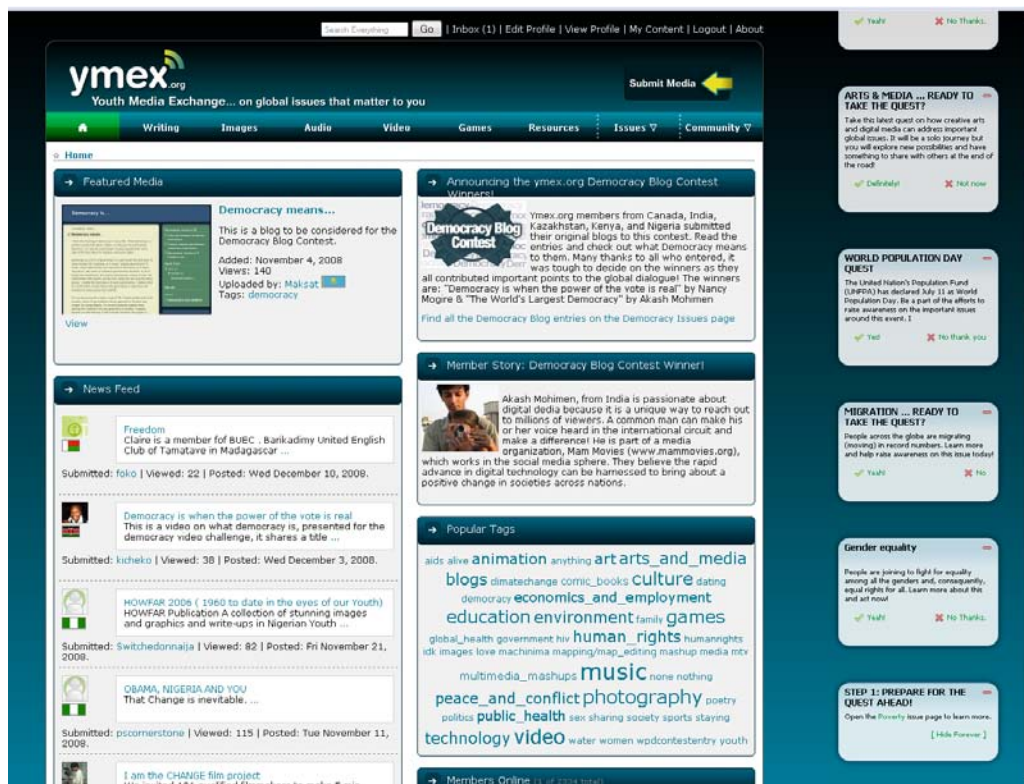


Youth Media Exchange

Final Project Report

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Project Overview

Youth Media Exchange (ymex.org) is a social network that enables youth to exchange and discuss digital media on global issues that they create, or that exists elsewhere on the web. The ymex.org web site was created by TakingITGlobal and Global Kids, in collaboration with Asia Society, to educate and empower young people around the world to become creative producers and critical consumers of digital media about global issues through a social networking environment that provides directed learning activities. The directed activities (including survey questions, focused group discussions, media production, and contests) aimed to link the MacArthur Digital Media and Learning Initiative research goals with the Youth Media Exchange program. An advisory board comprised of MacArthur Foundation grantees was also formed to guide the project partners for this particular goal.

The ymex.org pilot focused on the creation, organization, and dissemination of youth produced digital media addressing a wide range of global and social issues in innovative ways. By building on the TakingITGlobal community platform and existing media uploading sites such as Flickr and YouTube, ymex.org allows users to share both first and third party digital media. The site incorporates a youth development approach to learning through “Quests”, guided steps to engage in a global issue while learning to use digital media to effectively explore the issue; “Resources”, member submissions of online tools and free open source software to find, create and upload media on the Internet, as well as online resources on global issues; and “Youth Guides”¹, a mentorship system for members age 13 to 17 to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and engagement. The learning activities on ymex.org focused on the global issues most important to the community identified through a pre-registration survey and site activity. These issues included global health, migration, access to education, environment, and poverty.

Context

The pilot phase ran from November 2007 through November 2008² throughout which time formal and informal outreach was conducted in China, India, South Korea and North America. This was done through viral outreach on other social networking websites, NGO partnerships and events in order to engage youth. Our initial goal was to have 1,000 active members on ymex.org at the end of the pilot phase. Since the public launch of the website, as of November 30, ymex.org has had a total of 2,329 members sign-up for membership.

The website attracted young people who were likely to be media literate. According to the compiled digital media literacy survey results, 86.9% of the participants were confident of teaching themselves new skills on the computer. 75.4% agreed they could affectively determine the accuracy of information found online, and 73.8% agreed that they were able to effectively identify bias or prejudice within a form of digital media [Refer to Appendix 1 for the results to the digital media literacy survey].

¹ The Youth Guides and Explorers system was built as the last main feature in the process and did not have any participants. Please refer to the Recommendations for Future Consideration section of this report for the potential for this system in the future.

² The project planning and development began in November 2007 and the site was made live to the public on May 2008.

ymex.org Member Experience

Picture Victoria, a 17-year old high school student in Lima, Peru:

One day she finds ymex.org as a result of a Google search for “youth media”.

She immediately lands on the home page, and clicks on the featured media to view a youth-produced video about climate change that has been submitted by another member.

She wants to give this video a 5-star global rating but is prompted to sign-up in order to use the interactive tools on the website.

She signs up for ymex.org in about 3 minutes, rates the previous piece of media and decides to share her latest blog entry discussing the role of women in her country.

As practitioners, we took a hands-on approach to our work by building a new commercial-free social networking web site with very specific intentions. One purpose was to create a space that would be applicable to academics in the field by making digital media and learning the centerpiece of this niche social network. While our work was not intended to match the rigorous research and methodological approach of academics, it supports their efforts by creating a hub where young people from around the world who are interested in digital media and social issues meet, create, discuss and critically reflect on the impact of digital media in their lives.

The Youth Media Exchange team was comprised of three partner organizations with different but complementary strengths, goals, and approaches to their work in the realm of digital media and learning. TakingITGlobal³ and Global Kids⁴ were the two leads on the project, and Asia Society⁵ was sub-contracted by Global Kids. While each partner had a unique role in the project, the majority of our efforts were collaborative which not only presented a number of challenges but also resulted in a broader scope of the learning potentials of the project. Refer to Appendix 2, ymex.org Timeline, which documents our process and provides a synopsis of our meeting minutes.]

³ TakingITGlobal’s flagship program is the original social networking site, takingitglobal.org, first launched in 2000. The goal is to create positive social change locally and globally using primarily Web 2.0 tools and digital media. TakingITGlobal (TIG) led site design and improvements for ymex.org. The TIG team of designers and web developers created the branding, design, and built the website and learning activities based on the entire team’s input. The Project Coordinator managed the online community and content submissions. She handled all communications with the members, the majority of whom were existing members of takingitglobal.org. TakingITGlobal was able to lend to the project eight years of experience in social networking and learning as well as years of trial and error with building online tools to facilitate this process of informal learning. Additionally, they utilized their resources and experience with online volunteers in Asia in order to enable grassroots recruiting of youth in the targeted outreach countries.

⁴ Founded in 1989, **Global Kids**’ mission is to transform urban youth into successful students and global and community leaders by engaging them in socially dynamic, content-rich learning experiences. Global Kids Inc. is a nationally recognized leader in using digital media to promote global awareness and youth civic engagement. Global Kids’ Online Leadership Program integrates a youth development approach and international and public policy issues into youth media programs that build digital literacy, foster substantive online dialogues, develop resources for educators, and promote civic participation. Global Kids acted as an incubator in the project, contributing a conceptual basis for learning, developing culturally and age appropriate global issue content and coordinating the relationship with the ymex Advisors. In addition, Global Kids was responsible for leading the evaluation process as well as supervising the relationship with Asia Society.

⁵ **Asia Society**, a global non-profit with the goal of increasing dialogue and promoting understanding between the peoples of the US and Asia, was brought on the project to establish partnerships for reaching youth in Asia. Asia Society’s Education Program creates models and resources for schools and afterschool programs across the US in international education, and as such, they also contributed significant input to the design of the learning activities and user experience.

Research and Outcomes

The Evaluation Report submitted in August was focused on the five project aims proposed by TakingITGlobal and Global Kids, in collaboration with Asia Society at the onset of the project. [Refer to Appendix 3 for the entire Evaluation Report]

These project aims were based on five research questions:

1. How are young people currently using and thinking about social networking and digital media?
2. How can social networks be designed for learning across social and cultural boundaries?
3. How do young people develop media literacy in the process of learning?
4. How can youth-produced media best educate and engage a broad audience of global citizens?
5. How can partner organizations develop best practices for social networks?

Over the course of this project, these research questions have evolved based on what we have learned. This final report will focus on the adapted research questions and is designed to share our findings and unique contribution to the field of digital media and learning. It is imperative to keep in mind this report is written from the perspectives of practitioners, not academics, and is not intended for publication or considered an academic exercise, but rather an insight into our learning process.

The adapted research questions are:

1. What level of instruction is needed for meaningful learning to occur in the informal environment of social networks?
2. What is a necessary length of engagement needed to sustain substantial learning and how is this achieved?
3. How does cross-cultural interaction help make learning more engaging?
4. How does our approach as practitioners frame our thinking and affect our contributions to the field of digital media and learning?

1. What level of instruction is needed for meaningful learning to occur in the informal environment of social networks?

Creating a structured learning process that is flexible and transparent & make online learning engaging when it's not mandatory:

Structured learning built into a social networking site that youth visit in their free time, outside of school or in after-school program settings must maintain the spontaneous and organic properties that social networks without specified learning goals possess.

Even though the youth that were drawn to ymex.org were likely already active and involved in creating and sharing socially conscious media, the activities still needed to be captivating in order to compete with the multitude of other options of online social media websites available to them at any moment in time. Young people must be drawn to them and participate in them willingly and without guidance. They also must be provided with relevant incentives.

In order to attract youth members to take part in these learning activities, we proposed them as discovery-based experiences, referring to them as “quests”⁶ rather than “learning activities” to take the “school” feeling out of the formula. We assumed that by taking on a quest and making the completion of a step a discovery into the next step members would be intrigued to complete an entire quest in order to uncover an ending.⁷ [Refer to Appendix 4 for a chart describing all steps in a quest and Appendix 5 for an example of the entire text from one of the 13-step quests.]

But only one member ever completed a quest and most of the feedback we received from members as well as advisors asked for the quests to be more transparent. We learned in this feedback that the learning that occurs on a social network has a fun element unique to that experience.

⁶ Created as multi-step processes, quests aim to build competencies in young people, first by building a deeper understanding of a global issue that is of personal interest or relevance, then by using the affordances of a social network to connect to peers interested in this issue who have experience, knowledge or skills to share. Then, as an international group forms online, the team engages in digital media production with the goal of producing digital media that will raise awareness or educate an even wider group of peers. The established order of steps to complete a Quest ensures that each user is developing a wide range of digital media literacies throughout the process of educating and engaging themselves and their peers as global citizens.

- ymex Evaluation Report, page 8, August 2008

⁷ Note: They were structured so that users could easily sign-off anywhere in the quests process and return to the point in the quest where they left. They were not required to be completed in one sitting.

But certain elements of traditional learning, such as a final goal and revealing what steps will be needed to achieve that goal are needed in order for youth to be willing to engage and complete the process⁸. Youth want to know the intended purpose behind their learning in order to fully engage in the process.

Creating original digital media on global issues in order to share with others⁹ was a process that ymex was intended to promote and facilitate as an integral part of the process of building digital literacy skills¹⁰. While we had imagined that the majority of youth who would be drawn to the site were those already writing blogs and creating videos, we hoped that ymex.org could be a place for them to find the resources to build on those skills or develop a proficiency in other types of digital media. And for those who were drawn to the site because of their interest in global issues like climate change and HIV/AIDS, ymex.org was intended to be an environment that could nurture their initial exploration into creating digital media, or even be a space to begin the process of critically examining media and its ability to confront and spread awareness on those issues.

For incentives, we developed a points system to motivate members to be more active. These points were displayed on their profile page, as well as a break-down of how many points they received for every site activity. More complex activities received a higher number of points, but it was observed late in the process that for the point system to be an effective motivator, members' points needed to be more clearly displayed site-wide.

The most active members were youth who had solid media creation skills in one category or another, but the majority of members were engaged in ymex.org by sharing third-party media and then continued on as observers only. So the question that emerged is: to what extent do we create structure with explicit directions and guidance to walk youth through the process and how much do we leave up to them and the discovery process? And in choosing how much to facilitate, how much independence and choice is

⁸ As one user suggested in an offline focus group conducted in Shanghai, "I would take all steps and put it in a big page so they can see all steps at once. Then people can do it at whatever order or skip the ones they don't have interest in." The formatting of the Quests in pop-up windows was also reported to be an annoyance for some users. Another site user in the Shanghai focus group reported "The boxes only show in certain pages. I have to look for it when I accidentally leave the planned route". As a result, not clearly presenting all steps to a quest may have turned users away from the quests or discouraged them from finding their way back to their step in the quest. - ymex Evaluation Report, page 9, August 2008

⁹ Ymex was designed to highlight the different media categories by tabs in the header on all the websites' pages in order to emphasize digital media as the focal point of the website. The original media categories were: Writing, Video, Audio, Images, Games, and Mashups. We removed the Mashups category in September after realizing this was the least utilized category and all the Mashup submissions could easily be categorized into one of the other categories that these creations were most related to (generally images or video).

¹⁰ The tools youth members needed to experiment with creating new types of media or to build on their current skills were found in the Resources section. The Resources section was placed under the Community tab which was also in the header alongside "Issues" and the different types of media. It was moved in September to replace Mashups in the main header in order to make it more prominent. Resources were broken down into "Create media", "Share media", and "Global Issues". The Resources section was intended to be a key aspect of ymex as a place where members could find, for example, online tools to collaboratively edit video (Jumpcut) or youth-friendly free open source software to create animation (Scratch). This was the place for the members to find those online spaces that would host their media before sharing it on ymex (blogger.com for blogs, YouTube for videos). It was also the place to share other websites focused on socially-conscious media and global issues (UN's Cyber School Bus).

left up to the user in order to build digital media skills through the process of experimentation? We chose to give less explicit instruction and direction in the initial phase, but a second phase of ymex would put more emphasis on scaffolding the user's experience and guiding them more directly in the process of creating new digital media in order to test the hypothesis that informal learning on social networks still requires a small amount of the instruction that is given in more formal learning environments.

Facilitating, prompting and encouraging youth to enhance their critical thinking skills when consuming and commenting on media:

One of the most important aspects of ymex.org was promoting critical thinking in response to shared media, which was confirmed by member's feedback as well as leading scholars in the field like Henry Jenkins¹¹. We also put a great deal of consideration into providing a space for youth members to articulate those thoughts. In one of our weekly group meetings on February 21st, the following key questions were raised: "How are we prompting critical thinking when users upload or embed and respond to media? How do we structure rating in a way that creates a critical feedback environment? How do we structure the submission process so members adequately site sources, credit the creator and collaborators? And how do we do all this in a way they want to do it and do not feel obligated?"

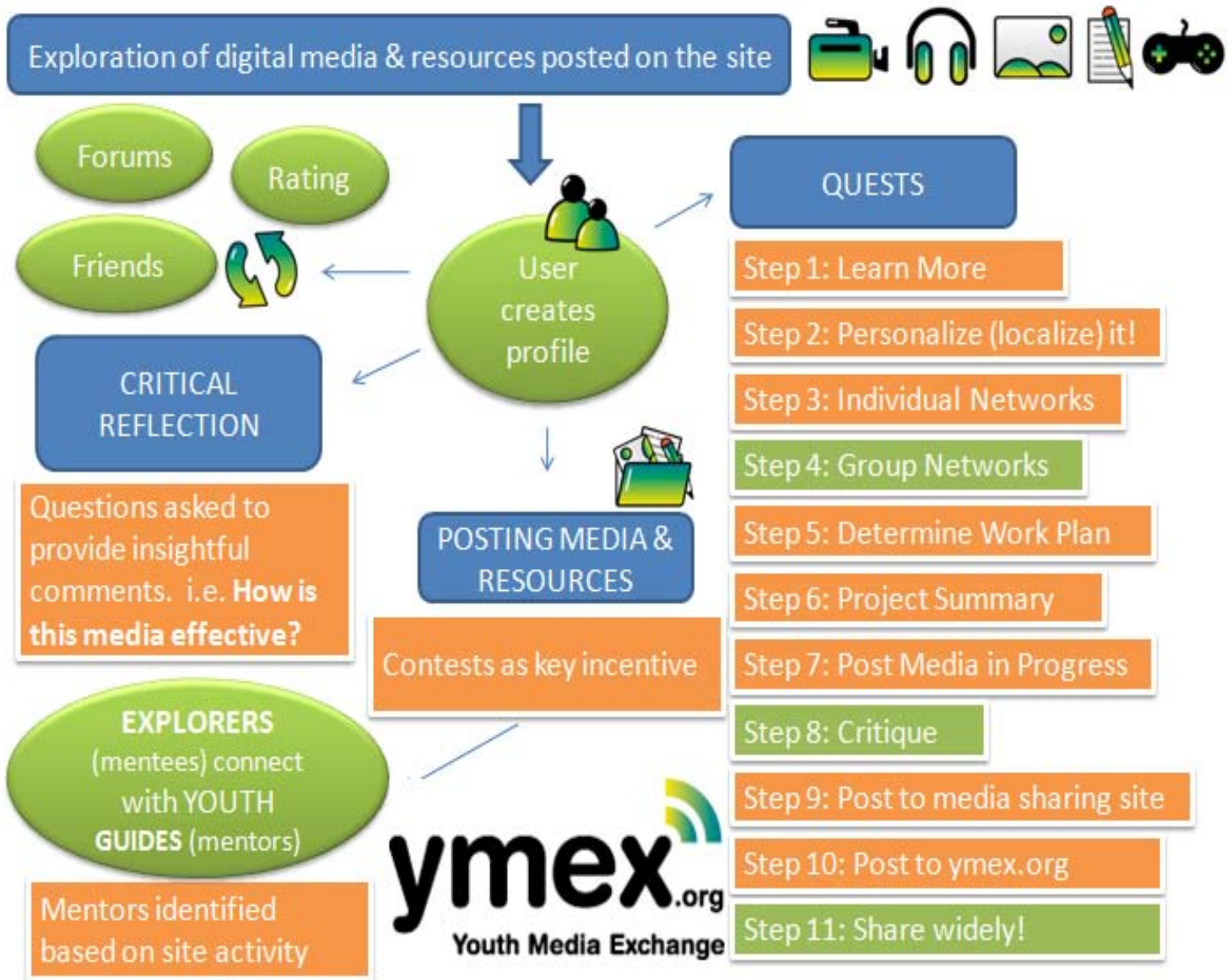
We used these questions to guide us in creating a unique process¹² for sharing and consuming media from the submission form to the commenting section. According to members, ymex.org was unique in that it genuinely encouraged critical thinking around the process that is generally done just for fun on other media-sharing sites¹³. By asking the question "How is this media effective?" instead of providing a generic "Comments" section, we intentionally provoked thought processes around the use of digital media for social change. In answering this question and then responding to other member's comments, youth members were able to contemplate both the media and the issue. The critical discussion that followed played an initial yet essential role in the collaborative process of examining the use of media to highlight the issues that matter to them. The diagram below provides an overview of the user experience and the various ways the site was designed to facilitate learning

¹¹ On April 4, 2008, members of the Youth Media Exchange team from Global Kids and TakingITGlobal met with Henry Jenkins, Erin Reilly, and the Project NML team to cover a number of topics regarding the use of social networks for learning and civic engagement. Henry Jenkins mentioned the importance of the critical discussion around digital media, how young people "need that ammunition" to concretely explain – "hey, this is what I am getting out of it". Jenkins raised the point that they need a vocabulary to talk about the effect that digital media has on their lives and learning processes, and that for the most part young people have been lacking a space for this discussion so they're not yet involved in a rhetorical process which would empower them and enable more learning with digital media. Essentially, youth must be able to defend themselves by making counter arguments to adults who want to restrict their interaction with the tools available to them.

¹² Refer to Appendix 6 for a screenshot of the media submission process, which was categorized by type of media as well as by first, third or collaborative media productions.

¹³ In a Focus Group with two active ymex.org teen members, this level of back-and-forth commenting was one of the highlights of their experience on ymex.org. In response to the question, "What are you able to do after spending time on ymex.org that you weren't able to do before?" The first one responded, "Actually making comments on other people's media." This member "makes comments on other social networking sites but feels more compelled to do that on ymex.org. It's more about sharing ideas with other people." A second participant said, "I can reflect more on others' ideas on an issue in a multidimensional way. I don't just read their ideas, I can watch, listen, etc. to their point of view."

ymex.org Learning Model



2. What is a necessary length of engagement needed to sustain substantial learning and how is this achieved?

Connecting with a new community to encourage engagement:

Driving an audience to the website was achieved throughout the course of the pilot phase with an average of 13-14 new sign-ups a day and a total of 2,329 members as of November 30, 2008¹⁴. Sustaining and building each user's unique experience in interacting with the site's features and other members is even more crucial to building a strong and active community, and this is what we found to be the greatest challenge. Some successful tactics to increase engagement were running contests¹⁵, viral marketing efforts¹⁶, as well as direct and personalized communication. In order to make a connection with new members, the Project Coordinator sent initial personal emails to members who shared media and resources, made comments, and contributed to discussion boards. New media and resources that were exemplary (made by youth and that which explored global issues) were featured in the spotlights throughout the site to incentivize sharing. Periodic emails, "ymex.org News & Updates", were sent to all members making it clear that we were seeking content to be featured, as well as spotlighting new features on the site and hints and tips for enhancing one's involvement on the site. [Refer to Appendix 7 for one of these example emails.]

Over time, a small core group of active members emerged as nodes in the network and contributed to spreading the awareness of ymex.org as well as motivating their own network of people to be involved. Nurturing these members to stay involved by giving them more opportunities for site activity were a key method to sustaining engagement.¹⁷

Unique aspects to encourage and sustain engagement:

While all of these efforts did spur engagement, the levels of user-engagement were inconsistent. The question of how to sustain engagement to the point where significant

¹⁴ Refer to Appendix 8 for a chart of select site metrics.

¹⁵ To increase activity among users age 18 and under, a series of contests were conducted on ymex.org. The contests which offered concrete prizes such as Amazon.com gift certificates, as well as time in the ymex spotlight and extra points added to their profile, had more participants than those that only offered rewards on the website itself. The most popular contest was the World Population Day Media Contest with 13 entries. It attracted new members and increased participation of current members. This contest was unique and most successful because it was connected to and had a deadline on the World Population Day (as declared by UNFPA). It was the contest with the lowest barrier to entry as it asked youth to decide what this day meant to them and to share any type of original digital media creation on ymex with the tag "wpdcontestentry".

– ymex Evaluation Report, August 2008

¹⁶ Viral marketing efforts were conducted by placing comments on youth-produced media on other social media sites such as YouTube, blip.tv, Vimeo, Viddler, blogger.com, and more. These comments gave a positive critique of the blog or video and asked the creator to share their work on ymex.org as well. Additionally, a Fan Page was created on Facebook.com with regular site updates, and a Club was created on Cyworld.com. As of November 19, 2008 the Facebook page has 105 members and Cyworld has 47.

¹⁷ An example of one of these key members was instrumental in bringing new and experienced media producers onto the site by passing on the ymex weekly mailer to friends and inviting Facebook friends to the ymex.org Facebook Fan Page. She was in touch regularly with TakingITGlobal's Project Coordinator, who would ask her to vote on contest entries as well as get her feedback on new site features.

learning can occur in a niche-based non-commercial online environment needs further investigation by both academia and practitioners. One of the assumed assets of Youth Media Exchange was the commercial-free aspect, which made it classroom-ready and more focused in intent, with an emphasis on educational content. But when most of the social networking realm is saturated with advertisements, do youth appreciate or even notice the value of a commercial-free space? Is this focused intent enough for youth to use it as their main hub for sharing and discussing media on global issues?

