



MEDIA IMPACT
2016 FESTIVAL

Since 2014, Media Impact Funders has been showcasing the work of producers dedicated to creating documentaries in the public interest through our annual Media Impact Festival. This year, we are celebrating the power of interactive technologies to deepen the relationship between news and documentary projects and their audiences. Our 2016 selections span a range of interactive techniques, including virtual reality, participatory reporting, physical installations and personalized digital experiences.

Congratulations to the teams who produced this year's selected projects:

- **Across the Line**
- **The Counted**
- **Do Not Track**
- **Hollow**
- **Question Bridge**

A signature goal for our festival is to illuminate creative engagement strategies invented by producers and outreach teams. We hope to demonstrate fresh ways for funders and makers to connect users and influencers with pressing social issues. See the case studies for each project to learn more about the selected teams' goals, lessons learned and outcomes.

Throughout the year, we will be hosting face-to-face and online conversations with our festival teams in order to spread knowledge about how such projects can help fulfill philanthropic goals. Keep an eye on our events section for more details: mediainpactfunders.org/category/events.

Many thanks to this year's judges:

Kathy Im, MacArthur Foundation (*Festival chair*)

Hussain Currimbhoy, Sundance Film Festival

Andrew de Vigal, Agora Journalism Center

Ingrid Kopp, TFI Interactive

David Mascarina, Annenberg Foundation

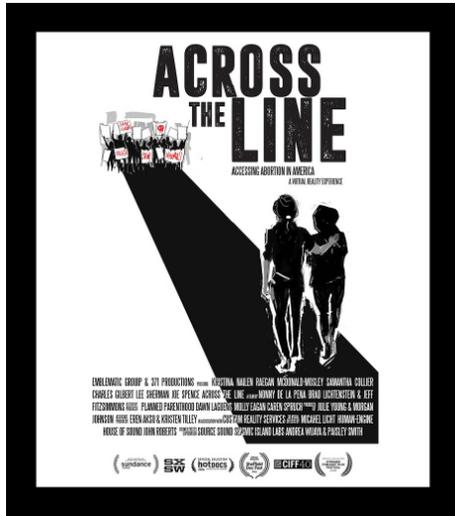
Andrea Nemtin, Inspirit Foundation

Debika Shome, TCC Group

Kim Spencer, KCETLink Media Group

Sarah Wolozin, MIT OpenDocLab

We hope you'll share these case studies with your network. For digital versions, visit: mediainpactfunders.org/festival.



CASE STUDY

ACROSS THE LINE

Across the Line (AcrossTheLineVR.com) is an immersive virtual reality experience that puts the audience on the scene as anti-abortion extremists try to intimidate patients who seek sexual and reproductive health care. Using documentary 360° video footage and computer generated imaging (CGI), paired with a montage of real audio recording of actual protesters, viewers gain an intimate knowledge of the harassment outside and compassion inside health centers across the country. The film is a powerful hybrid documentary-fiction depiction of the gauntlet that many abortion providers, health center staff, and patients must walk on a typical day in America.

The project is currently shown on the HTC Vive walk-around virtual reality headset, Gear VR, and Google Cardboard. The experience consists of three scenes. We begin inside the health center, finding ourselves in an exam room with a young woman and a compassionate doctor. The scene fades as we travel back in time to follow the patient and her friend as they drive up to a health center lined with protesters holding graphic signs and shouting. The final scene uses computer-generated graphics. The viewer becomes the

patient and must navigate a group of intimidating protesters shouting highly offensive remarks aimed at shaming and stigmatizing her. The audio montage, captured from protesters across the country, anchors the viewers' experience in the reality of what thousands of people across the country face during anti-abortion protests outside of health centers.

Launch date: January 2016

Funders: *Across the Line* received funding from a variety of individuals who donated to the Planned Parenthood national organization and/or the local affiliates of Planned Parenthood Wisconsin and Planned Parenthood Greater Ohio. *Across the Line* also received funding from the Fledgling Fund for the evaluation component, and from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation to help complete the earliest version of the film for the Sundance premiere. The *Across the Line* team worked very closely with funders to craft engagement strategy, and received funds earmarked for evaluation and for collaborations with nonprofit partners.

Across the Line reflects a unique situation. Planned Parenthood wore two hats—working closely with the extraordinary artists who created the film and securing funding from other organizations. The artists and Planned Parenthood had—and continue to have—regular meetings; they collaborate on screenings, events and workshops, and develop engagement strategy together. Given the broad and diverse networks of each organization, this collaboration has yielded positive results. 371 Productions is an award-winning, socially engaged documentary filmmaking company and has broad connections in the film and social justice communities. Emblematic Group is perhaps the best-known company producing award-winning immersive journalism using virtual reality and has broad connections in virtual reality as well as social justice. Planned Parenthood, along with its network of 58 affiliates serving all 50 states, has extensive connections in health care, sex education, and advocacy.

Production team:

- Produced by: Emblematic Group, 371 Productions, and Custom Reality Services in association with Planned Parenthood Federation of America
- Nonny de la Peña, Brad Lichtenstein, and Jeff Fitzsimmons, Writers and Directors
- Dawn Laguens, Molly Eagan, Caren Spruch, Michael Licht, and James Pallot, Executive Producers
- Julie Young and Morgan Elise Johnson, Producers

Festivals:

- Sundance Film Festival (premiere), January 2016
- South By Southwest (SXSW), March 2016
- Ashland Independent Film Festival, April 2016
- Cleveland International Film Festival, April 2016
- Chicago Feminist Film Festival, April 2016
- Tribeca Film Festival, April 2016
- International Documentary Association, April 2016
- Hot Docs Film Festival, May 2016
- Sheffield Documentary Fest, June 2016
- Martha's Vineyard Film Festival, July 2016
- Milwaukee International Film Festival, September 2016

TARGETS

Engagement goals: By putting the audience in the shoes of someone who is trying to access a safe and legal abortion, virtual reality offers a new and immersive experience that can help people better understand what thousands of women face when they seek health care. In order to ensure that abortion remains safe and legal for future generations, the team sought to replace misinformation with the facts and start having honest conversations about abortion in America today.

Honest portrayals of sexual and reproductive health topics in film and television are still

extremely rare, and that's part of a much bigger lack of honest depictions of women's health and sexuality. *Across the Line* is part of ongoing efforts by Planned Parenthood and other sexual and reproductive health organizations to reduce stigma and change the conversation around safe and legal abortion. The team behind *Across the Line* sought to increase awareness of harassment and the potential violence that patients, their loved ones, and staff experience trying to access and provide abortion in the United States.

Target location: The filmmakers recorded video and audio, including anti-abortion protest activity, in many United States locations. The target location is viewers in the United States, where *Across the Line* depicts the impact of protest activity on patients accessing abortion and the courageous providers and staff who have to cross those protest lines every day in the United States.

Target audience: The team identified several target audiences. Broadly, they are engaging audiences wherever they can be visible (film festivals, events, conferences, etc.) to help reduce stigma around abortion, even if the audience is supportive of reproductive rights. This is especially necessary after the discredited video smear campaign that targeted Planned Parenthood health centers and staff and motivated heated protests at health centers. Specifically, the team seeks out opportunities to reach individuals with moderate views on abortion who have been unexposed to the harassment many women face trying to access sexual and reproductive healthcare. Another specifically targeted audience is women in the Southern U.S. who may not be strong supporters of abortion, but are offended by the bullying and harassment captured in this project. Finally, the team is also using the film to help other documentary filmmakers and journalists learn how to make virtual reality content and use it as a tool for social change.

Events that opened up the project to new user groups: In July 2015, well into production, Planned Parenthood came under attack after a

now-discredited group, the Center for Medical Progress, released videos claiming Planned Parenthood was selling fetal tissue. These video releases led to a heavy increase in anti-abortion protests and heightened levels of harassment.

Planned Parenthood has never sold fetal tissue or facilitated fetal tissue donation in order to make a profit. To date, officials in 12 states have concluded investigations into claims that Planned Parenthood profited from fetal tissue donation, and each one has cleared Planned Parenthood of wrongdoing. Another eight states have declined to even investigate, citing a lack of any evidence to suggest wrongdoing. Lastly, a grand jury in Texas not only cleared Planned Parenthood of all wrongdoing but indicted the people behind these videos with felony charges for their participation in this smear campaign.

In January 2016, Planned Parenthood filed a federal lawsuit against the Center for Medical Progress and the individuals behind the smear campaign. The lawsuit charges that anti-abortion extremists engaged in an elaborate, illegal conspiracy to falsely accuse Planned Parenthood of improper activity in an effort to block women's access to safe and legal abortion. The goals of this lawsuit are to hold the people behind this fraud accountable, to again make clear that the accusations about Planned Parenthood are untrue.

