

NEH Application Cover Sheet

Digital Humanities Start-up Grants

PROJECT DIRECTOR

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UNITED STATES

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Field of Expertise: Technical: Mathematics

INSTITUTION

Montclair State University
Montclair, NJ UNITED STATES

APPLICATION INFORMATION

Title: *Distributed Biography: a Deleuzian approach to the expression of human experience*

Grant Period: From 6/2014 to 12/2015

Field of Project: Social Science: Anthropology; Communications: Composition and Rhetoric;
Interdisciplinary: Interdisciplinary Studies, Other

Description of Project: Distributed Biography (dBio) is a web-based application currently in ???proof-of-concept??? or ???alpha??? stage that supports the expression of human experience. The dBio Project aims to create an environment for the construction and dissemination of collaborative, distributed, multimodal accounts of a range of human experiences. With the help of NEH Grant funding, dBio will be developed into a fully functional ???beta??? web application with improved and expanded features, including: 1) an ability to embed and present a range of multimodal artifacts (e.g. images, video, text); 2) connections to other expressive electronic genres; 3) a system for identity verification and extended collaboration; 4) a visualization and navigation system for interacting within and between dBio projects; and 5) updated interaction, creation, and administration interfaces. The products of this project include a working beta and a white paper summarizing lessons learned and next steps.

BUDGET

Outright Request	\$59,457.00	Cost Sharing	\$0.00
Matching Request	\$0.00	Total Budget	\$59,457.00
Total NEH	\$59,457.00		

GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

Ms. Dana Natale
Research Development Specialist
1 Normal Avenue, College Hall 309
Montclair, NJ 07043-1624
UNITED STATES

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Distributed Biography:

a Deleuzian approach to the expression of human experience

A Level II StartUp Project proposed by the Digital Spaces Working Group

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2. List of Participants

Greenstein, Steven

Montclair State University

Olmanson, Justin

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

3. Abstract

Distributed Biography (dBio) is a web-based application currently in 'proof-of-concept' or 'alpha' stage that supports the expression of human experience. The dBio Project aims to create an environment for the construction and dissemination of collaborative, distributed, multimodal accounts of a range of human experiences. With the help of NEH Grant funding, dBio will be developed into a fully functional 'beta' web application with improved and expanded features, including: 1) an ability to embed and present a range of multimodal artifacts (e.g. images, video, text); 2) connections to other expressive electronic genres; 3) a system for identity verification and extended collaboration; 4) a visualization and navigation system for interacting within and between dBio projects; and 5) updated interaction, creation, and administration interfaces. The products of this project include a working beta and a white paper summarizing lessons learned and next steps.

Statement of Innovation

There are no existing web-based platforms that support the creation, compilation, and dissemination of expressions of human experience produced by multiple individuals about a person, a place, or an experience. Comparable existing tools support long-form, single-author blogging, and those that do afford collaborative expression tend to carry expectations in terms of voice and tone. In contrast, dBio will combine multimodal expression and distributed authoring within a single web application.

Statement of Humanities Significance

The dBio environment generates a new multimodal, nonhierarchical, distributed genre of expression. We see this project as beneficial to the humanities in that it offers a way forward in terms of 1) the application of theory to human experience, 2) the embedding of democratized expressions of experience in an open source application, and 3) the way it supports consideration, complication, critique, and the enactment of experience and identity within electronic genres (Appendix A: Fig. 1).

4. Narrative

Enhancing the humanities through innovation

Distributed Biography (dBio) (<http://www.distributedbiography.org/>) is a functional, freely available, web-based prototype application that integrates poststructural theories about human experience into a tool that supports new types of expression and collaboration. In the design of dBio, we draw on several ideas of Deleuze and Guatarri's construct of the rhizome [1] and Deleuze's notion of identity [2]. Specifically, our forefronting of heterogeneity, and multiple and overlapping connections, entry points and pathways, create an environment that tangibly experiments with expression from a theoretical perspective without requiring creator-users to 'buy in' or understand the theories on which the application is built. Our use of the word "biography" is broadly conceived so as to include not only accounts of individuals' lives, but also the shared ways humans experience objects, ideas, locations, and emotions.

In encouraging the re-presentation of personally meaningful experiences, dBio moves away from enforced consensus toward expressions of human interaction from a range of individuals who experienced the subject (i.e., a person, event, location, experience) at different times and in different capacities. A distributed biography project about a person, for example, might be created by a dozen or more people who knew her. Some knew her in her youth, others later on, some called her 'boss,' and others referred to her as 'mom.' Through images, audio, video, and text, collaborators add moments or fragments, which, in combination and juxtaposition with other fragments (Appendix A: Fig. 2), construct more complicated understandings about a subject. It's like a Chuck Close painting (Appendix A: Fig. 3). Each fragment offers its own aesthetic, and together forms part of an imperfect but useful portraiture of an individual, a place, or an experience.

Through the dBio StartUp project we aim to build on the existing prototype, developing it into a fully functional web 'beta' application with an expanded feature-set and improved user interface design.

Enhanced Beta Features

Expanded features and usability considerations include: 1) the ability to embed a range of multimodal artifacts (Appendix A: Fig. 4); 2) connections to other expressive electronic genres; 3) a system for identity verification and extended collaboration; 4) a visualization and navigation system which affords macro and micro interaction with dBio

projects; and 5) updated, more usable, interaction, creation, and administration interfaces.

Technical Specifications

dBio, including all features, will be developed as an open source web application and template based on python, HBase, redis, CSS, HTML5, paper.js, and JavaScript. Particularly, python (<http://python.org/>), via a web platform such as Zope/Django and HBase or redis database, will serve as the technologies providing the main functionality. HTML5 and paper.js will enable dBio interaction on a range of mobile devices.

Environmental Scan

A number of web applications exist which, in combination, represent many of the features proposed in the dBio application. Such features include multimodal embedding and expression (e.g. Wordpress, Tumblr), collaboration (e.g. Wikipedia, Google Docs), democratized, nonhierarchical organization (e.g. Twitter, Tumblr), and connection visualization (e.g. Facebook, Twitter). A few applications (e.g. Tumblr) incorporate multiple features but fail to support the sort of integrated patterns of collaboration necessary for the type of expressive work we envision and wish to support.