And while we don't wish to compete with other social networking sites, but rather leverage the fervor and excitement for the form, is it impossible to avoid the fact that we are competing with more financially-viable websites?

How much of a role does scale play in interest-based social networking? And how does scale affect engagement? We assumed that a smaller and more tight-knit community would encourage youth to be more active because of their position as pioneers in a new social networking space and the fact that they were more likely to be highlighted for their accomplishments. But the question that arose as a result of intermittent engagement levels was: are young people more likely to participate more intently on the social networks that have a much larger community and does a well-established site tend to see greater levels of engagement after a certain point of longevity? Does popularity affect the motivation for continued use and higher levels of engagement and is the main draw and attraction to a social network a high saturation of content and people?

And does the learning that occurs with only intermittent activity make for more solid learning as the youth have time to reflect on what they observe and gain before returning to the site? Or does consistent activity and greater awareness of the site's ongoing activity and contributions lend itself to more substantial learning?

Sustained Engagement and Sustained Issues:

Ymex.org was established and promoted as a niche issue-based social network, and the tagline, "On global issues that matter to you" was found on all pages of the web site itself. We assumed that a breadth of issues would allow for a more inclusive environment and draw young people who were interested in any social and global issue that was relevant to their community and life experience. But the most active members of ymex.org displayed a consistent commitment to one particular issue. A lesson learned toward the end of the pilot phase was that we could draw members but not necessarily sustain engagement with a broad issue base. As members become more active on an issue, they need more support and so will likely move on to an even more niche-based network to meet their needs.

3. How does cross-cultural interaction help make learning more engaging?

Identifying and defining the initial target audience in order to enable cross-cultural interaction:

Outreach was focused on TakingITGlobal's existing membership along with targeted outreach in India, China, South Korea, and North America with the goal of building collaboration between youth in Asia with youth in North America. We chose these countries in Asia alongside North America because of the paralleled enthusiasm and youth involvement in digital media, and in particular, social networking.

High membership numbers were expected from the US and Canada due to the partner organizations' established presence in these countries and the fact that the site was only offered in English. Of the three countries in Asia, only India achieved significant participation, ranking second in members and first in site visits¹⁸. Uptake of the site among youth in China and South Korea was not as successful mostly due to the language barrier as well as less opportunities to engage in informal learning.

Initial project plans for outreach were to test the site in schools, after-school programs focused on digital and social media, as well as youth on their own time. We adapted the outreach plan to focus primarily on youth working independently online as a result of time constraints and more complex technical demands than we had prepared for. With a May launch date, all the target countries were nearing the end of the school year¹⁹, and summer programs had for the most part already made their lesson plans.

While this may have given us less insight into what kind of learning can happen in more structured learning environments, it did give us greater insight into what can happen in an almost completely organic and viral sense and how willing young people are to engage in learning and civic engagement on their computers at home or in public facilities. In the grand scope, we witnessed a remarkable willingness on the part of many to sign-up and the part of few to fully engage, enter contests, create new media, connect with others, and provide feedback. What seemed like a setback could have actually proved to be an asset to the research by forcibly narrowing it to one type of user with a few exceptions²⁰.

¹⁸ The countries with the highest number of members as of November, 2008 are: USA (949), India (478), Canada (167), Nigeria (72), and Pakistan (35).

¹⁹ with the exception of India

²⁰ Asia Society, from its New York headquarters as well as its regional offices in Asia, reached out to a variety of organizations in the three target countries with the goal of establishing partnerships that would bring in youth new to the site. These included: educators and administrators in schools, exchange programs, and afterschool programs; issue-based non-profit organizations with youth programs; educational technology programs; and youth media organizations. A partnership was established within China; however, the group did not establish large increases in either membership or activity on the site. This group was able to facilitate the focus group of youth in Shanghai to provide feedback on ymex.org's tools and learning processes.

– ymex Evaluation Report, August 2008

In-country focal points to build cross-cultural interaction:

TakingITGlobal hired three online volunteers with the title of Regional Online Community Connector (ROCC) in each of the three targeted outreach countries in Asia. The volunteer based in Bangalore, Puja Goyal, was a journalist who wrote a number of stories about ymex in Hindi for local newspapers. She also worked with youth in community theatre and used theatrical productions as a venue to promote awareness of ymex.org. The volunteer based in Shanghai, Lily Wang, was a volunteer for the Red Cross as well as UNICEF and used other volunteer opportunities, gatherings, and conferences to spread awareness of ymex to others in China. The South Korean ROCC, Heon-Joo Ha, a college student in technology based in Seoul, used other Korean online forums to spread awareness of ymex. Through his efforts and feedback we realized that trying to get an English-only website in South Korea to pick up was not a practical task. According to this volunteer, an impenetrable language barrier existed with youth in South Korea asked to get involved in ymex.org.

These ROCC's served as the ymex.org team's bridge for cross-cultural interaction. We greatly benefitted from their input on how youth in their country were responding to ymex.org's offerings and what it was lacking to appeal to their local communities. While Asia Society was the institutional connection to the target outreach countries, the ROCC's were youth and media creators themselves. Asia Society liaised with their in-country offices to garner support for the project and contributed efforts to finding an ROCC in South Korea. The dual approach to the in-country outreach was more effective than one or the other on its own.

Creating opportunities for broader global reach:

We did focus but did not restrict outreach to the three Asian countries because we believed it was valuable to leverage the diversity of the TakingITGlobal network and the likelihood that a number of members would be interested in the more niche-based ymex.org. And indeed, the most active members were not from the target countries. Included in the Evaluation Report [Appendix 3] is a profile of the five most active members as of August – four of whom were TakingITGlobal members prior to joining ymex.org.²¹

²¹ These five members were from Madagascar, Mexico, Peru, and the US.

The factors that determine the level of engagement in a global context and the potential for cross-cultural collaboration:

We envisioned and designed quests in order to enable cross-cultural collaboration by way of members making contacts with youth in other countries and then working with them on a particular media creation. This did not occur in the pilot phase timeframe but other forms of collaboration did occur, mostly in the exchanging of media and comments²² that gave us insight into the potential for more fruitful collaboration in the future.

One challenge for true collaboration is how to create equal opportunities for all the participants. But the reality of the digital divide means that while select youth from any region of the world would be drawn to ymex.org, their ability to engage more deeply varies greatly. The youth members who were most active on ymex were those who had regular access to a computer, either at home or in public facilities like a university or internet cafe (likely in the case of India and parts of Africa). There were others who had the desire but not the ability to be more active.²³

In considering this dilemma in advance, we made the majority of our quests and contests open to the type of media that was submitted. To avoid privileging youth with greater access to equipment, we considered the substance and messaging of the media that was submitted over type or production quality. Also, we learned that it was important to have quests that did not require collaboration in the production of media but more in the conceptualization of it. In the later quests that were developed, collaboration was not required by producing the digital media, but rather by rating and discussing it.

²² In a writing submission titled, “What is the World Coming To? An Essay in Teen Generalization”, a member, TK from Canada, expressed her discontent with age discrimination which is well-summed up in the final few sentences of her essay: “I felt the scorn of teenage hood as soon as I stepped into it. I thought being a teenager was all about freedom, but instead you are put under a microscope. Under this particular microscope, I guess, we all look the same. But this microscope could not be more wrong. We are all individuals, making up the future population of the world. Let us express ourselves, let us be us.”

The first response to this article came from a member from Peru who said, “Fantastic essay. It is true that we as teenagers are put under a microscope nowadays, and this increases the chances of our ‘rebelliousness’. However, it may be different in every country, as I have not felt such a harsh treatment here in Peru. It is always interesting to learn how people my age are seen in other places :). TK responded, “Thank you! I’ve always wanted other people to see my writing, so thank you for the complement. I really appreciate it.” This was followed by an American teen’s response: “I feel I can really relate to this in so many ways. Just with the fact that I’ve seen so many people casting immediate judgment without any regard to the person they’re judging at hand. Especially when you mentioned the whole bit about having an employee looming over you while shopping with friends; something I’m certain so many people in our generation can relate to. Truly terrific essay :)!”

²³ Club Foko from Madagascar is a good example – a group of university students in Madagascar who used blogs and vlogs to simultaneously practice their English language skills and to explore environment and development issues in their local community were thrilled to discover ymex which provided a platform to share their blogs and videos with like-minded young people in other parts of the world. Their group coordinator mentioned they wished to be more involved with ymex, but met only once a month, which was the only time they had access to the video equipment and computers in the same day.

Inherent value of international dialogue and cross-cultural interaction:

Our intent in designing and building a website with an international focus and appeal was to take the process of learning about global issues out of the abstract and make it more tangible to the youth members. For example, a young person who wants to learn more about water issues in the developing world will undoubtedly be engaged in doing so on a social network where she can submit a video or blog on the issue and continue the process of learning about this issue in a dialogue with a member from China or India. This type of learning most likely has more of a genuine, authentic impression on both members.

4. How does our approach as practitioners frame our thinking and affect our contributions to the field of digital media and learning?**Determining learning objectives and assessing learning outcomes for an informal digital environment:**

As practitioners in the field of media and education, we tend to focus on goals for learning that are based on concrete outcomes and deliverables such as new media creations, comments and dialogue around the digital media that is shared and learning activities that are completed. But we also realized that experiential learning and the creation process is as valuable as the end product itself.

While we do have some of these deliverables that we can refer to in order to demonstrate that learning did take place on the site²⁴, much of the valuable learning and enhancement of digital media literacy that occurred on Youth Media Exchange was not easily accessible or visible to us. It is likely that some of this learning was not tangible or immediately evident to the users, as is the nature of spontaneous, emerging and informal learning. And it is this type of learning that youth must choose to engage in on their personal free time that gave Youth Media Exchange a unique place in the field. It was a conscious decision to create a free-flowing learning environment with multiple pathways to participation.

It was difficult to assess the quality of the interaction and how that helped to develop the new knowledge-awareness and skills that resulted from interaction on the site. The qualitative digital literacy survey that we conducted was intended to be one of the measurements of members' progress before and after engaging in activities that the website offered. But because of the short time frame from the actual site launch (May 2008) to evaluation (August 2008) and completion of the project cycle (November 2008), the timing was not appropriate to run another survey to assess what youth had learned in their time spent on ymex.

²⁴ As of November 30, 2008, a total of 224 pieces of media were submitted to ymex.org since May 1, 2008, and these submissions have received a total of 31, 387 views. 38 of these media submissions had at least one comment, and 12 had from two to five comments. There are a total of 44 discussion board posts and 35 different threads of conversation.

Although we were not able to use the survey to gauge member's progress before and after, we were able to gain useful insight into the youth we were attracting to the site from the initial survey²⁵. [Refer to Appendix 1 for the Survey Results.]

The question that emerges from this process and that needs further investigation is: how do we give youth an opportunity to self-assess their knowledge and skills gained on a particular issue, how they managed to discover ways to navigate a new and unique website on their own and involve themselves in a community without being given instruction on how to do so? And how do we as practitioners design and assess intentional online learning environments?

Content necessary to "seed" the site and "expert" content needed to ground learning:

While the entirety of the site was intended to be driven by the community's submissions, including the educational content, there must be exemplar material as well as enough "expert" material to guide new members and set the standard for future content. The dilemma that persists is how to seed the site with this content while maintaining the authenticity of a member-driven community. We approached this by asking members for specific contributions such as telling us directly what issues mattered to them as well as sending us images, short blurbs, and the beginning thread of a discussion board topic that matched this issue. For the two youth that did submit the content needed for a new Issue page, their learning and contribution to other member's learning was tangible, as well as the sense that they played a leadership role in the process of peer-to-peer learning. [Refer to Appendix 9 for a screenshot of the Languages Issue page.]

What academics can bring to our work and vice versa:

A team of five advisors was established to support Youth Media Exchange on both the conceptual and practical levels. By incorporating MacArthur grantees, we created a sounding board on the following:

- Developing the critical questions for research purposes,
- Expanding the partners reach to targeted demographics,
- Assuring the site is appropriate for the global audience,
- Aligning the project to best practices in youth development, international education, new media literacy, and youth media production,
- Sharing advice and experience on a host of issues from how to engage youth in media creation using social networks to how to effectively communicate with diverse global communities.

Through the incorporation of academics into the advisory board, we were able to ensure a rigorous working standard was established and thus held accountable for. Alternatively, by engaging academics in these conversations we in turn worked to

²⁵ From a sample of 25 youth members age 18 and under, 13 participants described themselves as "very confident" in teaching themselves something new on a computer by seeing what happens when you play around with it, whereas 5 participants answered with "confident" and 7 participants as "fairly confident". Young people drawn to ymex.org are learning appropriation, the ability to sample and remix content in a meaningful manner, and performance, the ability to adapt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery. As a member from Mexico stated, "[I created] a video montage made out of footage of a rhythmic gymnast and a pop song." Young people on ymex.org are also using digital media to perform. "I sometimes choose characters viewed as 'icons' in Western culture and conceptualize how different it would have been had they belonged to a Mid-eastern culture" is one example of how a female member from United Arab Emirates is developing digital media literacy.

address specific questions and best practices vis a vis their own research such as effective uses of a point system and increasing engagement in a scaffolded learning structure. Refer to Appendix 10, the Advisor Summary, for further insight into how they informed our process and critical reflection.

Recommendations for Future Considerations

TakingITGlobal

Most Valuable Research Questions for the Future and Next Steps

The most fascinating outcomes that emerged from our experience in developing Youth Media Exchange occurred in the process of conceptualizing designing and testing a variety of ways to leverage the power of social networking to foster learning on global issues combined with developing digital media literacy skills. After extensive efforts through our pilot phase and evaluation, we are left with a range of knowledge assets that can be applied in a variety of contexts.

We can foresee a range of possible futures for how these knowledge assets can be further explored and applied across different settings. In broadly disseminating this final report, our intention is to support a growing field of digital media and learning in a cross-cultural environment. Whether it be through leveraging existing mainstream platforms or developing niche networks, digital media tools can play a profound role in helping promote active citizenship and engagement in global issues among youth. At TakingITGlobal we are interested in pursuing further research and practice on the following key questions:

1. How can TakingITGlobal.org facilitate informal, embedded learning experiences in an issue-based social networking environment while developing media literacy skills?
2. What level of instruction is needed for meaningful learning to occur in the informal environment of social networks?
3. What are the best methods for determining learning objectives and assessing learning outcomes for an informal digital environment?

The large numbers of highly engaged youth on TakingITGlobal's main social networking site presents a ready-made community to move forward in answering these questions. Rather than trying to grow and maintain a separate community TakingITGlobal plans to embed the learning components developed and tested on ymex.org into the thriving community on TakingITGlobal.org. An integration of the most prominent features on ymex.org would inform all of TakingITGlobal's goals and current plans for fine-tuning of the site to meet current demands and trends in the social networking sphere.

TakingITGlobal's entire social networking website is currently being re-designed and upgraded and can be found at tigweb.org – a Youth Media section will be a new and prominent section of the website. Integrating the media pages from ymex.org as well as the Quests would be a natural progression to continue the learning that has begun with these step-by-step learning activities. Advisor and youth member feedback would be considered in the process of improving the Quest structure – making the steps as well as the end goal clear to the user to encourage greater participation in these activities.

Additionally, TakingITGlobal recognizes the peer-to-peer mentoring process as a critical component to youth-directed learning, and would be an ideal platform to test out the potential of the Youth Guide and Explorer feature. Conceptually, TakingITGlobal will put a stronger emphasis on building and tracking digital media literacy skills.

The questions that emerged throughout the course of the pilot phase of the project as the most potentially valuable contributions that we as practitioners can lend to the field of digital media and learning will guide us in a Phase II of the Youth Media Exchange project development. TakingITGlobal has begun to put in motion particular tools and methodologies for working towards the answers to these research questions as well tracking and documenting outcomes.

Global Kids

The Role of a Project Incubator

Throughout the demonstration phase of Youth Media Exchange, Global Kids continued to exercise its abilities as an incubator in collaboration with TakingITGlobal. During this one year period, Global Kids was directly involved with the conceptual design of the Youth Media Exchange site to framework for learning and outreach and engagement strategies for youth in Asia. In order to implement this, Global Kids hired Asia Society to manage outreach to youth through regional offices, partner organizations and individuals in China, India and Korea. Global Kids with the support of Asia Society worked to develop culturally and regionally appropriate global issue content on ymex.org. In addition, Global Kids created and supervised an advisory board comprised of fellow MacArthur Foundation grantees including academics, researchers, and practitioners. The advisory board was instrumental in sharing key experiences and examples in contributing to the conceptual development of Youth Media Exchange. Most recently, Global Kids collected, wrote and disseminated an evaluation of ymex.org at the conclusion of the demonstration phase. As Youth Media Exchange transitions out of the incubation phase into the next phase of project development, Global Kids foresees taking on a consulting role in Youth Media Exchange under the lead of TakingITGlobal.



Digital Media Literacy Survey Report

Introduction

As part of the Youth Media Exchange (ymex.org) website launch in 2008, TakingITGlobal (TIG), Global Kids and Asia Society conducted a survey on digital media literacy with those who registered on ymex.org. Two versions of this survey were uploaded: a first version was posted on TakingITGlobal.org, and a second version, with slightly modified questions, on Survey Monkey. The TIG version contained 18 quantitative questions and 10 qualitative questions, while the Survey Monkey version included 20 quantitative questions, as well as 6 questions regarding participants' habits and time spent online and playing video games (which were not included in the TIG version). This survey was conducted by and from the perspective of practitioners who did not employ complex metrics and rigorous quantitative methods but it does gather an overview of what type of young people were attracted to Youth Media Exchange. It includes qualitative results and provides youth voices for the field of digital media and learning.

Methodology

In the version of the survey posted on the TIG, there were 97 respondents. Some participants did not fully answer all survey questions – these samples were excluded; others had participated more than once – in these cases, all submissions except the first fully completed version were excluded. This left a sample size of 55. The same exclusion criteria were applied to the data collected from the Survey Monkey version, yielding 6 additional unique and fully-completed survey responses (out of 8). The total sample size, therefore, was 61 (28 females, 28 males, 1 other, and 4 undetermined).

The responses from both surveys (TIG and Survey Monkey) were compiled for 16 questions due to the similarity in language and content of the respective questions asked. 2 questions from the TIG survey and 4 questions from the Survey Monkey version were incompatible with each other: the responses from these questions were not compiled together for analysis. (Note that while the 2 non-compatible questions from TIG were analyzed, those from Survey Monkey were not due to the minute sample size.)

In addition, the version of the survey posted on TIG included several qualitative questions (the Survey Monkey version did not). These responses were clustered according to themes and analyzed.

The compiled results of the survey are shown in the table below, where positive responses (yes, agree, strongly agree, scale options 4 and 5) are aggregated separately from negative responses (no, disagree,

strongly disagree, scale options 1 and 2). The questions highlighted in green represent questions to which many participants responded positively (positive results – negative results > 60%); those in yellow had a moderately positive response (30% < positive – negative < 60%); and those in red received mostly mixed responses (positive – negative < 30%).

Results¹

Topic	TIG Survey Tool Question (55 respondents)	Survey Monkey Question (6)	Positive	Negative
Effectively using search engines	How good are you at using search engines to find what you want online? If I were being honest, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'terrible' and 5 is 'excellent', I would say that I am...	I am able to effectively pick the right words to enter in a search engine to find what I'm looking for.	90.2%	1.6%
Self teaching on a computer	How confident are you about teaching yourself something new on a computer by seeing what happens when you play around with it? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'not very confident' and 5 is 'very confident', I would say that I am...	I have taught myself something new on a computer by seeing what happens when I play around with it.	86.9%	1.6%
Narrowing down search engine results	When you search for information online, and get a thousand different links to check out, how good are you at figuring out the best ones to go to and ignoring the most useless? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'terrible' and 5 is 'excellent', I would say that I am...	When I search for information online, and get a thousand different links to check out, I can figure out the best ones to go to while ignoring the useless ones.	85.2%	4.9%
Getting stuck = learning opportunity or personal failure?	When you fail to learn something correctly do you consider this a personal failure or an opportunity to take another approach and try again? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents 'personal failure' and 5 represents 'learning opportunity', I would say I see it as...	When I get stuck trying to solve a problem, I view it as a learning opportunity rather than as a personal failure.	78.7%	3.3%
Determining accuracy of online information	How often do you make sure information you find online is correct? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'never' and 5 is 'always', I would say that it is:	I can effectively determine whether or not the information I find online is correct.	75.4%	6.6%
Awareness of bias or prejudice within digital media	How likely are you to be aware and critical of bias or prejudice within a form of digital media, such as within a game or an MP3. Example: bias or prejudice against women, youth, or people of color. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents 'never notice such things' and 5 represents 'always notice such things', I would have to say that I...	I am able to effectively identify bias or prejudice within a form of digital media, such as within a game or an MP3. Example: bias or prejudice against a particular gender, age group, or race.	73.8%	8.2%
Working with others using digital media (TIG survey only)	How comfortable are you working with others to get something done using digital media? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'very uncomfortable' and 5 is 'very comfortable', I would say that I am:	N/A	70.9%	9.1%
Using digital media to create/do something that can't be achieved alone	Have you ever used digital media to create or do something with others that could not have been done by an individual? Example: taking on a mission in a multiplayer game, or adding your thoughts to an online discussion.	I use digital media to create or do something with others that I couldn't have done on my own. Example: taking on a mission in a multiplayer game, or adding my thoughts to an online discussion.	67.2%	27.9%
Effective time organization	Have you developed ways that help you keep control of the time you spend gaming, texting, cellphone chatting and other uses of digital media to have enough time for homework and other activities?	I prevent distractions from a variety of media (e.g. tv, radio, text messages, etc) from getting me off track when I'm doing something else that's more important.	65.6%	31.1%

¹ See Annex 1 for a more detailed look at the results in chart format.

Topic	TIG Survey Tool Question (55 respondents)	Survey Monkey Question (6)	Positive	Negative
Roleplaying helping to change perspectives	In most games you pretend to be someone you are not. Has viewing the world from a different perspective helped you view the world in new ways?	The times that I have taken on "play" identities have helped me to view the world in a different way. (Like taking on a role in a video game, or something like that.)	65.6%	29.5%
Multitasking during homework	How good are you at doing other things while doing your homework, like listening to music or texting friends? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'terrible' and 5 is 'excellent', I would say that I am...	I complete my homework successfully while doing other things at the same time, like listening to music or texting friends.	59.0%	13.1%
Grasping and understanding aspects of a system	How well are you able to look at a system, grasp the most important aspects, and understand how they relate to one another? Example: an analog watch with all of its moving parts or a complex movie. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'terrible' and 5 is 'excellent', I would say in this area I am:	I can look at a system and grasp the most important aspects, understanding how they relate to one another. Example: an analog watch with all of its moving parts or a complex movie.	55.7%	11.5%
Understanding of others from experience on the web/in games	Has your experience on the web and/or in games made you more or less understanding of those different from yourself? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'less understanding' and 5 is 'more understanding', I would say that it has made me...	My experience on the web and/or in games has made me more understanding of those different from myself.	55.7%	11.5%
Creating fanworks	Have you ever created anything in response to something that already exists in popular culture, such as writing a short story based on a character from Harry Potter or writing a poem in response to a rap song?	I have created something new that incorporates things or ideas that already exist in popular culture, like writing a short story based on a character from Harry Potter or writing a poem in response to a rap song or something like that.	54.1%	41.0%
Fangroups (TIG only)	Do you use digital media to associate with others who are also fans of something you like? Example: trading game tips or discussing what happened in a certain anime.	N/A	52.7%	47.3%
Using others' creations to create own piece	Have you ever created a piece of art intentionally using pieces of something created by someone else, such as mixing tracks for a song?	I have used something created by someone else to create my own piece of art, like mixing tracks, making a collage or stringing together video clips.	52.5%	44.3%
Online vs. real-life behaviour	Have you ever done something online or in a game that you would never do in person?	I have taken on a different identity online in order to experience something new or solve a problem.	50.8%	47.5%
Finding information or assistance online	If you needed information or help, how likely are you to go online to find a person who can assist you, such as through MySpace or IMing a buddy? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents 'I would never do that' and 5 represents 'I do it all the time', what I would say is this:	When I need information or help, I find going online to contact a person who can assist me, such as through MySpace or IMing a buddy, an effective way to solve a problem.	34.4%	42.6%

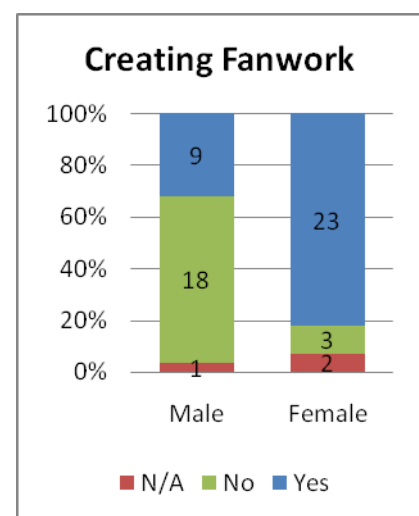
Analysis: Quantitative Results

It is interesting to note that most of the questions to which participants responded most favourably have to do with technical and logical skills (effectively using search engines and zeroing on the right search results, self-teaching on the computer, determining accuracy of information available online, etc.) On the other hand, the questions where participants were the most evenly split generally addressed using digital media to show one's appreciation for other people's works (creating fan-works, participating in fan-groups, mixing someone else's creation with one's own, etc.) Note also that the only question which garnered more negative responses than positive responses addressed participants' likelihood to contact someone online to find help or information.

