

DIGITAL MEDIA AND LEARNING

MacArthur is exploring how digital media are changing the way young people learn, play, socialize, and participate in civic life. The goal is to make education more powerful for all students by creating more opportunities for more youth to engage in learning that is relevant to their lives and prepares them for success in school, the workplace, and their community.



REIMAGINING LEARNING FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

The gap between young people's lives and their schooling has grown dangerously wide, putting at risk two cornerstones of American prosperity: innovation and economic mobility. MacArthur's digital media and learning grantmaking is focused on shrinking that gap by creating a learning approach and a view of citizenship designed for our times.

Over the past eight years, investments in digital media and learning have supported efforts to explore how best to do this in a world that is highly networked, technology-enabled, and producing new knowledge at a pace not known to previous generations. The Foundation has awarded grants totaling more than \$150 million for research, development of innovative technologies, new learning environments for youth, including a school model based

on game design principles, and efforts to build the new field of digital media and learning. A new approach called "connected learning" has emerged from this work to become an important framework for rethinking and supporting learning for the 21st century.

ABOUT CONNECTED LEARNING

Developed by scholars, designers, and practitioners to fit the realities of the world

young people are growing up in, connected learning draws on successful approaches of the past and is based on evidence of what works best in the contemporary context. It uses the tools of the digital age to connect academics to a learner's interests and the learner to inspiring peers and mentors—an approach proven to better engage more students and achieve more lasting learning outcomes. Learners are encouraged to experiment and to create, produce, and design things, positioning them as the makers and producers they will need to become to be successful in work and in life. Connected learning also uses the tools of our connected age to link learning in school, home, and the community so lessons are reinforced and supported in multiple settings.



INNOVATION LABS

MacArthur supports experimentation in several types of institutions—libraries, museums, schools, community centers, afterschool programs—to demonstrate what connected learning could look like in action. These include:

Hive Learning Networks

www.hivelearningnetwork.org

Hives are open, connected networks of institutions and organizations in cities that seek to create opportunities for youth to explore their interests across institutions in both digital and physical spaces. Currently active in Chicago, New York City, and Pittsburgh—with other locations under development—Hive Learning Networks fund innovative youth programming through public-private partnership support.

Quest to Learn

New York City: www.q2l.org

Chicago: www.chicagoquest.org

Quest to Learn is an innovative school model—with campuses in

New York City and Chicago—developed in response to growing evidence that digital media and games offer powerful models for reconsidering how and where young people learn. Quest schools are designed to bridge old and new literacies, with students taking on the identities and behaviors of explorers, mathematicians, historians, etc., as they work through a challenge-based curriculum.

YOUmedia

www.youmedia.org

YOUmedia—which first opened at the Chicago Public Library's downtown Harold Washington Library Center in 2009—is an innovative teen space for engagement and learning based on MacArthur-supported research. Expansion to other libraries, museums and community-based organizations around the country is supported by funds from the Foundation and the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

OPEN BADGES

MacArthur is supporting the development of an alternative accreditation tool called Open Badges. Like the physical badges used for centuries by the military and scouting organizations, Open Badges serve as digital markers of accomplishment. Housed online, Open Badges are portable and verifiable, allowing learners to showcase work, document skill sets and competencies, and create a robust portrait of their abilities wherever they were acquired—whether in school, in the community, on the job or online.

MacArthur is supporting the Mozilla Foundation to develop the technical infrastructure to make Open Badges possible. Through its Digital Media and Learning Competition, the Foundation also has funded 30 organizations around the country, including Intel, Disney, and the Girl Scouts, to create and begin issuing badges for their youth programs. And most recently, MacArthur funding has been at the center of an effort in Chicago to encourage and document year-round student learning through badges as part of the Chicago City of Learning. Nine other cities from around the country plan to follow Chicago's lead and hope to pilot badges to document summer learning in 2014. More information about Open Badges is available at www.reconnectlearning.org.



GRANTMAKING PRIORITIES

Research and Design

Grants focus on establishing a new approach to learning research and design experimentation. Foundation-funded research includes ethnographic studies, surveys, interdisciplinary research networks—one on youth and participatory politics and another on connected learning—and other projects that examine what young people are doing online, their views on such activities, and the knowledge, skills, and competencies they are gaining.

