

## 2011-2012 Grant Proposals

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Heather Brodie Perry & Jennifer Macauley  
"Teaching Information Literacy Through Online Gaming"  
Classroom Innovation Grant

### *Project Description:*

Information Literacy has been and continues to be a critical topic on college campuses. With immediate access to an ever-increasing stream of resources with vast variations in legitimacy and value, the college student may find himself or herself so overwhelmed with irrelevant information that their research becomes an insurmountably daunting task. Educators' assumptions regarding Millennials' are often sadly misinformed.

It is tempting to believe that since the current crop of college students were born "into the Internet" they are innately equipped with the tools and techniques necessary to traverse the new digital information landscape. Unfortunately, this is simply not the case. College and university libraries must be prepared to educate their patrons on the various pitfalls that await them in their research and inform the community in the best practices in searching and information retrieval, abiding by academic honesty and avoiding plagiarism, and organizing and presenting references.

Research has shown that using online games to engage students can have true benefits. Such games can also raise overall interest in information and digital literacy in general and prompt students and faculty to think about new ways in which the Library can serve and support them in their academic goals. Studies have also shown that persons at play learn better than those that are bored or "tuned-out". Such pedagogical techniques can and should be utilized to teach students skills that will last them their academic career and beyond. In a world increasingly comprised of bits of information, there is no better time to become information literate!

The Library is requesting \$1,250 to fund a student employee during Summer .The student will work in close collaboration with the Library staff to code a Flash-based, interactive online games which have been developed in accordance with Information Literacy guidelines as delineated by the ACRL. While the concept of this project was designed by Kevin Lague, he is on to other opportunities.

Heather Brodie Perry and Jennifer Macaulay will be supervising the student. Heather will provide ongoing supervision of the student, and will utilize her expertise in Information Literacy and Bibliographic instruction to guide the design of the games. Jennifer Macaulay will provide infrastructure and technical support. After the student has completed the coding and the game is launched, there will be a period of review, observation, and assessment to determine the efficacy of the game as well as quantify the impact the game has had on Library patronage.

Brief rundown of the game itself: an "arcade/action" point-and-click style game that tests a student's understanding of Boolean operators, expanding and narrowing searches in a variety of scenarios (e.g. Google, EBSCOhost databases, traditional library catalogs)

We plan to focus on one primary game, but if time permits, two other possibilities have been designed and will be developed.

### *Benefits:*

The benefits to the Stonehill Community are multiple, broad, and potentially ongoing. The game will be available to all Stonehill students indefinitely, until it falls into contextual or technological obsolescence. That said, the game could be updated in the future as better technology becomes available or information literacy standards change. Currently, the techniques and skills that will comprise the content of the game is taught by individual Librarians to classes of some 20 or 30 students at a time. The game will be invaluable as fun and accessible resources that can be referred to again and again, independent of Library hours or the availability of Reference Librarians.

If the game proves effectual and garner enough interest, they may potentially serve as a form of 'advertising' for the College. Often times, institutions with limited resources piggyback on the accomplishments of others in their quest to provide their students with adequate and engaging content. While we certainly cannot prevent such institutions from linking to Stonehill content, we can use this to our advantage to further promote the Stonehill brand.

Obviously, the student himself will benefit greatly from increased hands-on experience in an area in which he is very interested. He will also benefit financially from having gainful employment during the summer months while he is not taking classes.

Hopefully this will prove to be only the first of many successful collaborations between the Computer Science Department and the Library.

*Timeline:*

The student will begin with an overview of the goals of the Information Literacy objectives, and a brief tutorial on use of the varied library resources.

He will sample examples of bibliogames that have been designed by other academic libraries. He will see game storyboard, and discuss where we want to go in the creation of the game.

The bulk of his time will be spent in the coding of the game. He will be supervised by Heather Brodie Perry, and she will provide oversight and assistance where needed.

*Budget:*

1,250 will go to hiring the student. \$12 per hour 10 hours a week for 10 weeks