With regards to correlation (see Annex 2), some strong correlations were self-evident. For example, those who were confident in teaching themselves something new on a computer by playing around were also more likely to consider learning obstacles as opportunities to try again, as well as to be more adept at easily grasping the most important aspects of a system. Those who believed themselves to be good at using search engines are also more likely to consider themselves good at narrowing down on search engine results to find the information they want. Those who are comfortable with working with others to get something done using digital media are more likely to go online to find a person who can assist them if they ever need information or help. There were also a few correlations which were not self-evident and thus present rather interesting topics for discussions:

- Those who consider learning obstacles as personal failures are more likely to have done something online that they would never do in person;
- Those who believe that their experience on the web or in games has made them more understanding of people different from themselves are also more likely to...
 - ... believe that taking on "play" identities has helped them to view the world in new ways;
 - ... go online to contact someone for help or information;
 - ...use digital media to create or do something with others that could not have been done alone;
 - ... be more comfortable working with others to get something done using digital media;
 - ... be aware and critical of bias or prejudice within a form of digital media.

Concerning gender breakdown, interestingly, the only question where responses differed significantly by gender was regarding the creation of fan-works.² The TIG version of the survey asked the following yes-or-no question: "Have you ever created anything in response to



² Differences between survey responses were considered significant when p-values were less than 0.05. See Annex 3 for a breakdown of p-values by gender and by question.

something that already exists in popular culture, such as writing a short story based on a character from Harry Potter or writing a poem in response to a rap song?” while the Survey Monkey version asked participants to rate the following question on a 5-point disagree-agree scale: “I have created something new that incorporates things or ideas that already exist in popular culture, like writing a short story based on a character from Harry Potter or writing a poem in response to a rap song or something like that.” Female respondents were far more likely to have created fan-works than male respondents.

Analysis: Qualitative Results

The first qualitative question asked, “In most games you pretend to be someone you are not. Has viewing the world from a different perspective helped you view the world in new ways? If yes, in what way?” The majority of participants (17) responded that they better understand and appreciate “outsider” points of view, as well as opposing world viewpoints and opinions. Several (6) found that such experiences allowed them to discover new opportunities or solutions to problems. Others felt that they became more empathetic (5), while others still stated acquiring a deeper appreciation of their own (fortunate) situation (3).³

If I put myself in a position of adversity in which I am not currently in, then I can think of different ways that I could help myself. Therefore coming up with new strategies for tackling global issues.

Gives you another perspective, shows you ideas and viewpoints you wouldn't have had otherwise. Gives you a chance to rethink your moves. Keeps you from getting full of yourself and having a mental block. Helps you learn, connect and grow.
--

The second question asked, “Have you ever done something online or in a game that you would never do in person? If yes, please give an example of what you did, why you did it, and what you learned.” Unsurprisingly, most responses had to do with violence and/or killings in games (15). Interestingly, a significant number of participants also wrote that they were more outgoing and open with communication online (9). A few respondents also mentioned experiencing “what if” situations online without having to take the risk in real life (3), as well as taking action for a cause (2).

Kill. I learned how easy it is when you have the means to do so.
--

To find out what would happen if I took risks I know I wouldn't normally, but that some people would, for example making bad decisions in a game about AIDS, to experiment with how far you could go (how many mistakes you could make, at least in the game) before it was too late.

I took the initiative to meet and talk to people, which I would have not done .This gave me an opportunity to meet people across the globe and learn a lot.

The third question asked, “Have you ever created a piece of art intentionally using pieces of something created by someone else, such as mixing tracks for a song? If yes, please give an example.” Most examples were visual (15) or audio (11), while a minority where video (4) or writing (2).

³ The phrasing of this question was rather ambiguous, and it was difficult to cluster responses due to different interpretations from participants of the meaning of the question.

By contrast, the fourth question, which asked, “Have you ever created anything in response to something that already exists in popular culture, such as writing a short story based on a character from Harry Potter or writing a poem in response to a rap song? If yes, please give an example,” generated mostly written creations as examples (17 – writing, 6 – lyrics to a song), with much fewer audio (3) and visual (2) examples.

The next question asked, “Have you developed ways that help you keep control of the time you spend gaming, texting, cellphone chatting and other uses of digital media to have enough time for homework and other activities? If yes, please give an example.” Responses were varied, including setting time limits (9), always completing homework/work first (7), listing or planning the day’s activities in advance (7), and removing the object of distraction or removing self from the place of distraction (4). Surprisingly, no one raised a point related to the digital divide (i.e. distractions are not a problem since access to video games, the web, etc. is expensive and/or limited.)

I do my homework first, so I don't run out of time, and when my parents say it's time, I quit. Or I reward myself with chocolate for not getting distracted.
I generally have self-control over using digital tech, but if necessary I will remove myself from the environment where it is available, such as going to a coffee shop or the library.
I list down everything I have and want to do... and go each one at a time...
I set a time limit for myself and then after the time is up i do something else like read

The sixth question asked, “What are three places you visit online to research a topic that you want to learn more about? Not where you CAN go, but where you DO go.” Respondents were to list the top three websites. Google was by far the most popular site (34, 8, 1), with Wikipedia close behind (10, 16, 3). TIG received a passing mention (1, 2, 1). Other sites included news/magazine websites, sites of national governments or international governmental organizations, university library or online journal sites, encyclopedia, international NGO websites, YouTube, as well as email hosts (presumably to contact someone else for information).

The seventh question asked, “Have you ever used digital media to create or do something with others that could not have been done by an individual? Example: taking on a mission in a multiplayer game, or adding your thoughts to an online discussion. If yes, please give an example.” Many participants quoted online discussion boards or forums (16). A few cited online projects (6), team-creation of media such as videos, online narratives, or wikis (4), and a couple of participants mentioned multiplayer games.

The eighth question asked, “How often do you make sure information you find online is correct? If you do, please give two tips for others based on what you do.” Many suggested cross-referencing (29), doing some research on the author/source to find out whether they are reliable (10), or talking to someone else with expertise on the topic (10). Others suggested checking the references, if available (6), using only credible sources (5), and checking the specifications of the website, such as contact information or last updated date (3).

1. Only trust reputed sites 2. in case of forums try to get background information on the informant
Check another source to make sure it's correct. If the second source says something otherwise, look up a third source and see what the third source agrees with. Also, look for legitimate contact information, and when the

website was last updated.

I will often swing it by someone that I know who has more experience in the area that I'm researching. I will research that particular area more online to find consistencies or inconsistencies.

The ninth question asked, "Do you use digital media to associate with others who are also fans of something you like? Example: trading game tips or discussing what happened in a certain anime. If yes, what are you a fan of?" The responses were generally split between games, movies, music, books, and other popular culture references (15), and more serious socio-economic-political issues (10).

The final question asked, "Has your experience on the web and/or in games made you more or less understanding of those different from yourself? In what way has it made you more understanding or less understanding, if at all?"⁴ Those who responded positively cited being exposed to different perspectives (22), ability to communicate with diverse people (8), and simply having access to more information and discovering new things (6). Those who responded negatively (5) talked about problems with anonymity and isolation with the Internet.

Experience on the web has exposed me to others who think outside of the norm, such as in terms of sexuality

I have access to greater information about people and cultures. I can also stay in touch with those I've met around the world, so I can build my understanding.

I often learn information that I wasn't looking for in the first place, hence discover something new about someone different.

Because it isn't a real face to face communication^^ so you don't know how they really are in person, I think I'm just very untrustworthy though!

Conclusion

In general, the survey revealed that participants seem to be technically skilled with using the Internet, such as in using search engines, and are also comfortable working with others on digital media and playing around to teach themselves. Areas in which participants were less active or comfortable involved using digital media to show one's appreciation for other people's works, such as creating fan-works, participating in fan-groups, or using someone else's creation to make something new. Surprisingly, the only question which received more negative responses than positive responses addressed participants' likelihood to contact someone online to find help or information: this, however, could be due to the digital divide (less access to internet for those in developing countries) and/or habits for finding information on the Internet (using search engines instead of using MSN/email to contact someone).

In the qualitative questions, many responses indicated an increased openness to and appreciation for different viewpoints and perspectives as a result of their experience on the web. Respondents appeared to be informed individuals (see responses to question regarding tips on determining accuracy of information found online) who use the Internet and digital media for both play (creating music and chatting about movies) as well as for more serious purposes (research, work, discussions about social issues, etc.)

⁴ This question was also rather vague, and participants had varying interpretations of its meaning.

Annex 1: Charts

Legend

Blue
(TIG)Red
(SM)

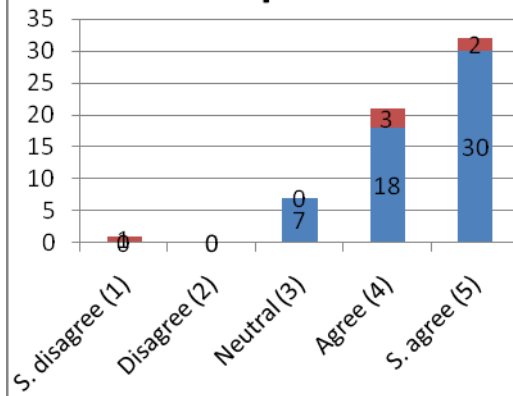
Side by Side Comparisons

Compiled

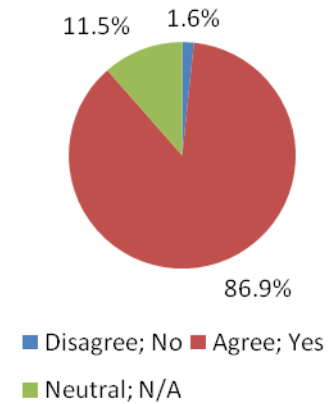
How confident are you about teaching yourself something new on a computer by seeing what happens when you play around with it? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'not very confident' and 5 is 'very confident', I would say that I am...

I have taught myself something new on a computer by seeing what happens when I play around with it.

Self-teaching on the Computer



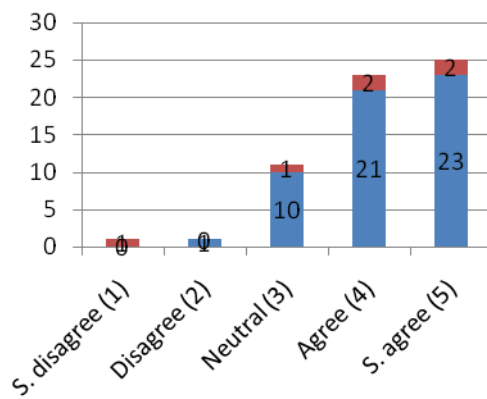
Self-teaching on the Computer



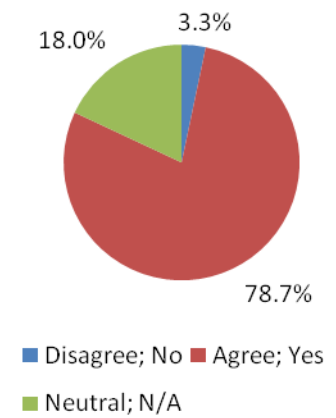
When you fail to learn something correctly do you consider this a personal failure or an opportunity to take another approach and try again? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents 'personal failure' and 5 represents 'learning opportunity', I would say I see it as...

When I get stuck trying to solve a problem, I view it as a learning opportunity rather than as a personal failure.

Learning Opportunity vs. Personal Failure



Learning Opportunity vs. Personal Failure



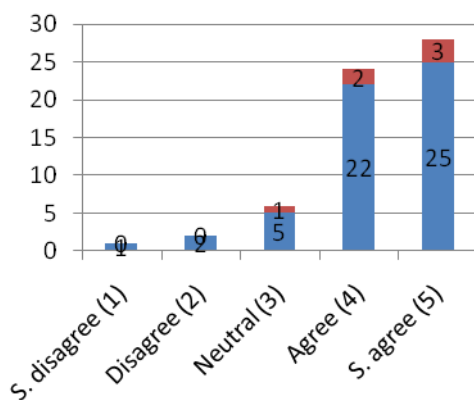
<p>How well are you able to look at a system, grasp the most important aspects, and understand how they relate to one another? Example: an analog watch with all of its moving parts or a complex movie.</p>	<p>On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'terrible' and 5 is 'excellent', I can look at a system and grasp the most important aspects, understanding how they relate to one another. Example: an analog watch with all of its moving parts or a complex movie.</p>	<div><div><div>Understanding aspects of a system</div><div><table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Disagree; No</th><th>Agree; Yes</th></tr><tr><td>S. disagree (1)</td><td>2</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Disagree (2)</td><td>4</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Neutral (3)</td><td>18</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Agree (4)</td><td>21</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>S. agree (5)</td><td>10</td><td>1</td></tr></table></div></div></div> <div><div>Understanding aspects of a system</div><div><table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>Disagree; No</td><td>11.5%</td></tr><tr><td>Agree; Yes</td><td>55.7%</td></tr><tr><td>Neutral; N/A</td><td>32.8%</td></tr></table></div></div>	Response	Disagree; No	Agree; Yes	S. disagree (1)	2	1	Disagree (2)	4	0	Neutral (3)	18	2	Agree (4)	21	2	S. agree (5)	10	1	Response	Percentage	Disagree; No	11.5%	Agree; Yes	55.7%	Neutral; N/A	32.8%									
Response	Disagree; No	Agree; Yes																																			
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Neutral; N/A	32.8%																																				
<p>In most games you pretend to be someone you are not. Has viewing the world from a different perspective helped you view the world in new ways?</p>	<p>The times that I have taken on "play" identities have helped me to view the world in a different way. (Like taking on a role in a video game, or something like that.)</p>	<div><div><div>Roleplaying and perspectives</div><div><table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Count</th></tr><tr><td>No</td><td>17</td></tr><tr><td>Yes</td><td>38</td></tr></table></div></div></div> <div><div>Roleplaying and perspectives</div><div><table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Disagree; No</th><th>Agree; Yes</th></tr><tr><td>S. disagree (1)</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Disagree (2)</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Neutral (3)</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Agree (4)</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>S. agree (5)</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>N/A</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr></table></div></div> <div><div>Roleplaying and perspectives</div><div><table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>Disagree; No</td><td>29.5%</td></tr><tr><td>Agree; Yes</td><td>65.6%</td></tr><tr><td>Neutral; N/A</td><td>4.9%</td></tr></table></div></div>	Response	Count	No	17	Yes	38	Response	Disagree; No	Agree; Yes	S. disagree (1)	0	1	Disagree (2)	0	1	Neutral (3)	0	1	Agree (4)	0	2	S. agree (5)	0	2	N/A	0	2	Response	Percentage	Disagree; No	29.5%	Agree; Yes	65.6%	Neutral; N/A	4.9%
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Response	Percentage																																				
Disagree; No	29.5%																																				
Agree; Yes	65.6%																																				
Neutral; N/A	4.9%																																				
<p>Have you ever done something online or in a game that you would never do in person?</p>	<p>I have taken on a different identity online in order to experience something new or solve a problem.</p>	<div><div><div>Doing something online vs. in person</div><div><table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Count</th></tr><tr><td>No</td><td>26</td></tr><tr><td>Yes</td><td>29</td></tr></table></div></div></div> <div><div>Different ID online to try new things</div><div><table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Disagree; No</th><th>Agree; Yes</th></tr><tr><td>S. disagree (1)</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Disagree (2)</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>Neutral (3)</td><td>0</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Agree (4)</td><td>0</td><td>2</td></tr><tr><td>S. agree (5)</td><td>0</td><td>0</td></tr></table></div></div> <div><div>Online behavior vs. real ID</div><div><table><tr><th>Response</th><th>Percentage</th></tr><tr><td>Disagree; No</td><td>47.5%</td></tr><tr><td>Agree; Yes</td><td>50.8%</td></tr><tr><td>Neutral; N/A</td><td>1.6%</td></tr></table></div></div>	Response	Count	No	26	Yes	29	Response	Disagree; No	Agree; Yes	S. disagree (1)	0	1	Disagree (2)	0	2	Neutral (3)	0	1	Agree (4)	0	2	S. agree (5)	0	0	Response	Percentage	Disagree; No	47.5%	Agree; Yes	50.8%	Neutral; N/A	1.6%			
Response	Count																																				
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Response	Percentage																																				
Disagree; No	47.5%																																				
Agree; Yes	50.8%																																				
Neutral; N/A	1.6%																																				

Have you ever created a piece of art intentionally using pieces of something created by someone else, such as mixing tracks for a song?	I have used something created by someone else to create my own piece of art, like mixing tracks, making a collage or stringing together video clips.	<div>Mixing others' creations</div> <div><div><div>25</div><div>No</div></div><div><div>30</div><div>Yes</div></div></div> <div>Mixing others' creations</div> <div><div><div>S. disagree (1)</div><div>1</div></div><div><div>Disagree (2)</div><div>1</div></div><div><div>Neutral (3)</div><div>2</div></div><div><div>Agree (4)</div><div>2</div></div><div><div>S. agree (5)</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>N/A</div><div>0</div></div></div> <div>Mixing others' creations</div> <div><div><div>Disagree; No</div><div>44.3%</div></div><div><div>Agree; Yes</div><div>52.5%</div></div><div><div>Neutral; N/A</div><div>3.3%</div></div></div>
Have you ever created anything in response to something that already exists in popular culture, such as writing a short story based on a character from Harry Potter or writing a poem in response to a rap song?	I have created something new that incorporates things or ideas that already exist in popular culture, like writing a short story based on a character from Harry Potter or writing a poem in response to a rap song or something like that.	<div>Fanworks</div> <div><div><div>24</div><div>No</div></div><div><div>31</div><div>Yes</div></div></div> <div>Fanworks</div> <div><div><div>S. disagree (1)</div><div>0</div></div><div><div>Disagree (2)</div><div>1</div></div><div><div>Neutral (3)</div><div>3</div></div><div><div>Agree (4)</div><div>1</div></div><div><div>S. agree (5)</div><div>1</div></div></div> <div>Fanworks</div> <div><div><div>Disagree; No</div><div>41.0%</div></div><div><div>Agree; Yes</div><div>54.1%</div></div><div><div>Neutral; N/A</div><div>4.9%</div></div></div>
How good are you at doing other things while doing your homework, like listening to music or texting friends? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'terrible' and 5 is 'excellent', I would say that I am...	I complete my homework successfully while doing other things at the same time, like listening to music or texting friends.	<div>Multitasking with Homework</div> <div><div><div>S. disagree (1)</div><div>1</div></div><div><div>Disagree (2)</div><div>5</div></div><div><div>Neutral (3)</div><div>15</div></div><div><div>Agree (4)</div><div>17</div></div><div><div>S. agree (5)</div><div>17</div></div></div> <div>Multitasking with Homework</div> <div><div><div>Disagree; No</div><div>13.1%</div></div><div><div>Agree; Yes</div><div>59.0%</div></div><div><div>Neutral; N/A</div><div>27.9%</div></div></div>

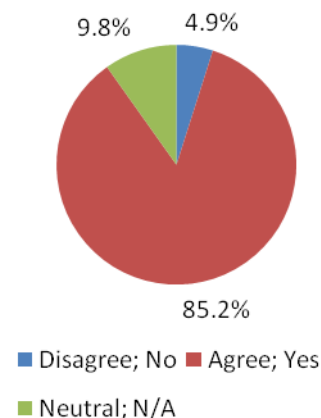
When you search for information online, and get a thousand different links to check out, how good are you at figuring out the best ones to go to and ignoring the most useless? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'terrible' and 5 is 'excellent', I would say that I am...

When I search for information online, and get a thousand different links to check out, I can figure out the best ones to go to while ignoring the useless ones.

Narrowing down search engine results



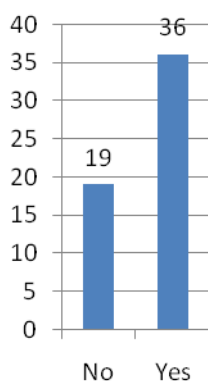
Narrowing down search engine results



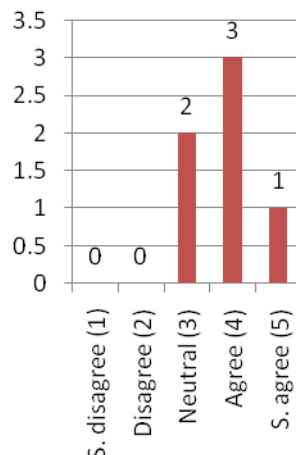
Have you developed ways that help you keep control of the time you spend gaming, texting, cellphone chatting and other uses of digital media to have enough time for homework and other activities?

I prevent distractions from a variety of media (e.g. tv, radio, text messages, etc) from getting me off track when I'm doing something else that's more important.

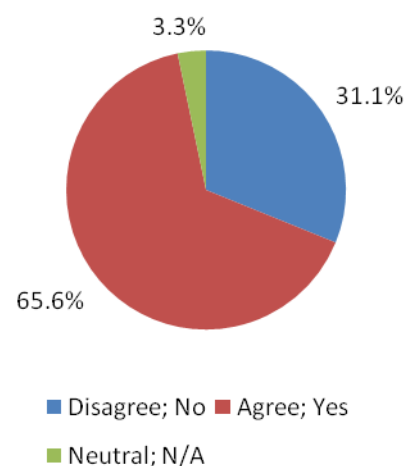
Time Organization System



Time Organization



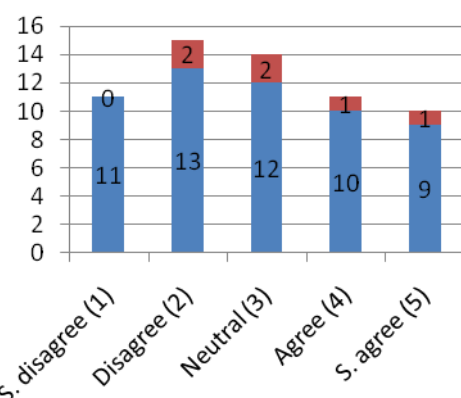
Time Organization



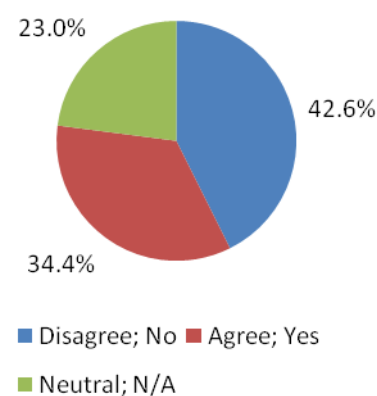
If you needed information or help, how likely are you to go online to find a person who can assist you, such as through MySpace or IMing a buddy? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents 'I would never do that' and 5 represents 'I do it all the time', what I would say is this:

When I need information or help, I find going online to contact a person who can assist me, such as through MySpace or IMing a buddy, an effective way to solve a problem.