In November 2015, an armed shooter opened fire in a Planned Parenthood health center in Colorado Springs, killing three people and wounding many others. He made it clear that he was motivated in part by the discredited sting videos. Unfortunately, one of the lessons learned from the awful tragedy is that words matter, and hateful rhetoric fuels violence. There has been an alarming increase in hateful rhetoric and extremist campaigns against abortion providers and patients since the release of smear videos by opponents of Planned Parenthood's services, and that environment breeds acts of violence.

In March 2016, the Supreme Court took up *Whole Women's Health vs. Hellerstedt*, a case challenging the targeted restrictions against abortion providers (TRAP) passed in Texas HB2. A woman's very right to access safe, legal abortion in the United States is at stake in this case; it's the most important abortion case heard in decades. In March 2016, Donald Trump said out loud what anti-abortion groups and politicians like John Kasich and Ted Cruz have been putting into practice: women and health care providers are being punished for having or providing safe, legal abortion. Politicians who have long opposed access to safe, legal abortion—and even oppose access to birth control—have used the false claims in these videos to fuel their efforts to pass extreme restrictions on access to reproductive health care. The Republican Party's leadership has been waging a full-out assault on access to reproductive health care.

These events in 2015 and 2016, as well as multiple Congressional investigations and frequent mention of abortion generally and Planned Parenthood specifically, further raised these issues with the general public.

USER ENGAGEMENT

Platforms: *Across the Line* is a virtual reality film available in a fully immersive walk-around setting using the HTC Vive, as well as the Samsung Gear VR and Google Cardboard. It is on the Vrideo site, and soon will be an app in the iOS and Android stores, as well as on VRSE and possibly the *New York Times*. Instructions for viewing *Across the Line* on cardboard (less immersive version) can be found at AcrossTheLineVR.com.

Users: Virtual reality films are experienced individually, not via large screens and theaters with seat capacity. *Across the Line* has had approximately 3000 views since launching at Sundance in January.

Social media:

- Facebook: [facebook.com/PlannedParenthood](https://www.facebook.com/PlannedParenthood) (The project does not currently have its own Facebook site, however *Across the Line* has been promoted on Facebook from the personal sites of the artists, the executive producers, and the cast, and has received thousands of likes.)
- Twitter: twitter.com/PPFA (Similarly, the project does not have a specific Twitter account, but has mentions on both #AcrossTheLine and #AcrossTheLineVR. Please note that because there is another Canadian film released called *Across the Line*, there are mixed tweets under the #AcrossTheLine hashtag.)
- Tumblr: plannedparenthood.tumblr.com

Efforts to reach particular demographic groups:

Virtual reality equipment like the Samsung Gear and HTC Vive are still quite inaccessible to the general public. To have the desired impact, the team knew they would have to find a way to bring VR to a much broader viewing audience. The creators worked to make the film viewable on the Google Cardboard, a very low cost and widely available VR viewer. Planned Parenthood produced a large number of branded cardboards that are being distributed at large events and in kits for local screening.

The team partnered with the film *Trapped*, the award-winning documentary by Dawn Porter about the effects of TRAP laws on clinicians and medical professionals who provide abortions. *Across the Line* Google cardboards have been distributed at *Trapped* screenings across the country. Organizers also launched a “street team” model at SXSW to bring the VR experience outside the confines of the exhibition and onto the streets of Austin. Planned Parenthood volunteers took hundreds of general festival-goers through the *Across the Line* experience on Samsung Gear VRs. This was a successful test of a street canvassing model they plan to use for future engagements.

CHANGES IN AWARENESS/BEHAVIOR

Goals: For much of the public, the image of protest activity in front of health centers tends to be described as “little old ladies with rosaries” and other more peaceful descriptors. The team wanted to raise awareness that at many health centers, there is aggressive bullying of patients, their loved ones, and the facility staff. Previous focus group research has shown that even for those neutral or opposed to abortion, viewing a 2D film of harassment outside of health centers led to a stronger empathy and anti-bullying frame.

What happened: Initial observations from qualitative interviews conducted at Sundance, summarized by research partners at the Sea Change Program, reveal:

- *Across the Line* is a “powerful” and “impactful” opportunity to experience a different perspective and “walk in the shoes” of a woman seeking an abortion.
- Viewers are drawn to *Across the Line* for the opportunity to see a new perspective and experience a new technology.
- Viewers have a range of reactions to *Across the Line*, including wanting to take political action, to attack harassers, and to tell their friends to watch the film.
- Audience members had diverse emotional responses to *Across the Line*, ranging from anger to surprise to sadness.
- Overall, men expressed more surprise, anger, and emotional impact than women.
- When asked to describe *Across the Line* to a friend, respondents were very similar in their responses: “it’s a must-see that puts you in the shoes of a woman seeking an abortion, which may change your attitudes towards and emotions about abortion.”

Evaluation strategy: The team partnered with two organizations: the Sea Change Program dedicated to reducing abortion stigma, and the Stanford VR lab, which is able to test VR impact. Those two partners created both a quantitative tablet-based

survey and open-ended qualitative questions for interviewing viewers. Questions focus on both the impact of VR as a medium and the subject of attitudes on abortion. At Sundance, the team conducted qualitative interviews. At South by Southwest and the Cleveland International Film Festival, it gathered more than 300 quantitative surveys. Viewers were randomized to take part in the survey pre- and post-viewing.

The research is currently in progress to analyze data from the first phase of the project. If the team is able to secure funding, phase II research will center around behavior change, including but not limited to support for proactive health center entrance protective legislation, as well as donating to and/or volunteering with local abortion providers. These behavior change areas are hypotheses based on emerging qualitative interview data about actions the film inspires in viewers.

Press examples:

- *Cosmopolitan*: "Experience What It's Like to Visit a Planned Parenthood Clinic Through Virtual Reality"
www.cosmopolitan.com/politics/news/a58928/vr-planned-parenthood-abortion-protesters
- Mic: "Across the Line Uses Virtual Reality to Put Viewers in Abortion Patients' Shoes"
mic.com/articles/144312/across-the-line-uses-virtual-reality-to-put-viewers-in-abortion-patients-shoes#.cgbMOK9Ps
- Rewire: "Filmmakers Use Virtual Reality to Depict Abortion Clinic Protests"
rewire.news/article/2016/03/07/filmmakers-use-virtual-reality-depict-abortion-clinic-protests
- Broadly: "Planned Parenthood's New Virtual Reality Video Simulates Clinic Harassment"
broadly.vice.com/en_us/article/planned-parenthoods-new-virtual-reality-video-simulates-clinic-harssment
- Democracy Now!: "Wicked Jezebel Feminist! Users Witness Anti-Choice Abuse in Virtual Reality Film *Across the Line*"
www.democracynow.org/2016/1/25/across_the_line_virtual_reality_immersed

- MTV: "I Was Called A 'Whore' Just For Walking Into A Planned Parenthood":
www.mtv.com/news/2731625/planned-parenthood-virtual-reality-sundance/

Events: The team is in the early stages of planning events. Events beyond film festivals and co-screenings with the documentary *Trapped* include participation in panels and workshops. The goal is to acquire funding to create *Across the Line* event kits comprised of a Google Cardboard, instructions, and a discussion guide so that the community-based organizations (including Planned Parenthood affiliates) and donors interested in house party screenings are able to order kits at cost through the Planned Parenthood web-based merchandise marketplace.

User participation in ongoing development: A strong feedback loop for *Across the Line* viewers to participate has aided ongoing development. The open-ended qualitative interview questions have yielded considerable feedback, most of which was incorporated into the next version of the experience, released in April 2016. All of the changes implemented were the result of consistent viewer feedback.

POLITICAL IMPACT

Across the Line has great potential for political impact based on initial reactions to the film. Many viewers are shocked that protesters are allowed to personally harass patients and staff entering a facility and have expressed support for proactive legislation to expand health center entrance protections. They have also received a proposal from a well-respected canvassing and focus group organization to explore how they might use *Across the Line* as a canvassing tool at the doors prior to the election. Like preliminary conversations with Working Films, engaging with this organization is based on securing funding.

INNOVATION

Platform innovation: *Across the Line* is highly innovative—not only in that it is a virtual reality piece, but that it represents the first piece of its kind to combine scenes with 360° video and computer-generated imagery. Two different filmmakers, each with expertise in different types of filmmaking (documentary, 360°, and CGI) worked together to create this film. *Across the Line* is also one of a few virtual reality films highlighting a significant social issue.

