

Title: Student Journalism 2.0

Project summary (one sentence) (50 word maximum)

The Student Journalism 2.0 project will help high-school journalism students to both understand and apply the legal and technical solutions for harnessing the capabilities of the Internet for virtual collaboration, viral dissemination, and feedback loops that can inform, deepen, and extend the reach of their stories.

Proposal describing the project (600 word maximum)

Include information about the project's significance and the contribution it will make to advancing participatory learning, the goals for the project in the 12-month grant term, and goals beyond the grant term. Explain why your idea is novel.

When a building collapses in Arizona because it was made of sub-standard concrete, an independent journalist investigates further, publishing his story on his personal blog on the Internet. The blog posts are licensed openly (using Creative Commons), with adaptations and translations permitted. A translation of the story is published in China alongside a news item about building failures in a recent earthquake. Chinese journalists adapt the story, adding depth and context relevant to their local situation. Their story is included in a European report on current regulatory failures on the construction industry, again translated and adapted for inclusion in this formal review. The original blogger follows up on his post several months later, taking advantage of the additional inputs and contextualizations to connect the local and isolated incident to a phenomenon of global ramifications.

This scenario reflects our new age of participatory, viral, and networked journalism. Call it Journalism 2.0. It is made legally and technically possible by the pro-active choices of journalists to release their work to the world under open licenses. The license and metadata associated with a work allow others to know what they can legally do. As a result, the original journalist receives attributions, can track derivative works, and benefits from the additional information tied to his work. Our journalist understood these facts and how to act on them. Unfortunately, the same cannot be said for the majority of people who distribute and act upon information on the Internet.

For the Student Journalism 2.0 project, we propose to work directly with journalism students and their teachers in several high schools in the Bay Area of California. First, we will produce explanatory and best-practices guides about copyright, Creative Commons, and Internet dissemination for both the students and the teachers. These guides will be specifically tailored to journalism, though they will also serve as excellent starting points for additional media geared towards other audiences. Second, we will engage teachers and students with hands-on training as they go about their actual work. Third, we will provide support for ensuring that their digital productions are properly marked and licensed, thereby building the infrastructure for viral dissemination of their stories and virtual collaboration with extramural peers. Fourth, we will provide a platform that allows the students to track their stories as they are picked up and adapted by others. Finally, we will evaluate all of these developments as they occur, monitoring the impacts on the students, teachers, and the broader

community. This project will be deeply integrated into journalism classes at the local level, with an eye towards scaling nationally after the first year.

This project targets an important group of people, since most students who are interested in media production get their first hands-on experiences in high-school journalism classes. In some classes, copyright may be discussed, but usually only as a tangential issue. Given that technology is integrated into nearly every aspect of the journalistic process, especially via the Internet, we can no longer afford to treat copyright as an afterthought. Fortunately, the Student Journalism 2.0 project offers a way for students to engage with these ideas deeply and in a self-interested way. Through this project, we believe that students will achieve both greater awareness of important legal issues and enhanced opportunities for participatory learning.

Brief project description (200 word maximum)

Include information about your target users, principal goals and outcomes, the kind of user experience you will create, and what you consider the "wow factor" of your idea. Explain how you will implement your project

For journalism students, participatory learning in the digital age requires more than hands-on reporting, writing, and publication of stories. Instead, participatory learning requires embracing 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 pro-active application of open content licensing, such as with Creative Commons, and appropriate metatags and technical formats. The Student Journalism 2.0 project will engage high-school journalism students directly to teach them about these opportunities, help them to understand the legal and technical issues at hand, and provide ongoing support and a platform for tracking derivative uses as they implement these new journalistic practices. The lessons learned during this pilot project will be documented in anticipation of a national-scale, follow-up project. All of the media produced for this pilot will be suited for scaling up, as well as for expansion into other opportunity areas for participatory learning. We expect to document some incredible stories regarding the global reach of the student articles; moreover, we expect the impact of the feedback loops and participatory processes on the student work to be profound.

Participatory Learning description (450 word maximum)

Explain how your project will help people participate, reflect on their experiences, and share their efforts and observations with others. Describe the different kinds of learning experiences users will have, how these experiences are promoted by your design approach, and the kinds of technological solutions necessary to implement your approach to participatory learning.