Finding info/assistance online



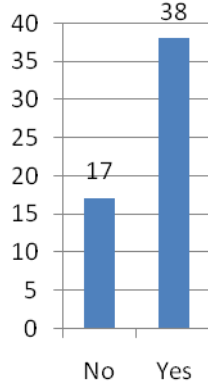
Finding info/assistance online



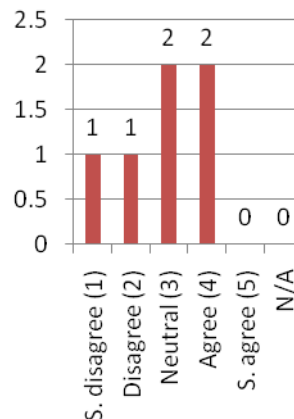
Have you ever used digital media to create or do something with others that could not have been done by an individual? Example: taking on a mission in a multiplayer game, or adding your thoughts to an online discussion.

I use digital media to create or do something with others that I couldn't have done on my own. Example: taking on a mission in a multiplayer game, or adding my thoughts to an online discussion.

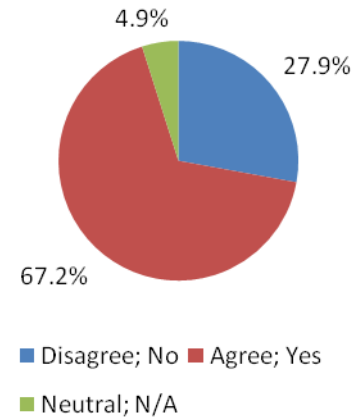
Using digital media with others



Using digital media with others



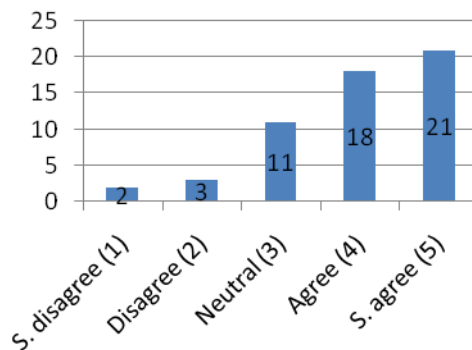
Using digital media with others



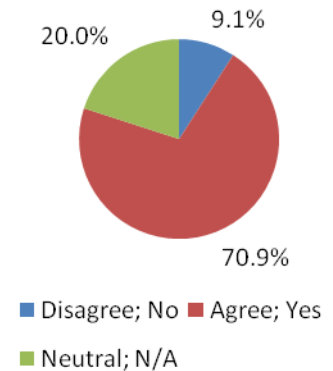
How comfortable are you working with others to get something done using digital media? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'very uncomfortable' and 5 is 'very comfortable', I would say that I am:

N/A

Comfortable with working with others using DM



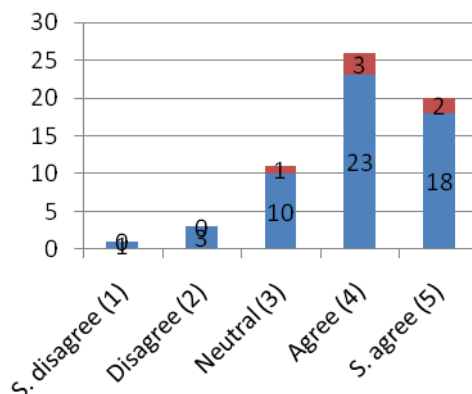
Comfortable with working with others using DM



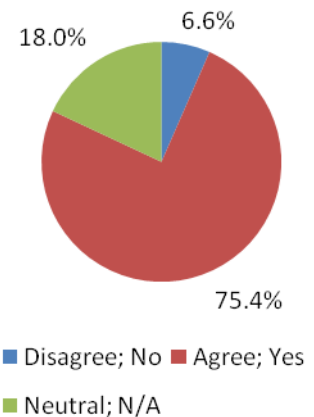
How often do you make sure information you find online is correct? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'never' and 5 is 'always', I would say that it is:

I can effectively determine whether or not the information I find online is correct.

Verifying online information

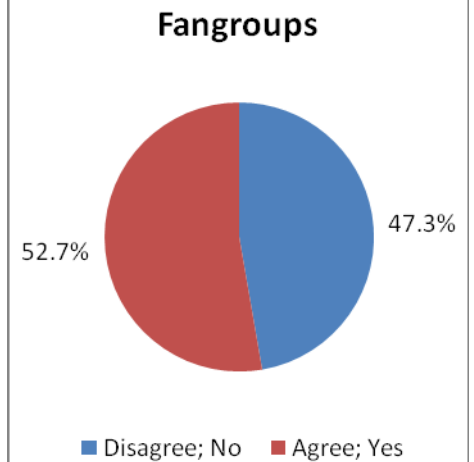
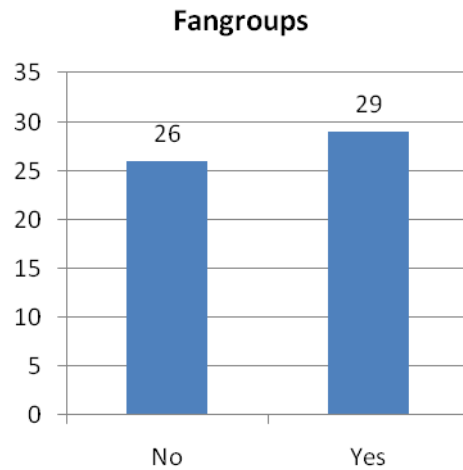


Verifying online information



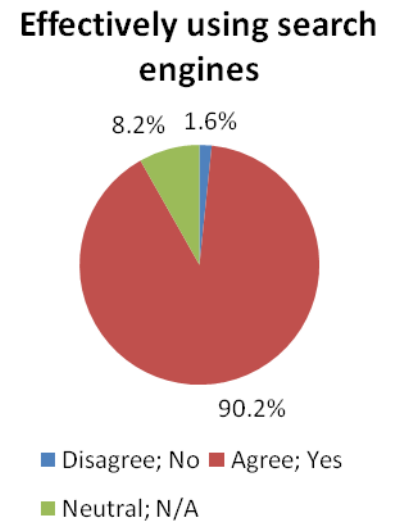
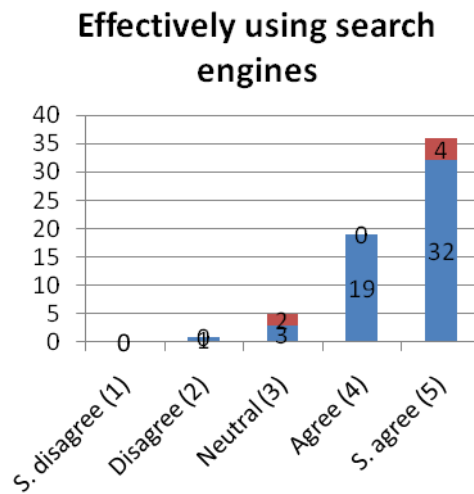
Do you use digital media to associate with others who are also fans of something you like? Example: trading game tips or discussing what happened in a certain anime.

N/A



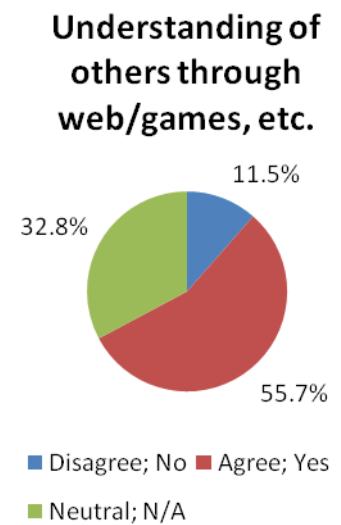
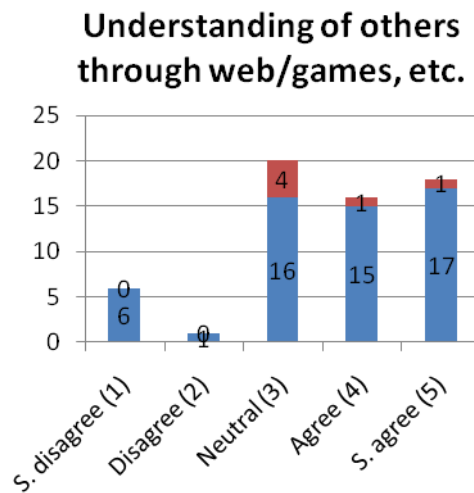
How good are you are using search engines to find what you want online? If I were being honest, on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'terrible' and 5 is 'excellent', I would say that I am...

I am able to effectively pick the right words to enter in a search engine to find what I'm looking for.



Has your experience on the web and/or in games made you more or less understanding of those different from yourself? On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is 'less understanding' and 5 is 'more understanding', I would say that it has made me...

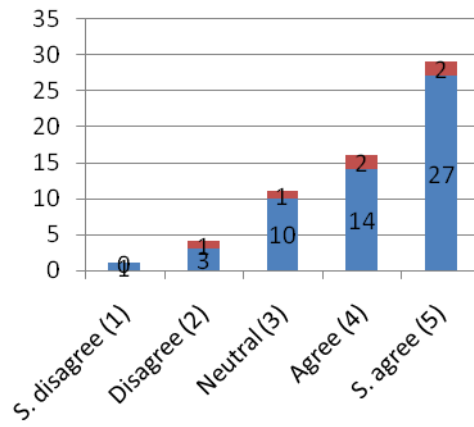
My experience on the web and/or in games has made me more understanding of those different from myself.



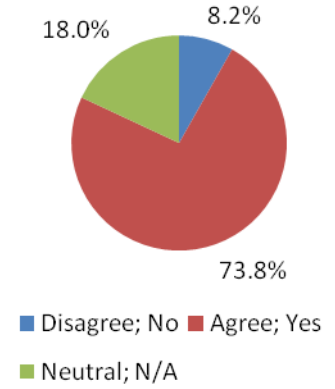
How likely are you to be aware and critical of bias or prejudice within a form of digital media, such as within a game or an MP3. Example: bias or prejudice against women, youth, or people of color. On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 represents 'never notice such things' and 5 represents 'always notice such things', I would have to say that I...

I am able to effectively identify bias or prejudice within a form of digital media, such as within a game or an MP3. Example: bias or prejudice against a particular gender, age group, or race.

Awareness of bias in DM



Awareness of bias in DM



Annex 2: Correlation Data

Question #	Question (TIG version)
1	How confident are you about teaching yourself something new on a computer by seeing what happens when you play around with it?
2	When you fail to learn something correctly do you consider this a personal failure or an opportunity to take another approach and try again?
3	How well are you able to look at a system, grasp the most important aspects, and understand how they relate to one another? Example: an analog watch with all of its moving parts or a complex movie.
4	In most games you pretend to be someone you are not. Has viewing the world from a different perspective helped you view the world in new ways?
5	Have you ever done something online or in a game that you would never do in person?
6	Have you ever created a piece of art intentionally using pieces of something created by someone else, such as mixing tracks for a song?
7	Have you ever created anything in response to something that already exists in popular culture, such as writing a short story based on a character from Harry Potter or writing a poem in response to a rap song?
8	How good are you at doing other things while doing your homework, like listening to music or texting friends?
9	When you search for information online, and get a thousand different links to check out, how good are you at figuring out the best ones to go to and ignoring the most useless?
10	Have you developed ways that help you keep control of the time you spend gaming, texting, cellphone chatting and other uses of digital media to have enough time for homework and other activities?
11	If you needed information or help, how likely are you to go online to find a person who can assist you, such as through MySpace or IMing a buddy?
12	Have you ever used digital media to create or do something with others that could not have been done by an individual? Example: taking on a mission in a multiplayer game, or adding your thoughts to an online discussion.
13	How comfortable are you working with others to get something done using digital media?
14	How often do you make sure information you find online is correct?

15	Do you use digital media to associate with others who are also fans of something you like? Example: trading game tips or discussing what happened in a certain anime.
16	How good are you are using search engines to find what you want online?
17	Has your experience on the web and/or in games made you more or less understanding of those different from yourself?
18	How likely are you to be aware and critical of bias or prejudice within a form of digital media, such as within a game or an MP3. Example: bias or prejudice against women, youth, or people of color.

Correlation Chart

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17
2	0.47																
3	0.33	0.23															
4	0.28	0.07	0.09														
5	0.05	-0.36	0.06	0.08													
6	0.02	-0.14	0.26	0.26	0.23												
7	-0.05	-0.01	-0.14	0.20	-0.03	0.08											
8	0.02	0.06	0.07	0.14	-0.15	0.04	-0.03										
9	0.36	-0.09	0.17	0.40	0.01	0.24	0.11	0.07									
10	0.00	-0.06	0.13	0.18	0.08	0.18	-0.10	0.16	0.28								
11	0.02	0.04	0.22	0.23	-0.06	0.13	-0.06	0.30	0.28	0.10							
12	0.12	0.02	-0.03	0.06	0.00	0.10	-0.03	-0.17	0.49	0.18	0.20						
13	0.38	0.27	0.11	0.16	0.14	0.24	0.00	0.04	0.22	0.16	0.42	0.27					
14	0.13	0.16	0.03	0.28	-0.10	-0.09	0.18	0.00	0.36	0.27	0.23	0.24	0.33				
15	-0.01	-0.22	-0.05	0.15	-0.02	0.09	0.27	-0.18	0.33	0.08	-0.01	0.08	-0.07	-0.02			
16	0.16	0.17	0.14	0.13	-0.01	0.17	0.10	0.24	0.46	0.24	0.32	0.13	0.45	0.37	0.09		
17	0.15	0.08	0.06	0.35	0.00	0.13	0.11	-0.01	0.36	0.11	0.30	0.35	0.53	0.25	0.24	0.24	
18	0.25	0.00	0.08	0.13	0.14	0.06	0.13	-0.05	0.17	0.07	0.09	0.17	0.26	0.00	-0.01	0.02	0.35

Annex 3: Gender

Question	Female	Male
How confident are you about teaching yourself something new on a computer by seeing what happens when you play around with it?	0.746	0.902
When you fail to learn something correctly do you consider this a personal failure or an opportunity to take another approach and try again?	0.628	0.476
How well are you able to look at a system, grasp the most important aspects, and understand how they relate to one another? Example: an analog watch with all of its moving parts or a complex movie.	0.661	0.412
In most games you pretend to be someone you are not. Has viewing the world from a different perspective helped you view the world in new ways?	0.996	0.978
Have you ever done something online or in a game that you would never do in person?	0.485	0.378
Have you ever created a piece of art intentionally using pieces of something created by someone else, such as mixing tracks for a song?	0.902	0.827
Have you ever created anything in response to something that already exists in popular culture, such as writing a short story based on a character from Harry Potter or writing a poem in response to a rap song?	0.031	0.177
How good are you at doing other things while doing your homework, like listening to music or texting friends?	0.328	0.304
When you search for information online, and get a thousand different links to check out, how good are you at figuring out the best ones to go to and ignoring the most useless?	0.395	0.574
Have you developed ways that help you keep control of the time you spend gaming, texting, cellphone chatting and other uses of digital media to have enough time for homework and other activities?	0.892	0.854
If you needed information or help, how likely are you to go online to find a person who can assist you, such as through MySpace or IMing a buddy?	0.498	0.731
Have you ever used digital media to create or do something with others that could not have been done by an individual? Example: taking on a mission in a multiplayer game, or adding your thoughts to an online discussion.	0.988	0.992
How comfortable are you working with others to get something done using digital media?	0.867	0.893
How often do you make sure information you find online is correct?	0.748	0.899
Do you use digital media to associate with others who are also fans of something you like? Example: trading game tips or discussing what happened in a certain anime.	0.866	0.943
How good are you are using search engines to find what you want online?	0.715	0.755
Has your experience on the web and/or in games made you more or less understanding of those different from yourself?	0.848	0.563
How likely are you to be aware and critical of bias or prejudice within a form of digital media, such as within a game or an MP3. Example: bias or prejudice against women, youth, or people of color.	0.830	0.561

APPENDIX 2: Timeline / Meeting Minutes Synopsis

Timeline for ymex.org

TakingITGlobal (TIG), Global Kids (GK), and Asia Society (AS) conducted weekly meetings (both conference calls and in-person) from November 7, 2007 until September 11, 2008 in order to discuss every aspect of the Youth Media project and online space for learning. This document is a condensed compilation of the meeting minutes recorded by TakingITGlobal's Project Coordinator.

It is organized by the following categories, although not all topics were discussed every week:

Working mode
Site Development
Learning Activities
Branding
Global Issues
Engagement
Outreach
ROCC's

November 2007

7th – Kick-off Meeting

The Project Goal:

1. To create an online social network that engages youth in social issues through the use and study of digital media as an instrument for education and social engagement.
2. To create critical consumers and creative producers of digital media.

Framing Questions:

1. What is the users' total experience throughout the use of the site?
2. How do we transform directed activities into informal learning experiences?
3. What tools do we feel best suit our needs as instruments of education and social engagement?
4. Will the user be in control of creating new 'activity projects' once a community is built?
5. Who will be creating the topics of discussion for:
 - a. Survey questions?
 - b. Focus groups?
 - c. Events/festivals/contests?
6. Who will be conceptualizing contests and research projects?
7. Who will be filtering the information online and documenting the learning outcomes of projects?

13th - TakingITGlobal conducted initial research for social networks, media-sharing websites and tools (Resources, actually)

14th

Working mode

- Started the ymex wiki (as a space for all partners to organize ideas and project developments)

Site Development

Much of the basics, groundwork is laid out:

- The confirmed headers for the main page related to different categories of digital media are decided upon.
- '*profile page*' decided upon
- Tag words as a way to organize media, discussions, events and networking.
- A ranking system based on rewarding the user for their use and interaction on the site.

The reward system will reward or give 'points' for a number of actions

Branding

- The name Youth Media Exchange was decided upon

Global Issues

- Most important issues for AS's and TIG's communities are shared

Engagement

- Begin to brainstorm Pre-reg questions

21st

Advisors

Potential Roles & Involvement of Advisors discusses (including working with Advisors in pre-registration)

Branding

tag lines for ymex shared (by Asia Society)

26th

Site Development

Beginning ideas on the process of sharing the media and the technical specifications - Initial wireframes are shared by TakingITGlobal

Branding

Initial logo ideas shared

28th

Learning Activities

- TakingITGlobal started a brief list of ideas for potential learning activities on the wiki. And asked others to add or adjust any idea on this page

Branding

Ymex Logo discussions begin

-Global Kids really liked the visual representation of various forms of digital media and would like to possibly see more types within the logo.

-TakingITGlobal really liked the top right ymex logo with the box around the 'm' and would like to see the words Youth Media Exchange within the logo

-Asia Society really liked the arrows which express the exchange element about the project and wondered if the arrows could link to another letter within the logo. Alexis also mentioned the point of casing, whether we wanted to you all capitol letters or the 'x' be lower case.

Engagement

Pre-reg questions are decided upon & date for pre-reg set (to begin in January 08)

December 2007

5th

Advisors

List of potentials created, Advisors' roles defined, & plan to invite/ engage them put in motion

Site Development

Add the point system at the beginning so they understand that what they will receive.

Engagement

Pre-registration questions further defined

This list of social issues will not be the tag cloud, the content tagged by the user will be the words in the tag cloud.

-Do we want to add a question about global issues of importance/items they wish to change in order to monitor the users response from the time of pre-registration and after coming back to the site?

12th

Site Development

-Updates on wireframes & designs

- Defined the users experience

YMEX will promote youth civic engagement while increasing their digital media skills.

- Defined possible site activities

- "Content being created is coming from Asia Society, Global Kids and teens working with Global Kids, as well as TIG online community. How will this effect embedding content? Define 'tag cloud'-key words entered by the user upon submission of content that links their content to that word. Larger fonts used for words within the tag cloud represent words that are referenced more often during the submission process"

Learning Activities

What are the key objectives we would like to achieve through the learning activities?

- the learning activities should build a better understanding of 'the issues', increase digital media literacy and prompt 'youth voices' through the use of digital media as a tool for social change.

Engagement

Community age limitations?

- we understand there is a chance that many University students will want to partake in this site, however our target age range for YMEX is high school (ages 14 to 18)

- involve educators and have the option to navigate through the site without having to join to see what is taking place on the site.

- create some sort of rewards system for individuals who are within YMEX target age range. i.e. featured spotlights of content produced by individuals within YMEX age range or higher points for those within that target age range. This may lead to individuals lying about their age so, this separation would need to take place behind the scenes.

19th

Advisors

Plan to invite & get commitments from Advisors

Learning Activities

- Survey planned (to make this survey a mandatory aspect of the site & have it as a basis for planning what you should do to get started with the site)

- review the survey early January

Engagement

- Pre-registration timeline: begin mid January

Question:

Are we addressing Asian youth?

- Not specifically, we are designing the site for a global market, starting with Asia; our goal is to understand how all youth use digital media as a tool for social change, starting with Asia and North America. Some questions to think about when brainstorming who will be the advisory in Asia.

1. How do Asian youth think about working with digital media comparing to North American (similar or different?)
2. How are Asian youth addressing social issues?
3. Where are digital content being posted in Asia?

Outreach

- outreach in Jan, commitment by February and testing in March

- In Asia, What are we asking for from the Asian Market...

1. What do we want to learn from working with this market?
 2. Who do we want to target, in school, larger outreach? Through school is high priority, established youth groups, clubs, digital centers?
- global community for social change.

January 2008

15th - Natalie's Orientation / Review of the Grant Proposal

16th

Working Mode

- Natalie & Shawna introduced to the group

Advisors

- All parties have reached a consensus that those with the actual title of "advisor" will be limited to MacArthur affiliates and select individuals on-the-ground in each of the Asian focus countries who are not from Asia Society (yet are hopefully professionals in the realm of youth & digital media).

- Defining partners vs. advisors, levels of partnership

- Established youth media groups where we'd like to get youth involved, also undecided on term - perhaps "project partner"

Branding

- Logos
- Concerns of symbols used across countries and cultures (i.e., arrows)
- GK still concerned about lack of global connotation on any of the logos - will work on concrete specific examples
 - *Tag line in header space will also help to share global intent
- Just the logo, how does the acronym appear/convey without it spelled out
- .org is good to have on logo - TIG designer currently adding to favored logo(s)
- Tag line should be removed since the youth won't yet have a full grasp on the intent of the network

Engagement

Preregistration- Length: existing one is too long and appears daunting to those registering, esp. the non-native English speakers

23rd

Working Mode

MOU: Discuss when Global Kids & TIG can meet separately to clearly define roles. Once GK receives the final MOU, we'll make a time for meeting to discuss and use it to more clearly define who is doing what so that we're not overlapping efforts.

Advisors

AS will be responsible for regional advisory, GK on the project advisory, and TIG for domestic outreach & partner media groups

Advisor Roles draft has been finalized

Branding

- Logos - GK's mock-ups shared - the half a globe and outline curve marks preferred by group
- TIG concerned about height and too many words; pointed out a site with a long name (such as takingitglobal) in their experience has been complicated, confusing, and somewhat problematic, esp. for non native English speakers
- GK strongly concerned about false branding with ymex - undeniable association with mex (leads to thoughts of Mexico/ Mexican)
- TIG designers have been asked to put finalizing the ymex logo at the top of the list
- All need to put in their vote/ have decided the final logo by end of the day Thursday in order to have pre-reg set to go by Friday!!

30th

Working Mode

- GK concerned about user experience

Site Development

- TIG gave a run-through of wireframes in most updated form, and pointed out questions for consideration:
- What else is needed on "My Content"?
- How to source re-mixes of content?
- What questions prompt constructive feedback to media, while keeping it in familiar form to the users?
- View pages of writing, audio, and games - how to make interesting visually, but also clear and not confusing?