Contemporary attempts at co-constructed expression and identity tend to suffer from a need to distill subjects into a categorically recognizable experience presented in a consistent voice – thus leaving little or no support or opportunity for the inclusion of fragmented, incongruous first- and second-hand accounts. The tendency to present a consistent identity and mode of expression is tacitly embedded and explicitly encouraged in most electronic genres including Facebook [3] and Wikipedia [4]. dBio supports a different type of experimentation and expression of experience. The construction of uncategorized experiential narratives (Appendix A: Fig. 5) may be linked to one another via temporal, geographical, emotional, and via other connections [1] without requiring that they conform to particular themes or narrative arcs. The democratized nonhierarchical nature of the display of each composition in juxtaposition with others (Appendix A: Fig. 6) places the ordinary and everyday on equal footing with attempts to encapsulate or summarize experience.

History and Duration of the Project

The genesis for the Distributed Biography project emanated from a series of meetings held during the summer of 2006 between several members of what would eventually become the Digital Spaces Working Group (DSWG) (Appendix A: Fig. 7).

At the time, the DSWG was comprised largely of graduate students in the College of Education at The University of Texas at Austin, as well as graphic designers, programmers and publishers scattered across the country. During the Fall 2006 semester, we created a white paper and began meeting biweekly to discuss ideas we had for the application’s design. Out of a concern that the project was overly dominated by the text in the white paper, we created an “image series” of three PowerPoint presentations that focused on (1) theoretical aspects of the design of dBio, (2) considerations of the application’s overall structure, and text entry and media features, and (3) issues of collaboration and how dBio could facilitate the setup, seeding and growth of dBio projects.

In the spring of 2007, we worked to convert our ideas and the theories that supported them into some initial wireframes. We selected a development paradigm, and assumed roles based on member interest, availability, and skill-set. We selected the Agile or ‘extreme’ software development approach [6], which promotes an accessible, constantly collaborative participation dynamic between programmers, designers, application visionaries, and potential users. The group wrote “user stories” which described application functionality and features. These stories were assigned a unit score based on the estimated development time needed to realize the functionality described in each story. These scored user stories were ranked by DSWG members from most to least necessary, and developers, based on their available time, selected stories from the top of the queue that fit within the available time they had during a given two-week cycle. At the end of each cycle, the in-progress application was shown to the rest of the group for testing, and decisions about the next round of stories were made.

The iterative design and initial development process continued throughout the summer of 2007. Distributed Biography has been a working, ‘proof-of-concept’ alpha ever since.

Work Plan

	Task	Staff	Completion
01.	Create the user stories that go with the features for inclusion.	Greenstein, Olmanson	June, 2014
02.	Identify a lead software developer and design intern.	Greenstein, Olmanson	June, 2014
03.	Initiate a series of fifteen 2-week design and development sprints based on Agile Programming.	Software Developer, Design Intern, Olmanson	July, 2014 -- January, 2015

04.	Conduct user testing on the extended Alpha of dBio.	Greenstein, Olmanson	December, 2014 – January, 2015
05.	Review and update user stories based on Alpha progress, testing, and user feedback.	Greenstein, Olmanson	January, 2015
06.	Initiate a second series of ten 2-week design and development sprints (Agile programming).	Software Developer, Design Intern, Olmanson	February, 2015 – June, 2015
07.	Conduct user testing on the latest iteration of the application.	Greenstein, Olmanson	May, 2015 – June, 2015
08.	Initiate a series of five 1-week usability, bug fixing, and performance sprints (Agile).	Software Developer, Design Intern, Olmanson	July, 2015 – August, 2015
09.	Create and publish a dBio project wiki to support users and developers.	Technical Writing Intern, Greenstein	July, 2015 – August, 2015
10.	Release Beta version.	Software Developer	August, 2015
11.	Make open source code freely available.	Software Developer	August, 2015
12.	Publish White Paper documenting lessons learned from development and testing.	Greenstein, Olmanson	December, 2015
13.	Present project results at conferences.	Greenstein, Olmanson	Ongoing

Staff

Steven Greenstein (Project Director). Assistant Professor, Department of Mathematical Sciences, Montclair State University. Dr. Greenstein will serve as lead applicant on the project and point of contact with the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs at Montclair State, where the grant will be administered. In addition, he will be responsible for collaborating in the creation of initial user stories; identifying,

interviewing, and offering input on the hiring of a lead software developer; being virtually or physically present for user testing and focus groups; co-writing the white paper regarding lessons learned; and co-presenting at conferences regarding the application and its development.

Justin Olmanson (Project Co-Director). Postdoctoral Fellow, College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In addition to the responsibilities outlined in the Work Plan above, Dr. Olmanson will be responsible for collaborating in the creation of initial user stories; identifying, interviewing, and offering input on the hiring of a lead software developer; participating in design and development planning for each of the three series of “sprints”; being virtually or physically present for user testing and focus groups; co-writing the white paper regarding lessons learned; and co-presenting at conferences regarding the application and its development.

Lead software developer/graduate student. Primary responsibilities comprised of programming the expanded alpha version of Distributed Biography, incorporating the enhanced beta features described elsewhere, and releasing the code base to the development community. The lead software developer will also be responsible for participating in design and development planning meetings, observing user testing, and explaining elements of the code base to the technical writing intern.

Graphic design intern/graduate or undergraduate student. Primary responsibilities comprised of redesigning the graphic ‘look’ and interactive ‘feel’ of the expanded alpha version and ensuring the enhanced beta features described elsewhere are integrated into the graphic and interactive approach. The design intern will also be responsible for participating in design and development planning meetings, user testing, focus groups, and designing explanatory images to accompany select elements of the application and the collaborative process.

Technical writing intern/graduate or undergraduate student. Primary responsibilities comprised of describing enhanced beta features and processes of navigation and use via writing and images. The design intern will also be responsible for working with the lead software developer to create documentation to support future open source development.