Replication:

- *Inside their organization:* Following the incredible response to the early release of *Across the Line*, Planned Parenthood is exploring ideas for future content development using virtual reality. The impact on viewers' empathy makes virtual reality a powerful tool for health care and social change. The organization plans to apply the data and lessons learned from *Across the Line* to tackle more issues around sexual and reproductive health and justice.
- *By other producers or technologists:* The film is in its early stages of release, however the filmmakers have been invited to speak on a number of panels (South By Southwest, Cleveland International Film Festival, HotDocs, Ashland Independent Film Festival, International Documentary Association, NAMAC) about the techniques used to make the film and how this filmmaking can be made more accessible. Nonny De La Peña and her business partner, James Pallot, have spoken at a huge number of panels and workshops.

BUILDING CAPACITY

New collaborations or organizations: The *Across the Line* film helped to launch Custom Reality Services, which is now in discussion about many VR projects. Custom Reality Services was co-founded by two of the filmmakers, Brad Lichtenstein and Jeff Fitzsimmons.



CASE STUDY THE COUNTED

Project description: Through video, interactives, investigative journalism, crowdsourcing, and deep audience engagement, *The Counted* (theguardian.com/us-news/series/counted-us-police-killings) sought to create a database of Americans killed by police. No government agency, including the FBI, tracks this information. The ultimate goal was to combine this data with personal histories to raise the level of national consciousness of the magnitude of this crisis in criminal justice.

Launch date: March 2015

Funders: The project was entirely funded by *the Guardian's* core editorial budget.

Production team:

- Jon Swaine, Oliver Laughland, Jamiles Lartey and Ciara McCarthy, Reporting
- Kenan Davis, Rich Harris, Nadja Popovich and Kenton Powell, Design and Production
- Mary Hamilton, Mike Barry, Jessica Lee and Sarah Eberspacher, Community Maintenance and Moderation
- Valerie Lapinski, Laurence Mathieu-Léger and Mae Ryan, Video

- Tom McCarthy, Additional Reporting
- Sarah Gilbert, Pictures
- Maraihe Thomas and Tom Gottlieb, Copy editing
- Katharine Viner and Lee Glendinning, Editing

Festivals and awards: Not reported

TARGETS

Engagement goals: The team wanted the government to take action and start accurately tracking and monitoring deaths by police. Team members also wanted local police municipalities held to account in a way that would bring about reform in their precincts.

Target location: Nationwide

Target audience:

- 1) A general audience of American readers recently introduced to concerns about police shootings and the use of other deadly force after the unrest in Ferguson in 2014;
- 2) An audience of broadly 16–35-year-old nonwhite readers sympathetic to Black Lives Matter and the surrounding protest movement since Ferguson, Eric Garner, and other similar incidents; and
- 3) Researchers, academics, and police theorists frustrated by the lack of comprehensive data on the use of force by police—data that would be useful in their work.

USER ENGAGEMENT

Platforms: Online and mobile

Users: Currently over 8 million views of *Counted* stories and 3 million views of the database.

Social media:

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/TheCounted (21,000 likes)
- Twitter: twitter.com/thecounted (16,000 followers)

Efforts to reach particular demographic groups:

The team sought audiences that were impacted by deaths by police and who could fill in the data and contribute to the story. Readers identified an additional four deaths by police not recorded anywhere else.

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR AND AWARENESS

Goals: The team sought to humanize the victims through broad awareness of the issue. But the primary concern was to get attention from the U.S. Government and to spur it to take action.

What happened: The project featured stories of all who had been killed; identified deaths previously unmentioned in media through readers; and commanded attention from the head of the FBI, attorney general, Senator Dianne Feinstein, and many local police districts. The team hoped the government would create their own database and take action, but neither have happened yet. The project resulted in deep, expanding, and committed readership. Unfortunately, project leaders have not been able to find outside funding, so the Guardian has continued to support it with its core editorial budget.

Evaluation strategy: *The Guardian*, as a regular course, polls readers to understand their reactions and the impact that journalism has on them.

Press examples:

- Interactive database and map, tracking every death across the country for the first time. This prompted promises from the Justice Department and FBI to overhaul their systems. www.theguardian.com/us-news/ng-interactive/2015/jun/01/the-counted-police-killings-us-database
- “The County,” a five-part multimedia series on Kern County, CA, which *The Counted* identified as having the country’s highest rate of killings by police. This prompted protests in Kern and demands for reform.

theguardian.com/us-news/2015/dec/01/the-county-kern-county-deadliest-police-killings

- A four-part, in-depth series on trends revealed by the data—police killing people in moving cars despite federal guidelines designed to prevent such deaths; shootings being ruled suicides, allowing officers to skirt scrutiny; dozens dying after being shocked by Tasers despite related regulations; 87.5% of inquiries into killings by police being tainted by conflicts of interest: theguardian.com/us-news/2015/sep/01/moving-targets-police-shootings-vehicles-the-counted

User participation in ongoing development:

700,000 people have signed up to receive newsletters and updates. All of these readers are updated on new content, developments, and more.

From the project's launch, the reporting team has been assisted by a community of digital subscribers. Built from scratch on social media, this group now totals 38,000. These participants have submitted thousands of tips on fatal incidents, photographs of people killed, and backstories on cases. Each submission was taken on for verification by reporters. This input has helped reporters identify people killed by police who had never before been named publicly. *Guardian US* journalists have also consistently interacted with this audience on Twitter, Facebook, and Reddit in order to bolster engagement and steadily improve the quality of data. Reporters frequently answer readers' inquiries about the project directly and have held Facebook live video question-and-answer sessions to discuss their findings with users in real time.

Other evidence of behavior change: The team identified an audience and gave it an outlet where none previously existed. The producers created a community of 2 million people around this content and topic. FBI Director James Comey stated in October 2015 that it was "unacceptable" for *Guardian US* to have better data than his own officials, which attracted more interest from Washington-based audience more concerned with

policy. This was boosted further by the Justice Department announcing that it would launch a new program for counting deaths caused by law enforcement—a program that draws on the *Counted* data and mirrors its methodology.

Throughout the year, new high-profile deaths involving police across the country brought readers from new areas to the project. Much interest was generated by the cases of Samuel DuBose in Ohio, college football star Christian Taylor in Texas, and six-year-old Jeremy Mardis in Louisiana. Regional media cited the data in coverage of their states and cities to provide context on the subject, which had been impossible before. The controversial delayed release late last year of video footage of the fatal shooting of Laquan Macdonald in Chicago in 2013 also sharply increased attention on the issue, along with coverage by *Guardian US* of the brutality by Chicago officers in an off-the-books jail facility.

POLITICAL IMPACT

The team did not set out with explicit political goals. However, this site spurred new proposed legislation, attention from the head of the FBI and AG, and was frequently referenced in Congressional testimony.

INNOVATION

Platform innovation: The project is built on the existing *Guardian* platform and lives prominently on its US digital front. The most innovative part of the project was the way the team identified readers who were connected to the story.

Replication: The team is looking to build new projects that fill a void of an absent database or cases where crowd-sourced data is essential to telling a complex and important story.

BUILDING CAPACITY

Not reported.



CASE STUDY

DO NOT TRACK

From April 14 to June 15, 2015, every two weeks, a personalized episode of *Do Not Track* (donottrack-doc.com) addressed a different issue related to web privacy and allowed users to see how their own personal data is being tracked in real-time. In between each of the seven episodes, users could read, listen, and dig deeper into the ideas through additional content. Users were asked questions and received emails in between episodes.

Launch date: April 14, 2015

Funders: Primary funders were public service media organizations. Co-producers: Arte (French and German public broadcaster), Bayerischer Rundfunk (German public broadcaster), National Film Board (Canadian interactive producer). Pre-buyers: AJ+ (USA), Radio-Canada (public Canadian Broadcasting Corporation), RTS (public Swiss broadcaster). The CNC (Centre National du Cinema et de l'image animée) French film fund was also a partner. Tribeca New Media Fund also supported the project.

The team worked closely with funders but did not receive any funding specifically earmarked for evaluation or collaborating with nonprofits. The main funders were public broadcasters and public institutions, so the outreach and distribution of the program was at the core of the production process. Creator Brett Gaylor, coming from

the Mozilla Foundation, understands this type of campaign well—it is part of his DNA. The team had weekly telephone conferences with partners where distribution and editorial creation were discussed. Each partner in the different participating countries built media partnerships locally to facilitate public conversation, raise awareness, and increase the visibility of the web series on well- frequented websites. For the last episode, the team discussed how to give more action power to users by redirecting them to NGOs and nonprofits that fight to protect personal data and privacy.