Point system -

- Important how and where the points system will be presented to members and how explicitly (better less so figuring out how to accumulate part of the points is a game in itself)
- concern with emphasis on quantity over quality / we have to beware, figure in how avoid people gaming the system just to get ahead in points while not really contributing quality work
- Also important to remember that we have our conceptual framework for this system but that needs to match tech capabilities

Learning activities

- A) Will be tied to digital literacy skills and survey
- Perhaps a member cannot complete an activity until collaborating with someone in a different country
- B) Educational content - separated by media how-to's and global issues
- C) Contests/Competitions -
- Based on theme or based on media form?

Engagement

Accessibility concerns and digital divide issues - most likely better to have them based on theme so that participants are not limited by equipment/access to tools

Will we pull from pre-existing learning activities and models?

-iRemix.org has a good literacy piece to incorporate

-GK has some

Outreach

- TIG & Asia Society will work on 1-pager for schools & educational outreach

February 2008

5th -

Learning Activities

-TIG working on learning activities structure informed by architecture and technicalities of the website

Engagement

- GK & AS have been discussing China and safety with discussing issues - censorship

-discussing putting the partner emphasis on virtual or offline exchange programs in schools

Outreach

-NR has begun domestic outreach minimally – GK & AS will forward contacts to fuse with TIG's into one ymex domestic outreach list

13th

Working Mode

GK still not getting sought-after answers on the social networking tools – questions around specificity

So if a members is embedding media: how & where

-TIG: ymex.org will not actually host any media. Any pre-existing media that is linked to will be done with a link or embedding code from the origin, same goes for new media productions – they will be uploaded on any existing sites that host media and linked to or embedded on the site.

Learning Activities

Structure

TIG – The activities will be embedded throughout the site and promoted through the spotlights

-They will be pitched as a "challenge" rather than a boring-sounding "learning activity", with buttons for ACCEPT & DECLINE

- should not be specific on what kind of media, so we wouldn't have a "Climate Change Video Contest"

-TIG: Most important now is deciding -

1) How are we prompting users to use critical thinking skills?

2) How are we structuring this?

-GK requests that if the first few steps are more focused on individual activity that we put more emphasis on social networking in the following step

Engagement

As far as issues, AS & GK concerned with China, would like to hear more from TIG about experience in China, what issues are too controversial

-TIG: from TIGed experience, beware of opening ourselves up too much to being able to censor what issues anyone considers controversial

-so, focus for China on keeping out what could be legal implications

21st

Learning Activities

-specific sns tools used -- TIG will do this

-once that is in place, GK & AS will contribute specific activities

How are we prompting critical thinking when users:

- Upload media/embed media

- Respond to media

- How do we structure rating in a way that creates a critical feedback environment

- Citing sources, credit to creator, collaborators - in a way they want to do it and not just feel obligated

- *For all to think about and contribute specific ideas, prompts, etc - Google doc to come for contributions
- *iRemix does a good job with this; GK will ask Akili Lee about this

Site Development

Launch date- Re-wording March 1 -> "early March" - still aiming for March 1 but will likely be more like within the week following.

- We don't have time for a long staged roll-out but certain things like projects and mentorship tools don't necessarily need to be there the day we launch
- We need to create a list of what's going to be on site when we launch, essentials for what must be there in order to launch

Resources

- need for gathering Tutorials/How-to's, Media Production Tools, Youth Content Exemplars (especially!)

Global Issues

- TIG will send GK & AS the count from pre-registration of most popular issues to inform their process of creating the initial Issues pages

Engagement

TIG blocked but ymex.org will be on a completely separate server in China

- Keep on the agenda updates on where TIG stands with China to inform Alexis in dealing w/ contacts there
- We'll keep a lessons learned/ reflections section of the wiki going on this discussion
- Decided that we'll dual-focus on Hong Kong and China, but with HK being so international, will try to target Chinese population within the island
- Can we get ROCC's in both HK & China?
- TIG will let MacFound know when we contact them about site launch
- The proposal did say we'd focus on two of three countries, so if emphasis ends up being in India & S.Korea...

Outreach

to potential content partners (and partners who may be larger or broader institutions or organizations with some component or area relating to youth, global, media)

- We need to decide on criteria for how to engage those partners in a more involved way; how to give them credit and exposure
- How these partners could inform the learning activities
- Do we want to vet other contests. Do we want to promote what others are doing?

27th

Site Development

Next week March 3-7 all week most likely will be testing within our circle. We can invite advisors like Erin Reilly and Akili end of next week to test and give feedback as well.

- What tools will be available? core functions, digital media literacy surveys, profiles, issues, resources
- The following week beginning March 10 we should be ready with learning activities fleshed out and invite pre-registrants.
- What adds on? learning activities, back-end ready to push out featured media & spotlights, more media content around the issues
- ymex.org will be on test server until we're ready to go live - better to have a gradual, incremental opening to work out some bugs before having a hugely public launch
- Official, "public" opening of site will be Wed, March 19th - what we put on the Press Release.

Will there be different prompts to encourage different discussion around different media (3rd party or user-generated), content, fact sheets, all the elements?

- Luke: what we need now are questions for discussing media of any and all kinds
- Shawna: since TIG has most experience in this area wants us to come up with it

Learning Activities

- Luke working now on adding tools and after that is clear, GK & AS will add specifics to flesh out learning activities

Global issues

- Shawna & Alexis working on background info, can also use some TIG "Understanding the issues" content
- Natalie working on finding youth-created media around the issues, Shawna & Alexis and everybody else pitching in

Engagement

AS -- working on getting media content from Asia for ymex launch; some pushback from people in Asia who already have their work on other platforms; sent ROCC job description to contacts in South Korea; school district in US does exchange with China interested; reluctance from people who haven't seen ymex.org to contribute (will help once they have something to visualize).

Outreach

-delayed (from TIG's end) because priority on site content

Google Adwords- GK has grant from Google, will allow some for ymex.org, Shawna meeting with Google tomorrow, will share details

March 2008

5th

Advisors

- GK - talked to danah boyd who would be happy to give her advice & send notice out to her network; will talk to Akili about commenting prompts this Friday

-AS - continuing with outreach in Asia, sent job description to S.Korea

-TIG - website development & youth media group outreach; ROCC interviews have begun

Site Development

Media Content

- have lots of video youth media exemplars: need audio, writing, we can add for now

- games & mashups pages still being worked on

- 3rd party media flag to come soon

Global Issues

-GK need to know more about how page will be structured

- Luke: they will be organized around issue tags and under the drop-down menu

Learning Activities

-Do GK & AS now have what they need to move forward on learning activities?

- need to know how the site is working

Luke: Outside of that, we need to establish what are the main activities that we need to cover? What within the issues? We need outcomes - what do we want the members to be coming away with? What global issues knowledge do we need them to gain? What are the learning objectives? What are the unique aspects of the learning activities

GK: What are the things one can do?

Luke: We don't want to be limited by that, but rather use our creativity to come up with our ultimate goals and then we can build those aspects into the site - beyond what we now have

Outreach

- we need to start doing viral outreach through other sns's - making ymex groups - Facebook one ready to go

Media outreach

- Press release: we'll wait on this until we have a real story

- Language needs to be less jargon and more tailored for those who don't have the technical words we use in everyday life

Engagement

Three dot dash Summit involvement (NR)

- is ymex a place this group and others can have their own project, add their logo and be connected to both their group and the larger network as well?

12th

Advisors

-GK - sent email from Akili to the group including his suggestions - refer to that email for specifics

quick note: - each quality needs to have a set of stars

- wants to get iRemix youth as a mentor group

Note: intentional mentor vs. organic mentorships based on connections made on the site

Learning Activities

- Shawna sent Google doc with specific finalized learning activities
- Some specific site mechanics questions raised in development of learningact's

Outreach

- pre-registrants delayed to early next week
- GK will reach out to advisors for launch announcement on Monday March 24th
- TIG will reach out to professional contacts March 24th
- so public launch basically delayed to March 24th if all agree and think we'll be ready then

18th

Site Development & Launch

- Point system set up, almost complete, just a few more specifics with the developer
- Site to transfer to ymex.org today and email to pre-registrants will follow, tomorrow or soon
- Basic functionality ready (Issues and tagging ready, just waiting for Issues blurbs), design changes remain
- Content-wise, we'll add Spotlights and Featured media, everyone can submit content

Learning Activities

- Not yet on the site, soon-to-come
- Next step is working with the developer to see what is working and what's not
- We hope to add some further dimensions to these, not just stick with the same five steps, but we'll test it out and see how it goes and keep it a process
- MIT meeting should help inform us on these

26th

Working Mode

All of us will share our concepts and notions of learning, beginning with an in-person meeting this Fri. The idea here being that each partner needs to know how the others think of and methodologically understand learning processes within the digital context so that we can break this barrier of getting to the heart of making the led learning activities truly unique, worthwhile, and inspiring

Site Development

Launch

- the developers have sent the request for the transfer to the ymex server
- the points system is in place
- basic functionalities in place (although some bugs exist)
- After much fruitful discussion, we decided on the following plan of action for launching:
 - We will open the site internally (only amongst us) as soon as it is switched over (later today hopefully)
 - We will open the site to pre-registrants (and whoever happens to drop by) next week when all partners feel comfortable doing so, clearly explaining that we are in beta version of testing out the sns tools that we have built and that the real substance of the website (learning activities!, but also mentoring system, and groups) is yet-to-come - Hopefully this will generate interest from members to be more involved; inform and inspire us where to go with learning activities (and the issue blurbs that will complement them)
- we decided on this for a few reasons:
 - 1) TIG's lead developer is leaving April 4th for either a month or indefinitely. We are going to try keep on track with the schedule to have all the main web development finished before she leaves
 - 2) it will be staying closer to our time line and returns us to the concept of experimenting and improving as we go rather than waiting until it is ideal to launch it (and then not having hardly any time for the site to be active before the end of our pilot phase)
 - 3) the website as it stands with just the tools, although it is not as substantive and unique from other sites as it is going to be, still offers the user some engagement with media and will give the member time to get their profile set-up, acquainted with resources, and a unique process for sharing media
 - 4) will give us an opportunity for professional opinion/ feedback on site design

Points

- Weighted by age? under 18 gets full points, 18-30 get 75% points, over 30 get 50% points
- We're returning to the concept of experimenting, so we'll put this in and see how it goes and we can change later

As for content - although it is not priority, we still need to have more media on the site than there is now when the pre-registrants are invited in. Natalie will add some more - GK & AS can start submitting when they have a clearer picture of what and how best fits

Global Issues

We decided Issue blurbs would be more unique and useful if closely tied to learning activities so GK & AS are going to hold off on sharing the blurbs they have constructed and will return to them once we have learning activities on the site and/or more clearly defined

April 2008

2nd

Working mode

- GK & TIG - have been working in-person much in the last week with 6 hours of meetings on learning activities, 3 hours on planning 3DD presentation, and full day travel and meeting at MIT
- Ben from MacArthur was notified last Thursday in an email that ymex launch has been delayed and why

Advisors

MIT meeting (separate more extensive notes in another Google doc)

- > Positive meeting and feedback to our work, New Media Literacy staff want to find ways to collaborate with ymex.org (and have been encouraged to do so by Connie / MacArthur)
- > developers from their team would like to discuss with developers from TIG
- > GK will make a Google doc with all the players and point persons for which aspects, we can keep updated and work on this doc to chart progress and developments with NML team
- > GK will discuss with Akili Lee how to get his iRemix youth more involved on ymex as mentors

Site Development

- > GK & AS concerned that the rating words don't give a scale-ability of global content so maybe ymex can have globes (1-5) along with stars to assess global content or any sort of scale?
- TIG: OK but we need to have it in a way that's really clear
- GK (sent later in the day: 1. In-depth global ideas! 2. Exciting ways to take action! 3. New perspectives from new places! (Cheesier version might be: "Many views, one world!") 4. Helps make new connections! (Again, alt could be "Think Globally, act locally!")
- > For writing submissions (would be useful for all other media submissions as well), limiting the word count in the commentary would help indicate for them not to submit the entire writing entry on the submission form
- > An explanation for tagging would help
- > More specific directions and fields for all submission entries (suggestion from Erin Reilly and Natalie's original request) would help guide their proper crediting of media

Learning Activities

- we'll discuss the possibility of non-linear structure of the learnact's (per Erin Reilly's suggestion)
- > Learnact's are half-built and should be completed by the end of the week

Engagement

Launch

- > Re-establishing a launch date would really help
 - Alexis is receiving pressure from interested schools
 - Shawna: advisors would like to/need to know
 - > Luke: For now we'll do tool-testing internally and with a few invited participants (ROCC's, etc)
 - Pre-reg will be back up by end of day, on ymex.org; Beta-testing version will be on a different url
 - In two or three weeks we'll have a more open beta version and invite pre-registrants
 - May 1, our new anticipated public launch date
- side note: The plan is to limit access to ymex.org as mentioned above but the site has been publicly-accessible since the switch-over to the ymex.org server' but by the end of the day, ymex is planned to not appear how it has, open to public

Outreach

AS has our 1st formal partner in China beginning to be established. Another staff person is going to Beijing on April 9th. needs to be able to tell him where pre-registration stands and an approximate date for launch for these Chinese youth

ROCC

Still seeking S.Korean ROCC, the two possibilities from Asia Society's prospectives haven't worked out; Alexis going to re-solicit job opening with media group in Seoul. TIG will do outreach on Cyworld and other online job boards

9th

Working Mode

- Tuesday's meeting at the TIG office with GK, AS, & TIG led to further developments of the quests:
 - for further ones, we'll pick and choose from the list in each of the categories and alter the global issue (working off the list of 5 questions that GK & AS had come up with before)
 - get finalized quests to TIG by next Tuesday or Wednesday

Site Development

- TIG & GK created a ymex still to-do's & text list sent to developers (end of the day, Wed) with all the specific text and functionality changes
- Mentor system needs to be built from scratch still
 - Process on how people become mentors and what expectation of mentors / different from just help wanted
 - what we're expecting of them
 - how open is the process, finding, feedback on mentorship received, long term or just need help on 1 thing for a short time (a system that encompasses every scenario)
- Organization of Resources improvement, clearly indicated in text & to-do's Google doc sent to Luke & Rob
 - Members can choose how to view the Resources page by clicking 5 different tabs
 - Change visual icons to clearly indicate what type of media the Resources corresponds, or if it is a global issue add a globe icon

Learning Activities

- * Now we'll refer to as quests
- the back end is complete, ready-to-go

Engagement

Launch

- May 1st still scheduled as official public launch
- rolling private beta, to start inviting pre-registrants probably Fri, April 18
- Who to invite to beta-testing? (A few youth invited: GK interns, ROCC's, AS contacts)
- Are we sure of launch date?
 - can we send out another email to youth media groups and others with updated dates?
- Yes!

16th

Working mode

Pre-meeting:

- In examining our working modes up-to-date and moving forward, we collectively decided that we have had improvements in the last 3 to 4 weeks due to in-person brainstorming and learning processes meetings. Conducting any meetings in person has helped a lot.
 - TIG: ready to take on the day-to-day community management of ymex, but still requests to have at least bi-weekly face time with partners.
 - GK expressed and TIG agreed that the biggest grey area is in knowing what is happening in Toronto and getting inconsistent feedback or updates on site development (weekly meetings haven't sufficed in sharing the information flows for this). Although improvements had been made in recent days, we still need to find a way to improve this to reduce amount of frustration in not knowing how to interpret silences and gaps of information.
 - TIG suggested very brief daily IM or emails from the developer (Rob) saying what he planned to work on for the day - at least up until the public launch and then we'll take it from there.
- (Update: Rob started this today, Thurs. 4/17)

Site Development

- GK: should we scale back or delay launch date again? What is the minimum we need to go live?
 - > decided we definitely need the text & to-do's list, which we discussed in detail and figured out what was in progress AND the two learning activities in the system, ready to push out
- debugged as much as possible
- So, we'll launch May 1, with the above-mentioned completed, but the mentoring system not yet in place
- We'll invite all of the pre-reg once the text & to-do's list is done

Mentors -

de-prioritized to after May 1 but we'll check in next week and work on them some more

Parameters and what do we have to give back to supporters, other websites or org's that want to be involved

Learning Activities

QUESTS!

technically challenging

- Still needs work: the problem is that the ability to assign multiple actions within steps is difficult
- and the submitting media is difficult in relation to the points system

Engagement

- Beta-testing, 8 TIG staff members asked to be given access, no one responded
- AS would like to test some of the text throughout the site with beta-testers from Asia to get their opinion on legibility
- Feedback - we haven't gotten any from beta-testers, need specific questions posted on Spotlight
- The more we can physically watch the beta-testers as they're testing, the better. Natalie will ask the ROCC's to do some in-person beta-testing
- TIG will put together a doc with a checklist on what to look for when doing this
- seeding content (hopefully beta-testers and the whole group)

23rd

Site Development

- Rob's daily updates have helped track what's getting done
- Text & to-do list has been updated on a daily basis

Creative Commons needs to add some choice for members to say they don't know/it wasn't clearly indicated which license the original creator used

Guidelines will be visible from multiple places: FAQ's, when people join ymex, the submission pages

Tagging: change to specifics of what they're supposed to be doing

Note: gauging how explicit we need to be with directions and how much we need to leave to the user to figure out

Rating with globes in addition to the stars, really crucial for GK, very difficult technically (Update: 3/23 & 3/24 - We decided to replace the stars with globes, this was done immediately with the tooltip saying "Rate the Global Connection". Then it was realized this doesn't make sense for rating Resources. Will be changed back to stars with the tooltip saying: How useful is this?)

AfterNote: we are not able to change the tooltip on the resources b/c it was one code written throughout

Learning Activities

QUESTS!

- TIG: how do we make quests more like normal social networking activities but still make it where we can track their learning/process/progress?
- discussion on where to document and track this process: quest comment box, individual profiles, group pages, (Decision made that we'll use the conversation canvas for reflection, and the "featured" box, the blue box at the top of the group page for their project summary, and the TIG to-do tool from projects for their to-do list; we also split this from 2 steps to three separate ones to ensure the reflection step is one step in its own)

Global Issues

text & images

- Eventually we'll draw from images on the site but to begin with the main five topics GK will look through Global Gallery, (hint: try collections - TIG express good place to look for hiv/aids) (Update 4/25: GK found them Rob has added a "featured" box to showcase this text & images at the top of these issue pages)
- After we launch sometime in May, put up a spotlight on the main page asking members to share images that relate to the global topics they care about

Engagement

Still planning to invite pre-registrants once the text & to-do list is completed, hopefully Monday 3/28

-- Still launching to the public on May 1

Beta-testing updates and feedback

-Testing and feedback with some Global Kids' students

30th

Working Mode

Debriefing on MacA call

What do we want to be public about and what do we want to keep internal?

- keep internal our own group dynamics, everything else about process okay to share publicly

- get going on public ymex TIGgroup blog: 1st one focused on launch, the website itself, target countries, introduce ROCCs; subsequent ones to come from group suggestions in our weekly calls (Natalie will start, Shawna can do some too, and all of us can contribute)
- > We need to strategize how to keep our focus and not spread in too many different directions
 - so next steps really focused on getting pre-registrants involved submitting content, etc.
 - Suggestion to looking at how members respond to surveys and that we respond to them individually
 - with the goal of at least 100 of the 400+ to post content
 - TIG will focus on the group we have; AS (and ROCCs) to focus on Asia

Learning Activities

Quests - In process, progress & Mentor system

Engagement

Feedback from beta-testing

- > From Natalie & Shawna doing in-person testing, two major problems were revealed
 1. Not knowing what to do on the site at initial glance
 2. once the media angle was realized, it wasn't clear what it was supposed to be about
- > The tag line could help - TIG designer will work on it asap
 - Designer will also work with moving the tag cloud up so it is more prominent which help convey global issues, moving "My Membership or doing away with it; & also play with a globe watermark (wallpaper)
 - but concerns from TIG that this will make visual too busy, detract from focus on media
- > All agreed the design elements need some work, slight adjustments
- > in general we will stay in-tune to comments and feedback & respond collaboratively the best we can
 - TIG will ask developer about possibility of doing something like the Second Life thing: is your experience on ymex better or worse than before (or last time) during this initial period?

Launch on Thursday May1!

- will happen unless major roadblocks or user feedback reveals we shouldn't

Outreach strategies - once launched

- In Asia: AS will start reaching out again to those she initially contacted
- In US: TIG will also re-connect with those she had already contacted & do further initial contacting; follow-up with some individual pre-reger's

- everybody bug-testing & feedback!

May 2008

1st - Site is launched

7th

Site Development

- less time with developer, twice a week he can work on ymex

All the media, resources, and site features will be visible to public except profiles

- Rationale? GK: security and safety, and trying to get others on board
- TIG: media sharing sites tend to be more open but sns more closed but since we are focusing on youth we do have to be more cautious
 - So profiles will be hidden to public, and any participatory steps like rating or commenting or submitting, we'll add an error message accompanied by a prompt on why & how to join in order to participate

Learning Activities

Quests:

- Are almost done, Rob still working on putting in second action for each step
- New design (visible to us as admin only until they're finished) works fine but visual needs to be changed slightly to look more fun
 - Mehrad is working to come up with something

Mentor system:

- we'll refer to them as "Youth Guides"
- We'll send a ymex message or email (?) to them when they're eligible and we want them to apply
 - TIG will start an application that they have to fill out to
- Projected to be ready by end of next week (according to Rob)

Branding

ymex.org not YMEX

- help spread the branding; everybody try not to use YMEX, always use ymex.org or Ymex.org if it is at the beginning of a sentence

Engagement

User feedback

- how to improve Commenting question, "how did this [media] affect you?" not clear why we're not just asking for the standard "Comments" (according to user feedback)

-- Change text that says " Post answers" to "Post answers or ask another question"

-- Change question for "How did this media affect you" to "How is this media effective?"

Outreach

3 to 4-word slogan for a ymex badge that can be shared on other websites

- ymex logo -

"global issues that matter to me"

14th

Learning Activities

Quests

-> re-design of quest text box in progress, Mehrdad said it should be done by the end of the week

-> bottom-up quests are the next big feature to build after mentor system is complete

-- the form for inputting quests needs to be built

- we aim to have a spec by end of next week or following Monday once the specifics are decided upon; TIG& GK will meet Tuesday

- have them completed and ready to go by June 6

Mentor system

-> Reviewed TIG's spec and answered a few questions; decided on the application questions; refer to Google doc for specifics

-> Rob will work on these on today

Outreach

because of our need to have evaluation complete by August in order to write a new proposal for re-funding in September, we have shifted our target and strategy

-- a new and easy-to-grasp 1 page project description is in the works, hopefully finished by the end of today and sample emails by the end of this week

-- minimizing almost totally focusing on schools since it is end of the school year everywhere except for India

-- shifting to youth media groups and organizations both in the US and Asia who have summer programs

-- Nurturing members already registered

- TIG has conversed with ~6 members so far thanking for contributions, asking them to credit the creator correctly, encouraging them to participate further, etc.

- an incentive of some kind would help

- was planning to use the Digital Literacy Survey results to help know which members to target but nearly all are incomplete; GK will soon have the new one ready to go and we can make it required to encourage others to use it

-- TIG will start reaching out to youth activists and specific producers end of this week

-- AS will start reaching out to programs in Asia end of this week

21st -

Learning Activities

Quests

-> New design is done ;everybody likes it

-> Make a Quests page with a list of all the quests, a chance to accept them, and a numerical amount of how many people are working on a quest as well as up to 10 members' avatars showing with a link to their profile

-> Bottom-up quests

- we'll try both option 1 & 2 if Rob thinks they're feasible ; (Update, later in the day): Rob said let's try Option 2 first (basically slightly modifying what we have on the back-end to present to members who will create their own quests with access to each step in the process at all times) and take it from there

- only members with a certain point-level will get to make their own

- the main dilemma is whether to give the members the option to choose from all the actions so more is up to them to figure out what goes after another and ideally come up with more creative ways (than we have) OR to give them a choice of

3 or 4 options for each step. Another suggestion was to give those 3 or 4 plus a blank field where they can fill in any action they can think of (may even be beyond options we have available and therefore suggestions for site features we could add in the future).

