



MACARTHUR INVESTING \$50 MILLION IN DIGITAL LEARNING

How is widespread use of digital media transforming our youth and how they learn?

New York, NY, October 19, 2006 – The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation today announced plans to build the emerging field of digital media and learning, committing \$50 million over five years to the effort. The Foundation will fund research and innovative projects focused on understanding the impact of the widespread use of digital media on our youth and how they learn.

“This is the first generation to grow up digital – coming of age in a world where computers, the internet, videogames, and cell phones are common, and where expressing themselves through these tools is the norm,” said MacArthur President Jonathan Fanton, who announced the new initiative today. “Given how present these technologies are in their lives, do young people act, think and learn differently today? And what are the implications for education and for society? MacArthur will encourage this discussion, fund research, support innovation, and engage those who can make judgments about these difficult but critical questions.”

MacArthur’s approach is comprehensive, extending beyond the classroom to assess how digital technology may transform youth in both their formal and informal learning environments. The research will test the theory that digital youth are different because they use digital tools to assimilate knowledge, play, communicate, and create social networks in new and different ways. The Foundation’s efforts will connect players across a variety of academic, education, commercial, and nonprofit fields to assess implications and seed new collaborative projects.

Eighty-three percent of young people between the ages of 8 and 18 play video games regularly; nearly three-quarters use instant messaging. On a typical day, more than half of U.S. teenagers use a computer and more than 40 percent play a video game. Using websites like MySpace and Facebook, young people are sharing photos, videos, music, ideas, and opinions online, connecting with a large group of peers in new and sometimes unexpected ways.

Fanton also announced –

- Beginning in 2007, MacArthur will dedicate \$2 million annually for competitive research, writing and demonstration projects.
- www.macfound.org/digital, a new hub for information on digital media and learning, where people can learn more about the field and this initiative, share opinions and interact with guest bloggers.
- In 2007, MacArthur will publish six books, online and in print, representing leading research and thinking on a range of digital media and learning topics. Topics will include credibility, innovative uses and unexpected outcomes, civic engagement, the ecology of games, race and

ethnicity, and identity and digital media. Online public conversations, which have already begun, will help shape the content of these books.

- The first in an occasional series of papers on digital learning topics, authored by MIT Professor Henry Jenkins, describes a participatory culture for young people and addresses the potential benefits and educational implications.

MacArthur has already funded some exploratory grants in the field of digital media and learning:

- Researchers at the University of California-Berkeley and the University of Southern California are engaged in a large-scale ethnography of young people that will provide a broad portrait of the digital generation: technology's influence on their social networks and peer groups, their family life, how they play, and how they look for information. It will be one of the most significant attempts yet made to explore the influence of digital media on youth.
- The Academic Advanced Distributed Learning Co-Laboratory at The University of Wisconsin-Madison is developing "Game Designer," a software application for young people. As students use it to create games, they learn about ethical judgment, aesthetic design, systemic thinking, and collaborative problem solving.
- Professor Jenkins is engaged in further research on media literacy, exploring ways to teach it in the classroom and through after-school activities. The aim of the MIT project is to help young people learn how to filter, judge, synthesize, and use information available on the Internet and from other sources. An additional grant to Professor Howard Gardner at Harvard University supports research on young people's ethical use of digital media.
- MacArthur is also funding efforts to engage young people directly in this initiative. Global Kids, a nonprofit youth development organization, has organized online discussions and run a written essay competition for kids in which they describe their everyday use of digital media. And the University of Chicago is working to expand after-school media literacy programs in Chicago.
- The Illinois Institute of Technology is examining how digital media and learning may change social institutions and developing new designs for schools and libraries.

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The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation is a private, independent grantmaking institution dedicated to helping groups and individuals foster lasting improvement in the human condition. With assets of \$5.5 billion, the Foundation makes grants totaling approximately \$200 million annually. For more information or to sign-up for MacArthur's electronic newsletter, visit www.macfound.org/digital.

