

2009 DIGITAL MEDIA AND LEARNING COMPETITION WINNER

The 2009 Digital Media and Learning Competition includes two categories: Innovation in Participatory Learning and Young Innovators. The Innovation in Participatory Learning category funds projects that use 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. Young Innovators category funds 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.

INNOVATIONS IN PARTICIPATORY LEARNING

DevInfo GameWorks: Changing the World One Game at a Time

Jeff Kupperman, Community Systems Foundation, Ann Arbor, MI

\$118,000

Over one billion people on our planet live on less than \$1.00 a day. More than 115 million children are denied the right to go to school. 30,000 children die each day from preventable diseases. Through the development of a software gaming engine that supports the creation, exchange, and play of games based on robust UN development data, DevInfo GameWorks brings wide-ranging information on the condition of humanity to young people in an engaging, social way. DevInfo GameWorks puts learners in the position of game creators, blurring the line between teacher and learner to provide opportunities for higher-order thinking and creative collaboration that expand the ways in which young people learn and engage with this global information.

DigitalOcean: Sampling the Sea

Constance Penley, University of California, Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA

\$211,000

DigitalOcean engages middle and high school students in 200 classrooms around the world in monitoring, analyzing, and sharing information about the declining global fish population that, in its implications for humans and the ecosystem, dwarfs other food issues in our time.

DigitalOcean uses multi-disciplinary teams of students, scientists, and new media experts, partnering with Google Ocean, NASA GLOBE, and ePals, to engage the next generation of consumers in a global dialogue on the interrelationships among local human customs, regulatory laws, fishing practices, wildlife management, and the future of the sea.

Global Challenge

David Gibson, Global Challenge Award, Stowe, VT

\$183,000

Global Challenge is an online collaborative problem-solving competition that engages underrepresented pre-college students throughout the world. Using a wide variety of digital media and social networking tools, K-12 students develop and propose solutions to complex global problems from global warming to the future of energy. Peers, project staff, and outside experts judge solutions, providing feedback, award certificates, travel stipends, and scholarships to students who are enhancing their science, technology, engineering and mathematical skills while learning collaboration and project management from a transnational perspective.

History Game Canada

Thomas Axworthy, Centre for the Study of Democracy, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario, Canada

\$147,000

Built on the popular "Civilization" strategy game platform, History Game Canada enhances the history learning experience of 12-18 year olds by putting them in control of early Canadian civilizations—from the French and English to the Huron and Ojibwe. Players are invited to imagine historical events from different perspectives or to fantasize alternative outcomes to consider not only the "what was" of history, but also to envision what might have been. History Game Canada fosters critical thinking, creative problem-solving, and what it means to make or remake national history. An in-game encyclopedia provides detailed historical accounts, while dedicated online discussion forums allow players to share their game experiences and discuss potential implications for present day Canada with peers and experts.

Voces Móviles (Mobile Voices)

Francois Bar, Annenberg School of Communication, University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA

\$135,000

Voces Móviles is a university-community partnership between the University of Southern California and IDEPSCA (Instituto de Educación Popular del Sur de California) that connects low-wage immigrant day laborers in Los Angeles with popular communication practitioners, university researchers, and open source software developers. Together, they design, deploy and use a low-cost, mobile, multimedia platform that promotes everyday sharing and dialogue. Through Voces Móviles, immigrant workers become citizen journalists, sharing, creating, and publishing multimedia stories directly from their mobile phones. These stories represent their own experiences, perspectives, and ideas. Voces Móviles allows other communities to create their own storytelling networks so that future uses of the platform may expand the possibilities of collaboration, dialogue and cultural understanding.

M-Ubuntu: Teachers Building an M-Literacy Collaboratory

Naomi Tempies, Learning Academy Worldwide, Johannesburg, South Africa

\$68,000

Applying the Zulu community-based problem-solving concept of Ubuntu—best translated as “I am because we are”—M-Ubuntu uses inexpensive, low-threshold mobile phone technologies to promote mobile literacy (m-literacy) by empowering local teachers to connect to each other and to literacy coaches in the United States. M-Ubuntu focuses on two reform-minded schools and their enthusiastic teachers and learners—Spectrum, near Johannesburg, which contends with crime and other social dislocations accompanying urbanization, and Ramosadi, located near Botswana, which struggles to serve orphans—and links teachers in primary schools across South Africa.