Production team:

- Brett Gaylor, Showrunner and Director
- Sandra Rodriguez, Vincent Glad, Zineb Dryef, Richard Gutjahr, Virginie Raison, Akuphen, Authors and/or Episode Directors
- Jason Staczek, Music
- Margaux Missika, Alexandre Brachet, Gregory Trowbridge, Producers
- Sebastien Brothier, Artistic Direction
- Nicolas Menet, Maxime Quintard, Development
- National Film Board of Canada: Hugues Sweeney, Louis-Richard Tremblay, Marie-Pier Gauthier.
- BR: Christiane Miethge, Sandra Marsch

FESTIVALS AND AWARDS

Festivals/Exhibitions:

- Tribeca Film Festival 2015
- RIDM 2015
- IDFA Doclab 2015
- Canadian Screen Awards 2015
- Filmgate 2016

Awards:

- Sheffield Docfest 2015
- Deutscher Preis 2015
- Prix Gemeaux 2015
- FWA (September 13, 2015)

- DIGI Awards 2015
- AIB 2015
- IDA Awards 2015
- Prix Europa 2015 (special mention)
- Crossmedia preis 2016
- Club de l'Audiovisuel de Paris 2016
- Peabody Award 2015 (web winner)

TARGETS

Engagement goals: The first objective of the project was to open a public debate and raise awareness about what goes on behind closed doors, when data is being used, collected, and stacked. Engaging users meant making them care about the issue—the team was expecting people to become aware of the importance of their privacy, realize the amount of data that is collected and exploited about them, understand how data collection works and advocate for more transparency online.

Target location: The target was worldwide, with a focus on the countries involved in the coproduction and the broadcast: France, Germany, Canada, USA, and Switzerland.

Target audience: The primary audience was people between 16 and 50 years old who use the web, smart phones, and social media on a daily basis. The challenge was to be informative enough to address average web users while also engaging people highly informed about privacy, so that they could become ambassadors of the program. The team was very happy when it received a few emails from older people or very young teenagers offering thanks for explaining the web clearly.

Events that opened up the projects to new user groups: The “Loi renseignement” (surveillance law), authorizing state surveillance against terrorism was being discussed at the Parliament in France. Canada was also in the process of passing the C-51 bill, opening a door for surveillance. This was a few months after Snowden’s revelations. As a consequence, Brett Gaylor and different ambassadors (Richard Gutjhar, Vincent Glad,

Sandra Rodriguez) were invited to talk publicly about the project in mainstream media outlets and to write articles in well-followed news sites. Some of the ambassadors were invited not only to talk about *Do Not Track*, but also current events concerning data tracking and Big Data.

USER ENGAGEMENT

Platforms: Online and mobile

Users: 880,000

Social media:

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/donottrackdoc/ (The Facebook page has 4665 “likes.” But the project itself—the Do Not Track Platform—doesn’t have any, because the team needed to be very careful with the way it tracked users. Thus, it decided to not have a “like” button on Facebook, Twitter or any other social media, as doing so would have allowed these platforms to track users without users’ consent.)
- Twitter: twitter.com/donottrackdoc (The Twitter page has 2,208 followers but this number is not relevant, as the team’s outreach strategy was to use Twitter and Facebook accounts only to communicate with partners in different countries, so that they could communicate on their usual networks.)

Efforts to reach particular demographic groups:

Some initiative on social media from Arte and the NFB allowed them to reach a younger audience (15–18 years old).

CHANGES IN AWARENESS/BEHAVIOR

Goals: The team was mainly aiming at behavioral changes: in the type of services and tools people used online or on their mobiles, in the way they read terms and conditions, in their probability of paying for stuff online, and the importance they gave to their privacy. The team also wanted

to make people stop and ask questions before sharing data with social media platforms and apps, to make them question political representatives and be curious and interested about privacy and data tracking issues, and to encourage activism around privacy protection.

What happened: More than 50,000 people provided their email address to participate fully in the project (i.e. — answer questions, be informed of the release of new episodes, receive articles etc.), allowing the team to question them periodically and track their personal data in order to show them what could be tracked. Communication around the project on social media and comments was generally very positive. A Radio-Canada radio show even invited some of its journalists to discuss what they changed in their personal behavior after going through the seven episodes, spurring more comments, likes, and questions on the need for behavior and attitude changes.

One disappointment was that some users watched only one episode and didn't get information about the other topics. But around 30-40% of the audience was coming back from one episode to the next. The team discussed the possibility of partnering with NGOs for the seventh episode. However, because team members were working with public broadcasters in different countries, finding relevant initiatives in a very short period of time proved too complicated. Moreover, with public broadcasters under strict legal obligations, it was difficult to promote a specific organization. In the end, the team displayed several NGOs at the end of the episode for people to choose.

Evaluation strategy: In between episodes, questions were asked to registered users, and data was compiled (with consent) on registered and non-registered users. These questions were aimed at making users think about their initial habits, uses, fears or carelessness about data tracking and privacy. As the episodes developed, questions guided users in thinking about the future they wished for privacy in the web economy. The last

episode used this data to help users understand the power of their decisions and their personal attitude and behavior change throughout the series. Aside from this strategy, the team observed how people were interacting with the program in festivals or public presentations, as well as the comments and emails they would receive during the conversation.

Press examples:

- *The Guardian*: "Do not Track: an online, interactive documentary about who's watching you"
theguardian.com/world/2015/apr/14/brett-gaylor-do-not-track-interactive-documentary-privacy
- Motherboard: "This Surveillance Documentary Creeps You Out With How Much It Knows About You"
motherboard.vice.com/read/this-surveillance-documentary-creeps-you-out-with-how-much-it-knows-about-you
- Liberation: "Do Not Track, le business des données personnelles sur Internet"
www.liberation.fr/ecrans/2015/04/14/do-not-track-le-vol-des-donnees-personnelles-sur-internet_1240902

Notable social media conversations: On the first few days of the online life of the project, Arte used a "robot" on Twitter to answer any Tweets mentioning certain key words (privacy, cookies, tracking surveillance, etc.) and to make those who were tweeting know about the project. It helped to reach a younger community on social networks in an innovative way (the outreach was around 7% of conversion). During the Tribeca Festival, the NFB organized an "Ask Me Anything" session with Brett Gaylor, live on Periscope.

Notable actions: The team was not able to follow precisely what happened with NGOs. Some of the people interviewed for the project who are working in associations for privacy (like *the Guardian* project) used the program on social media. The Mozilla Foundation, which had been

working on an advocacy campaign around tracking in its SmartOn series, partnered with the team on showing the first episode of *Do Not Track* (mozilla.org/en-US/teach/smarton/tracking).

Events: At the Tribeca Film Festival in New York in April 2015, an exhibit helped raise public awareness of this issue. At Radio-Canada, also in April 2015, a two-hour public gathering was organized in Montreal Studios to talk about the *Do Not Track* webseries, data tracking and Big Data. In various festivals, screenings were organized or computers were accessible to the audience to try it. In France, la Prairie des hackers organized a Cryptoparty at la Bellevilloise (Paris) to teach how to protect data (PGP, encryption etc.) and then showcased the whole program with Q&A.

Event goals: To get journalists, researchers and citizens curious about the project and enhance the conversation.

Event attendees: Between 100–300, on average.

User participation in ongoing development:

Users not only shared their personal data, but also co-created the personalized content available to them, allowing for a deeper understanding of the issues. Users were invited to answer questions about their online habits and concerns and could contribute to the blog by commenting on posts and sharing more information.

Other evidence of behavior change: While producing the last episode of the program (which was created using the data collected in previous programs), the team asked audience members if *Do Not Track* had affected their online behavior. About 10,000 of registered users responded. The results were positive: 29% said they were more aware of the risks regarding their personal data, 23% took steps to protect their data, less than 4% said they didn't care about privacy, and 45% that they were already aware of privacy risks before watching the program.

Moreover, the curiosity of some journalists covering the series was piqued enough that Sandra Rodriguez was asked to contribute weekly to a radio show (on the main public broadcaster Radio-Canada) to inform the audience about technology developments and ethical risks.

POLITICAL IMPACT

Political impact: Not reported

INNOVATION

Platform innovation: The team built a custom player to display real-time elements (data, gifs, questions, web pages, etc.) inside the video. The team also built an API to collaborate with other development teams (in Canada) so that it could build an episode and still have access to the database. The technology allowed for personalized storytelling about personalization.

BUILDING CAPACITY

Key strategic partners: These included media and broadcasters, who were primary partners and were really strategic in building audience and outreach. For example, Bayerischer Rundfunk used *Do Not Track* material in several TV shows. A lot of teachers, researchers and universities are reaching out on a regular basis to use *Do Not Track* to explain tracking and privacy to their students. Some events have been organized around privacy technics (PGP, encryption etc.) with hackers, using the program as an introduction (for example at La Bellevilloise, in Paris, La Prairie des hackers). Mozilla has been an important partner in promoting the project worldwide, by using it in its campaign about tracking.



