

## **Call for Working Group Members: Evaluating Creative Production in Digital Environments**

Social media have dramatically popularized practices of evaluation, especially of cultural products and expressions. We are able to rate and “like” pretty much any shared content on social networking sites, from music to blogs, videos to news reports. Artists are developing reputations and careers now through a complex blend of online social reputation and distribution platforms and more longstanding forms of market and professional evaluation.

We are seeking researchers to participate in a working group that will collectively chart this new terrain. Selected researchers will receive a stipend and support to participate in a set of working meetings in the coming academic year. The aim of the working group will be to produce an edited volume that will define the landscape of contemporary work on how the evaluation of creative production is being transformed in the digital era. The working group is funded by, and will contribute to the larger initiative focusing on digital media and learning sponsored by the Digital Media and Learning Research Hub (<http://dmlcentral.net>) at the University of California, Irvine and supported by the MacArthur Foundation.

The Working Group on Evaluating Creative Production in Digital Environments seeks researchers who strive to understand and examine the emergence of new or alternative modes of evaluation in digitally enabled or displayed creative practices including fine arts, literature, digital storytelling, films, documentaries, performances, animation, digital arts, and gaming. The goal of this Working Group is to explore the implications and methods of new or alternative evaluating mechanisms in the digital environment, such as competitions, contests, rating, ranking, “liking,” digital badge rewards, and open critiquing and feedback. In doing so, we will be addressing a variety of questions. These include:

- What are the predominant and emerging practices related to the gaining of value and/or the managing of reputations linked to creative works in digital media environments?
- What is at stake in the evaluation of creative works in digital environments?
- How can “liking” practices on social networking sites be conceptualized as a form of evaluation?
- Who and what determine the value of the arts in the digital environments?
- What are the alternative forms of evaluation, and how do they impact aesthetic tastes?
- How do the politics of aesthetic taste and subjectivities in the judgment of creativity intersect with the market-driven digital economy?
- Can artistic evaluation taking place in digital environments facilitate learning?

The Working Group will be

- 1) Examining the new modes of evaluation tools on the digital media/social media environments, such as contests, competitions, ranking, and ratings;

- 2) Understanding the differences between digital evaluations taking place in traditional educational/learning settings vs. non-traditional, interest-driven learning environments;
- 3) Investigating criteria/assessment for evaluations of artistic works and aesthetic tastes;
- 4) Questioning what is at stake as digital/social media environments play a role in the evaluation of creative works;
- 5) Exploring the benefits and potential shortcomings/dangers of the new era of evaluations of creative productions in the digital media environments.

This Working Group is particularly interested in proposals that focus on “learning” aspects that are rewarded with badges, to be aligned with the 2012 Digital Media and Learning’s theme on “Badges for Lifelong Learning,” but other relevant considerations and contributions are welcome as well.

The members of working group will be required to attend at least 2 or 3 meetings throughout the year 2012-2013 to discuss, exchange research ideas, and receive updates on each others’ research progress, as well as share challenges and shortcomings. The ultimate goal for the members is to each produce a chapter for a co-produced book in the making.

During this year, the members of the work group will be asked to each prepare a research presentation of about 10-20 min. Discussions and feedback will follow. In addition to meetings, further discussion will continue via Skype, or email, as needed throughout the year. Participation of scholars who are abroad is welcome and will join via Skype.

To be considered, please send a 350-word abstract of your research proposal and a short bio to:

Principal Investigator:  
H. Cecilia Suhr  
[suhrhc@muohio.edu](mailto:suhrhc@muohio.edu)

The Working Group is funded by a grant award from the Digital Media and Learning Research Competition (<http://dmlcompetition.net>). Selected participants will receive an honorarium of \$1000 each.

Deadline: June 20<sup>th</sup>  
Notifications: July 20<sup>th</sup>  
Meeting Dates and Locations: TBA