



## GLOBAL COMPETITION SELECTS 19 INNOVATIVE DIGITAL MEDIA AND LEARNING PROJECTS TO SHARE \$2 MILLION

Chicago, IL, April 16, 2009 – Nineteen projects from around the world were awarded funding today to explore digital media’s ability to help people learn. In a \$2 million competition funded by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, winners include a radically affordable \$12 TV-computer, a video blogging site for young women in Mumbai, India, and a cutting-edge mobile phone application that lets children conduct digital wildlife spotting and share that information with friends. Other winners include:

- *Tecno.Tzotzil*, a project that leverages low-cost laptops to help indigenous children in Chiapas, Mexico learn by producing and sharing their own media creations;
- *Digital Ocean*, 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;
- *Voces Móviles (Mobile Voices)*, a low-cost, mobile, multimedia platform that lets low-wage immigrant day laborers in Los Angeles share, create, and publish multimedia stories to become citizen journalists; and
- *M-Ubuntu* (“I am because we are” in Zulu), a project that uses inexpensive mobile phone technologies to connect teachers in South Africa to each other and to teachers in the United States.

“This open competition makes an important contribution to the emerging field of digital media and learning by seeking out and embracing the freshest of ideas and the most innovative thinking,” said MacArthur President Jonathan Fanton, addressing Competition winners at an event showcasing projects produced through last year’s competition. “The Competition demonstrates that pioneering work often takes place at the edges and sometimes between the most unlikely of collaborators. These projects are true exemplars of how digital media are transforming the way we think and learn, and perhaps even how we participate in our democracy.”

The Competition is funded by a MacArthur grant to the University of California, Irvine, and to 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 \$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.

“We are developing a vibrant community of learning leaders that includes youth, international researchers, practitioners and theorists, non-profits and commercial enterprises and ranging across all the different fields from the arts, humanities, social sciences, natural sciences, and engineering. It's starting to feel not only like a new field but an actual movement" said Cathy N. Davidson of Duke University, co-founder of HASTAC along with David Theo Goldberg of the University of California Humanities Research Institute. “The decision this year to include proposals from international sites and a competition among young innovators, 18-25, has revealed extraordinary range, depth and creativity” Goldberg noted. “It points to profound changes in learning, changes soon likely to challenge educational institutions in deeply transformative ways.”

The 2009 Digital Media and Learning Competition includes two categories: Innovation in Participatory Learning and Young Innovators. The Innovation in Participatory Learning category sought novel projects that used digital media to help learners of any age use new technologies to share ideas, comment upon one another's projects, and plan, design, implement, or simply discuss their goals and ideas together. Applications were accepted from Canada, China Japan, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Russia, Singapore, South Africa, the United Kingdom, and the United States. Young Innovators, a U.S.-only category for this year, accepted applications from individuals aged 18-25 to bring novel participatory learning ideas from the “garage” stage to full implementation and to think boldly about what comes next.

Successful projects will promote learning and participation through a variety mechanisms, including games, mobile phone applications, virtual worlds, social networks, wikis, and video blogs. The Competition’s challenge to identify different forms of participation, as well as the eligibility of ten countries outside of the United States, yielded a diverse pool of awardees including individuals, a school, community organizations, universities, and for-profit companies. Awards ranged from \$9,000 to \$211,000. Fifteen winners come from the United States, and the remaining four are from Canada, India, Mexico, and South Africa.

Detailed information about the winning projects and the competition is available at [www.dmlcompetition.net](http://www.dmlcompetition.net).

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#### About the MacArthur Foundation

*The John D. and Catherine T. 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. More information is available at [www.macfound.org](http://www.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, the Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Advanced Collaboratory (HASTAC) is committed to new forms of*

*collaboration for thinking, teaching, and research across communities and disciplines fostered by creative uses of technology. The infrastructure for HASTAC has been largely provided by the John Hope Franklin Center for Interdisciplinary and International Studies and the Franklin Humanities Institute at Duke University and the University of California Humanities Research Institute. More information is at [www.hastac.org](http://www.hastac.org).*

**Press contacts:**

MacArthur Foundation: Jen Humke, (312) 726-8000, [jhumke@macfound.org](mailto:jhumke@macfound.org)

HASTAC: Mandy Dailey, (919) 681-8897, [mandy.dailey@duke.edu](mailto:mandy.dailey@duke.edu)