This project exemplifies the promise of participatory learning. Journalism students are already engaged in media production and dissemination, yet they do not generally incorporate participatory learning processes into their work. Part of the problem is a lack of knowledge and training on the part of their journalism teachers, and part of the problem is lack of awareness of how participatory learning networks can bring personal advantage and improve the quality and impact of their own work. This project addresses both of these issues simultaneously by embedding instruction about the legal and technical infrastructure that integrates participatory learning into their regular

workflow. The teachers involved will get the support they need to educate students about copyright and Creative Commons, and the students will be able to experience first-hand the networking power of the Internet by participating in collaborative knowledge generation related to their own works.

The students involved in this project will have the power to choose which type of Creative Commons license they believe will be most useful to their work. In this way, these students can customize their participatory learning experiences to some extent. Students will be provided with information and tools that help them to understand the connections between their choices and Internet-based collaborative opportunities that might accrue. We would expect that these same students will quickly translate these insights to all of their educational efforts, opening doors to a multitude of participatory learning experiences which are largely self-driven. The students will also have access to a platform of tools that will help them to track adaptations of their works, make connections with peers, and benefit from the participatory networks they help to develop.

It is worth noting that most people, including professional journalists, still lack knowledge of copyright and feedback processes on the Internet, both of which are crucial elements of any participatory learning infrastructure. High school journalism students are the reporters and storytellers of tomorrow, regardless of where, how, and for whom they work. We must ensure that these students, in particular, learn what participatory learning means and how to take advantage of it. That knowledge will clearly help them, but it is also likely to help everyone else who then participates in the networks seeded by the work of these student journalists now and in the future. Even better, if this project scales nationally, then high-school journalists across the country will be connecting at the same scale as professional networks. Reporting and opinions of high-school youth may have an impact on what news is reported, inspiring youth to participate in national issues, and so on. Quite exciting indeed.

Project timeline (350 word maximum)

We are already identifying potential journalism teacher-collaborators among high schools in the area. Upon receipt of funding, we will launch the project in August, 2009, in order to begin developing the necessary explanatory and training materials. We will work closely with the teachers involved to ensure that we can build these concepts into the curriculum.

We will provide ongoing support and training through both semesters of the school year. We will also manage program evaluations of the students and teachers, and we will adjust the materials and activities according to any feedback we receive. Because we will be working directly with everyone involved in the Student Journalism 2.0 project, it will be a simple matter to affix some additional metadata to all of the student work for the purpose of accurately tracking impacts.

After the end of the school year, we will perform a summative analysis of the student and teacher feedback, along with an analysis of learning gains. We will also produce a report detailing the apparent impacts of the open licensing and participatory learning processes, both for the works produced and the students who produced them. These

data and reports will be shared broadly and will serve as the building blocks of a planned national Student Journalism 2.0 project.

Throughout this first year, we will be managing a platform where the students will be able to easily collaborate and monitor their stories as they are picked up and adapted around the world, or even in their local communities. We will also be responsible for providing advice and support regarding the many third-party tools that the students can use to enhance their experiences and broaden their participatory networks. All of the materials and software that we use will be openly licensed or open source, and our expectation is that these resources will continue to get used and improved upon by the student community regardless of our continued direct involvement, though our plan is to stay involved.

Outcome and achievements (250 word maximum)

How will you know if your project is succeeding post implementation? What sorts of indicators will you look for?

There are many indicators that we will use to monitor the success of the project. First, we will simply monitor the extent to which the students are choosing to openly license their works and properly applying metadata to facilitate attribution and derivative tracking. Our expectation is that the students will soon embrace these facets of their work and open themselves to the participatory learning possibilities that can follow. Second, we will collect information about the extent to which students find themselves writing stories collaboratively and adapting the work of others. Because the students will be involved with the project over two semesters, it will be particularly interesting to see how they change their approaches to journalism and leverage their participatory learning networks in the second semester, after they have been exposed to and practiced with the ideas.