CASE STUDY

HOLLOW

Project description: *Hollow* is an interactive documentary and community participatory project that examines the future of rural America through the eyes and voices of those living in McDowell County, West Virginia. *Hollow* combines video portraits, data visualizations, photography, soundscapes, community-generated content and grassroots mapping to bring these stories to life through an online experience. URL: hollowdocumentary.com

Launch date: June 20, 2013

Funders: Kickstarter, TFI New Media Fund, West Virginia Humanities Council, Private/individual donations

Production team:

- Elaine McMillion, Project Director
- Jeff Soyk, Art Director/Designer and Architect
- Tricia Fulks, Associate Producer and Researcher
- Robert Hall, Technical Director and Senior Developer
- Russell Goldenberg, Interactive Developer
- Sarah Ginsburg, Editor
- Kerrin Sheldon, Editor
- Billy Wirasnik, Sound designer
- Lee Strauss, Composer

- Michelle Miller, Participatory workshop leader
- Eric Lovell, Participatory mapping
- Jason Headley, Writing
- Nathaniel Hansen: Project Manager

Festivals and awards

Festivals:

- 2015 True False Film Festival
- 2015 Big Sky Documentary Film Festival
- 2014 Eastern Oregon Film Festival
- 2014 SXSW Interactive Awards
- 2014 Visions Du Reel i_docs workshop (Switzerland)
- 2014 Festival du Nouveau Cinema (Montreal)
- 2014 Margaret Meade Festival at the American Museum of Natural History
- 2014 The Fife: 31st International Environmental Film Festival
- 2013 Filmmaker Magazine Film Series: 25 Faces of Independent Film
- 2013 Camden International Film Festival, Points North Doc Forum
- 2013 New York Film Festival: Convergence 2013
- West Virginia International Film Festival 2013
- Doc Lab at International Documentary Festival of Amsterdam

Awards:

- 2014 Emmy Nominee in New Approaches for Documentary
- 2014 ONA Excellence & Innovation in Visual Digital Storytelling award
- 2014 Webby Awards: "Web Community" honoree
- 2014 Innovation Award at the Festival du Nouveau Cinéma in Montreal
- 2014 FITC Awards Finalist in "Narrative" and "Best Visual Design"
- 2014 SXSW Finalist in "Activism" and "People's Choice" Awards
- 2014 World Press Photo 3rd Prize Award for Interactive Doc
- 2013 Peabody Award
- 2013 FWA Site of the Day (Aug. 28, 2013)

- 2013 FWA Adobe Cutting Edge Project of the Week (Nov. 11, 2013)
- 2013 Finalist for the DocLab Storytelling Award at IDFA
- 2013 CSS Winner of the Day (Sept. 27, 2013)
- 2013 National Coal Heritage Foundation: Research and Documentation Award

Conferences:

- 2013 Tribeca Film Institute's Interactive Day
- 2014 i-Docs Conference (Bristol, UK)
- 2014 Appalachian Studies Conference
- 2014 DC Webfest
- 2014 Magnum Photography Foundation: PhotoEx Symposium
- 2014 Woodstock Digital Media Festival
- 2013 Making Media Now: Filmmakers Collaborative
- 2013 The University Film and Video Association Conference
- 2013 A Bright Economic Future for the Mountain State Conference
- 2013 IFP Conference
- 2013 Future of Storytelling: Story Arcade Exhibit
- 2013 Create West Virginia Conference
- 2013 DocYard: Boston

TARGETS

Engagement goals:

- To build an interactive world online for people globally to understand the issue of population loss in rural America while also providing an understanding of the options available to keep small-town America alive.
- To offer a multi-dimensional portrayal of the diverse people in McDowell County, their ideas of "home," and the future of Southern West Virginia.
- To empower the people of Southern West Virginia by giving residents a chance to tell their own stories through community workshops and forms of grassroots mapping.
- To communicate the historical, cultural, social and economic significance of Southern West Virginia through user-generated content,

interactive data, and interviews with longtime residents.

Target location: United States, including cities where most brain-drainers from rural areas go to: NYC, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, D.C., Atlanta, etc.

Target audience: The primary target audience was 18–35 year olds who have left a small town in the United States for a larger city. The website has been viewed over 200,000 times in 178 countries.

- 64 percent of users are from U.S. (West Virginia, New York, Virginia, California, Massachusetts are the top 5 states).
- 178 Countries (U.S., U.K., France, Spain, Canada are the top 5 countries)

Events that opened up the project to new user groups: *Hollow* was a finalist at IDFA's Doc Lab and that opened up a new international audience. Furthermore, the team gave presentations in Switzerland, Japan, the UK, and other European countries, opening up those audiences.

USER ENGAGEMENT

Platforms: Online

Users: 200,000+

Social media:

- Facebook: facebook.com/hollowtheproject (3332 likes)
- Twitter: twitter.com/hollowthefilm (1330 followers)
- Instagram: instagram.com/explore/tags/hollowdocumentary

Efforts to reach particular demographic groups:

The team screened the project nearly 80 times in three years. Many of those screenings included traveling to small, rural colleges across the U.S., as well as public libraries in Appalachia. Many of these places have less access to high speed broadband and the students are the first in their families to attend college. The team felt they

were an important group to have a one-on-one experience with *Hollow*.

CHANGES IN AWARENESS/BEHAVIOR

Goals: The creators wanted to show a more nuanced version of the region to help audiences understand the extreme challenges that post-industrial towns face, while also showing people working hard every day to change their situation. The hope was to combat the stereotype of lazy, welfare-dependent, and uneducated Appalachia.

What happened: Elaine McMillion Sheldon designed and executed the outreach strategy. The team coordinated nearly 80 screenings—internationally and nationally—taking the project to rural towns, schools, and colleges across America and in Appalachia.

- One year after the film came out, the team secured a major screening with Senator Joe Manchin (D-WV) at the U.S Capitol in Washington, D.C. Fifteen residents from *Hollow* stood on stage with the Senator and expressed their concerns for their community.
- The interactive documentary has over 200,000 unique users and has generated hundreds of volunteers to the area and donations to individuals.
- The community members, through the online networks and tools the *Hollow* team built for them, continue to meet and organize for change. They were able to bring support and awareness to a community garden and local food movement campaigns on GoFundMe, which ultimately raised \$10,000.
- After watching *Hollow* and learning about hunger in West Virginia, one user called Feeding America non-stop for months until the group agreed to become a partner and donate food weekly to the food bank. Donations and volunteers have come into the county, especially to non-profit partners on the ground and the local food bank.
- *Hollow* was purchased and archived by

West Virginia University Libraries and is used in high schools and colleges to demonstrate the economic and social impact of population shifts in post-industrial and rural places. The raw materials are being archived for use in research by professors and students.

Evaluation strategy: The team conducted surveys among residents after participatory workshops during production. Residents rated their experience of working with *Hollow*. An overwhelming majority said the workshops made them feel more empowered to change their community. Many stated that they had learned new digital literacy and communication skills.

Locals' responses to *Hollow*:

Erica Lucas (young person running for city council): "I wanted to let you know that *Hollow* had inspired me to be that change and I am running for Welch City Council! I hope to bring new ideas and help out our community."

Elaine LaCaria (local businesswoman trying to expose police brutality): "You have no idea how you guys motivated us to quit taking their status quo and the impact your team has made here politically. We are going to take our county back and our political offices and our police and emergency medical personnel and hold them accountable."

Renee Bolden (local historian): "I'm not sure I can explain the hope and sense of community that *Hollow* has inspired. *Hollow* has given McDowell County the voice that we have never had before, and an opportunity to be seen as a people who overcome great obstacles and keep going."

Tammy Stevenson-Agee: "I just wanted to say thank you for making this documentary. I grew up in McDowell and moved to Tazewell for work and school but watching this has made me change my mind!! After I finish school in

May 2015 I will be moving back and helping rebuild. I didn't realize how much I missed it until now but the people on there was right — you don't know what you took for granted until it's gone."

The team also collaborated with Cowbird to collect stories at screenings around the theme of small towns: blog.cowbird.com/post/79165570128/small-town-america-is-vanishing-a-hundred-years

Press examples:

- Journalist.de: "Die 12 Besten Multimediareportagen 2013" www.journalist.de/ratgeber/handwerk-beruf/tipps-fuer-den-berufsalntag/onlinejournalismus-die-12-besten-multimediareportagen-2013.html
- Los Angeles Times: "Framework: Best of the Web" framework.latimes.com/2013/08/29/best-of-the-web-129
- POV: "Interactive Docs for the Nonbelievers" povmagazine.com/articles/view/interactive-docs-for-the-nonbelievers

Notable social media conversations: The team used social media to rally supporters and get a screening at the U.S. Capitol with Senator Manchin (D-WV). Read about it here: www.peabodyawards.com/stories/story/senator-manchin-invites-hollow-to-the-capitol

Reactions on Twitter:

- @tomburket: "I can say with confidence (*Hollow*) wins the Internet for 2013"
- @MikeyTacos: "The next frontier. Makes me feel determined to help out."
- @kylestudstill: "Exploring the greater tensions of modern America."
- @gabestein: "Everyone—historians, students, designers, developers—drop everything you're doing and watch this interactive doc."
- @crystalkinser: "Beautifully arresting. Stereotype-busting. An interactive documentary about people and a community."