Mentor system

-> Rob starting to build it today

-> Reduce the cap age for mentors to 17

Engagement

-Site Safety and legality: Erin Reilly advised us to be cautious after running into some problems with the FTC on Zooey's Room; we'll discuss mixing minors and members over age 18 next meeting

Outreach

in Asia: Alexis is reconnecting with groups she notified or discussed ymex with previously

Targeting in particular:

India - American/Indian Foundation (Digital Equalizer Program)

China - Roots & Shoots (Jane Goodall Foundation), Shanghai school working with youth in a summer program

in US:

- Media that Matters & Facing the Future contacted us - good that some viral marketing is happening

Ways to Participate doc is complete, pdf ready

-> can be used for youth media groups or summer programs as well

28th

Engagement

on age & site safety / legalities there are two main issues:

1) Copyright (this one is simpler)

2) Under-age issue, fostering relationships b/w adults and youth

Solutions, steps to achieve them:

- TIG will add Terms of Service (from TIG main site to ymex)

- Keep mentors under 18

Further discussion:

- Maybe you have to make someone your friend b/f you can see their profile; but this doesn't seem optimal for ymex where we're trying to get youth who haven't met each other before, on different continents to collaborate on quests and making media

- The more we make it clear to members that most site activity is public, the more people understand and can make decisions of what to put on their profile based on this

Site Improvements / Feedback

-> Internet Explorer 6, issues arose that the log-in boxes weren't working on this browser, brought to our attention by ROCC in Korea, fixed now but it took a half-day for the developer, not planned, delayed other things

June 2008

4th

Site Development

Country pages

- We will add "featured" members (with the ability to reveal or hide like spotlights) boxes on these country pages. ROCC's & most active members from a country will go there (its ok if they're over 18 since we're not trying to encourage relationship but rather highlighting individuals for outstanding work)

Learning Activities

Quests completed: text, quests page, etc.

->Launched the "Youth Quest Contest" this day to motivate users to complete them (for members under 18)

- June 20 deadline

- rewards / incentives: 500 extra bonus points; become Youth Guide; be "Featured Group" & "Featured Media" on ymex;

Mentor/ Youth Guides

- system in progress

- We need recruits for initial seeded ones (follow-up with and consider recruiting any youth who enter the contest, not just winners)

Engagement

Recognition that we need to engage members under 18, hope that the contest will do that

11th

Learning Activities

--Quests Contests -> response is not huge yet, especially because our under 18 membership is still low; no quests have been completed on ymex yet although number of those who have accepted a quest are growing

- Decided that we will stick to the deadline but offering more quests contests after this one is a good idea, as well as other contests (like just submitting final media pieces on a specific theme to encourage youth who already have finished media products to get involved)

--Youth Guides

Page is built - but things need to be moved around

- Lance Bennett's kids - GK found out they are not actually working with high-school aged youth until the fall so they will not be able to be seeded mentors.

- We need to see other individual youth who will be eligible (none on ymex now meet the pre-req; not many under 18's are involved on the site at all)

- TIG will try to reach out again and to more summer programs that are working with youth specifically with the seeking youth to be mentors angle

- Global Kids kids that are involved in the summer already have specific projects going on

Outreach

- Focused on spreading word of the contest: sent an mass email out to under 18ers on ymex & TIG target countries; put it on a spotlight on TIG & ymex; Google adwords; sent announcement to local youth media groups made aware, TIGed blog, ymex group blog, Facebook fan club update and email sent out, Cyworld Club update and email sent

AS sent out notice to all the Asia Society schools, Goldman-Sachs participants, and practically all AS education contacts

Asia - Roots and Shoots in China is considering having 1 group do the original project and another focused on quests

- working on India contacts since they go back to school in July, pushing to get them interested before they go back, specifically working on 15 schools in the global eschools network and the American-India Foundation

US - not getting response from most outreach efforts or an explanation that contact with youth in summertime is minimal

Engagement

- one thing that is definitely growing is membership numbers, even if participation is still low

18th

Site Development

Quests

- ran into a few major problems

- Rob fixed them (hopefully) completely yesterday afternoon

Learning Activities

Current contest - since quests all of a sudden weren't working (last time tested they were), no contestants have finished yet

Next Contest ->other ideas on Upcoming Events or International days: ICC postponing trial on child soldiers, so maybe something related to this issue

- Olympics; World Refugee Day (too soon)

- World Population day, July 11: we decided on this one

- I will make an entire new quest based on World Population Day since all the other quest have 35 to 82 people currently in them, so we don't want to change the text. Also, this contest will be based on the final media submissions that relate to the issue, whether they come out of the quest or not.

->We'll have another contest based on Youth Guides or bottom-up quests as soon as those are ready and tested (perhaps launch the Youth Guides system with a contest & some seeded Youth Guides) & we'll lower the threshold for the Youth Guide system/contest in order to get some under 18er's in there

Outreach

- High-intensity outreach promoting contests over the summer (multiple emails to members and other target groups) is ok since it will only be for about a month's time

Input appreciated

- listservs & other org's newsletters we need to be on (either youth-, global issue-, or media-based)

- winners of other online media contests

- local youth media events to attend
 - More focus on individual youth & access to them
- other promo ideas to put in motion soon:
- Blast out the ymex sharing badge; Maybe have a member drive or something equivalent (Strength in numbers: I'm 1 person, together we're 1,000)
 - Add an invite a friend to ymex ?

Evaluation (/ Working mode)

- will happen in all of August
- TIG: What is the methodology for the qualitative aspects of the evaluation?
- GK: still to be developed
- TIG: How to incorporate advisor's input into evaluation? GK have received the advisor's best practices to go on
- GK: less concerned with how the evaluation will be structured. More worried about collecting all the info needed to do the evaluation.
- TIG for GK: Is the primary issue that we need to be tailoring our approach to engage with users? Or how we're gathering the info?
- GK: Its hard to know at this point
- appears that the issue is really engagement
- TIG: If we can identify now what the site is missing, we need to add to add that now in order to capture that data by evaluation time, but if we don't know what that activity would look like then we can't know if we have it or not
- The project aims are very theoretical, so how do those aims break down into actual site activity?

25th

Site Developments

- Quests
 - ran into more problems yesterday while testing quests
 - fixing these and getting quests to work perfectly will now be priority for developer
- Youth Guides
 - system is ready; Rob just needs to fix/add the links and text needs to be written and inserted into the boxes
- Bottom-up quests
 - are finished and mostly debugged but the quests need to be working perfectly for these to work perfectly so they are priority after that

Outreach

AS

- China: Roots and Shoots submitted a lot of writing and some photos, their educator/leader is working with them to hone in on the best submissions to add to ymex; AS strongly encouraging them to do quests
- Now aiming for 1 school in India and 1 group in SK to serve at least as sample groups by July
 - > Jessica Remington of One World Youth Project would like to encourage her Youth Ambassadors and especially the ones selected to participate in our next contest
 - > We'll start a weekly ymex mailing to members - (this week will be focused on the Contest announcement, Youth Guides soon to launch, Join the Facebook Fan Page, Get the ymex sharing badge)

Engagement

- > TIG rotated featured media and resources and will continue to do so on a regular basis, as well as sending emails to members who get featured media (a highly-prioritized bug is to make this point fire so members get extra points for featured media);
- sharing featured media (and possibly resource) on the Facebook fan club as well as the weekly mailer

Evaluation

- > GK will pull all numbers on August 1 (AS to stop Asia outreach)
- > We have some means of evaluation so far but the large element that we're missing is user feedback so GK & AS will hold a couple of small focus groups with small incentives to get input from youth on the tools

July 2008

3rd

Learning Activities

Quests have been debugged (hopefully no more big ones to arise!)

Youth Guides -

- > Rob inserted text onto main Youth Guide page

-> we'll use the "Featured Youth Guide" spotlight as a place to promote the upcoming Youth Guide /Explorer contest which we will start next week to accompany the launch of the Youth Guide system

World Population Day Contest (deadline on July 11)

-> TIG has conducted extensive outreach for it also asking many contacts to spread far and wide

-- it was mentioned in the GYAN Newsletter as well as UNICEF VOY Media Magic Digest, will be in the TIG weekly mailer

-> No submissions so far; TIG will send mass weekly emailer reminding people to submit media for the contest and giving more specifics on what could apply to the theme of World Population Day (since maybe some members aren't clear on what that day means) & asking members what they think WPD means to them, present it as open to interpretation

Outreach

Asia - Roots & Shoots introduced ymex to about 100 people last Friday, Alexis reiterating that she is requesting them to be actively involved as well as promoting it outside of R&S

US

-> Natalie sent the contest announcement and scouting for Youth Guides to numerous contacts (new & previous) and hasn't received much response

-> Natalie has been commenting on applicable videos and sending messages to groups on YouTube & Viddler to share their work on ymex, no noticeable outcomes from this yet

-> Leah Sapin of Media That Matters Film Festival submitted numerous award-winning videos on behalf of the youth producers (Natalie requested she get the youth producers to do it themselves but she said Arts Engine is required to help them with promotion so she did it on their behalf; we added them to the Content Partners page)

-> EVC finally let Natalie know that they basically only rent and sell their work (Natalie responded that perhaps they could share trailers or teasers on ymex, but their model is really buy/sell)

-> Facebook Fan Page increased numbers after asking people to invite their friends in last week's mailer

-> Natalie will be attending the YPulse Mashup Conference in San Francisco on July 15 & 16

-> Today TIG is looking at updated DL survey results and will respond to each member personally to let them know thanks, points have been added, and ask for feedback and suggestions

Engagement

Numbers / Progress

-> We are at 973 members, including more under teens; China and India membership growing but Korea very little increase; TIG updated metrics for July 1 mark

-> This week saw some high-quality submissions but last 4 days very little activity; overall same trend of many people being minimally involved and almost none being super active

9th

Site Development

Bottom-up quests done (except for the Edit function still hasn't been added, will be Rob's first priority for next Monday)

Learning Activities

We lowered the pre-reqs for Youth Guide candidates based on previous logic, just lowered the numbers involved for now - changing the logic would take a lot of work/time, so we can do that later if we see fit but for now these pre-reqs are ideal for getting some Guides in there

Engagement

Quests - nobody is completing them even though they are working normal now; there is not a clear pattern as to where people stop

-> So in order to encourage more participation, we'll try a step-by-step incentive

-- so for every step that anybody completes in a quest or that they have already completed, they'll be entered into a raffle to win a \$100 Amazon.com gift certificate

-- the contest will launch on Thurs July 10 and the drawing will be held on Thurs July 24

"youth-produced" media

-> Some of the media submissions we are receiving are more about global issues reported on in the mainstream media (i.e.; National geographic or AP news article reported in Yahoo News)

-- so for the ones already submitted of this sort, I will ask those members to submit that to the Resources section and if they want something of that topic to be in the media section than they can blog about it or make a media piece about it

-- we'll add a prompt that users will receive before the actual submission page "Somebody else made this" that says "Is this media produced by or with the help of youth? If not, please enter it in the Resources section"

-- we can also have a "member-created" badge that will automatically be added to media that is submitted under "I or We made this"

Evaluation

-> Focus groups, GK working on organizing but need Youth Guide system & Bottom-up quests going to conduct them

17th

Learning Activities

- We won't have any pre-reqs for those who can submit bottom-up quests (and we'll also remove pre-req's other than being under 18 from the Youth Guides for now to encourage some people to participate)

- Contests

a) World Population Day Contest

-- we received 12 entries, all submissions were from girls and all from young members (19 and under); 2 winners were 17yrs and 1 was 18 years; no entries from outreach countries except the US

Outreach

Outreach update

US - Natalie made some good connections and potential content partners at the Ypulse Conference; starting to now get response from large numbers of outreach emails over the last couple of months, and some minimal response from viral outreach on other media-sharing sites

23rd

Learning Activities / Engagement

Bottom-up quests

-> The text is done; Rob will fix the last thing (removing the number of times to complete an action option) tomorrow and then we will kick them off with a contest

-- Contest judged on how it fits in the five criteria (on a scale of 1 to 5) & at least three of us will vote

1) Is it challenging enough but not unrealistic to be able to achieve/complete?

2) Will digital literacy skills / enhanced critical thinking about media be gained?

3) Is it participatory, does it encourage interaction and collaboration with other ymex members?

4) Does it keep the focus on the issue it addresses?

5) Is it fun - will others be likely to want to do it?

-- Deadline will be August 4 (Monday) to have two weekends in that period

-- We'll offer an iPod as the 1st place prize & 2nd place and 3rd place with lesser prizes [Amazon gift certificates]

-- Since it is our last contest (for this phase), everybody will help in outreach, pass the email on to their networks

Quest Step contest

-> Hasn't greatly enhanced participation in quests; still no members have completed quests but more have accepted or are in the middle of them

DML Survey - TIG put the new survey into surveymonkey, 1st made some slight changes and put the new link on ymex

30th

Working Mode

In moving forward / next steps, where does GK stand?

-> GK considers themselves as an incubator, so success for them would mean drawing back more or stepping off completely; there may be tools that ymex offers GK youth & programming but at the moment there's not a clear fit

-> If we get no funding moving forward with MacArthur, what happens?

-- GK's plan would be to withdraw

Evaluation

What is the planned methodology from GK's perspective? What about the focus groups?

-- B/c user engagement has been low in Asia, Alexis has been holding a focus group with youth in China (who were not familiar with ymex previous to the focus group) & will have one in India as well, SK doesn't look like it is going to happen

-- will use quantitative info coming from the site and the focus group

-> TIG would also like to include about 5 members' stories to illustrate how teens are using the site; Natalie now working on about 5 member's profiles - will share with everyone by August 11

-> How can we involve advisors?

Shawna: our request for involving them needs to be really specific, so what were we thinking?

- we'll compile advisors and all of us and set up a conference call on (ideally) the 17th or 18th of Sept. after they have had time to review our initial evaluation (which will go out to them on Sept 8); basically we'll present to them what we've learned so far and ask them to help us reflect on what we've learned

-> For actual ymex member's feedback we'll hold a Focus Group on August 11th using Elluminate; Natalie will send a "special invite" to 20-30 members

-- TIG will draft 3 -5 guiding questions & share with others by next week

- We want to get at the "why" and "How can we change it to better achieve..."; "Why do people come to ymex?"; Try to present the learning objectives in fun ways rather than making it sound too much like formalized learning (i.e., are you able to share media after participating in ymex, do you feel comfortable discussing media on ymex, have you learned more about a specific global issue)

August 2008

6th

Learning Activities

Quests

-- have finished plugging in the latest one on Arts & Media (no collaboration required in creating the media)

Youth Guide visual reformat

-- TIG designer will have something ready by Thurs

Outreach

-> will stick with viral efforts but not spend too much time at this point on institutions/organizations

13th

Evaluation

A) Progress / Focus on:

How kids are creating digital media & connecting

Where is this of interest and why - maybe not individuals, maybe groups (FOKO example)

Countries that are coming to the site is not in correlation to membership; India surpasses in terms of site views

A lot of lessons learned, a lot of information, how best to contextualize, Combined numbers with input from the Focus group

Critical discussion piece is actually more observed, utilized, and appreciated by members than we had realized

Interest in specific issues: environment / global warming pulled more people from Google adwords than any other issue;

TIG has observed HIV/AIDS as a major issue to the community as well

Project aims: were framed as questions, started out w/ assumptions, this process was about learning, so this is what we gained

How young people around the world are currently using digital media, etc.

Won't cover all 5 "learning objectives" but most will be covered in some way

We will frame it like; "These 3 things are what we are going to focus on..."

Quests - were too rigid, feedback from China group; too complicated; technically confusing then they dropped it rather than trying to fuss with them

Create-A-Quest is what we should have focused on; although our example helped; in general quests are a cool thing to do, but they want to have control over how they wanted to do it

One girl in Focus Group call said that they were evasive

27th

Evaluation

-We'll try to keep it to 8 pages or under

-We can add in that running contests increased participation

-- TIG will put together a run-down of data on contests & winners

Framework & structure - could be improved by putting deliverables and accomplishments up front in order to drive accomplishments and lessons learned throughout, so that take-aways are clear (and that we indicate proof that we are aiming for and deserve re-funding)

-- yes but also we should keep in mind this initial brief evaluation is more for recommendations for others who would like to create an sns, this is more of a "best practices" than an application for re-granting

- We should be more up-front with numbers, make it clear that the number of members who participate fully are small and that are conclusions are based on few rather than many

- We'll add an assessment of the level of *exchange*

-- beginning by defining what is exchange

-- demonstrated by indicators of: friends in other countries, discussion forum back and forths, & comments from members in countries other than the one who submitted the media (Luke will pull these numbers)

September 2008

5th

Working Mode

Keeping the community alive & new offerings

-- new partnerships being explored: TIG has partnered with a project, Democracy. Your Video. Your Voice. and would like to incorporate ymex into the partnership; all agreed

B) Working mode

-- we'll discuss this during a call next week about general intentions and roles in moving forward: what is the future of ymex but also within the context of the organization

C) TIG will send an email to GK about what we are hoping to do, what we would like to explore in the next phase

11th

Working Mode

Would suggest for TIG, as the leader on this project with GK as an advisor, to think about this less as what we would like to see happen with ymex and what MacArthur would like to fund

We started an entirely new network with ymex which is not what we originally intended to do. Jen thinks perhaps TIG would prefer to develop relationship further with MacA on the main TIG site in regards to examining learning and social networks; but thinks ymex fills that space of uniquely looking at media that young people are creating

Where does GK want to take ymex and the relationship with MacA?

-GK's other projects with MacA are different, separate, not related to social networking. So it's really up to where TIG wants to take it.



Youth Media Exchange Evaluation Report

**Demonstration Phase
August 2008**

Submitted By:

Global Kids Inc.

And

TakingITGlobal

In collaboration with

Asia Society

Overview

Youth Media Exchange (ymex.org) is a social network that enables youth, ages 13 to 18, to exchange and discuss digital media on global issues that they create or that exist elsewhere on the web. Global Kids and TakingITGlobal created ymex.org, in collaboration with Asia Society, with the goal of educating and empowering young people around the world to become both creative producers and critical consumers of digital media about global issues through a social networking environment that provides directed learning activities. Directed activities including survey questions, focused group discussion, media production, and contests, aimed to link the MacArthur Digital Media and Learning Initiative research goals with Youth Media Exchange. An advisory board comprised of MacArthur Foundation grantees was also formed to guide the project partners for this particular goal.

The demonstration phase ran from May 1 through mid-August 2008 and concluded with a membership of approximately 1,700 as of August 12, 2008. Outreach during this time focused on TakingITGlobal's existing membership along with targeted outreach to youth and youth organizations in India, China, and South Korea, and North America with the goal of building collaboration between youth in Asia with youth in North America. Outreach through websites, NGO partnerships, and events took place in order to filter, document, amplify and make visible youth voice both domestically and internationally.

During this phase, ymex.org focused on the creation, organization, and dissemination of youth produced digital media including writing, images, audio, video, games and mashups addressing a wide range of global and social issues in innovative ways. By building on the TakingITGlobal community platform and existing media uploading sites such as Flickr and YouTube, ymex.org allows users to share both first and third party digital media. Ymex.org incorporates a youth development approach to learning through "Quests", guided steps to engage in a global issue while learning to use digital media to effectively explore the issue, "Resources", member submissions of online tools and free open source software to find, create and upload media on the Internet, and "Youth Guides", a mentorship system for members age 13 to 17 to facilitate peer-to-peer learning and engagement. The learning activities on ymex.org initially focused on five global issues during the demonstration phase. These include global health, migration, access to education, environment, and poverty. Two were added in the latter part of the demonstration phase in response to upcoming events and user feedback. These were on the topics of World Population Day and Arts & Media.

This report focuses on the five project aims proposed by TakingITGlobal and Global Kids, in collaboration with Asia Society. These include how young people are currently using and thinking about social networking and digital media, how social networks can be designed for learning across social and cultural boundaries, how young people develop media literacy in the process of learning, how youth-produced media can best educate and engage a broad audience of global citizens, and how partner organizations can develop best practices for social networks.

Methodology

To evaluate the demonstration phase of Youth Media Exchange, Global Kids Inc. and TakingITGlobal in collaboration with Asia Society, examined the growth of site membership and activity, how active members used ymex.org, and youth's opinions of site features. We also documented best practices in social network development from MacArthur Foundation grantees advising Youth Media Exchange. The data collected for this report includes:

- Phone interviews with Youth Media Exchange Advisors throughout the development process. Please see appendix for a list of advisors.
- Preliminary registration survey of Youth Media Exchange members.
- Digital Media Literacy survey of Youth Media Exchange members age 18 and under.
- Google Analytics reports on the growth and activity of ymex.org membership.
- Analysis of site activity and points earned by five most active ymex.org users.
- An online focus group with two active members of Youth Media Exchange, age 17 and 14, in Peru and US, respectively.
- A focus group with eight youth ages 13-18 in Shanghai, China not previously familiar with ymex.org.

Findings

Project Aim 1: Social Networks for Education and Social Engagement

Youth Media Exchange demonstrated how young people around the world (with an emphasis on Asia) are currently using and thinking about social networking and digital media, as well as how social networking and digital media can best be used as an instrument for education and social engagement on a global scale. To assess this, membership activity on ymex.org, feedback collected in pre-registration surveys and focus groups of site members, and best practices compiled from the Youth Media Exchange advisory were analyzed by the staff of Global Kids and TakingITGlobal.

At the end of the demonstration phase in August 2008, Youth Media Exchange had nearly 1,700 members of Youth Media Exchange spanning a wide range of ages, geographic locations, gender and cultures. While most data covered in this report, will focus on youth engagement (age 18 and under) on ymex.org, this initial analysis examines ymex.org membership as a whole.

Table 1.1: Age of Youth Media Exchange Members

Age	Members	% Membership
18 and Under	487	37%
19-30	639	49%
31 and Above	186	14%

Table 1.2: Gender of Youth Media Exchange Members

Gender	Members	% Membership
Female	528	39%
Male	816	61%

Since the launch of Youth Media Exchange on May 1, 2008 through mid-August 2008, 1,691 accounts were created on ymex.org. Roughly 500 members pre-registered as a result of promotion through TakingITGlobal's newsletters and spotlights. Over half of Youth Media Exchange's population identifies as male (816 members) while 528 members identify as female, and 162 members selected no response. Youth Media Exchange membership spanned a wide age range. Approximately 487 members are 18 and under, whereas 639 members are between the ages of 19 and 30, 186 members are age 31 and above. While Youth Media Exchange aimed to reach youth ages 13-18, this age group did not become the majority. This may be a result of the recruitment and cross membership of TakingITGlobal's network where the majority of the population is in the 19-30 age range. The presence of adults on ymex.org may also be a result of outreach to educators and partners who then registered in order to explore if ymex.org was a valuable tool for their students. However, it is important to note though that the most active members on the website, based on the number of points scored and contest submissions, were females between the ages of 14 and 19.

Table 1.3: How Members Heard About Youth Media Exchange

How'd You Hear	Members	% Membership
Friend	363	44%
Google Search	305	37%
Website	68	8%
Nonprofit	46	6%
Online Social Network	24	3%
Teacher	15	2%
After-School Program	4	0.50%

A large majority of Youth Media Exchange members heard about ymex.org through a friend (363 members) and through Google (305 members). From the months of May-August, a Google Adwords account was dedicated to promoting Youth Media Exchange through a Google grant. Other members heard of ymex.org, through a website (68), nonprofit (46), online social network (24), a teacher (15), and an after-school program (4). Most commonly searched keywords include global warming (2,996 visits), games (300 visits), chatting (208 visits), youth (190 visits), and blogs 159 (visits), demonstrating that in addition to digital media, global issues are a strong draw among users. Growth in membership was largest through viral contacts and through Internet search engines. Members of ymex.org rely on their networks of peers, both online and offline, to spread and receive information.

Table 1.4: Online Community Membership of Ymex.org Members

Online Community	Members	% Membership
Myspace	490	29%
Facebook	461	27%
Youtube	360	21%
Orkut	178	10%
Flickr	73	4%
Bebo	59	3%
Second Life	33	2%
Cyworld	17	1%
QQ	16	1%
Mixi	9	0.50%

Members of Youth Media Exchange are actively joining multiple online communities. Myspace ranks first with 490 members of ymex.org also belonging to the Myspace community, followed by Facebook with 461 ymex.org members, Youtube with 360 members, Orkut with 178 members, and Flickr with 73 members of ymex.org. Members of ymex.org are actively joining multiple online communities. The youth participating in the focus group in Shanghai were split evenly in whether they would rather join another social network or have the new network like ymex.org be incorporated into an existing

social networking site as a group or application.