Participatory Chinatown

Jeremy Liu, Asian Community Development Corporation, Boston, MA

\$170,000

Participatory Chinatown seeks to transform the planning practices shaping Boston's Chinatown from disjointed transactions between developers and communities to a persistent conversation shaped by participatory learning. Marrying physical deliberation, virtual interaction and web-input, Participatory Chinatown encourages residents of all ages without prior urban planning experience to participate in the collaborative design and development of their own public spaces. Participants sit side-by-side in physical space and simultaneously co-inhabit a 3D virtual space where they engage in rapid prototyping and testing of urban design proposals. Participatory Chinatown enables communities to articulate their vision and strengthen their internal and external bonds to produce better neighborhoods. Participatory Chinatown is a collaborative effort of the Asian Community Development Corporation, Emerson College New Media faculty, and the Boston Metropolitan Area Planning Council.

Playpower: Radically Affordable Computer-Aided Learning

Jeremy Douglass, University of California, San Diego, San Diego, CA

\$180,000

Playpower uses a \$12 TV-computer (TVC) as a platform for open-source participatory design of 8-bit learning games that will improve educational access for millions of children in the developing world and create real economic opportunities for adults. The TVC uses an existing TV as a display and is based on an 8-bit video game processor technology that is now in the public domain due to expired patents. Playpower is working with partners in Brazil, Ghana, India and the United States to build an open-source Software Development Kit from which local organizations can create their own learning games.

Women Aloud: Videoblogging for Empowerment (WAVE)

Sapna Shahani, Mumbai, India

\$107,000

Offering an unprecedented online presence for low-income women from across India, WAVE is a unique digital platform for Indian women aged 18-25. Through videoblogging, women who otherwise do not have a voice online are given an avenue for self-expression and a podium from which they can address such key issues as health, the environment, employment, access to basic necessities, education, democracy, and gender equality. Participants will attend an intensive video training camp, where experienced media professionals will provide the required technical and documentary journalistic skills necessary for empowering these young women to tell their stories and those of their communities.

Student Journalism 2.0

Ahrash Bissell, ccLearn, Creative Commons, San Francisco, CA

\$39,000

For journalism students, the digital age requires more than hands-on reporting, writing, and publication of stories. Students must also embrace the capabilities of the Internet for virtual collaboration, viral dissemination, and feedback loops that inform and deepen original stories. All of these web-based opportunities depend on knowledge and proactive application of open content licensing, such as with Creative Commons, and appropriate metatags and technical formats. Student Journalism 2.0 engages high school students in understanding legal and technical issues intrinsic to new journalistic practices. The lessons learned during this pilot project will be documented in anticipation of a national-scale, follow-up project.

Talkers and Doers

Alan Gershenfeld, E-Line Ventures, Montclair, NJ

\$166,000

Talkers and Doers is a platform through which at-risk teens and young adults learn about entrepreneurship through games that integrate real world learning, mentors, opportunities, and services. Focusing on areas of interest to youth (e.g., fashion, music, games and comics), the first release, Talkers and Doers: Gear, will feature gameplay that seeds ideas and inspires players to design and sell personalized apparel and gear. Kids will work together across their social networks to develop real world money-making opportunities. Players will get feedback from successful entrepreneurs, be connected to local mentors and engage in peer-to-peer learning to bring their visions to fruition.

Tecno.Tzotzil: Participatory Learning Among Indigenous Children in Chiapas

Yolanda Heredia, Virtual University, Monterrey Campus, Tecnológico de Monterrey,

Monterrey, Nuevo Laredo, Mexico

\$97,000

To promote participatory learning among the indigenous Tzotzil children of Chiapas, one of Mexico's poorest communities, Tecno.Tzotzil will produce culturally-sensitive teaching aids that advance problem-based and project-oriented learning in which students both produce and share relevant materials and learning outcomes. The Mexican government has created the Consejo Nacional de Fomento Educativo (CONAFE), a special commission to address educationally disadvantaged communities. Leveraging low-cost laptops to work with two rural

schools in Chiapas, Tecno.Tzotzil will create materials and exercises for use with CONAFE's math and science curriculum.