Events:

Community screenings and exhibits:

- Photography Exhibit "Beautiful McDowell County" in Charleston, WV, October 2012
- Welch, West Virginia, June 2013
- Caretta, West Virginia, June 2013
- Kanawha County Public Library Screening Series (3 screenings), September 2013
- Princeton, West Virginia, October 2013
- River View High School, October 2013
- Mount View High School, October 2013
- Bisbee, Arizona, December 2013
- Washington, D.C. in United States Capitol Congressional Theatre, July 2014
- Sarasota, Florida, February 2015

University screenings:

- Virginia Tech University, October 2013
- Radford University, October 2013
- West Virginia University, November 2013
- Emerson College, November 2013
- Colgate University, November 2013
- Ohio State University, January 2014
- Davis & Elkins College, March 2014
- Alice Lloyd College, April 2014
- Shepherd University, April 2014
- Wheeling Jesuit University, April 2014
- Vermont College of Fine Arts, April 2014
- Duke University Center for Documentary Studies, November 2015
- University of Tennessee Knoxville, March 2016
- Appalachian State University, March 2016

Event goals: Events were designed to engage audiences with these stories through screenings and discussions. At five events, local residents attended and spoke directly with the audience. The team also collected stories (for its partnership with Cowbird) at these screenings, asking people why they left, why they stayed, or why they returned to their small town. Each screening venue paid \$250–\$700 to host a screening; that money went directly to paying server fees of \$750 a month.

Event attendees: From 250–300 people at the premiere in Welch and the U.S. Capitol screening,

to 25–50 at small university campuses. *Hollow* attracted both large and small crowds, which made for different types of experiences and discussion.

User participation in ongoing development:

Users can visit hollowdocumentary.com to watch the 30 short films, contribute to the data visualizations, and add their photos of home through the #hollerhome campaign on Instagram.

Other evidence of behavior change: The decision to make *Hollow* an online, interactive documentary was fueled by the idea that non-linear and exploratory narratives may actually encourage participation among users locally and globally. It has been argued that the step from consumption to action is much smaller in a self-guided and user-generated experience than the consumption of a lean-back, linear film.

By inviting users to actively explore McDowell at their own pace, the team hopes to encourage and cultivate a more personal experience for a global audience. This has been seen through Linda McKinney—the owner of the food bank—who has received visitors, donations, and calls after people discover her story on the website. On the local side, the residents have a real-time sense of people who visit the site through their blogging tool. This could be seen as a motivator for many locally.

Despite the efforts of *Hollow's* producers to assist residents in bettering their community, they have been unable to overcome deep-seeded issues regarding local infrastructure, motivations, and politics to sustain active participation. In McDowell there are limited organizations to support the continued growth of digital literacy skills. The problem becomes compounded when access to computer labs, mobile networks, and high speed Internet is limited. Additionally, the large, consolidated schools have not supported programming aimed at overcoming such obstacles. Such apathy and lack of initiative was not expected given high levels of involvement exhibited by youth participants during the summer of 2012. Other active storytellers have become

disheartened at the lack of tangible change to come about in the community, often blaming embedded systems of institutional and political bureaucracy as stalling their efforts.

The team has reflected on this drop-off of participation; the lack of incentive and collaboration is disheartening. Team members are dedicated to seeing residents follow through and has begun work to identify the issues surrounding this phenomenon. The team has pondered the cultural climate created amidst a community focused on survival. Perhaps digital literacy skills are not considered important when people are focused on putting food on the table. Regardless, this cycle of youth exodus and brain drain is not specific to McDowell. The challenge for the *Hollow* team is to work to create and maintain infrastructure that supports all residents in developing agency. Although it is too early to fully gauge successes and failure, the team continues to work on strategies to support the community.

POLITICAL IMPACT

- After participating in *Hollow* workshops, two locals ran for positions on city council.
- Residents got the opportunity to speak to Senator Manchin about their concerns during the Washington DC screening.

INNOVATION

Platform innovation: *Hollow* is one of the first custom-built, independent interactive documentaries that seeks to tell an American story. The innovation in *Hollow* lies in the fact that true stories lead the choice in technology. The team aimed to tell meaningful and impactful stories, not looking to jump on a tech trend. This allowed people to connect with individuals without being confounded by technology.

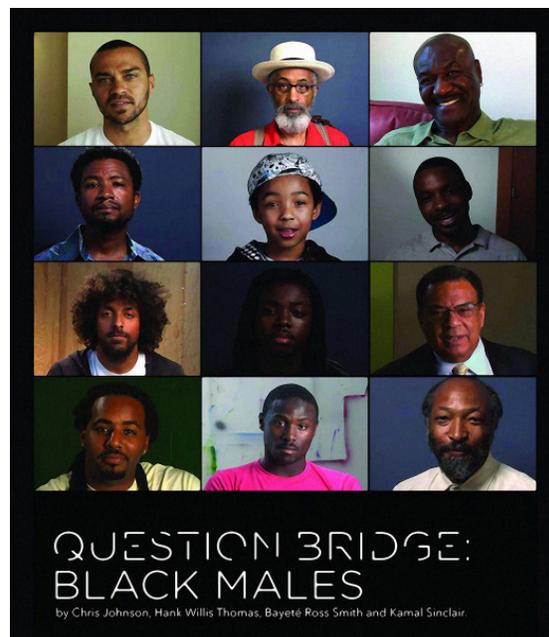
Replication: The team has been told, again and again, that *Hollow* is a project that inspires many while making their own interactive stories. Grant

Scott, a jury member for the World Press Photo Awards, shared why he chose *Hollow* for 3rd Prize in the Interactive Documentary category: "Some of the most impressive elements of *Hollow* are the depth of the content, the richness of the content. The characters that are portrayed are totally believable and I think it's these small stories told in a big way...it's not a large production piece but it has that feeling, it feels very much as if it was created by people who care about the subject that they are documenting." The *Huffington Post* wrote on *Hollow's* launch day, "Anyone who saw promise for the future of web-based journalism after watching/reading *The New York Times'* highly innovative 'Snowfall' will positively be drawn to the work produced at *Hollow*. It is next level. It's maybe the most magnificently presented, web-aware journalism I've ever seen. But more important than the visual achievement is what it does—documenting the lives of people who live in a mostly ignored rural community, far from the traditional media bastions and bubbles."

BUILDING CAPACITY

Key strategic partners: Key strategic partners included Five Loaves and Two Fishes Food Bank, Big Creek People in Action, Mount View High School, River View High School, Council of the Southern Mountains, Documentary Educational Resources, West Virginia Humanities Council, West Virginia Filmmakers Guild, West Virginia University, Reed School of Media at West Virginia University.

New collaborations or organizations: The project has resulted in volunteers for partner organizations, donations to partner organizations and new collaborations between partner organizations. Through social media, *Hollow* helped Joel McKinney raise over \$10,000 towards his local food movement (gofundme.com/fiveLoaves). A new, informal citizens group has developed since the *Hollow* team left the community. The group meets once a month to work on initiatives and it is led by some of the individuals trained and featured in *Hollow*.



CASE STUDY

QUESTION BRIDGE: BLACK MALES

Question Bridge: Black Males (questionbridge.com) is an innovative transmedia art project that uses media to facilitate a healing dialogue between a critical mass of Black men from diverse backgrounds, and creates a platform to represent and redefine Black male identity.

Through a robust web platform, a museum installation, a community engagement campaign, and curricula for high schools and universities, *Question Bridge: Black Males* aims to help create a paradigm shift in American consciousness around Black male identity that removes two critical obstacles limiting males' political, social, and economic advancement: exclusion from the other and estrangement from each other.

Launch date: January 2012

Funders: Open Society Institute Campaign for Black Male Achievement, Ford Foundation, Earned Revenue on exhibitions, Kickstarter, and individual donations. The team worked closely with funders and had funds earmarked for evaluation and nonprofit collaborations. Team members worked very closely with Rashid Shabazz from the Campaign for Black Male Achievement, which resulted in greater strategic planning, network optimization and leadership development.

Production team:

- Chris Johnson, Artist
- Hank Willis Thomas, Artist
- Kamal Sinclair, Artist/Producer
- Bayete Ross Smith, Artist
- Jesse Williams, Executive Producer
- Deborah Willis, Executive Producer
- William Sylvester, Associate Producer
- Natasha Logan, Associate Producer

Festivals and awards:

New Media Infinity Award from the International Center of Photography - 2015.