Focus group participants in the online focus group and the offline focus group in Shanghai stated that they see Youth Media Exchange as a network to make new friends outside their own country through digital media and global issues. Four of 8 said they would use ymex.org to meet new people, while 1 responded they would use the site to communicate with their existing network of friends, and 3 stated they would connect with both existing friends and meet new people through ymex.org.

Table 1.5: Digital Media Views and Posts By Type

Digital Media Type	Views	Posts
Video	8,160	122
Writing	4,484	81
Images	4,059	69
Games	1,882	7
Audio	1,357	18
Mashups	913	5

Youth Media Exchange allows users to link or embed their own media or share third party media licensed under Creative Commons licensing. Videos were the most popular digital media type posted and viewed on ymex.org with 122 posts and 8,160 views. Writing/blogging was second highest with 81 posts and 4,484 posts followed by images with 69 posts and 4,059 views. This correlates with user membership in digital media sharing communities online. Ymex.org users are most active on Youtube, a video-sharing site, Flickr, a photo-sharing site, and on various blogging sites to share their writing. Seven of the eight teens that participated in the focus group in Shanghai are already creating media, the majority creating their own videos and blogs that are then uploaded on the Internet.

Features of social networks that ymex.org members enjoy using in other online communities that they feel could improve learning on Youth Media Exchange include chat rooms, more groups and networks to identify with, broader discussion boards, a stronger emphasis on global issues, a friend finder tool to make it easier to locate friends, and easier ways to communicate with short messages -- both between members and as comments to explain and discuss digital media.

The Youth Media Exchange Advisory was comprised of MacArthur Foundation grantees with an expertise in social network development for educational purposes and digital media literacies. Recommendations around social networks and digital media suggest they are best used as an instrument for education and social engagement when:

- **Learning Modules are easily accessible;** with a strong scaffolded process that is easy to understand and engage with to empower and enable youth learning with digital media. However, selected roadblocks can promote participation. In response

to this suggestion, we made our learning modules, or "Quests", available in pop-up boxes throughout the site as well as on a webpage of their own. We also created a quest management section in the member's profiles for clear access to their progress in a quest.

- **Mentorship system sets the bar for knowledgeable and reliable mentors;** a certain level of points and learning activities must be completed before becoming eligible to become a "Youth Guide". "Youth Guides" must earn 60 points on ymex.org before they can apply to mentor.
- **Points and ratings create transparent incentives;** when it comes to rating, keep it simple by determining what you value and creating community standards that are easy to understand. This was applied to ymex.org by rewarding most activity on the site with a point value equivalent to an action's level of difficulty and effort. The point system allowed top ymex.org members to be noticed and rewarded with time in the "Member Stories" spotlight on the home page. We created a rating system that was similar to other online rating systems, but was based on a system of globes (rather than stars) and accompanied by the text: "Rate the Global Connection" to emphasize the focus of the website.
- **Go where the youth are;** user engagement should take advantage of friendships and existing networks. Fan pages and clubs were set up on Facebook and Cyworld to reach out to existing networks and offline communities, such as Three Dot Dash's Global Teen Leaders.
- **Reach multiple levels of English comprehension;** while the majority of the site will be in English discussion boards can facilitate communication in other languages. During the demonstration phase we were not able to incorporate discussion boards in other languages, however we did encourage members to submit digital media in other languages with English subtitles. This allowed youth to share their creations with their local communities as well as on a more global level on ymex.org.
- **Make media submission and credits accurate and accessible;** have users enter information in a multi-step process as they submit media including licensing with Creative Commons. When tagging provide users with suggested tags, including formatting and keywords. We created a unique and innovative (although extensive) process for submitting media requiring proper crediting of the original creator in the case of third-party media. We also asked members to explain why they were sharing media and why it was relevant in the commentary section rather than simply cutting and pasting basic information from the original. In the case of original media, we asked the creator to share if the work incorporated other media and also gave the creator a chance to choose which Creative Commons licensing they wished to use.

Project Aim 2: Designing Social Networks for Learning and Collaboration

Through the development of ymex.org, the project partners aimed to gain additional insight into how peer-mediated networks can be designed for learning and understanding of the social and cultural contexts within which information emerges. The development process of Quests, contests, and Youth Guide system, as a tool for learning in a social network environment combined with data regarding international collaboration on ymex.org provided insight into how to design peer-mediated networks for learning.

The learning activities on Youth Media Exchange were designed as Quests, Create A Quest, and a Youth Guide system. Created as multi-step processes, they aim to build competencies in young people, first by building a deeper understanding of a global issue that is of personal interest or relevance, then by using the affordances of a social network to connect to peers interested in this issue who have experience, knowledge or skills to share. Then, as an international group formed online, the team engages in digital media production with the goal of producing digital media that will raise awareness or educate an even wider group of peers. The established order of steps to complete a Quest ensures that each user is developing a wide range of digital media literacies throughout the process of educating and engaging themselves and their peers as global citizens. As a young person in Shanghai stated, “I could discover the world more widely if I complete more quests.”

Table 2.1: Quests Accepted and Number of Steps Completed

Quest (13 Steps)	Date Launched	Accepted	Step Completed
Environment	1-May	109	Step 8
Global Health	1-May	94	Step 9
Poverty	29-May	86	Step 5
Education	2-Jun	81	Step 4
Migration	2-Jun	65	Step 2
World Population Day	23-Jun	55	Step 12
Arts and Media (8 Steps)	5-Aug	16	Step 8; Done

Embedded learning experiences that were facilitated on ymex.org took place in the form of Quests. The Quests were intentionally designed as multi-step processes as a discovery-based journey with one step being uncovered only after the previous was completed in order to add a sense of place and entice the curiosity of the user. The goal was for the user to learn more about digital media while furthering the discussion around a global issue. The potential of this model however may have been limited by its unique approach and the way it was presented may have been a cause of confusion for some members. While many users chose to ‘Accept a Quest’, to reveal the first step in creating

digital media on global issues, very few site users moved beyond steps 1 and 2. Quest Contests promoted user engagement in the quests, however only one quest was completed from start to finish. As one user suggested in the Shanghai focus group, “I would take all steps and put it in a big page so they can see all steps at once. Then people can do it at whatever order or skip the ones they don’t have interest in.” The minimal engagement in these original five quests can be a result of the amount of time and rigid format of the steps. The formatting of the Quests in pop-up windows was also reported to be an annoyance for some users. “The boxes only show in certain pages. I have to look for it when I accidentally leave the planned route,” a site user reported in the Shanghai focus group. As a result, not clearly presenting all steps to a quest may have turned users away from the quests or discouraged them from finding their way back to their step in the quest.

Project Aim 3: Developing Media Literacy in Young People

To look at how young people are developing the critical media literacy faculties to assess, prioritize, and use relevant information in the process of learning, members of Youth Media Exchange were offered an incentive of 40 points upon completion of the Digital Media Literacy survey developed by Global Kids with assistance from Project New Media Literacies at MIT. The Digital Media Literacy survey was designed with the intent to assess how young people are acquiring new media literacies through Global Kids programming by taking the survey upon starting and completing the program.

Youth around the world are developing the capacity to play, or experiment with one’s surroundings as a form of problem solving, on computers. The Digital Media Literacy survey was taken by members during one of their first visits to ymex.org in order to examine their experiences with digital media prior to joining Youth Media Exchange. Of the sample of 25 youth members age 18 and under, 13 participants described themselves as “very confident” in teaching themselves something new on a computer by seeing what happens when you play around with it, whereas 5 participants answered with “confident” and 7 participants as “fairly confident”. Young people are also learning appropriation, the ability to sample and remix content in a meaningful manner, and performance, the ability to adapt alternative identities for the purpose of improvisation and discovery. As a female member from Thailand shared, “I made the song that is sung by Mariah and I mixed my voice to it. It’s much fun.” Similarly, a member from Mexico stated, “[I created] a video montage made out of footage of a rhythmic gymnast and a pop song.” Young people on ymex.org are also using digital media to perform. “I sometimes choose characters viewed as ‘icons’ in Western culture and conceptualize how different it would have been had they belonged to a Mid-eastern culture” is one example of how a female member from United Arab Emirates is developing digital media literacy. Youth Media Exchange enables young people to develop, share, and support their peers through a range of digital media literacies including play, performance, appropriation and transmedia navigation.

Project Aim 4: Engaging & Educating Global Citizens Through Digital Media

The demonstration phase of Youth Media Exchange explored how youth produced media is best conceived, organized, and disseminated to engage and educate a broader audience of global citizens. Through targeted outreach conducted in Asia and North America, viral marketing through social networks, and organizational partnerships with youth media organizations, ymex.org sought to both aggregate, stimulate, and amplify youth voice through digital media. By focusing on youth produced media, Youth Media Exchange aimed to engage and educate young people across the world as global citizens.

Table 4.1: Youth Media Exchange Membership By Country as of Aug 12, 2008

Country/Territory	Members	Site Visits*
United States	531	8,234
India	300	18,368
Canada	120	1,629
Nigeria	53	376
Pakistan	32	632
Ghana	27	Data Not Available
South Africa	25	1,586
China	25	259
United Kingdom	17	821
Australia	16	338
South Korea	12	Data Not Available

*Based on Google Analytics estimate of Internet service provider location.

Targeted outreach for ymex.org was conducted in the US, Canada, India, China, and South Korea. As of August 2008, membership is highest in the USA with 531 members, followed by India (300 members), Canada (120 members), and Nigeria (53 members). High membership numbers were expected from the US and Canada due to the partner organizations' established presence in these countries and the fact that the site was only offered in English. Of the three targeted Asian countries, only India achieved significant participation, ranking second in members and first in site visits. Uptake of the site among youth in China and South Korea was not as successful, resulting in China ranked 8th (25 members; 9 under the age of 18), and South Korea ranked 13th (12 members; 0 under the age of 18).

Asia Society, from its New York headquarters as well as its regional offices in Asia, reached out to a variety of organizations in the three target countries with the goal of establishing partnerships that would bring in youth new to the site in a sustained way. These included: educators and administrators in schools, exchange programs, and after school programs; issue-based non-profit organizations with youth programs; educational technology programs; and youth media organizations. A partnership was established within China, however, due to the timing of the site launch and evaluation, this group has not yet established large increases in neither membership nor activity on the site. This group was able to facilitate a focus group of youth in Shanghai to provide

feedback on ymex.org's tools and learning processes. TakingITGlobal also hired one Regional Online Community Connector (ROCC) from its membership or from Asia Society contacts in each of the target countries who promoted ymex.org to their peers and other youth groups in their community. Most of their work was intended to focus on more informal, viral outreach directly to youth. Outreach in China was also met with additional challenges when TakingITGlobal was blocked in early 2008. As a result, ymex.org had to be placed on a different server in order to allow people in China to access the website. TakingITGlobal reached out to individuals and youth media groups on YouTube, Viddler, Vimeo, blogger.com, and Flickr. Approximately 1 in 50 of these viral outreach messages or comments posted ended up in a new sign-up and media submission. Fan Pages or Clubs were set up on other social networks including Facebook (102 fans) and Cyworld (46 members) to attract new members as well as notify members of updates and contests on ymex.org.

Although interest in ymex.org from educators, educational organizations, and youth in Asia was high, efforts at outreach in Asia were complicated by a number of factors. Due to unforeseen delays in site development, the launch coincided directly with school vacations and holidays in all of the target countries. Many educational organizations in Asia expressed interest in participating in partnerships and project activities on ymex.org, however the timing made it impossible for them to do so before the evaluation period. As the site was constantly in development during the launch and the membership was growing, technical bugs and lower levels of user activity may have made it seem intimidating and less user-friendly to an audience who uses English as a second language.

While the site was designed for use outside of formal education settings, there are few organizations operating in the informal education sphere and especially in youth media in the target countries of China and South Korea. We found that educational technology initiatives are mainly targeted to under-resourced populations and schools where English language skills are low or non-existent. In general, educators in these countries expressed interest in using the site if it was directly tied to English language learning or other specific educational goals within the classroom. Likewise, youth in these countries who speak English and have the interest to participate in a site such as ymex.org have very little time outside of school and school-related activities, and so tend to use existing national online social networks where they can connect quickly with peers they know in their native language.

However, with more time, we believe that both partnerships and memberships from Asia have strong potential to grow. Youth in Shanghai who participated in the focus group expressed interest in communicating with their friends on a deeper level around global issues, first gaining confidence in the site and their local network before expanding out to others around the world that have similar interests. They saw the specific global issues focus as a way to meet people outside their home country, which they do not currently do on existing online social networks. As one student wrote, "Because you can give your own information to help others to understand, and then you share it, a lot of people will help you and you might find the person who has the same opinion with you. You guys

may become friends." Another student wrote, "It will be more fun than just use facebook.com and say hi to everyone and wait for the response. Sharing thoughts with strangers is kind of exciting and I am looking forward to it."

Table 4.2: Comments/Discussions Involving Members from Multiple Countries

Country	Comments/Discussions
United States	7
Canada	5
China	5
India	4
Pakistan	4
Mexico	3
Peru	3
Philippines	2
Nigeria	1
Norway	1
South Korea	1
Uganda	1

Youth Media Exchange members have already begun to discuss and collaborate around global issues through ymex.org. At least one member from the country networks indicated in Table 4.2 have participated in a discussion or form of collaboration with ymex.org member(s) from another country. All of the countries targeted in outreach conducted by Youth Media Exchange partners, were engaged in an international conversation around digital media on global issues.

To increase engagement and dissemination, TakingITGlobal approached a range of youth-based groups where ymex.org could promote their youth produced media while engaging and educating their youth as global citizens. Numerous youth media and issue-related organizations and websites promoted Youth Media Exchange by encouraging their youth to register and share content in addition to promoting announcements relating to ymex.org. The list can be found in the appendix.

Site engagement was also evaluated through user activity of highly engaged ymex.org members. The five most active profiles on Youth Media Exchange include an 18 year old from Mexico, a 17 year old from Peru, a 14 year old from the United States, a 19 year old from the United States, and a youth media group of 30 high school students from Madagascar. Please see appendix for descriptions of activity for these members.

Project Aim 5: Developing Best Practices in Social Networks & Digital Media

Throughout the demonstration phase of Youth Media Exchange, the involved organizations examined how to capture, build upon, and promote best practices for social networks. The following summarizes lessons learned during the demonstration phase as well as recommendations for future work.

The architecture of the Youth Media Exchange platform was intended to sit on top of the existing TakingITGlobal platform and enable linking and embedding to create a network of content as well as people. However, the ability to support a system of linking and embedding content to integrate a wide range of digital media while supporting multi-step learning activities resulted in a more intensive technical development process than initially anticipated.

As a result of development delays during the ambitious one-year timeframe for a site with as robust functionality as Youth Media Exchange, the partner organizations missed the window of opportunity for targeted outreach in school systems in North America and Asia. Outreach then focused on youth media organizations and issue-related organizations. Because there was not a strong focus on any one specific target audience, a sprinkled approach to outreach occurred which created challenges around targeted participation on ymex.org. Development over a longer time period would have allowed for a needs-based assessment in advance to more closely align specific targeted outreach with language capacity, learning objectives, and site tools and functionality. These challenges created tension between the partner organizations as site development, learning activity design, and outreach were out of sync, causing numerous ‘false starts’ throughout the development process. While the intent was to attract new topical content that TakingITGlobal’s existing network could not otherwise attract, ymex.org has not yet added equivalent value to the TakingITGlobal community or benefited Global Kids programming as anticipated by the project partners.

One aim of Youth Media Exchange was to assist TakingITGlobal in developing a broader membership base in the 18 and under age range, as their current network has seen the average user age jump from 19 to 24. However, extensive outreach to the TakingITGlobal network resulted in a large growth in membership in the age range of 19-30 on ymex.org. While these members were helpful in boosting site membership and activity, they were outside of the targeted age range for Youth Media Exchange and therefore did not help TakingITGlobal lower the average member age.

To increase activity among users age 18 and under, a series of contests were conducted on ymex.org. The contests which offered concrete prizes such as Amazon.com gift certificates, as well as time in the ymex spotlight and extra points added to their profile, had more participants than those that only offered rewards on the website itself. Three of the four contests were Quest-based contests - these had few participants. The most popular contest was the World Population Day Media Contest with 13 entries. It attracted new members and increased participation of current members. This contest was unique and most successful because it was connected to and had a deadline on the World Population Day (as declared by UNFPA). It was the contest with the lowest barrier to entry as it asked youth to decide what this day meant to them and to share their original digital media creations on ymex with the tag "wpdcontestentry". The final contest was held to kick off the newly launched member-created quest feature. We only

had two member-created quest entries but they were inspired, practical, and had much more youth-friendly language and step progression than we were able to design internally. The success of the quests created by users provided insight into the value of the structure we created and affirmed our assumption that young people are both interested in and capable of designing such learning experiences.

Recommendations For Future Consideration

Based on data and feedback collected during the demonstration phase of Youth Media Exchange, the following includes recommendations for further development of ymex.org and that can be applied to the development of social networks for learning and international collaboration.

Program Design

- Learning objectives and specific target audience should be defined first, based off an assessment of needs, so the technology can be designed to support their objectives.
- Establish an offline cohort of youth who meet regularly to seed the site and participate in the learning process, as well as provide youth voice in the development process. This could include activity development, serving as Youth leaders on the site, and a wide range of media production.
- Provide multi-language capabilities wherever possible, and build in educational activities to help English language learners practice their skills through the exploration of global issues via digital media.
- Create more flexibility in the Quest structure and content. Allow more flexible modes of collaboration for those who may not be ready to work in teams. Ymex.org users enjoyed first collaborating in the form of discussions around a piece of media, which can then build up to collaboration around media production later.
- Create more choice for users so they are able to not only choose their own global and/or social issue to explore, but also choose how they want to explore it.

Site Development

- Allow for a longer window for site development and ensure that the launch can occur towards the beginning of the academic year. Allow adequate development time including a beta launch dedicated to fixing bugs, and implementing user-requested changes. Be prepared to allocate a significant amount of time to site upgrades and modifications based on user feedback once the site is up and running.
- A beta launch with a select group will ensure the site is functioning well before opening it to the public, or else people try it, don't like it/get frustrated, and don't come back. This results in a high number of members but little activity on the site, which makes it look empty and abandoned to new users at a time when building an active membership is crucial to get it off the ground.

Project Management and Partnerships

- Define organizational roles, responsibilities and goals with all staff members including MOU's prior to beginning project development. The roles for the project partners were only broadly defined and needed greater clarity, which took a great deal of time throughout the beginning months of the project. The development of the project began prior to hiring project coordinators also increased confusion and delays in development. Partner organizations developing Youth Media Exchange had different understandings of the broader pedagogical framework and relevant interests in building a template or model for social networks.
- Explore meaningful partnerships for member incentives and increased participation. Leverage other organization's contests, communities, and initiatives in order to extend the scope and impact of Youth Media Exchange.

Appendix

Youth Media Exchange Advisory

Lance Bennett – The Center for Communication & Civic Engagement, University of Washington

danah boyd – University of California Berkeley

Akili Lee – Digital Youth Network

Michael Levine – Joan Ganz Cooney Center, Sesame Workshop

Erin Reilly – Project New Media Literacies, Comparative Media Studies Program, MIT

Organizations, Newsletters and Websites Promoting Youth Media Exchange

One World Youth Project

Global Youth Action Network

Global Youth Coalition for AIDS

The World Bank Group, North American Affairs, Youth Development and Peace Network UC

Arts Engine / Media That Matters Film Festival

Next Vista

UNICEF VOY Media Magic Digest

Educational Video Center (EVC)

YPulse

Three Dot Dash

Facing the Future

Thinking Beyond Borders

Scott McLeod, Iowa State University, Associate Professor of Educational Leadership and Policy Studies, Director of the Center for the Advanced Study of Technology Leadership in Education

World Movement for Democracy

Online Focus Group Survey

What were your first impressions of ymex when you joined?

2. A) What is your favorite tool, page, or section of ymex?

B) What is your least favorite?

3. What are you able to do after spending time on ymex.org that you weren't able to do before?

4. What new information do you have on global issues that you didn't have before?
5. What is ymex.org missing that you would like it to have?
6. A) Are there aspects of the website that really don't work for you?
B) How would you make them better?

Questions for pre-focus group:

Why did you come to ymex.org in the first place?

Have you or would you invite your friends to ymex.org?

How would you describe it to them?

How is ymex.org different from other social networking sites?

How have you connected with other young people on ymex?

Which of the resources that you found on ymex have you used?

Feedback Questions for ymex.org Focus Group

Activity 1: Sign up, create, and edit your profile

Activity Time: 15-20 minutes

Feedback Questions for Activity 1: (Please type your answers below)

1. What problems or challenges did you have completing this activity?
2. What part of creating/editing your profile did you like?
3. What could be changed to make the process of signing up and creating/editing a profile easier?

Activity 2: Join the Environment Quest and complete all the steps

Activity Time: 30 minutes

Feedback Questions for Activity 2: (Please type your answers below)

1. What is the title or number of the last step you completed?
2. What problems or challenges did you have completing this activity?
3. What was most fun about the Quest?

4. What would you change to make the Quest more fun?
5. What would help you learn more about the global issue of the Quest?
6. What would make the Quest easier to understand and complete?
7. What are the reasons why someone might want to complete a Quest?
8. Would you complete another Quest in your free time? Why?

Activity 3: Create your own Quest.

Activity Time: 15 minutes

Feedback Questions for Activity 3: (Please type your answers below)

1. What problems or challenges did you have completing this activity?
2. How could we make it more fun to create your own Quest?
3. How could we make it easier to create your own Quest?
4. Why did you pick the global issue you chose for your Quest?
5. What three actions did you choose?
6. Why did you choose these three actions?
7. Why do you think someone might want to create his or her own Quest?
8. Did you enjoy completing a Quest or creating a Quest more? Why?

Activity 4: Read about Youth Guides

Activity Time: 10 minutes

Feedback Questions for Activity 4: (Please type your answers below)

1. Why would you want a Youth Guide to help you on ymex.org?
2. Why do you think someone might want to become a Youth Guide?
3. If you had a Youth Guide to help you, what country would you want them to come from? How often would you want to talk to them? What would want

them to help you with?

4. If you had a Youth Guide to help you, how would you want to communicate with them? What would you use on ymex.org to communicate with your youth guide?
5. Would you prefer that your Youth Guide be someone you meet on ymex.org or someone you already know in real life?

Activity 5: General Questions

Activity Time: 15 minutes

Feedback Questions for Activity 5:

1. What online social networks do you belong to?
2. Would you prefer to join a new social network like ymex.org or have ymex.org become an application you add to a social network you already belong to?
3. Who do you want to communicate with on ymex.org? Do you want to communicate with friends you already know, make new friends in your country, or make new friends outside your country?
4. Would you use ymex.org to meet new people? Why or why not?
5. How can we improve ymex.org to help you meet new people in other countries?
6. Are you already creating media (videos, audio, animation, blogs, etc.)?
7. If you are already creating media, where do you post it online? (YouTube, etc.)

Activity on ymex.org is measured through a points system that displays points on the user's profile. The following is how the five most active profile members are using Youth Media Exchange:

[FaerieGirl](#): 18 years old – Mexico: Joined May 1, 2008. Has 599 points, 6 friends; one of the winners of the World Population Day Media Contest and the Create-A-Quest contest; logs into ymex weekly, submits only her own original work. TakingITGlobal member since Oct 2005. She is a skilled media producer who last year was given the opportunity by MTV Staying Alive to create and publish a vlog about the face of

AIDS in Mexico.

