

# 2008 Academic Technology Grant Final Report Web 2.0 Digital Media Project

*New England Ethnic Newswire / Center on Media and Society*

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**Funding Period:** Spring 2007-Spring 2008

**Project Title:** Web 2.0 Digital Media Project at Center on Media and Society/New England Ethnic Newswire, McCormack Graduate School of Policy Studies

**Principal Investigator and Participants:**

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**Project Summary:**

Through the use of online Web 2.0 technologies the *New England Ethnic Newswire's Digital Media* project developed innovative teaching strategies that focus on students' learning outcomes through experiential learning and community-based projects.

This grant allowed us to provide digital equipment giving students an opportunity to have hands-on experience with digital equipment developing of 21st-century literacies and technical skills, working collaboratively to develop multimedia projects as part of their portfolio of work.

In addition, we were exploring the use of interactive Web 2.0 technologies to create mashups of geospatial information with public databases to better understand the needs of our communities.

The experience gained was leveraged for external funding through a variety of grant and foundation sources. Thanks in part to this technical support, our team was able to win a \$30,000 McCormick Tribune Foundation award in support of the New England Ethnic Newswire ([www.go-NEWz.com](http://www.go-NEWz.com)) and establish a relationship with the new Center for Future Civic Media at MIT.

The New England Ethnic Newswire team, headed now by Frank Herron as Editor in Chief, was working closely with the Dorchester Historical Society developing a student-generated interactive walking tour of Everett Square neighborhood in Dorchester, MA.

Using Web 2.0 mapping technologies we also created a series of maps that show where the stories are based, where NEWz consumers and contributors are based, and where the ethnic media of New England are located.

**Project Timeline:**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Completed</b>
June '07	Project Begins	May 1, '08
June '07	Advertise and hire graduate assistant	June '07
July '07	Train assistant in the use of the web site functionality and Content Management System	July '07
July '07	Purchase digital equipment: cameras, recorders, and GPS devices; inventory equipment	Aug. '07
Aug. '07	Create tutorials and training materials	Sept. '07
Sept. '07	Fall 2007 Semester: Train students from ASAMST390 class (Prof. P. Kiang) in the use of digital equipment and Web 2.0 technologies	Dec. '07
Oct. '07	Coach students in small group environment throughout the Fall semester	Dec. '07
Oct. '07	Use Google Docs to create databases, create interactive maps with students using Google Maps	Dec. '07
Nov. '07	Create tutorials on journalistic uses of digital media and equipment	Dec. '07
Dec. 15, '07	Preparation of Interim Report	Dec. 15, '07
Jan. '08	Revise course as needed	Jan. '08
Jan. '08	Web developer hired to migrate NEWz website to Drupal platform as necessary for overall success of the project's mission	June '08
Feb. '08	Spring 2008 Semester: students enrolled into COMSTU 490 work on beta testing of new website	May '08
Mar. '08	Initiate a project with Dorchester Historical Society	May '08
Mar. '08	Create interactive walking tour of Everett Square neighborhood for Dorchester Historical Society	May '08
June '07	Project Ends	May '08
	<b>Final Report</b>	<b>June '08</b>

## **Project Goals and Deliverables:**

The Academic Technology grant enabled us to purchase global positioning system (GPS) devices, digital recording equipment and photo cameras to develop rich Web 2.0 applications with Google Docs and Maps.

Also, this grant enabled us to hire IT consultant (Charlotte Corbett) and instructional designer and expert in innovative educational technologies (Irene Yukhananov), to work with this equipment and train students from Communication, American and Asian Studies classes to create original maps of their neighborhoods, and collect valuable information of community resources of ethnic communities of the Greater Boston Metro area.

This grant also enabled the Center on Media and Society to start designing and creating a new web platform for the New England Ethnic Newswire project. At the end of January 2008 the old NE Ethnic Newswire website was migrated to a new Drupal platform ([www.ethnicnewz.org](http://www.ethnicnewz.org)). Web developer Richard Hood has been hired to implement this migration, and the balance of the grant went toward finalizing that process.

This new site provides a cross-ethnic platform that serves as a source of news for ethnic-media professionals and other visitors throughout New England and offers a one-stop platform to display some of the best journalistic work being produced by any of dozens of ethnic-media outlets in the region. NEWz team works closely with media organizations that serve African-American, Hispanic, Portuguese, Brazilian, Chinese, Korean, Armenian, Irish, Polish and Jewish (among others) communities.

**Challenges and Outcomes:**

We found that we needed less money for equipment and more money to hire tech professionals, specifically a web developer familiar with the Drupal Content Management Systems platform.

The final \$4,500 of the grant was allocated to migrate the NEWz website to the more robust Drupal platform. The Drupal platform is positioned to better support community-centered applications and also allows user-generated content to be easily published online. The new Drupal website now has new Web 2.0 functionality: more mapping, photos, videos, and also “video postcards” and podcasts.

The Newz also won in January 2008 new grants from the Blue Cross Blue Shield Foundation of Massachusetts and MetroWest Health Foundation to hire a full time health reporter who will push a flow of medical and health stories into the local ethnic media, in four languages. The reporter, Eduardo DeOliveira, also will create an “Ask the Doctor” column and do outreach to community groups and health providers about how to connect medical care with hard-to-reach ethnic populations.

The EDUCAUSE Teaching and Learning Community voted a development of 21st-century literacies among students and faculty (information, digital, and visual) as one of the top Teaching and Learning Challenges for the 2009 year. The Web 2.0 Digital Media project piloted on the UMB campus in 2007-2008 proved to be a valuable experience. This project demonstrated that a majority of undergraduate students still lack important skills needed to be successful in their future careers.

In the future the NEWz team plans to actively use digital equipment to further enhance a website with interactive features such as Places, Sounds and Sites.

**Project Budget (Revised):**

<b>Qty.</b>	<b>Item Description</b>	<b>Relates to Grant</b>	<b>Total</b>
2	Digital Voice Recorder/microphone	Taping interviews and creation of podcasts	\$125.73
2	Professional GPS Mini -Tracker	Locating precise locations of pictures in order to create interactive, rich media maps	\$207.43
2	2-Year Warranty on Camera		\$55.98
2	Olympus Stylus 750 Camera	Taking photographs of events, people and places post on the website and be embedded into maps	\$392.39
2	Olympus USB 200 media reader	Creating Maps	\$36.96
2	2 GB USB flash drives	Transferring data	\$40.00
2	Euro camera bags	Equipment protection	\$24.52
2	1 GB Add Picture card Type H	Mapping	\$69.90
<b>Web Development</b>			
	Migration of NEWz Web site and databases to a new web 2.0 Drupal platform		\$4,463.00
<b>Staffing</b>		<b>Per Month</b>	<b>Total</b>
10	Monthly Pay for Mapping Consultant to May 17, 2008	400.00	4,000.00
5	Monthly Pay for Web Consultant to Jan. 20, 2008	500.00	2,500.00
			<b>Total: \$ 12,000.00</b>