jacobson Harris looks at the challenges teachers and schools now face, and Matthew S. Eastin outlines a cognitive developmental approach to youth perceptions of credibility.

In *The Ecology of Games*, noted game designer Katie Salen of the Parsons New School of Design has gathered essays not only from those who study games and learning but from those who create such worlds. Jim Gee's essay cuts through the debate on "are games good or bad?" to describe the ways in which well-designed games foster learning both within and beyond the play, while Mimi Ito chronicles the cultural history of children's software and the role educational games have played in it. At the same time the volume contains an article on participatory culture by Cory Ondrejka who as CTO of Linden Labs helped create *Second Life* and a case study on collective intelligence gaming by Jane McGonigal, premier puppet master of the new genre Alternate Reality Games.

Youth, Identity, and Digital Media, edited by David Buckingham explores how young people use digital media to share ideas and creativity and to participate in networks that are small and large, local and global, intimate and anonymous. The contributors look at the emergence of new genres and forms—from SMS and instant messaging to home pages, blogs, and social networking sites. For example, University of California, Berkeley professor danah boyd uses case studies to look at the influence of social network sites like MySpace and Facebook on the social lives of teenagers.

The range of topics touched on in Tara McPherson's volume *Digital Youth, Innovation, and the Unexpected* is perhaps the widest of all in the collection. Lest we forget lessons learned from other eras she includes essays by Justine Cassell and Meg Cramer of Northwestern on moral panic in the early days of the telegraph and telephone and Christian Sandvig of Illinois and Oxford evokes the collective imagination applied in the early days of wireless technology and analogizes it to that of the era of short wave radio. Sarita Yardi of Georgia Tech describes how Berkeley students use back

channels in the classroom to enhance the instructional experience and Henry Lowood of Stanford traces the roots of a new genre of movie making which uses game engines, "machine cinema" or machinima.

Anna Everett of the UC Santa Barbara draws on the work a diverse group of scholars including Chela Sandoval and Guisela Latorre from her own campus, Raiford Guins of the University of the West of England, Anotonio Lopez of World Bridger Media, Jessie Daniels of Hunter College and Doug Thomas of USC and others who in *Learning Race and Ethnicity* draw out lessons from Chicana/o activism, Hip Hop, and digital media in native America as well as hate speech and racism in online games.

Beginning in 2008, the new *International Journal of Learning and Media* will continue the investigation of the effects of digital media on young people and learning. Supported by the MacArthur Foundation, the new journal will be published quarterly by The MIT Press in partnership with the Monterey Institute for Technology and Education. Funds also have been provided to support an on-line community for discussing the articles in the journal and the issues that are central to the emerging field.

The series and the journal are part of MacArthur's \$50 million digital media and learning initiative that is gathering evidence about the impact of digital media on young people's learning and what it means for education. The initiative is marshaling what is already known about the field and seeding innovation for continued growth.

About the MacArthur Foundation

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation is a private, independent grantmaking institution helping to build a more just and sustainable world. Through the support it provides, the Foundation fosters the development of knowledge, nurtures individual creativity, strengthens institutions, helps improve public policy, and provides information to the public, primarily through support for public interest media. With assets of more than \$6.4 billion, the Foundation makes approximately \$260 million in grants annually. More information is available at www.macfound.org or www.digitalllearning.macfound.org.

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About the Monterey Institute for Technology and Education

The Monterey Institute for Technology and Education is an educational non-profit organization committed to improving access to education. MITE (pronounced "mighty") sponsors a range of projects from establishing development standards and specifications for online courses, to educational research and multimodal content development. More information can be found at <http://www.montereyinstitute.org/index.html>.