Final Product and Dissemination

At the conclusion of grant funding, MSU in concert with UIUC will have created a working, open source beta application that will be available to the public as a web application and as web-accessible source code via a GitHub repository and via the application’s ‘about’ page.

Iterations of the dBio application will be tested with a range of prospective users and iterative redesigns and bug fixes will be based on user feedback. The application and its wiki will support users in their use of the beta version of the application.

The project's director and co-director will author a white paper about lessons learned and guide the work of the technical writing intern in the creation of documents for users and developers. To further raise the project's profile, the director and co-director will present the dBio project at conferences such as Digital Humanities 2016, the annual meeting of SIGDOC, and at other such gatherings. Post-grant-period products may also include a proposal for a Digital Humanities Implementation Grant to add features and robustness to the application based on user and conference attendee feedback.

Budget Form

OMB No 3136-0134
Expires 7/31/2015

Applicant Institution: *Montclair State university*

Project Director: *Steven Greenstein*

Project Grant Period: *06/01/2014 through 12/31/2015*

	Computational Details/Notes	(notes)	Year 1	(notes)	Year 2	(notes)	Year 3	Project Total
			06/01/2014- 05/31/2015		06/01/2015- 12/31/2015			
1. Salaries & Wages								
Steven Greenstein	Summer Salary	5%	\$3,252					\$3,252
								\$0
Graduate Student Developer	\$20 per hour x 20 hours per week		\$14,000		\$8,000			\$22,000
Graduate Student Technical Writer	\$20 per hour x 8 hours per week				\$800			\$800
Graduate Student Designer	\$20 per hour x 10 hours per week		\$1,600		\$800			\$2,400
								\$0
2. Fringe Benefits								
	Summer Salary	9%	\$293					\$293
	Student Salary	7.65%	\$1,193	7.65%	\$734			\$1,927
3. Consultant Fees								
								\$0
4. Travel								
	PI to D.C.		\$700					\$700
								\$0
5. Supplies & Materials								
	Focus Group Costs		\$350					\$350
6. Services								
	Server Space		\$360		\$90			\$450
7. Other Costs								
Sub-Award	University of Illinois Urbana Champaign		\$7,462		\$3,036			\$10,498
8. Total Direct Costs								
	Per Year		\$29,210		\$13,460			\$42,670
9. Total Indirect Costs								
Salaries and wages	Per Year	59%	\$11,123	59%	\$5,664			\$16,787
10. Total Project Costs								
(Direct and Indirect costs for entire project)								\$59,457
11. Project Funding								
a. Requested from NEH				Outright:				\$59,457
				Federal Matching Funds:				\$0
				TOTAL REQUESTED FROM NEH:				\$59,457
b. Cost Sharing				Applicant's Contributions:				\$0
				Third-Party Contributions:				\$0
				Project Income:				\$0
				Other Federal Agencies:				\$0
				TOTAL COST SHARING:				\$0
12. Total Project Funding								
								\$59,457

Budget Narrative

A. Senior Personnel:

Steven Greenstein (Project Director), with a 10-month appointment and an annual salary of \$65,044, will allocate 0.5 months of summer salary at 5% of his annual salary. The total salary allocated to Dr. Greenstein is \$3,252.

B. Other Personnel:

A **Graduate Assistant Developer** will work 20 hours per week for 20 weeks in year 1 and for 35 weeks in year 2. Total wages for this student are \$22,000, calculated at \$20 per hour x 20 hours per week x 55 weeks. This student's responsibilities are outlined in the Work Plan.

A **Graduate Assistant Technical Writer** will work 8 hours per week for 5 weeks in year 2. Total wages for this student are \$800, calculated at \$20 per hour x 8 hours x 5 weeks. This student's responsibilities are outlined in the Work Plan.

A **Graduate Assistant Designer** will work 10 hours per week for 8 weeks in year 1, and 10 hours per week for 4 weeks in year 2. Total wages for this student are \$2,400, calculated at \$20 per hour x 10 hours x 12 weeks. This student's responsibilities are outlined in the Work Plan.

C. Fringe Benefits total \$2,220, calculated at 9% of Dr. Greenstein's summer salary for a total of \$293, and 7.65% of the graduate students' salary for a total of \$1,927.

E. Travel: \$700 is requested for Dr. Greenstein to attend a one-day planning meeting in the first year of the grant period at the NEH offices in Washington, D.C.

G. Other Direct Costs: \$11,298

Refreshments and Materials for a Focus Group: 20 people x (\$12.50/meal + \$5 for materials) = \$350

Computer Services: \$450 (\$30/month x 15 months) is requested for server space.

Subaward: Justin Olmanson (Project Co-Director), with a 12-month appointment and an annual salary of \$52,000, will allocate 1 month of salary, fringe benefits, and indirect costs at \$7,462 in year 1 and \$3,036 in year 2. A 3% projected cost of living increase is included in year 2. \$989 is requested to cover costs for the NEH one-day planning meeting in D.C. The total allocation to Dr. Olmanson is \$10,498.

H. Total Direct Costs: \$42,670

I. Indirect Cost Rates: MSU's federally approved indirect cost rate of 59% (on salaries and wages excluding all stipends and fringe benefits) has been applied for a total of \$16,787.

J. Total Direct and Indirect Costs: \$59,457



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES

Program Support Center
Financial Management Services
Division of Cost Allocation

26 Federal Plaza, Room 41-122
New York, New York 10278
Phone: (212) 264-2069
Fax: (212) 264-5478
Email: dcany@psc.gov

September 24, 2012

Ms. Dianne Teixeira
Accounting Manager
Montclair State University
Upper Montclair, NJ 07043


Dear Ms. Teixeira:

A copy of an indirect cost Rate Agreement is being faxed to you for signature. This Agreement reflects an understanding reached between your organization and a member of my staff concerning the rate(s) that may be used to support your claim for indirect costs on grants and contracts with the Federal Government.

Please have the Agreement signed by an authorized representative of your organization and returned to me by fax or email, retaining the copy for your files. Our fax number is (212) 264-5478 and email address is dcany@psc.gov. We will reproduce and distribute the Agreement to the appropriate awarding organizations of the Federal Government for their use.

