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Horror Stories: Informatics, Data and the Collaborative Film

Jillian McDonald, Dyson College of Arts and Sciences
Pace University

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Thinkfinity Interim Report

Title of the Project *Horror Stories*: Informatics, Data, and the Collaborative Film

Cornerstone #3

Principal Investigators Names along with their School/College Jillian McDonald, Dyson College

Date November 14, 2009

Mid-Project Reports - Please submit the following:

Please outline your original goals.

My original goals in this project were to create a new artwork titled *Horror Stories* and present it publicly on a dedicated URL as well as to identify galleries and new media festivals that may feature this work. Secondary objectives are to develop the artwork's interface and aesthetic appearance, work with a student programmer and student video editor, research open source software for online video content contributions, and participate in a new media artist's residency in Banff for the purpose of producing and testing this artwork amidst a built-in audience of world renowned creative professionals.

I anticipate the major outcome to be a completed artwork which has two iterations: a participation-based web artwork and an interactive gallery installation. Additionally I expect to publish an information brochure which includes a piece of critical writing. An anticipated secondary outcome is at least one public venue to exhibit the work publicly.

The development of this project will improve the experiences of students in my future video, animation, and web design classes who are invited to submit content to the database. Film studies students and aficionados alike may find themselves instrumental in suggesting appropriate horror genre parameters and making recommendations based on their burgeoning knowledge. Pupils may wish to incorporate the project into their coursework, bringing their own research into the artwork. Working both behind and in front of the camera, they are invited to create film sequences in fulfillment of both class assignments and the *Horror Stories* motifs. They will gain knowledge of web-based and interactive artwork by encountering and participating in this project. I expect students hired as assistants particularly will, through their involvement, find reinforcement of invaluable skills such as time management and problem-solving as we move towards deadlines and work through obstacles. The experience of working in a studio environment with a practicing professional artist affords them "real world" experience comparable to an internship, and enhances both the students' resumé and their expertise. Credited for their work, they may gain confidence in pursuing future employment opportunities in their fields.

What progress have you made towards your original goals on your project to date?

To date, I have hired two key students from Fine Arts and CSIS: to create and compress video content for the project; and to program the database and integrate this with the

visual interface. I have prepared and written short scenes for one student to shoot; collected and shot initial film clips in Sweden, California, North Carolina, and Arizona while traveling for other research projects; digitize and encoded video clips for online presentation; designed a web-based interface; researched open source video and audio editing systems for online participants; and been accepted as an artist in residence this coming March at the prestigious and international Banff Center for the Arts in Canada where I will continue to edit, shoot, and fine tune this project. The student I hired as a computer programmer on the project has not fulfilled his obligations and met deadlines, but we are in communication and I anticipate him catching up in the coming weeks.

Has your project impacted students? If so, how many?

Thus far my project has affected two students, as I am on sabbatical and working at a distance with only two (paid) students on development. When the project is further developed and ready for testing I plan to send a call for videos to other Fine Arts students. Once the project has been completed, I will send a general announcement and invite to Pace community to contribute created video clips.

Has your project impacted other faculty members? If so, how many?

My project has not, as yet, affected other faculty members.

What are your next steps?

My next step is to attend a focused artist's residency in Banff in order to create sound and more video, as well as test and fine tune the interface and programming on the project. When the project is near completion in March, and prior to public launching I will begin testing with Pace students, seeking video clips from online audiences, and producing an educational brochure which contextualizes the work within the broader scope of my artistic practice.