**Not competitive**

**Greenstein**

**Distributed biography**

My reservations about this project reflect two distinct concerns: (1) the potential for abuse of the dBio application by users; (2) the wariness with which I think NEH should approach supporting any social media project. These issues are exacerbated by the lack of clarity in the proposal about any sort of editorial or oversight control of posted content.

The PI is unabashedly postmodern in his approach to experience and identity. He mentions Close in the proposal, I thought of Cindy Sherman and, of course, Rashomon. DBio is conceived of as "an environment for the construction and dissemination of collaborative, distributed, multimodal accounts of a range of human experiences." Essentially it seems that there will be some fixed point of departure (a person, an event, a site or construction) that is experienced by and then reported on by individuals who collaborate to disseminate their varied perspectives on the shared subject/object/location/event.

As a statement of the relativity or subjectivity of experience and knowledge the project's focus is non-controversial if not obvious. And there is no denying, I think, the personal benefit to a group of individuals sharing their perspectives and even recording them, commenting on them, and reifying them as a network of perspectives they wish to share. The PI mentions a "distributed biography project about a person, created by a dozen or more people, some as employees, others as children. Of course the problem is that the very same multifaceted approach to experience and identity is itself a process of development and change, employees become disgruntled and children estranged. And friends become enemies. There is a reason cyber-bullying gets millions of hits on Google.

When I looked at, for example, Fig. 5, I envisioned all the things that could go wrong with the "dramatic and ordinary interactions" about the subject of the biography. I am not entirely sure I would like a group of individuals posting, with me as a subject, "a complicated, unordered portrait". Users may have discretion about "how long and to whom their data will be shared" but do the subjects have discretion about how long offensive material about them would be online. And, of course, it is not easy to ensure that offensive posts not go viral.

**Overview**

1. Intellectual significance: Given a particular focus on noteworthy events, objects, or persons the compilation of distinct perspectives could be interesting, though hardly novel (as many commentators do this for a living).

2. Impact on research and technology: This project will not have a significant impact on research nor do is the digital technology particularly innovative.

3. Innovation: The technology is appropriate and the concept while new for a digital initiative is not new from a theoretical perspective as many scholars have commented on the variability of experience by different subject.

4. Proposal development: The proposal is well defined and explained.

5. Feasibility: From a technological and social media perspective the proposal is feasible and might, indeed, attract interest. It is not clear what subsequent stages are envisioned.

6. Qualifications: The team is qualified to carry out the proposal.