An indirect cost proposal, together with the supporting information, is required to substantiate your claim for indirect costs under grants and contracts awarded by the Federal Government. Thus, your next proposal based on actual costs for the fiscal year ending 06/30/2015, is due in our office by 12/31/2015.

Sincerely,


Robert I. Aaronson
Director, Division of
Cost Allocation

Enclosures

PLEASE SIGN AND RETURN A COPY OF THE RATE AGREEMENT BY FAX OR EMAIL

•Phone: (212) 264-2069 •FAX: (212) 264-5478 •E-mail: dcany@psc.gov

ORIGINAL

COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES RATE AGREEMENT

EIN: 1216000928A9

DATE:09/24/2012

ORGANIZATION:

FILING REF.: The preceding agreement was dated 06/04/2009

Montclair State University

Upper Montclair, NJ 07043

The rates approved in this agreement are for use on grants, contracts and other agreements with the Federal Government, subject to the conditions in Section III.

SECTION I: Facilities And Administrative Cost Rates

RATE TYPES: FIXED FINAL PROV. (PROVISIONAL) PRED. (PREDETERMINED)

EFFECTIVE PERIOD

<u>TYPE</u>	<u>FROM</u>	<u>TO</u>	<u>RATE (%)</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>APPLICABLE TO</u>
PRED.	07/01/2012	06/30/2016	59.00	On-Campus	All Programs
PRED.	07/01/2012	06/30/2016	21.80	Off-Campus	All Programs
PROV.	07/01/2016	Until Amended			Use same rates and conditions as those cited for fiscal year ending June 30, 2016.

*BASE

Direct salaries and wages including vacation, holiday, sick pay and other paid absences but excluding all other fringe benefits.

SECTION III: GENERAL

A. LIMITATIONS:

The rates in this Agreement are subject to any statutory or administrative limitations and apply to a given grant, contract or other agreement only to the extent that funds are available. Acceptance of the rates is subject to the following conditions: (1) Only costs incurred by the organization were included in its facilities and administrative cost pools as finally accepted; such costs are legal obligations of the organization and are allowable under the governing cost principles; (2) The same costs that have been treated as facilities and administrative costs are not claimed as direct costs; (3) Similar types of costs have been accorded consistent accounting treatment; and (4) The information provided by the organization which was used to establish the rates is not later found to be materially incomplete or inaccurate by the Federal Government. In such situations the rate(s) would be subject to renegotiation at the discretion of the Federal Government.

B. ACCOUNTING CHANGES:

This Agreement is based on the accounting system purported by the organization to be in effect during the Agreement period. Changes to the method of accounting for costs which affect the amount of reimbursement resulting from the use of this Agreement require prior approval of the authorized representative of the cognizant agency. Such changes include, but are not limited to, changes in the charging of a particular type of cost from facilities and administrative to direct. Failure to obtain approval may result in cost disallowances.

C. FIXED RATES:

If a fixed rate is in this Agreement, it is based on an estimate of the costs for the period covered by the rate. When the actual costs for this period are determined, an adjustment will be made to a rate of a future year(s) to compensate for the difference between the costs used to establish the fixed rate and actual costs.

D. USE BY OTHER FEDERAL AGENCIES:

The rates in this Agreement were approved in accordance with the authority in Office of Management and Budget Circular A-21, and should be applied to grants, contracts and other agreements covered by this Circular, subject to any limitations in A above. The organization may provide copies of the Agreement to other Federal Agencies to give them early notification of the Agreement.

E. OTHER:

If any Federal contract, grant or other agreement is reimbursing facilities and administrative costs by a means other than the approved rate(s) in this Agreement, the organization should (1) credit such costs to the affected programs, and (2) apply the approved rate(s) to the appropriate base to identify the proper amount of facilities and administrative costs allocable to these programs.

BY THE INSTITUTION:

Montclair State University

(INSTITUTION)

(SIGNATURE)

(NAME)

(TITLE)

(DATE)

[Handwritten Signature]
CATHERINE A. CORYAT
A VP for FINANCE : CONTROLLER
OCT 16, 2012

ON BEHALF OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT:

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

(AGENCY)

(SIGNATURE)

Robert I. Aaronson

(NAME)

Director, Northeastern Field Office

(TITLE)

9/24/2012

(DATE) 0189

HHS REPRESENTATIVE:

Michael Stanco

Telephone:

(212) 264-2069

6. Biographies

Steven Greenstein

Dr. Steven Greenstein is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Mathematical Sciences at Montclair State University. He earned his PhD in Mathematics Education from The University of Texas at Austin in 2010. He is interested in children's mathematical thinking, the design of exploratory software environments for learning mathematics, and issues of equity and social justice. In addition to his collaboration on prior work with Distributed Biography, Dr. Greenstein has used design-based research to collaborate on the design and development of a dynamic geometry environment called *Configure* (available at www.playwithshapes.com) that supports topological representations and transformations of plane figures. Dr. Greenstein has also designed Peer-Led Team Learning (PLTL) featuring web-based exploratory tools for STEM students in entry-level mathematics courses, and conducted professional development with university-level mathematics instructors to explore the pedagogical possibilities of a variety of computing environments including domain-specific exploratory playgrounds.

Justin Olmanson

Dr. Justin Olmanson is an IES Postdoctoral Fellow in literacy, assessment, and technology in the College of Education at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. He earned his PhD in Instructional Technology from The University of Texas at Austin in 2011. He works on several projects (Scholar and FunWritr) which focus on literacy acquisition and writing within K-12 learning environments. Specifically online open-ended multimodal literacy acquisition & language exploration environments. Additionally, he is interested in socio-educational contexts of technology; implementation dynamics, and new ethnographic writing. Finally, Dr. Olmanson was the lead developer of the dBio Alpha prototype.

7. Data Management Plan

Data to be Generated

Data type	Sharing Timeline	Conditions
The application's open source computer code including server and client side, reader, creator, and admin components.	Two weeks after the release of the Beta version of the software.	Code will be made available via GitHub or a similar open source project repository.
Text, video, audio, and images generated by users throughout the course of the project.	Data made public by users will be available throughout the course of the project. Private user data and contributions will remain so.	Users/creators will have discretion as to when, for how long, and to whom access to their data will be shared.
Project wiki information for users and developers.	User-related wiki entries will be available at the time of beta release. Developer-related wiki entries will be available when the application code is made open source.	Wiki entries will be freely available via the project website.
White paper.	At the conclusion of the project.	Freely available on the project website.
NEH final report.	After the project has been completed.	At the discretion of NEH.