[lapikiorejuda](#); 17 years old – Peru: Joined June 29th, 2008. Has 273 points; Has 4 friends on ymex (one of whom she interacts with by exchanging comments on media); one of the winners of the World Population Day Media Contest; logs into ymex weekly, submits only her own original work. TakingITGlobal member since August 2007. She studies Sociology at University; she is aware of her causes and focuses on them (women's rights; social issues in Peru); a regular blogger in both Spanish & English (9 entries in July). She was one of the participants in the online focus group and offered very substantive feedback.

[kaylarose](#); 14 years old – USA: Joined May 1, 2008. Has 177 points; has submitted only her own original work so far; Not very interactive yet with other members (only has 1 friend); logs in irregularly, mentioned that she wasn't active in the beginning but has become more involved in the last few weeks. TakingITGlobal member since November 2007. Her profile says: "I am a high school student, adept in digital media absorption and creation and passionate and involved in various global issues. Seems like a good fit to me!"

[aknyc3](#); 19 years old – USA: Joined May 1, 2008. Has 275 points; Not very interactive with other members (only has 1 friend). She is a proven leader and activist - since high school has started groups to raise money for good causes. She logs in irregularly, not weekly but frequently. TIG member since April 05. Her latest profile status says: "Organizing a benefit concert and fashion show on ymex". She was hoping to promote events she is creating in NYC on ymex, we encouraged her to create a video or blog about the event and share that on ymex. She uses ymex mostly to share writing and images of her own life experience in interacting with global issues first-hand.

foko; Youth Media Group – Madagascar: Joined July 4, 2008 (in order to submit content to the World Population Day contest of which one of their members won one of the three prizes), This collective has 455 points. Over email communication with the group's administrator, she mentioned: "I think getting the kids to contribute at your community is an excellent way to motivate them so don't worry I will ask for their profile as soon as possible (with 30 bloggers around the country things are a little complicated but we're managing things well). We will opening another workshop in Antsirabe, our fourth town and we're going to be very proud to introduce their contents to the community".

Youth Created Quests

Issue: Disabilities

Step 1: In places all over the world, children with mental or physical disabilities are facing prejudice and discrimination. Want to take a stand? Then do whatever you can!

Step 2: Buff Up that Brain! In order to complete this quest successfully, you gotta know your stuff! Head on over to the Issues tab and click on the 'Stereotypes' page to learn about where discrimination begins.

Step 3: Energize that Inner Entrepreneur! Now that you know a little bit more about the basis of this issue, it's time to tell the world! Be the first to share it! Start a new Tag on 'Disabilities' to allow others to post resources and media as well.

Step 4: Unleash Your Imagination! It's time for YOU to contribute a little something-something! Unleash that inner imagination, and spunk things up by adding original writing (a poem, a short story, an anecdote - anything!). Next, add an original image about stereotypes or disabilities!

Step 5: Share the LOVE! Now that you know more about this issue, get others involved! Start a new group as well as a discussion post to spark matters up. And while you're chitchatting with your fellow members (you'll need to recruit at least one other member to your group), be sure to hit some of these questions:

1. What are some forms of discrimination that you observe in your own community?
2. What are some common disabilities (mental or physical) in your community?
3. Aside from hurting a person's feelings, how else can stereotyping in general be dangerous?
4. From your past experiences, do you believe that the need for people to stereotype others is lessening? Or is it getting worse?
5. Why do you think people discriminate against others in the first place?
6. What can you do as a citizen to stop stereotyping in your neighborhood or region?
7. What are some common stereotypes that you hear about in the media? What biases can you detect?

Step 6: Step Up and Get Out! It's time to get going - physically. Set up a group To-Do list with a few, non-virtual goals in mind. For example, you can begin making a difference by volunteering at your school's Life Skills or Special Ed Class. There are tons of possibilities! At the same time, don't forget to keep adding resources and media! You'll need to add at least one new resource to move on.

Step 7: Dazzle in that Spotlight! Great! You're very nearly done! Now that you've created a tag, a discussion post, and a group (whew, that was a lot!), you need to get noticed! Get your media and your group's media featured and viewed by others.

Issue: Gender Equality

Step 1: People are joining to fight for equality among all the genders and, consequently, equal rights for all. Learn more about this and act now!

Step 2: PREPARE FOR THE QUEST AHEAD! Find other ymex members that share a passion for the topic of gender equality and show they are willing to cooperate for a better world in the future. Add them as friends!

Step 3: GATHER YOUR GEAR! Now that you know other users that are interested in the topic, join the discussion boards and add a new thread about "Gender equality". Write about how it is affecting you and your community as well.

Step 4: START THE JOURNEY. Create your own media or share other media that you find online about gender equality. Maybe you can say how it is affecting your community!

APPENDIX 4: Chart for Quest Steps

Learn More Step 1	
OPTION 1	Tag
OPTION 2	Participate in Discussion
OPTION 3	Favoriting Content
OPTION 4	Post a link

Personalize (localize) It! Step 2	
OPTION 1	Create media on local/personal impact/actions OR Share media on local impact/actions
OPTION 2	I have something to share... skills, experiences

	Individual Networks Step 3	Group Networks Step 4
OPTION 1	Map	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a group & page • Join group • Close group
OPTION 2	Profile	Bypass groups
OPTION 3	Tag	
OPTION 4	Discussion Board	
OPTION 5	Help Wanted	

	If you completed, Step 4, start here... Step 5	Project Summary Step 6	Post Media-in-Progress Step 7	Critique Step 8
OPTION 1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEP 1 Reshare content as a group STEP 2 Determine group roles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEP 1 Specify topic STEP 2 Pick media type 		Get feedback from group
OPTION 2	If you bypassed Step 4, start here... <ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEP 3/1 Determine work plan (user discretion) STEP 4/2 Comment on document progress 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> STEP 3 Use steps 1 & 2 to write project summary 		Get site-wide feedback

Post final media to media-sharing site Step 9	Submit media on ymex.org Step 10	Share widely! Step 11
OPTION 1	Continue the conversation on ymex.org in discussion forums	Enter media in contests (both on ymex.org and external)
OPTION 2	Continue the conversation on ymex.org in suggestions/rating of media	Post on other social networks
	OPTION 3	Share media with offline communities and org's and document on ymex.org

POVERTY QUEST TEXT

Quest 3 - Poverty - What's The Best Way To Give?

1. Initial Prompt: People across the globe are joining the fight against poverty in all different ways. You can too - act now!

STEP 1: PREPARE FOR THE QUEST AHEAD!

Open the [Poverty](http://ymex.org/tags/?tag=poverty) issue page to learn more.

Step 2: GATHER YOUR GEAR

It's time to learn more about the issue! Try to find answers to these three questions:
1. What does poverty look like, both locally and globally?
2. How does humanitarian aid work?
3. What are other ways to help end poverty?
Go to the [discussion boards](http://ymex.org/discuss) to find out what others are saying about how we can help end poverty around the world. Or start the conversation!

STEP 3: START THE JOURNEY

Create your own media or share other media that you find elsewhere on the web showing what is being done to help fight poverty in your own community (your community could be your town, city, state, your country, or even your region). Don't forget to update your profile to include your interests, skills, and experiences on this issue!

STEP 4: FIND FELLOW EXPLORERS

Find others on ymex.org who care about joining the fight to end poverty. You can do this by searching the tags to find profiles of new friends and make the connection!

STEP 5: SET UP CAMP

With the connections you made in the last step, create or join a [Group](http://ymex.org/groups/) about what is being done to help fight poverty. Remember, think globally. The more countries you have represented in your group, the more you have to share! Using your group's name, tag your media from the previous step and any resources you have found about this issue. This way you can see it all on your group page.

STEP 6: DECIDE ON A DIRECTION

Pick a way that people are helping to end global poverty. Then decide what type of media you're going to use to tell the story. With this information, write 1 or 2 sentence summary in your group's conversation canvas that you think sums up your project.

STEP 7: FILL OUT YOUR TRAVELOGUE

Time to take a rest and reflect. On your Group's Conversation Canvas discuss how the first 6 steps of the Quest have been going for you.

STEP 8: MAKE A PLAN

Now it's time to determine roles for each of your group members. Lay the ground work and goals for what you want to accomplish in the Tasks To-Do list on your group page.

STEP 9: SHOW YOUR QUEST PROGRESS

As a team, research further the way you chose to help fight poverty earlier in the quest. Start creating your media to help share what actions are being taken, or how it has helped. When you get your first draft done, post your media to a media-sharing site. Then link to or embed it on ymex.org for others to see! Make sure to tag it as a work-in-progress.

STEP 10: GET DIRECTIONS

Find other individuals or other quests groups, comment on their work, give feedback and suggestions, and hopefully they'll return the favor!

STEP 11: REACH YOUR DESTINATION

Share your finished media with ymex.org! Upload your final media to a media-sharing site (check the [Resources](http://ymex.org/resources/) page to find a few). Then link or embed it on ymex.org. When you add it to ymex.org, post a discussion question you want others to answer about your work.

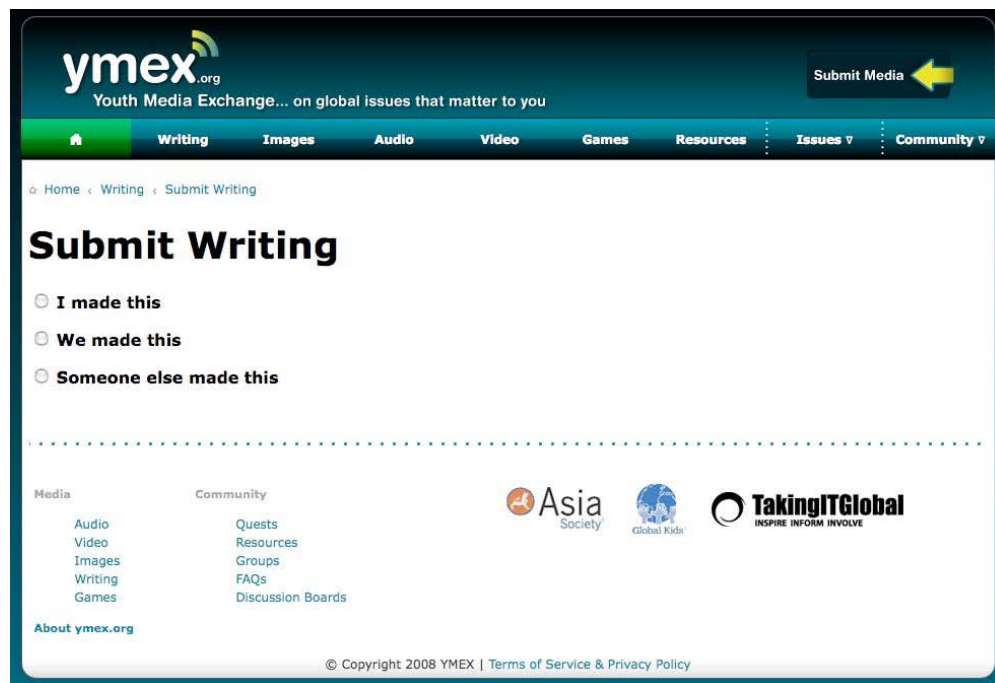
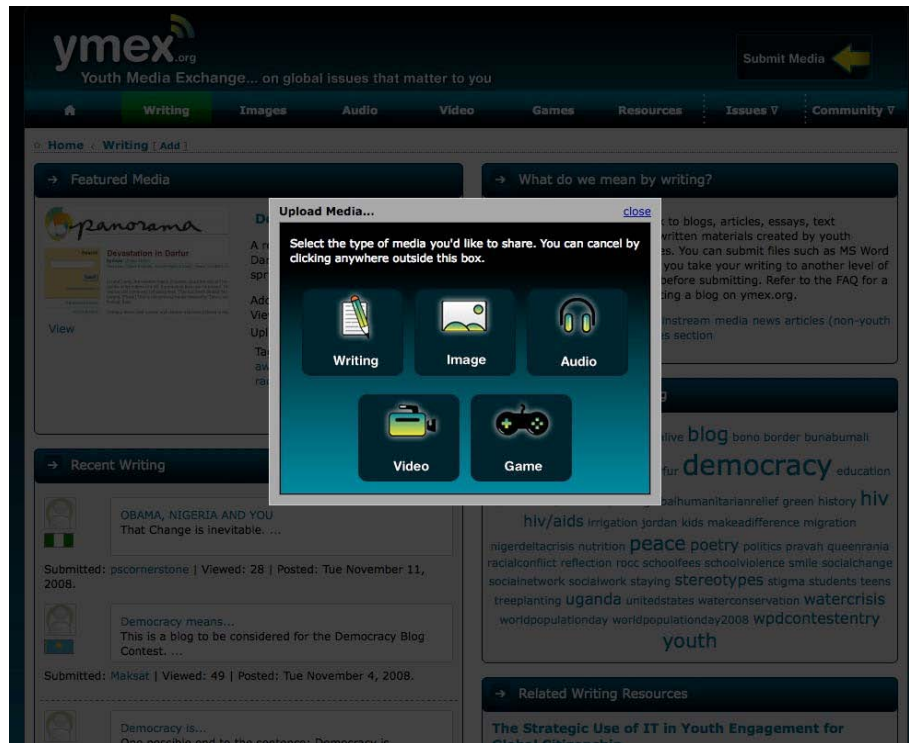
STEP 12: TALK TO FELLOW EXPLORERS

What's next? Continue the conversation about how you can fight poverty on the [discussion boards](http://ymex.org/discuss/)! Be sure to respond to any comments or questions about your media.

STEP 13: TELL THE WORLD

Educate others about how to help end global poverty! Start by sharing your media on other social networks you belong to. Tell the world on your group's Conversation Canvas how each of the steps of the Quest have been for you.

APPENDIX 6: Media Submission Process Screenshot



APPENDIX 7: Select Site Metrics

Site Visits to Youth Media Exchange



Total Visits 72,644

May 1, 2008 - May 31, 2008 9,104
 Jun 1, 2008 - Jun 30, 2008 13,382
 Jul 1, 2008 - Jul 31, 2008 15,184
 Aug 1, 2008 - Aug 31, 2008 15,548
 Sep 1, 2008 - Sep 30, 2008 14,745
 Oct 1, 2008 - Oct 31, 2008 3,534
 Nov 1, 2008 - Nov 18, 2008 1,147

Return Site Visits to Youth Media Exchange from May 1, 2008 to November 18, 2008

Number of Visits	Visits	Percentage of all visitors
1 times	65,530.00	90.21%
2 times	3,550.00	4.89%
3 times	807.00	1.11%
4 times	355.00	0.49%
5 times	207.00	0.28%
6 times	136.00	0.19%
7 times	103.00	0.14%
8 times	81.00	0.11%
9-14 times	300.00	0.41%
15-25 times	279.00	0.38%
26-50 times	284.00	0.39%
51-100 times	272.00	0.37%
101-200 times	205.00	0.28%
201+ times	532.00	0.73%

APPENDIX 8: Member Email Sample

Hey ymex.org Members!
We've got some exciting news and updates for you...

ymex.org ANNOUNCES THE DEMOCRACY BLOG CONTEST!

A little bit of background

TakingITGlobal and Youth Media Exchange have recently teamed up with the US State Department, NBC Universal, NYU, and others on the Democracy Video Challenge to encourage young people like yourself to create a short video about what Democracy means to you. You can learn more about this exciting opportunity in the Youth Contest section on the Discussion Boards.

What is the contest?

Alongside the Democracy Video Challenge, ymex.org is kicking off the Democracy Blog Contest. All ymex members are eligible. The rules are simple: write a blog finishing the sentence, "Democracy is..." on the blogging website of your choice (TIGblogs, blogger.com, etc.) and then submit it ymex.org.

How do I enter?

All blogs submitted by **October 26th, 2008 12pmGMT** that address the topic and are tagged with "democracy" will be automatically entered into the contest.

Who wins & what is the prize?

The winners will be chosen by the ymex team as well as by the ymex community based on global ratings and number of views - so get your submissions in as soon as possible to get more views! \$100 Amazon.com gift certificates will go to the two winning submissions. The winning blogs and the members who wrote them will be featured on ymex.org and will add youth voices to the global discussion on democracy!

If you're inspired in the process, maybe your next step will be creating a video for the Democracy Video Challenge as well! (<http://www.youtube.com/democracychallenge>)

ymex LAUNCHES A REDESIGN!

Just today we've launched a new design across the site! With this change, the website will be easier to use, navigate and view no matter which web browser you're using.

You'll notice we've done away with the Mashups section but you can still submit your mashups to the section where they best fit: images, video, or audio (most likely!) And don't forget to tag it with "mashups" as well.

We've put the Resources section in the header to make it more accessible. This is a great place to find websites, online tools, and free software for creating & sharing media AND to learn more about global issues.


MEMBER-CREATED QUESTS in ACTION!

There are now three member-created quests available for the entire ymex community. Get started on the Disabilities, International Year of Languages, or Gender Equality quest today to find other ymex members who share your interest and to take action on an issue that matters to you.

Try creating your own quest by filling in the Create-A-Quest Submission Form (<http://ymex.org/quests/>). Be original, be creative, get involved!


ANY QUESTIONS or SUGGESTIONS are WELCOME! Write to us at memberservices@ymex.org
BUGS or TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES? Write to us at broken@ymex.org

JOIN US ON the Youth Media Exchange FACEBOOK FAN PAGE :) (<http://www.tigurl.org/ymexfb>)


Submit Media

[Home](#) > [Tags](#) > [languages](#)


→ Tag Information: LANGUAGES



In 2007, the United Nations General Assembly declared 2008 the International Year of Languages to "unite in diversity and promote global understanding". It is not hard to take things for granted - especially when they seem to have been around forever. However, languages cannot be taken for granted, and the fact that the General Assembly decided to devote a year to them supports this claim. This page was mainly created for the completion of the IYoL Quest, but anyone who is interested in learning about the presence of linguistic issues in politics and everyday life is encouraged to consult the resources that are available here. Image by: Mariel GM
[International Year of Languages](#)

→ Items Tagged With LANGUAGES (1)

Members (1)



My name is Lillian, and I'm 15. I was born in the United States and my parents are American. I've also lived in Canada, England (when I was about...

[Lillian](#) | Joined: May 1, 2008 | Last Seen: September 26, 2008

→ Suggested Discussion

Culture \ˈkəl-cher\: the integrated pattern of human knowledge, belief, and behavior that depends upon the capacity for learning and transmitting knowledge to succeeding generations; the characteristic features of everyday existence (as diversions or a way of life) shared by people in a place or time (Merriam-Webster).

[Culture](#)

→ Related Resources

Resource #3 for IYoL Quest - Why languages -do- matter

This is a slideshow made to help YMEX members in the completion of the International Year of Languages Quest, and to give a hint to any interested soul out there on why languages are important in... [^]

61 views since September 20, 2008



Youth Media Exchange Advisor Meeting
Summary Report

Meeting Date: September 26th, 2008

ATTENDEES:

Advisors

Akili Lee - Program Director, Digital Youth Network

danah boyd - PhD Candidate at the School of Information, UC Berkeley and Fellow at Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet and Society

Erin Reilly - Research Director, Project New Media Literacies

Deen Freelon - Graduate Student (on behalf of **Lance Bennett**)- Director, Center for Communication and Civic Engagement, University of Washington

ymex.org Team

Jennifer Corriero - Executive Director and Co-Founder, TakingITGlobal

Natalie Rodic - Project Coordinator and Community Manager, TakingITGlobal

Barry Joseph - Online Leadership Director, Global Kids, Inc.

Shawna Rosenzweig - Online Leadership Program Associate, Online Trainer, Global Kids, Inc.

Alexis Menten - Senior Program Associate, Education, Asia Society

OBJECTIVES:

1. Briefly give an up-to-date status report on the ymex.org and briefly recap the findings from the ymex Evaluation
2. Recent findings, updates and questions pertinent to Advisors' research and work on digital media and online social networks
3. Advisor's suggestions on how ymex can be more useful in moving forward and planning for a Phase II of Youth Media Exchange

MEETING HIGHLIGHTS:

Akili Lee

- ❖ How are we leveraging other groups and communities?
- ❖ More intentional targeting of adults who bring youth in the space and who are setting expectations
 - They could be used to build a sense of community and connecting more
- ❖ More transparency/visibility of the points system
 - even on the home page
 - could be more obviously connected to rewards
- ❖ Go heavier on the new media literacies angle by looking at:
 - How much of the submitted content is 3rd party and how much of it is created by members & then build on the activity that is most popular.
 - Ask members to be more explicit on *why* they shared and on *commenting*
- ❖ Break down the rating system a bit more [be more clear on what members are rating and why]
- ❖ Consider how a more general group who isn't connected to new media literacies would respond to it

danah boyd

- ❖ Is our strategy that we want to find super engaged media superstars or is there a way to step people through and have layers of participation without having to be those superstars?
- ❖ Not sure the points system is the best [motivation] system for ymex
 - she suggests we need to do manual connection-making (modeled on Flickr founder's efforts in the beginning), but wait until we see baseline practices

Deen Freelon

- ❖ Different dynamics of what is going on is really interesting, helps the field
- ❖ Interested to see what we come up with - how does it relate to a more regional approach

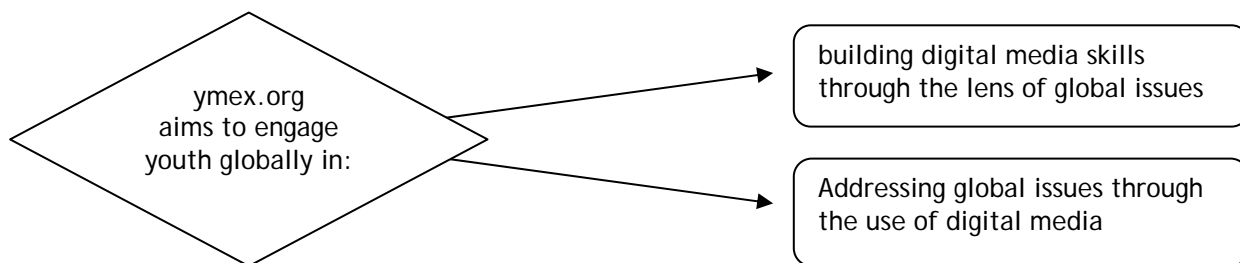
Erin Reilly

- ❖ How can we build on collaboration among communities?
- ❖ Mentorship system [Youth Guides and Explorers] as a key characteristic of learning in a participatory culture [crucial component]
 - How do we plan to get that informal mentorship to happen? To get youth voices to be the teacher?
- ❖ *How* users are **creating, circulating, connecting and collaborating** together?
 - New users - do they start with circulating?
 - Do they start with bringing in third party material - shaping story across media platforms?
 - Then, what drives them to become a creator?
 - What tools and motivations allow them to start collaborating with each other
- ❖ Create more flexibility with quests (as they have been tough for even the Project NML group to get through)
 - Members would like to be able to see what and where they're going so quests should be more transparent

- ❖ Making connections for potential collaboration amongst members
 - If a member shares a video on climate change they can see links on *what other members* uploaded (content on similar issues on same page)
 - This might be a way for people to start communicating more [now you only see other submissions but not *who* made the submission; this is an important change to make]
- ❖ The home page should speak to identity of users - i.e. those focused on global warming
- ❖ In the next phase
 - Look back at design/layout & consider how we can highlight or shift the focus to learning to create digital media
- ❖ Seems that most promotion has focused on issues, have we focused on the skill aspect?
 - Do we want to be able to attract people who want to learn more about digital media, in building tech and media skills? Then the stress needs to be more on media production
- ❖ Test the website in a usability lab
 - What do people click first? We should actually track what they're clicking

FUTURE DIRECTIONS:

Should we continue to pursue a dual focus or prioritize a focus on one of our aims?



1. Phase I of ymex attempted a dual approach to engaging youth but we lost the focus on building digital media skills. In Phase II, we will shift the focus back towards building digital media skills through the lens of global issues.
2. Step up the focus on how youth are **creating, circulating, connecting and collaborating**.
As well as add the technology that will facilitate the ability to monitor these processes
3. Keep experimenting with Quests based on user feedback. Possibly test on TakingITGlobal as well.
4. Phase II would like to develop different types of partnerships in order to expand the scope and reach of the outcomes as well as motivate and increase engagement.