WildLab

Jared Lamenzo, Mediated Spaces, Inc., Brooklyn, NY

\$195,000

By applying the latest mobile phone technology to K-12 participatory science, WildLab engages students in collaborative citizen science and encourages local environmental stewardship. Using GPS-enabled, internet-connected iPhones as data collection devices, WildLab allows students to report their scientific observations to each other and to the larger scientific community. In the classroom, students can send their data to sponsoring institutions for analysis, posit their own questions, and develop their own line of inquiry based on their field experiences.

Wiki Templates Transforming Instructional Environments (WITTIE)

Jennifer Kidd, Old Dominion University, Norfolk, VA

\$88,000

Through a wiki application and a suite of teacher-friendly template tools that help teachers and students work together to create and assess original Wiki-based texts, WITTIE helps teachers move to a student-centric approach to learning. Using WITTIE, students choose the content, write the text, and serve as the primary evaluators of the texts they create, becoming designers of their own educational environments. WITTIE will be piloted via two different case examples: the creation of a student-authored textbook in a higher education course; and the building of a multi-media collaborative text on communities written by K-12 students across the globe.

YOUNG INNOVATORS AWARD

CivicsLab.com

Laura Staniland, 22 years old, Pittsburgh, PA

\$30,000

Focusing on the Southwestern Pennsylvania region, CivicsLab puts elementary and middle school students in virtual control of decision-making in their communities to encourage civic participation, critical thinking, and sense of place. In CivicsLab, players will assume positions of power in the community from an urban, suburban or rural perspective and explore how decisions—based on social need and demand, proper planning (as defined by our civic experts), political pressure, and most importantly, their imaginations—might impact the community. Through manipulation of real mapping information and current data sets, students navigate social and political pressures to explore the cause and effect of civic investment and public policy as they attempt to create a sustainable future for their region.

Digital Democracy Contest

Daniel Poynter, 22 years old, West Lafayette, IN

\$9,000

The growing wealth of governmental data online has tremendous potential to increase civic engagement. Built on the successful Digital Literacy Contest, the Digital Democracy Contest employs existing online tools to help young people explore complex data sets and engage with them in meaningful ways. Working in teams, students will compete against each other as they navigate online government information and work together to develop future versions of the game.

Molecular Spore: Exploring the Cell Through Computer Games

Anthony Pecorella, 25 years old, Durham, NC

\$25,000

Addressing a decreasing interest and proficiency in the biological sciences among American teenagers, Molecular Spore seeks to engage kids in ways that make biological principles personally meaningful and relevant. Built on the powerful Maxis Spore strategy game engine, Molecular Spore will put middle and high school students in control of a cell, tasked with the job of coordinating all of the organelles in order to process food, create new parts, fight off viruses, and grow. During game play, students learn valuable biological information, while also developing organizational, planning, coordination, delegation, and logistical skills.

Networked Newsroom

Bingxia Yu, 22 years old, Buffalo, NY

\$20,000

Targeting high school and college journalism classes as well as the wider public, Networked Newsroom is an online participatory learning news platform that enables users to post story ideas, leads, photos, videos and other information directly from their computers or mobile phones. To leverage the collective intelligence of the Networked Newsroom community, the coveted “editor’s desk” is extended to all in this virtual newsroom. Diverse users—each bringing unique perspectives—supplement each others’ work to develop more meaningful and robust stories through collaboration, with final stories published to a public wiki.

Origami: Enfolding Real and Virtual Learning

Jonah Model, 23 years old, Long Island City, NY

\$9,000

Origami is a file-sharing system you can talk with by email and text message. It promotes ad hoc learning spaces using a visual tag for linking physical spaces with existing collaborative software such as wikis, social bookmarking, and groupware systems. The Origami tag is designed for readability and can be hand-drawn or converted into sign language, Braille, or a short URL. Origami allows students to trade learning resources quickly and easily without interrupting conversation, lectures, or meetings.