Period of Data Retention

Project-related data will be archived for five years after the completion of the Start-Up grant period. User-generated content will be available for as long as users designate their data as publicly available. Open source code will remain on GitHub or a similar repository/clearinghouse for as long as the repository (and others like it) remain in operation. Wiki content will remain available for as long as the dBio application is used.

Data Formats and Dissemination

Data will be stored in html, python, CSS, zip, gzip, tar and other widely compatible formats and accessible via the application's project website as well as its GitHub repository web address.

Data Management and Maintenance

Application code (server-side, client-side, viewer, creator, and admin) will be housed at GitHub or a similar code repository (<https://github.com>). All other forms of data will be available via the web and accessible via links on both the GitHub repository and the dBio "about" page.

8. Letters of Commitment and Support

Attached are letters of commitment and support from:

Justin Olmanson, Ph.D

IES Postdoctoral Fellow

College of Education

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Phone: (512) 299-8606

E-mail: olmansju@gmail.com

Clay Spinuzzi, Ph.D

Professor of Rhetoric and Writing

The University of Texas at Austin

Phone: (512) 471-8707

E-mail: clay.spinuzzi@austin.utexas.edu



University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Education Policy, Organization and Leadership

1310 South Sixth Street, Champaign Illinois 61820

August 27, 2013

Steven Greenstein, Assistant Professor
Department of Mathematical Sciences
Montclair State University
1 Normal Avenue
Montclair, NJ 07043

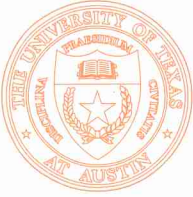
Dear Steven,

I am pleased to serve as co-director on the proposed Distributed Biography Start-Up project, as described in your September proposal to the National Endowment for the Humanities. I agree to provide the following range of services at a total sub-award amount of \$10,498.

During the project I will collaborate in the creation of initial user stories, help to identify, interview, and offer input on the hiring of a lead software developer, and participate in design and development planning for each of the three series of sprints. I will also be either virtually or physically present for each user testing and focus group meeting, co-write the white paper regarding lessons learned, and co-present at conferences regarding the application and its development.

Yours sincerely,

Justin D Olmanson, PhD
Lead Researcher & Developer of the Language Learning & Technology Research & Design Group
IES Postdoctoral Fellow in Education, Technology, & Assessment
College of Education
University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign



DEPARTMENT OF RHETORIC AND WRITING
THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT AUSTIN

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To whom it may concern,

In 2007, Justin Olmanson and Steven Greenstein impressed me with a SIGDOC paper entitled “Designing Distributed Biography: Co-constructing a Polyphonic Application on Borrowed Time.” The paper described the alpha development of a distributed biography system based on rhizomatics—a system that allowed people to “narrate shared experiences about people, events or locations in ways which interrupt monolithic conceptualizations of identity.” Rather than trying to force shared experiences into a single view (e.g., the Facebook timeline, the LinkedIn resume, and livestreaming applications), this system encouraged people to register their individual recollections. The result is an unreconciled, unordered, and potentially contradictory cluster of narratives in which individuals’ stories are not privileged over each other. Even at that early stage, the project seemed like an intriguing combination of postmodern theory and practical Web 2.0 application.

I’m glad to see that Olmanson and Greenstein have continued their work. They have developed “dBio” to better address the complicated, fragmented aspects of identity that tend to be washed out in other representations. They aim to “democratize identity and biography in ways that elaborate, celebrate, and complicate how we remember others and understand ourselves” and to “enrich and expand our memories of others,” not through traditional monoperspectival genres (e.g., memoirs, biographies, obituaries, Facebook timelines) but through a multiperspectival assemblage from which many understandings of a subject can emerge.

This project is an intriguing vision of how theory can be concretely applied to people’s actual experiences. I hope you agree that this Deleuzian experiment has potential for impacting the way we think about, complicate, critique, and enact identities in electronic genres.

Sincerely,

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9. Appendices

Appendix A: Selected Features, Underlying Theories, Use Cases, and Mockups

Fig. 1: Theory of Change: A logic model for the project.