We will be collecting both quantitative data (e.g., dissemination metrics, numbers of derivatives made, etc) and qualitative data (e.g., surveys of self-reported behavioral changes, subjective evidence of impact and reach of specific stories, etc) throughout the project. These formative data will give us the ability to respond to shortcomings and student needs in real time. We will know we are succeeding if students are applying open licenses, meta-tagging their works, and leveraging their core and distributed participatory learning networks as an integral component of the journalistic process. Positive feedback from both students and teachers will also be strong indicators that the project impacted their journalism practices in a useful manner.

Troubleshooting (250 word maximum)

Describe one or two ways that your project may not succeed and what you would learn from this failure. What will you do if you see your project struggling or failing during the project period? How would you know?

Traditionally, journalists have seen themselves as the information “providers”, much like the traditional role of teachers. Many years of pedagogical research have shown that people learn best if they see themselves as part of a cycle of knowledge generation, where they learn and teach simultaneously. The virtual social platforms made possible

by recent developments on the Internet can serve as a useful (if disruptive) mechanism for bringing these participatory practices into the regular work-flows of the teaching and learning experience. That is the premise of the Student Journalism 2.0 project.

However, it is certainly possible that students (and perhaps even the teachers themselves) will reject these participatory models, instead holding on to the traditional one-way model of information dissemination. For example, the students may resist engagement with their peers (both locally and virtually), or may be unwilling to openly license their works. In these cases, we will work with the participating teachers on timely interventions in order to further explore these phenomena and address the underlying causes. We will also be on the lookout for technical failures, or problems with using the technologies. We have the expertise to manage these issues, and our direct engagement with the participants (both students and teachers) will make corrections relatively simple. Again, lessons learned in each semester will inform this project and our plans for scaling this project nationally.

Social networking, peer to peer mentoring, and professional guidance (350 words maximum)

A social networking site, designed and moderated by HASTAC, will support winners in information sharing, group communications, participatory learning, collaboration, and peer mentoring. Online workshops by experts will also be hosted on the site. In what areas will your project/team benefit from the help of previous Competition winners and expert advisors (e.g., management, marketing, business models, human resources)? What will you be able to contribute to this online community effort? How might your project work with other projects in the field?

As a pilot project, we are obviously keenly interested in the feedback and outcomes of the Student Journalism 2.0 with respect to its potential to be scaled nationally. We believe that the materials, tools, and processes that we develop in collaboration with our high school journalism students and teachers should be of interest to any school, anywhere in the country. Our experience with web-based dissemination models and with creating and sustaining communities of expertise (much like the participatory learning networks described in this proposal) should give us good footing for undertaking a national-level project. Nonetheless, we could use the help and advice of other experts in this domain, as well as previous project participants who have already dealt with issues of sustainability and scalability beyond the original project period.

We expect that our participating students will be quite excited to join in the effort to reach their peers all across the country, and we expect that these peer networks will serve as useful points of entry for other projects in the field that need access to students. The tools that we will be providing should be of interest to anyone wanting to collaborate virtually, monitor derivative works, or build up coherent participatory learning networks. It will be fantastic to get the insights of others involved in this field regarding other domains in which to extend our work, and also other ways that we might be able to engage students in taking greater interest and responsibility for creating personal learning systems through the participatory capacities of the Internet.

Copyrighted Material

Does your project require use of copyrighted material or other intellectual property? Applications with the intent to obtain approval are acceptable. Distribution of an award is contingent upon approval.

This project is about copyright, at least in part, so it will of course require use of such material, especially those materials created by students. Students will retain control of the decision about how to copyright their works, though we will be encouraging them to use Creative Commons licenses so that they can create and enjoy legal and functional participatory learning networks on the open web. Because Creative Commons licenses are machine readable, we will not have any problems regarding appropriate usage of student-generated material based on copyright status. All of the materials and tools created by ccLearn and Creative Commons already are or will be openly licensed and free for anyone to use.

Profits

If your project generates profits, how do you intend to allocate them? You will need to explain why revenue creation is necessary and how any revenue will be used or shared in furtherance of the charitable objectives of the Competition.

We have no intention of profiting from this work. There is no need for revenue models since we will be working within formal education settings and this grant will pay for the material and staffing needs of the project.