Recent Exhibitions/Screenings:

- Power Plant Gallery (Duke University)
- Schomburg Center Fabric Workshop Museum
- San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art (San Diego, CA)
- Reginald F. Lewis Museum (Baltimore, MD)
- Maier Museum of Art at Randolph College CFAC (Syracuse, NY)
- Winthrop University Rochester Contemporary (Rochester, NY)
- Phillips Collection Wingnall Museum of Contemporary Art (Chaffey College)
- Deerfield Academy (Deerfield, MA)
- UMCA (University of Massachusetts)
- Flux Night (Atlanta, GA)
- Film as Protest (LA Film Festival)

Museum Partners:

- Atlanta's Chastain Art Gallery, Atlanta, GA
- Birmingham Museum of Art, Birmingham, AL
- Bloomfield College, Bloomfield, NJ

- Brooklyn Museum of Art Brooklyn, NY
- California African American Museum, Los Angeles, CA
- Catharine Clark Gallery, San Francisco, CA
- Chaffey College, Rancho Cucamonga, CA
- Cleveland Museum of Art, Cleveland, OH
- Community Folk Art Center at Syracuse University, Syracuse, NY
- Corcoran Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C.
- DuSable Museum of African American Culture, Chicago, IL
- Hey B. Gantt Center for African American Art & Culture, Charlotte, NC
- Jack Shainman Gallery, New York, NY
- Juxtaposition Arts, Minneapolis, MN
- Milwaukee Art Museum, Milwaukee, WI
- Missouri History Museum, St. Louis, MO
- Oakland Museum of California, Oakland, CA
- Papillion Gallery, Los Angeles, CA
- Photo Center Northwest, Seattle, WA
- Project Row Houses, Houston, TX
- Rochester Contemporary Art Center, Rochester, NY
- San Diego African American Museum of Fine Art, San Diego, CA
- Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, New York, NY
- Sumter County Gallery of Art, Sumter, SC
- Sundance Film Festival, New Frontier Park City, UT
- The Exploratorium Museum, San Francisco, CA
- The Fabric Workshop and Museum, Philadelphia, PA
- The Power Plant Contemporary Art Gallery, Duke University, NC
- Utah Museum of Contemporary Art, Salt Lake City, UT
- Winthrop University, Rock Hill, SC
- YMCA Bridgeport, CT
- YMCA New Haven, CT
- YMCA Stamford, CT
- YMCA, Hartford, CT
- Zora Neale Hurston Foundation, Eatonville, FL

TARGETS

Engagement goals: “My biggest hope for this project is that we will show that there’s not just one way to be a Black man. There’s as much diversity inside the demographic as outside of this demographic. That we are people. That we are not a caricature or stereotype. We’re not a monolithic identity.” – Hank Willis Thomas, Artist

Question Bridge: Black Males creates a new framework for Black men to own the Black male label without having to sacrifice their comprehensive and unique mix of identity attributes. Unfortunately, schisms within the black male “demographic” tragically divide people along geographic, economic, generational, educational, religious, cultural and political lines. These divisions tend to pit whole segments of Black men against others.

Question Bridge has proven to be a progressive and powerfully effective new model for resolving this estrangement. The convention of using media to safely mediate a conversation between Black men from diverse backgrounds has brought healing clarity to both participants and witnesses. This massive video exchange of questions and answers creates a platform for free expression and the broad sharing of previously isolated, or seldom shared, insights. This model builds agency in Black men who participate, because the very process of being asked to formulate questions and answers through media is empowering for otherwise alienated men.

Question Bridge recognizes that our society is interdependent and all Americans are stakeholders in overcoming the marginalization of Black men and boys from mainstream culture; as well as the healthy development of their identity and socio-economic condition. The exclusion of Black men and boys is not only a profound source of injustice, but it threatens the integrity and growth of our democracy as a whole. Part of this continued exclusion is a simple and malice-free lack of familiarity with arguably the most

opaque demographic in America. Individuals from other backgrounds have difficulty accessing Black men due to one or more limitations (e.g., geography, class, language, religion, education, or sexuality). This lack of familiarity creates voids in understanding about the intentions, behaviors, capacities, morality, and ideologies of Black men that are often filled with limiting assumptions and third-party accounts. This is a dangerous practice that can cultivate fear, bias, apathy, and prejudice that marginalizes Black men and stagnates collective advancement by hindering the creation of valuable social, civic, and business relationships across race and gender lines.

Question Bridge uses a unique mix of 21st-century circumstances and the magnetic power of art to create a tool for Black men to define their own identity in a dynamic, comprehensive, complex and perpetual manner. For the first time ever, a critical mass of people is indoctrinated into a social networking culture enabled by unprecedented access to technology. This project is uniquely effective at shattering stereotypes associated with “Black males,” so both participants and witnesses are freed to recognize each Black man as an individual with limitless potential.

Individual Black men are able to express agency, which effectively releases them from the constraints of stereotypes that lead to low expectations. The witnesses are able to break from static 20th century thinking about identity and adopt a multi-dimensional logic for processing the bombardment of largely media generated data they receive about Black men.

The campaign has had a life-span of five years. The results of the campaign have been documented in a book and curriculum for high schools and universities, and the art, website and trademark will be donated to the Smithsonian National Museum of African American Culture and History.

Target location: The United States

Target audience: To achieve an impact, the team

needed a significant number of Black American men to participate in the project, a significant number of the American public to witness the project, a significant number of thought leaders to include the project in their discourse, and a significant number of cultural workers and students to replicate the project.

Events that opened up the projects to new user groups: The project had robust coverage from many media outlets, which stimulated participation and awareness, but since the team's target was broad it didn't necessarily open up new user groups. The project had a notable amount of visibility and interest in the UK.

USER ENGAGEMENT

Platforms: Online and mobile, 5-Channel & Single Channel Installations/Screenings, 10-module Curriculum

Users: 1.5 million direct users via all platforms; 3 million indirect users via amplification media

Social media:

- Facebook: www.facebook.com/QuestionBridgeBlackMales (2,500 fans)
- Twitter: twitter.com/questionbridge (3,000 followers)
- Instagram: instagram.com/questionbridge

Efforts to reach particular demographic groups:

The team created "street teams" with mission-aligned youth programs focused on helping "unwired" black men create a profile and contribute to the project.

CHANGES IN AWARENESS/BEHAVIOR

Goals: Using a variety of media and community engagement strategies, *Question Bridge* aims to reach millions of Americans and directly involve several hundred thousand Black men and boys in an educational and social project aimed at radically changing perceptions of Black males among themselves and in the population at large.

Question Bridge aims to break through ways of understanding identity that can lead to exclusion and estrangement of the "other." It aims to represent and redefine Black male identity in America and create a healing dialogue that breaks monochromatic stereotypes, replaces estrangement with familiarity among Black men, and moves them from exclusion to inclusion in American society at large.

What happened: Since launching the curriculum in 2011, the exhibition in 2012, and the website and street teams in 2014, *Question Bridge: Black Males* has been in almost 50 museums, festivals, galleries and public art spaces, gathered over 1,000 fingerprint profiles from Black men reframing their identity in their own terms and had more than 3 million impressions via QuestionBridge.com, partner websites, social media and press. The project has used by influencers, academia and activists to increase Black male achievement, decrease systemic brutality on the black male body and consciousness, and deconstruct a narrow approach to identity framing in general.

In September 2016, after four years of development and five years of activity as a transmedia art project, *Question Bridge: Black Males* will find its permanent home within the distinguished brick-and-mortar and digital walls of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (SNMAAHC). This Institution is the perfect steward of this project and the many black male voices that contributed to its creation. Not only will they ensure that the work is available for future generations and scholars, but they will hold it as a living archive that allows additional black male voices to contribute and respond to this historic dialogue.

Evaluation strategy: The team tracked several milestones, including:

- Covered over 150 times in prominent national and local press. Highlights include coverage from BBC News, *Time Magazine*, *the New York Times*, *Fast Company*

magazine, Huffington Post, Ebony.com, Policy Mic, Global Grind, Upworthy, Complex, The Root, and Color Lines.

- As the project expanded, many industry leaders and intellectuals have referenced *Question Bridge* as a model for the future of interactive transmedia projects.
- The team participated as keynotes or attendees at various conferences and workshops, including the AVID national conference, iDocs Interactive Documentary Conference, the 99 U conference, NetRoots Nation, Brooklyn Historical Society, Impact Funders Convening, and countless other events.
- Team members have been invited to be included as a case study in a future iDocs publication surveying the field.
- In 2013, the team completed a successful Kickstarter campaign with the help of over 600 backers. It used the \$75,000 raised to complete the most recent launch of a beta website and mobile app.
- To date, over 450,000 people have seen the exhibition in more than 35 museums and cultural institutions throughout the country.
- The team has partnered with Aperture Foundation to publish a book surveying the project and its impact over the past three years.