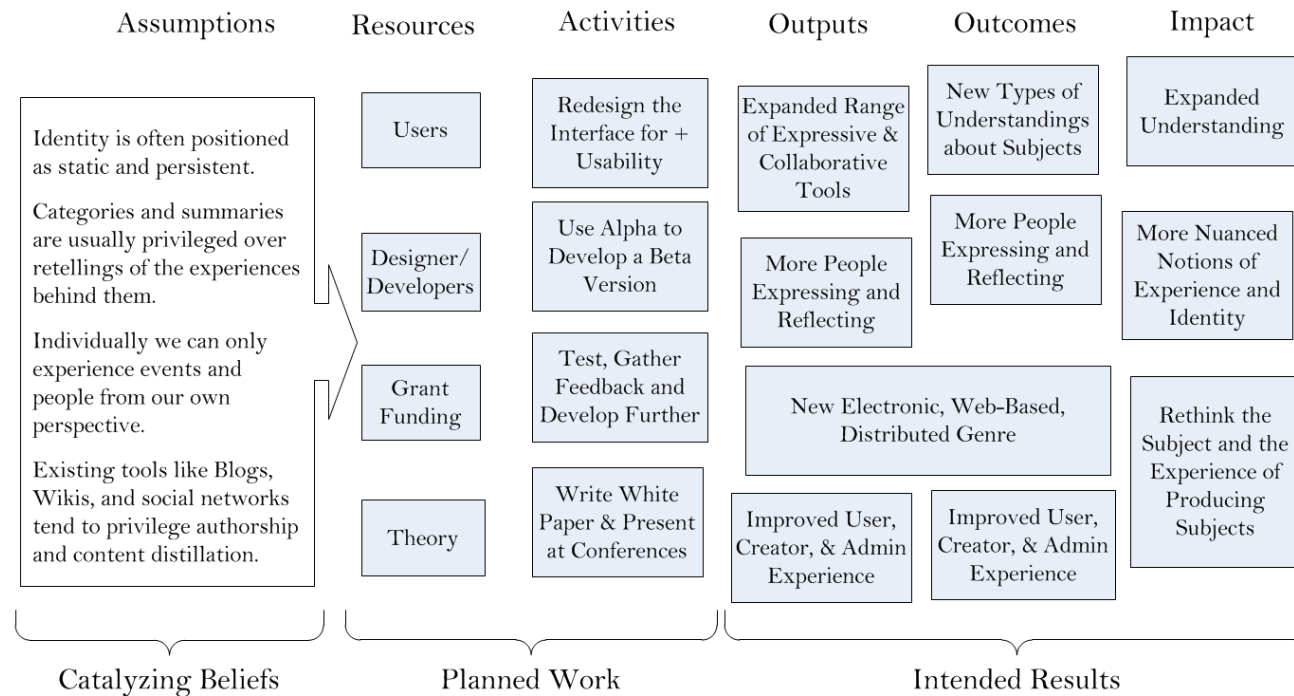


Fig. 2: Alpha Composition Environment Screenshot

Collaborators on a dBio project create their text- and image-based content and add meta-data via a simple composition environment. In addition to tagging, collaborators can explicitly link their entry with others.

The screenshot displays a web-based composition environment. On the left, a text editor is active, showing a paragraph of text: "I remember going out behind the house, picking a violet from between the long grass, dad said we were letting the grass go to seed, it seemed we were always letting it go to seed. I took that violet in and gave it to her, she was eating a defrosted butter-horn off a paper plate in our living room, talking to mom. 'Look at this grandma, isn't it fragile?' I passed it to her, from my tiny hands to her wrinkled ones flecked with semi-transparent frosting. She looked at it through pale blue eyes, 'Yes it is, so delicate'." Above the text is a rich text toolbar with icons for bold, italic, underline, strikethrough, link, unlink, list, and other formatting options. Below the text editor is a "Save Changes" button. To the right of the text editor are several metadata fields: "Title:" with the value "The Violet", "Date:" with "spring 1977", "Location:" with "715 North 4th Street, Me", "Type:" with a dropdown menu set to "First Hand Account", "People:" with a text input containing "justin, helen", and "Tags:" with a text input containing "violet flower".

Title: The Violet

Date: spring 1977

Location: 715 North 4th Street, Me

Type: First Hand Account

People: justin, helen

Tags: violet flower

Save Changes

Fig. 3:

Artistic Metaphor



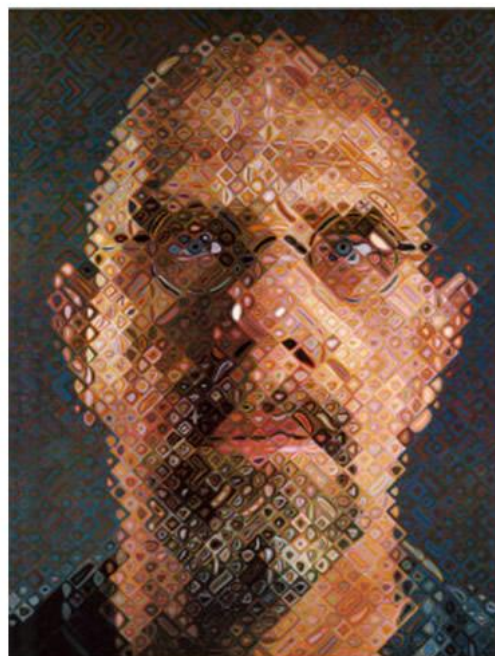
a single story



several stories



*It's like a
Chuck Close Painting*



a dBio project

Fig. 4:

A Vision for Distributed Biography Beta
Leveraging Multimodality and Aesthetics

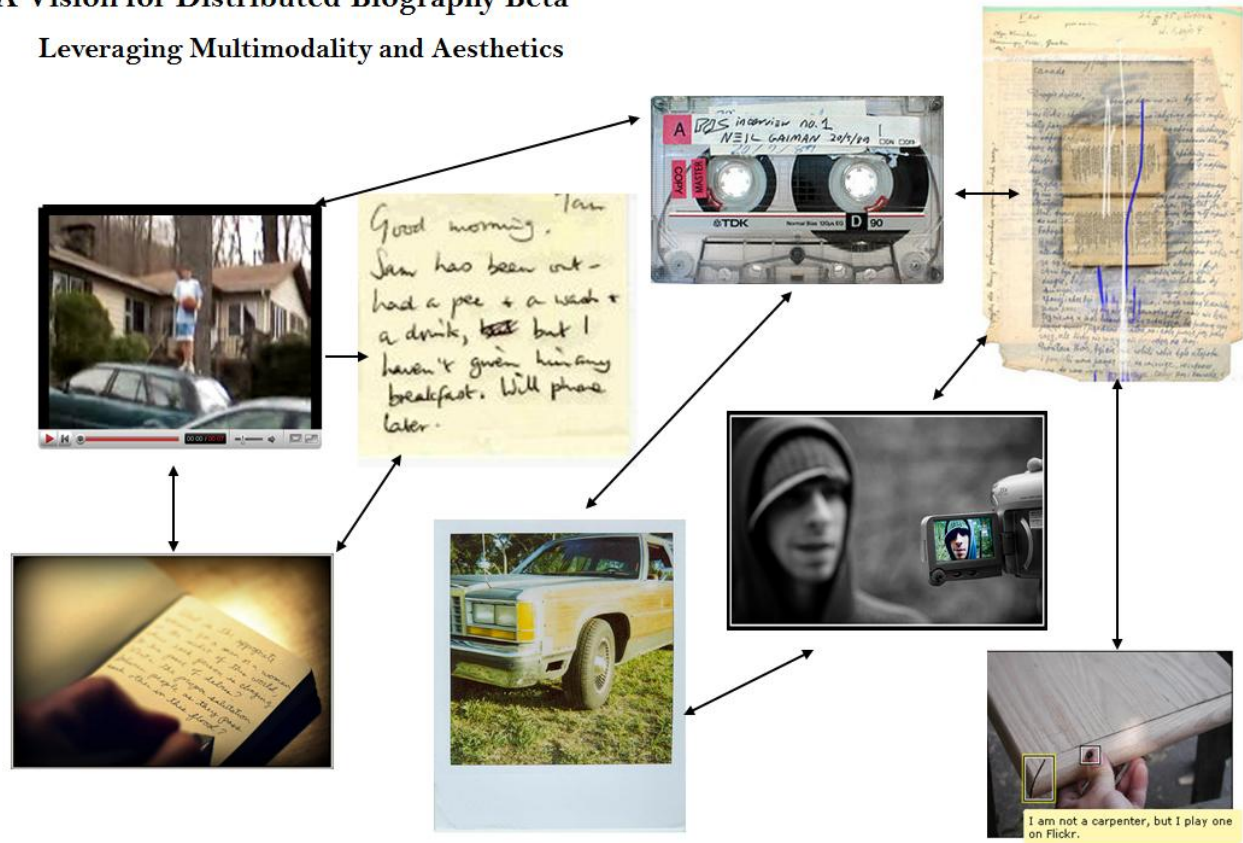


Fig. 5: Use Case

1. Jennifer starts a distributed biography about Amy, her mother.
2. She invites Amy's sister, nephew, best friend, co-worker, and husband to collaborate with her.
3. Some of them contribute stories about Amy based on dramatic and ordinary interactions they had with her.
4. Together, the stories create a complicated, unordered portrait open to interpretation, enriched with every new writer and each additional story.

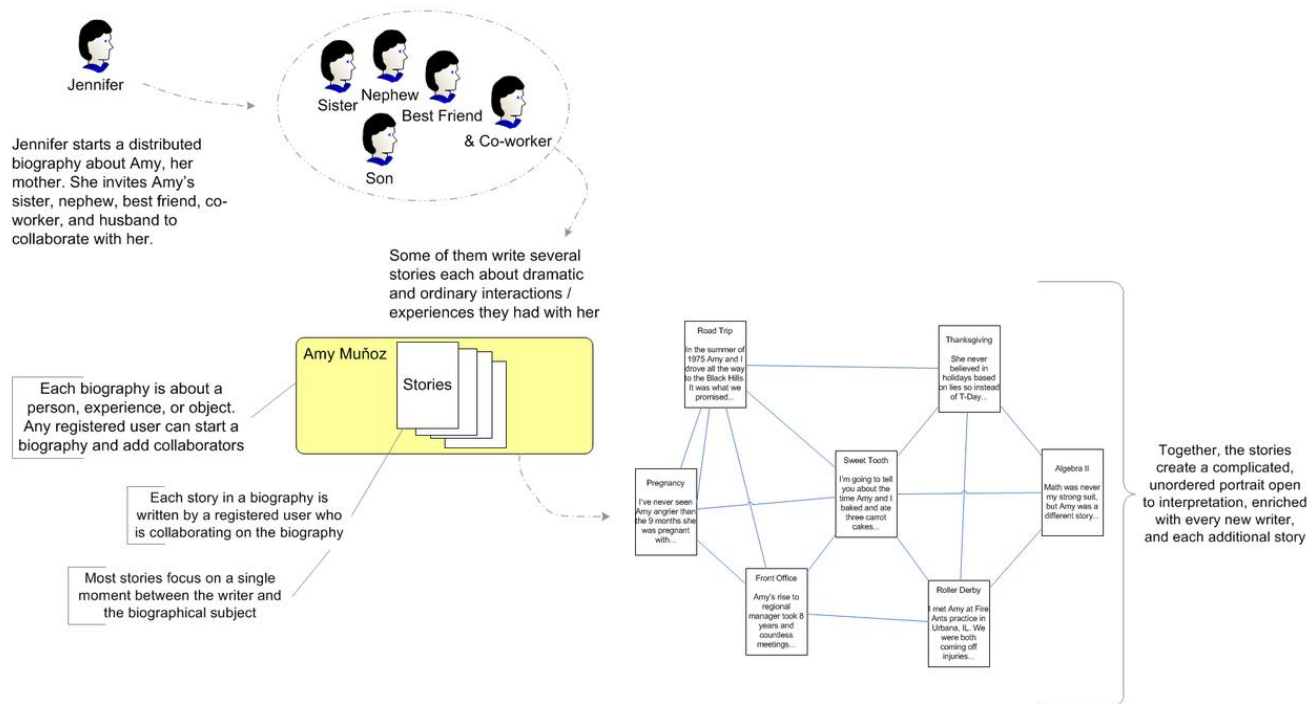


Fig. 6: Intertextuality & Interaction

More rhizome than reading space, the display and interaction space in the alpha version of the application positions selected texts (centered) within other texts (light gray font color). Order and linearity give way to interconnectedness and re-readings with subtle shifts in affect. Those interacting with the biography can move from the text they are currently reading to one of the light gray colored texts, following it to its conclusion via the linked “...” at the end of each introductory snippet.