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Building the Field of Digital Media and Learning |

The MacArthur Foundation's five-year, \$50 million effort to build the field of digital media and learning aims to understand how digital technologies are changing the way young people learn, play, socialize, and participate in civic life. Answers are critical to developing educational and other social institutions that can meet the needs of this and future generations. The initiative is both marshaling what it is already known about the field and seeding innovation for continued growth. For more information about ongoing projects, emerging research, and an innovative "knowledge network" of leading experts in the field, visit www.digitalllearning.macfound.org, or visit the *Spotlight* blog: spotlight.macfound.org to engage with Foundation grantees about their work.

Individual Grants

Blueprint Research and Design, San Francisco, California

\$80,000 to conduct a project for field building, planning and analysis of trends in innovation, expertise, and distribution in digital media and learning.

Principal Investigator: Lucy Bernholz, Ph.D., President and Founder, 415-677-9700,
Lucy@blueprintrd.com

Blueprint Research and Design, San Francisco, California

\$450,000 to develop reports and case studies about the use of digital media and the building of a new field.

Principal Investigator: Lucy Bernholz, Ph.D., President and Founder, 415-677-9700,
Lucy@blueprintrd.com

Digital Innovations Group (for Games for Change), Richmond, Virginia

\$250,000 to help build the field of digital learning through a website and social networking tools and a series of meetings.

Principal Investigators: Suzanne Seggerman and Ben Stokes, 917-478-4772, suzanne@weblab.org,
benjamin@newdream.net

Exploratorium, San Francisco, California

\$220,000 to produce background papers on the field of digital learning including a literature review, white paper on design research, and white papers on the future of education and technology.

Principal Investigator: Sherry Hsi, 415-334-6802, sherryh@exploratorium.edu

**To learn more about building the field of digital learning,
visit www.digitalllearning.macfound.org.**

To engage in conversation with grantees about their work,
visit the Spotlight blog at spotlight.macfound.org.

MACARTHUR

The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

Global Kids, New York, New York

\$900,000 to conduct youth-related activities that support the *MacArthur Series on Digital Media and Learning*.

Principal Investigator: Barry Joseph, Online Leadership Program Director, 212-274-9335, info@globalkids.org

Global Kids, New York, New York

\$170,000 to build the field of digital learning by engaging young people through written and on-line discussions of their use of digital media.

Principal Investigator: Barry Joseph, Online Leadership Program Director, 212-274-9335, info@globalkids.org

Harvard University, Harvard Graduate School of Education, Cambridge, Massachusetts

\$900,000 to conduct research on and prepare curricular modules related to young people's ethical use of digital media.

Principal Investigator: Howard Gardner, Hobbs Professor of Cognition and Education, 617-496-4929, howard@pz.harvard.edu

Illinois Institute of Technology, Institute of Design, Chicago, Illinois

\$250,000 to investigate the design of libraries and schools of the future.

Principal Investigator: Patrick Whitney, Steelcase/Robert C. Pew Professor of Design, 312-595-4900, whitney@id.iit.edu

Indiana University, Department of Telecommunications, Bloomington, Indiana

\$240,000 to create new approaches to social science research through use of virtual worlds.

Principal Investigator: Edward Castronova, Associate Professor and Director of Graduate Studies;
Contact: George Vlahakis Indiana University Media Relations, 812-855-0846, gvlahaki8@indiana.edu

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Comparative Media Studies Program,

Cambridge, Massachusetts

\$500,000 to develop a new framework and models for media literacy.

Principal Investigator: Henry Jenkins, Director, 617-253-3068, henry3@mit.edu

Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Comparative Media Studies Program,

Cambridge, Massachusetts

\$1,800,000 to develop and test a comprehensive media literacy curriculum and communications strategy for national distribution of new products.

Principal Investigator: Henry Jenkins, Director, 617-253-3068, henry3@mit.edu

Mills College, School of Education, Oakland, California

\$450,000 to conduct a longitudinal study of the effect of digital media on young people's civic engagement.