Common themes that emerge in reflecting on the project include: partnership development, exit strategy planning, time management, and team capacity building. Since the project launched, the team has found that selecting the right partners is critical: strong partners increased the depth and impact of the project; weak ones resulted in lost time and resources.

The team also learned on-the-fly with regards to building technology. There are unique conditions to working with developers that impact timelines, promotional strategy, and financial resources. Having a deeper understanding of how to manage developers could have saved stress, time, and personnel resources. The creators want the project to be sustainable even as they move on to new

projects and pursuits, and they have learned that considering an exit plan at the initial stages of a project can be liberating and effective.

The team considered partnering with a research institution to see if it could find empirical data that people who viewed or participated in *Question Bridge* had a quantitative shift in implicit bias via instruments such as the Implicit Association Test. However, the team was never able to set that analysis structure in place. The project did garner a high volume of testimonials from participants and from witnesses. The common theme is that *Question Bridge* exploded stereotypes, humanized the participants, and exposed a diversity of thought.

Press examples:

- *Time*: "The Question Bridge Project: Redefining Black Male Identity"
time.com/75987/the-question-bridge-project-redefining-black-male-identity/
- *The Root*: "Corcoran Gallery Explores Black Male Experience"
www.theroot.com/articles/culture/2013/12/corcoran_gallery_explores_black_male_experience.html
- MSNBC: "Stories of the Black Male Identity"
www.msnbc.com/melissa-harris-perry/watch/stories-of-the-black-male-identity-44153411537

Notable social media conversations:

A series of Blueprint Roundtables around the country engaged black men in responding to the question from the hip-hop generation posed to the civil-rights generation: "Why didn't you leave us the blueprint?" Example: [youtube.com/watch?v=4_37slxpCeU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4_37slxpCeU)

Events: The signature events were the Blueprint Roundtables. Additional events include Artist Talks, Educator Trainings, Curriculum Implementations, Street Teams, receptions, and community screenings.

Event goals: The goal was to stimulate dialogue within a community about strategies that members can employ to see a shift in Black male achievement and community/family healing, to diversify media representation of Black men, and to build inclusive communities.

Event attendees: These events began earlier (2007) than the formal launch (2012). Attendees are estimated in the 50,000 range.

User participation in ongoing development: Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture (SNMAAHC) will open the *Question Bridge: Black Males* exhibition in September 2016 and will keep it on display for no less than twelve months (August 2017). After this initial exhibition, the Smithsonian has the right to display the work at their discretion, as they will be the formal archive partner for the project. During the 2016-2017 exhibition at SNMAAHC the *Question Bridge* team will design related programming, which may include roundtable discussions, field trips and other educational programming, docent training, artist talks and influencer talks.

QuestionBridge.com will continue to operate under ownership of SNMAAHC by September 2017. The *Question Bridge* team will design and execute a social media campaign to bring visibility to the exhibition and the archiving of this historic project at SNMAAHC; and to stimulate widespread participation in *Question Bridge* before it is archived. Beginning August 1, 2016, and continuing through New Year's Day January 2017, the social media campaign will drive visitors to the exhibition, support activism around black male achievement, and stimulate the creation of an additional 1,000 Black male profiles on the website before it is archived

Natasha Logan will continue working with CBMA to do a book tour for Aperture's book, which should end by December 2016. Chris Johnson will continue to build an education organization to promote the curriculum to schools and youth programs.

Other evidence of behavior change: *Question Bridge* was part of activism movements in Flint, Ferguson, New York, and Los Angeles.

POLITICAL IMPACT

The team was looking to change America's relationship to black men in terms of social relationships, institutional relationships, and political relationships (i.e. policing of black men, incarceration, education). The project was at the center of the larger movement of Black male achievement and Black Lives Matter.

INNOVATION

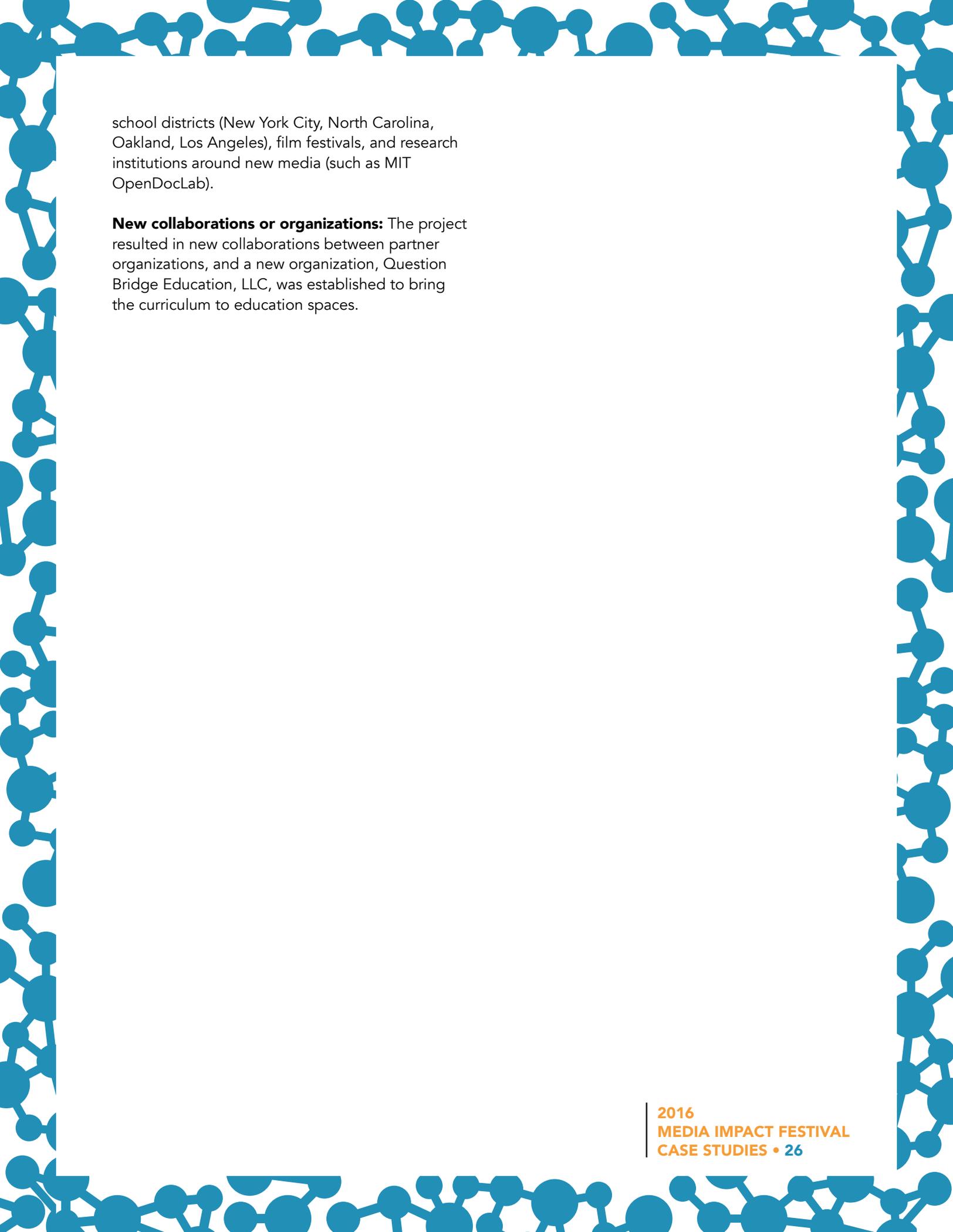
Platform innovation: In 2007, when *Question Bridge* began, the idea of transmedia art projects, interactive documentary or transmedia activism was nascent. This project is revered as a critical one for defining interactive and transmedia storytelling, art and activism, and for using the emerging social media culture, data analytics and access to mobile/computer devices to create a participatory story of the Black male experience.

The team created the first ever group-generated identity map of Black men in America, turning traditional ethnographic and documentary storytelling methodologies on their heads. Removing the observer and interpreter has allowed the complexity, nuance, and diversity to exist in a simple accessible form.

Replication: *Question Bridge* was at the front end of a pioneering wave of media-facilitated dialogue projects, such as *The Whiteness Project*. Created by Whitney Dow, this "interactive investigation" is not a direct replication of *Question Bridge*, but launched subsequent to it.

BUILDING CAPACITY

Key strategic partners: Key strategic partners included all the grantees in the Campaign for Black Male Achievement, the exhibition institutions, key



school districts (New York City, North Carolina, Oakland, Los Angeles), film festivals, and research institutions around new media (such as MIT OpenDocLab).

New collaborations or organizations: The project resulted in new collaborations between partner organizations, and a new organization, Question Bridge Education, LLC, was established to bring the curriculum to education spaces.