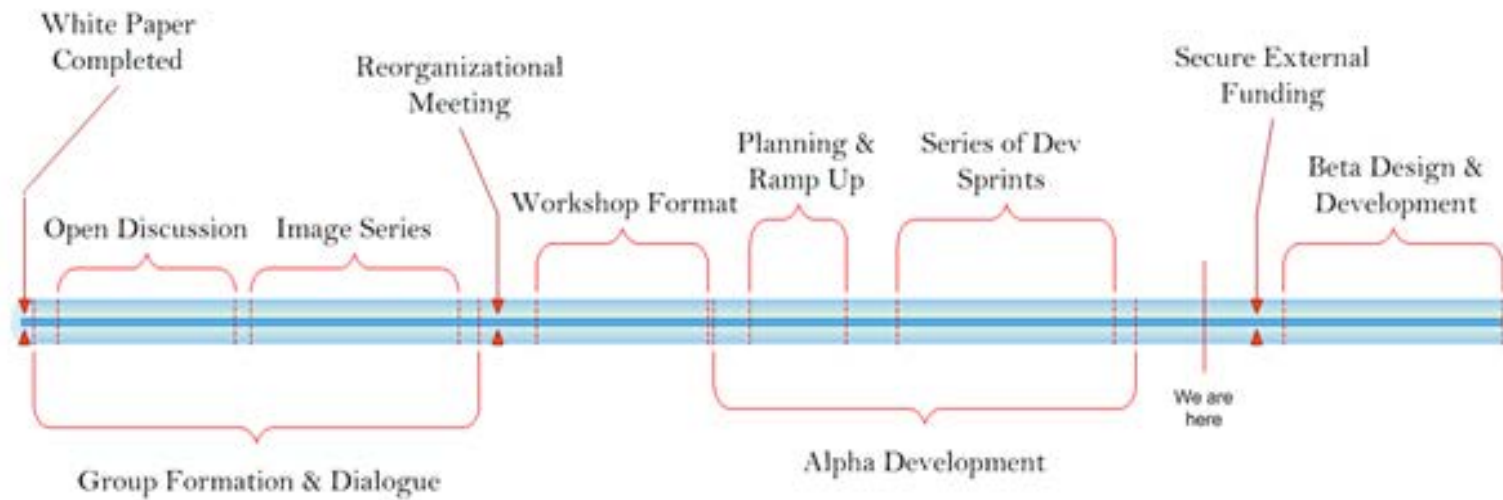
Waving Goodbye summer 1978 Redfield, South Dakota by olmansju

I remember crying in the back of our van, the whole family poised to make the all-night-trip back to Minnesota from Northern South Dakota. Surrounded by coolers and a water jug, lying on a pile of duffel bags covered with the seven sleeping bags which had served as our beds on the living room floor of their house. We would leave and I didn't want to, here we went to the park, here we ate cracklin oat bran in the morning, there were harmonicas here. I was crying in the back of the van and she wanted to hug me goodbye. My mom popped her head in the van, 'get out here, your grandmother wants to say goodbye' she had a look of baleful promise in her eye, if I didn't get over myself and come out things would get more uncomfortable for me as soon as we pulled away. I started crying harder but motioned to come out, 'No, its okay, he doesn't have to come out.' she said waving to me, looking concerned. Was I all right she wanted to know. Physically, emotionally. 'He's fine' my mother said eyeing me, her tongue scrapping across the outside of her teeth like someone trying to discreetly purge the outer molars of excess peanut butter. I settled down, she waved from inside their garage where we had been parked for pre-departure loading and where my brothers and I had batted at the flies who, finding no room to seed. I took that violet on the flypaper hanging above the collapsible table which was the site of our noon and evening meals were forced to share with us. By the time the van bottomed out and dad shifted out of reverse and into first gear, I was waving in earnest, in our family of nine, indulgences were about as common as our trips to South Dakota

Lefsa is a Norsky staple and like the good German wife I was, I wanted to learn how to make it...so one time when Grandpa & ma Olmanson came to visit, I aksed her to show me!! Well, her experience was to make a BIG batch...so we boiled the huge pot of potatoes, peeled the ...

We visited Grandma on Sundays, on a drive out to St. Peter after church. We would park alongside the red brick building, staring longingly at the enticing park across from the nursing home. The visit first, then the park. Down a hallway, dark, echoing linoleum with bright flourescent lights. Into the elevator, all nine of us (two parents, six brother, and myself) squeezed inside and the seven children clamouring to press the number. Often more than one number would be pressed and up we went, to the next linoleum hallway. The hallway would be cluttered with elderly sitting outside their rooms in wheelchairs, watching us file past with longing eyes. Our own eyes were huge--old age in all of its beauty. Finally we entered grandma's one-bed room. She always sat i ... My dad said that when he graduated from high school he figured he'd get a job in Redfield, SD and live in his hometown. One day later that summer his mother told him that she had signed him up for college in Wisconsin. My dad said that when he graduated from high school he figured he'd get a job in Redfield, SD and live in his hometown. One day later that summer his mother told him that she had signed him up for college in Wisconsin. ... My cousin Rachel told me about her second stroke. She had been staying with them at the time and they were outside to look at some flowers. She could still walk then and speak a little. 'By the time we got back to the house my mom noticed that her hips were sore and she was having trouble standing' ...

Fig. 7: Project History and Trajectory



Appendix B: Prototype Alpha to Initial Beta Feature Comparison

Feature Description	Current Prototype	Proposed Beta
Text composition and editing space	X	X
Brainstorming & Composition Support	--	X
Manual Content Arrangement		X
Organizable Notepad	--	X
Image embedding	--	X
Audio and Video embedding		X
Internal Invitation System	X	X
Proxy* Invitation System		X
Internal Identification and Login	X	X
Proxy* Identification and Login		X
Group Member Management	X	X
Public/Private Story/Project Toggling	--	X
Non-Hierarchical Content Viewing	X	X
Between-Project Linking		X
Multiple Modes of Project Navigation	--	X
Within-Project Visualization		X
Between-Project Visualization		X
Intuitive User Navigation Experience		X
Intuitive Creator Experience		X
Intuitive Admin Experience		X
Mobile Device Optimization		X

X = fully supported | -- = partially supported
 Proxy = Login or Invite via Facebook, Google, Twitter...

Appendix C: Project Evaluation Plan

Guiding questions meant to consider the extent to which the project team has reached its goals.

- Have all of the proposed features been realized in the final beta design? If not, which did not, and what was the rationale for non-implementation? Or, if implementation was attempted, what obstacles impeded progress?
- What obstacles proved to be the most difficult to overcome? How were those obstacles approached and what was the result?
- What did users have to say about their interactions with the dBio application in each of its design iterations? How was user feedback leveraged in subsequent iterations?
- How did the types of interactions and artifacts generated by users change as features were added?
- What are the most important features and integrations that came up as a result of creating the initial beta?

These queries will be addressed via the following methods:

- User focus groups
- Artifact and interaction evaluation
- Functionality checklists
- Correspondence review

Appendix D: References

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