Scale, Spread, and Field Building

To continue building the digital media and learning field and spread new approaches to learning, the grant portfolio includes the MacArthur Foundation Series on Digital Media and Learning and the MacArthur Foundation Reports on Digital Media and Learning. A website with resources and research related to connected learning, www.connectedlearning.tv, and the Digital Media and Learning Research Hub, an international research center at the University of California, Irvine, are additional resources for the field.

Digital Media and Learning Competition (dmlcompetition.net)

To encourage innovation and provide resources for new learning environments,

the Foundation funds the Digital Media and Learning Competition. This annual endeavor, administered by HASTAC, and supported by a grant to the University of California, Irvine, invites U.S. and international participants to compete for grant awards for domestic and international projects that use digital or new media as platforms for connected learning. The most recent competition supported teams of practitioners and designers to develop digital badge systems, an alternative learning assessment and credentialing mechanism that is managed online.

REPRESENTATIVE GRANTS

Research and Design

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
Bloomington, IN
\$400,000 to document lessons learned by the Badges for Lifelong Learning Competition winners.

MILLS COLLEGE
Oakland, CA
\$4,900,000 in support of the MacArthur Research Network on Youth and Participatory Politics.

NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF EDUCATION AND SOCIAL POLICY
Evanston, IL
\$150,000 to develop a new theoretical approach to the scale of ideas and practices in learning.

STANFORD UNIVERSITY
Stanford, CA
\$275,000 to build the field of learning analytics.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE
Irvine, CA
\$4,500,000 in support of the MacArthur Research Network on Connected Learning.

\$350,000 to edit, publish, and distribute the MacArthur Reports on Digital Media and Learning series.

Innovation Labs

CHICAGO COMMUNITY FOUNDATION
Chicago, IL
\$1,700,000 to fund the Hive Learning Network in Chicago and other activities that exemplify and advance connected learning.

COMMUNITY FUNDS
New York, NY
\$1,500,000 to fund the Hive Learning Network in New York City.

FUND FOR PUBLIC SCHOOLS
New York, NY
\$300,000 in support of NYC Summer Quest to move innovations in learning from the New York Hive Learning Network into New York City public schools.

INSTITUTE OF MUSEUM AND LIBRARY SERVICES
Washington, DC
\$1,250,000 in support of the scale-up of YOUmedia teen learning spaces.

INSTITUTE OF PLAY
New York, NY
\$1,800,000 to develop the Quest to Learn schools in New York City and Chicago.
\$3,300,000 to support the Games, Learning, and Assessment Lab.

MOZILLA FOUNDATION
Mountain View, CA
\$1,250,000 to develop and design a digital badge system for accreditation of learning and skills.



NATIONAL WRITING PROJECT

Berkeley, CA

\$1,300,000 in support of the Educator Innovator Initiative to build a community of educators committed to spreading the principles of connected learning.

NEW YORK UNIVERSITY

New York, NY

\$2,400,000 to document demonstration sites in the digital media and learning initiative, including Quest schools, YOUmedia and Learning Labs, and Chicago and New York Hive Learning Networks.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

Irvine, CA

\$5,450,000 in support of the annual Digital Media and Learning Competition.

Scale, Spread, and Field Building

ALLIANCE FOR EXCELLENT EDUCATION

Washington, DC

\$300,000 to educate and motivate policymakers and other decision-makers to support more opportunities for young people to engage in digital media and learning.

ASPEN INSTITUTE

Washington, DC

\$500,000 to establish and run a nonpartisan task force exploring policy issues related to the Internet and connected learning.

FAMILY ONLINE SAFETY INSTITUTE

Washington, DC

\$250,000 in support of the Platform

for Good, a website for parents that creates and rewards opportunities for online participation by parents and youth.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

Irvine, CA

\$4,500,000 in support of the Digital Media and Learning Research Hub.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Connected Learning

www.connectedlearning.tv

Hive Learning Networks

www.hivelearningnetwork.org

GlassLab

www.glasslabgames.org

Summer of Making and Connecting

www.makesummer.org

Chicago Summer of Learning

www.chicagosummeroflearning.org

The Digital Media and Learning Competition

www.dmlcompetition.net

Digital Media and Learning Research Hub

www.dmlhub.net

Digital Badges

www.openbadges.org

The International Journal of Learning and Media

www.ijlm.net

MacArthur Research Network on Youth and Participatory Politics

www.ypp.dmlcentral.net

MacArthur Research Network on Connected Learning

www.clrn.dmlhub.net

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About The MacArthur Foundation

The MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society.

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