

TRUST CHALLENGE

BUILDING TRUST IN CONNECTED LEARNING ENVIRONMENTS



Trust Challenge Awards \$1.2M to Digital Projects Building Trust in Online Learning Environments

AUSTIN, TX – March 10, 2015 – Thirteen projects have been awarded a total of \$1.2 million, as part of the Digital Media and Learning Competition’s “Trust Challenge,” to foster trust in online learning environments. Tech developers, youth-serving institutions, collaborative networks, school systems, and universities will develop innovative digital badge systems, data management platforms, digital learning environments, online learning content and related digital tools to promote trust in connected learning experiences.

The awards were announced today by educational innovator Richard Culatta, acting director of the U.S. Department of Education’s Office of Educational Technology, at the South by Southwest EDU Conference. The Trust Challenge is supported by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and administered by HASTAC, an alliance of more than 14,000 humanists, artists, scientists, and technologists working together to change the future of learning.

“The Internet and social media represent incredible opportunities to learn, but solutions to ensure youth feel safe in online spaces and are confident their online data are used in their best interest have not kept pace,” said Connie Yowell, Director of Education at the MacArthur Foundation. “This competition has been designed to surface the most promising approaches to help foster trust amongst youth, their parents, mentors and teachers in using the online world for learning. Winning projects include tools to provide greater transparency — in a straightforward, easy-to-understand way — into who can see young people’s data, to programs that foster greater civility and respect amongst users in online spaces. Trust, privacy, and safety are critical to learning in an open, online world, and the winners of the Trust Challenge will help us reach this vision.”

Applicants from 22 countries tackled some of the thorniest issues around trust, privacy, and safety that are critical to learning in an open online world: How can learners exercise control over who sees and uses their data? What tools are needed need to navigate, collaborate, and learn online with confidence? What solutions will foster greater civility and respect in online learning environments?

Winning projects, evaluated by a panel of interdisciplinary thought leaders, were selected for their ability to advance trust, privacy, and equity in the context of the core values of connected learning, an approach to education in the 21st century that takes advantage of today’s abundance of information and social connection. The projects also tackle issues of access, management of data, and technical interoperability. Winners will receive between \$35,000 and \$150,000 each to develop their projects over the course of a year. They are:

Building Connected Credentials

Hive NYC Learning Network, Mozilla Foundation

New York City, New York

A digital badge system that connects public school teachers, after-school educators, and youth to bridge informal and formal learning networks and expand safe and trusted learning opportunities.



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Code, Compose, Collaborate

*Parsons The New School for Design
New York City, New York*

A learning environment leveraging open-source hardware and software and the safe and neutral mediums of sound and computation to teach youth programming basics and online issues of collaboration, ownership, privacy, and sharing.

Digital Literacy Toolkit

*Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University
Cambridge, Massachusetts*

An online toolkit that provides digital literacy tools and educational resources to build trust amongst learners, family members, and educators in connected learning environments.

Global Gateway: Building Trust Through Peer Review

*VIF International Education
Chapel Hill, North Carolina*

A scalable digital badge system that moves learning artifacts like lesson plans through a graduated system of self, peer, and expert validation.

Gooru Trust Lab

*Gooru
Palo Alto, California*

An online learning community created in partnership with a local school district that builds on the Gooru platform to foster trust and safety, digital citizenship, and data privacy for youth.

MediaBreaker Learning Pathways

*The LAMP (Learning About Multimedia Project)
New York City, New York*

An online video editing and remixing platform and learning environment that provides youth opportunities to re-democratize and de-corporatize their online environments.

Open Badge Passport

*ADPIOS / Badge Europe!
France*

A technical infrastructure that establishes and nurtures networks of trust by enabling the seamless sending, receipt, organization, display, and search of digital badges in support of learning, employment, social inclusion, and citizenship.

OurNet: Building trusted network infrastructures for youth

*Eyebeam Atelier
New York City, New York*

Teaches middle school students a basic understanding of the key components of network infrastructure by enabling students to develop their own private internal networks that are independent of the Internet.

Resilience Network: Addressing Anti-Feminist Violence Online

*Arizona State University
Tempe, Arizona*

A digital space that bundles open access resources, best practices, and virtual events that foster trust, reduce harm, and support those who combat the harassment of women, girls, and feminists online.

RyeCatcher Family Trust Network

*RyeCatcher Education PBC
New York City, New York*

A communications platform for parents, families, schools, and related service providers that enables the sharing of data in a safe, secure, transparent, and auditable environment.

In addition to the selection by judges, all finalists were subject to an online public vote. The three finalists that received the most votes were awarded People's Choice Awards of \$5,000 each to be used for approved technology purchases for their respective organizations. The People's Choice Award winners are "Education through Global Engagement Mobile App," "Tools for Managing Learning Through Internships" and "Parents Guide to Media and Technology."

The Trust Challenge is a response to a call to action issued in the 2014 Aspen Task Force Report "Learner at the Center of a Networked World," which sought innovations and solutions that enable people to pursue learning experiences online in an environment that is safe and private.

"Mainstream narratives around trust online often turn on fear. This unwittingly undermines the potential for learning online and blocking access to valuable learning resources," said David Theo Goldberg, director of the University of California Humanities Research Institute and HASTAC co-founder. "These winning projects will help in developing a productive counter-narrative drawing on the underlying understanding of connected learning. They will create scalable, innovative exemplars to foster trust at the heart of the expansive technological ingenuity in support of creative learning environments, platforms, and practices."

Cathy N. Davidson, HASTAC co-founder and director of the Futures Initiative at the Graduate Center CUNY, added: "Trust requires both better tools and better literacy. The tremendous opportunities for learning online are compromised any time our data is misused, stolen, or misrepresented. These winners will add to our digital trust tool kit."

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Useful Links

Trust Challenge: Building Trust in Connected Learning Environments: dmlcompetition.net

MacArthur Foundation Digital Media & Learning Initiative: macfound.org/programs/learning/

HASTAC: hastac.org

About the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation

The MacArthur Foundation supports creative people and effective institutions committed to building a more just, verdant, and peaceful world. In addition to selecting the MacArthur Fellows, the Foundation works to defend human rights, advance global conservation and security, make cities better places, and understand how technology is affecting children and society. More information is at macfound.org.

About HASTAC

HASTAC (Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Alliance and Collaboratory; "haystack") is an open alliance of more than 14,000 humanists, artists, social scientists, scientists and technologists working together to change the way we teach and learn. Since 2002, HASTAC has served as a community of connection where members share news, tools, research, insights, and projects to promote engaged learning for a global society. Issues of access and equality are as important to HASTAC's mission as the latest technological innovations; creative contribution is as important as critical thinking.