Principal Investigator: Joseph Kahne, Ph.D., Abbie Valley Professor of Education, 510-430-3275, jkahne@mills.edu

Monterey Institute for Technology and Education, Pacific Grove, California

\$575,000 to produce the *MacArthur Series on Digital Media and Learning*.

Principal Investigator: Gary Lopez, Founder and CEO, 650-380-0580, glopez@montereyinstitute.org

New Media Consortium, Austin, Texas

\$17,500 to produce a literature review, monograph and communications activities related to visual and digital literacy in education.

Principal Investigator: Laurence F. Johnson, Ph.D., 512-445-4200, johnson@nmc.org

New Media Consortium, Austin, Texas

\$575,000 to produce the *MacArthur Series on Digital Media and Learning*.

Principal Investigator: Laurence F. Johnson, Ph.D., 512-445-4200, johnson@nmc.org

Northwestern University, Institute for Policy Research, Evanston, Illinois

\$309,000 to conduct a quantitative study of young people's use of the Internet and the effects of an intervention to improve their use, skills and participation.

Principal Investigator: Eszter Hargittai, Assistant Professor, 847-467-4681, press@eszter.com

Stanford University, School of Education, Stanford, California

\$750,000 to document the design and implementation of after school media literacy program in Chicago and in comparison cases.

Principal Investigator: Brigid Barron, Assistant Professor, 650-725-0194, barronbj@stanford.edu

University of California Berkeley, School of Information Management and Systems,

Berkeley, California

\$145,420 to prepare a literature review and plan for a multi-site ethnographic study of how and to what effect young people use digital media.

Principal Investigator: Peter Lyman, Professor, 510-549-0803, plyman@ischool.berkeley.edu

University of California Berkeley, School of Information Management and Systems,

Berkeley, California

\$1,954,000 to conduct a multi-site ethnographic study of how and to what effect young people use digital media.

Principal Investigator: Peter Lyman, Professor, 510-549-0803, plyman@ischool.berkeley.edu

University of Chicago, Center for Urban School Improvement, Chicago, Illinois

\$1,600,000 to continue to develop media literacy after school programs in Chicago.

Principal Investigator: Nichole Pinkard, Director of Technology, 773-834-8726, pinkard@csi.uchicago.edu

University of Southern California, Annenberg Center for Communication,

Los Angeles, California

\$80,580 to prepare a plan for a multi-site ethnographic study of how and to what effect young people use digital media.

Principal Investigator: Mizuko Ito, Research Scientist; Contact: Mariko Oda, 213-743-2520, moda@annenberg.edu

University of Southern California, Annenberg Center for Communication,

Los Angeles, California

\$1,346,000 to conduct a multi-site ethnographic study of how and to what effect young people use digital media.

Principal Investigator: Mizuko Ito, Research Scientist; Contact: Mariko Oda, 213-743-2520, moda@annenberg.edu

University of Wisconsin, ADL Co-Lab, Madison, Wisconsin

\$1,200,000 to design and develop innovative game modules, curriculum, and tools for media literacy.

Principal Investigator: James Paul Gee, Tashia Morgridge Professor of Reading, 608-276-5842,
jgee@education.wisc.edu

University of Wisconsin, ADL Co-Lab, Madison, Wisconsin

\$1,800,000 to develop and test a comprehensive media literacy curriculum, new approaches to assessment and communications strategy for national distribution of new products.

Principal Investigator: James Paul Gee, Tashia Morgridge Professor of Reading, 608-276-5842,
jgee@education.wisc.edu

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About MacArthur:

The MacArthur Foundation is a private, independent grant making institution dedicated to helping groups and individuals foster lasting improvement in the human condition. With assets of \$5.5 billion, the Foundation makes grants of approximately \$200 million each year. More information is available online at www.macfound.org. More information about the digital media and learning initiative is available online at www.digitalllearning.macfound.org.