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**Library of Congress Grant Awarded to MIT Libraries to Fund Work on Enhanced Open Access Tool, *Exhibit 3.0***

CAMBRIDGE, Mass., January 14, 2011 – The MIT Libraries has been awarded a \$650,000 grant from the Library of Congress for work in collaboration with the MIT Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab (CSAIL) and Zepheira, Inc. on “Exhibit 3.0”, a new project to redesign and expand upon *Exhibit*, the popular open source software tool for searching, browsing and visualizing data on the Web. The goal is to provide libraries, cultural institutions and other organizations grappling with large amounts of digital content, with an enhanced tool that is scalable and useful for data management, visualization and navigation.

According to the Library of Congress, “It is the Library’s intent that this work also will further contribute to the collaborative knowledge sharing among the broader communities concerned about the critical infrastructure that will ensure sustainability and accessibility of digital content over time.”

“This innovative work has already made a considerable impact on digital content communities whose data is diverse and complex. The visualizations bring new understanding to users and curators alike”, said Martha Anderson, Director of the National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program at the Library of Congress.

“We’re extremely fortunate to have the support of the Library of Congress on this important research,” said Ann Wolpert, director of the MIT Libraries. “Our hope is that Exhibit 3.0 will be a useful tool in tackling the daunting challenge all libraries face in ensuring the future sustainability and accessibility of our digital content.”

*Exhibit* was originally developed as part of the MIT Simile Project ([simile.mit.edu](http://simile.mit.edu)), an ambitious collaboration of the MIT Libraries, the MIT CSAIL, and the World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) to explore applications of the Semantic Web to problems of information management across both large-scale digital libraries and small-scale personal collections. *Exhibit* runs inside a Web browser and supports many types of information using common Web standards for data

publishing. Since its release, *Exhibit* has been used by thousands of websites worldwide across a range of diverse industries including cultural heritage, libraries, publishers, medical research, life science and government. Most recently *Exhibit* has been used by DATA.GOV (<http://data.gov/>), an Open Government Initiative by President Obama's administration to increase public access to high value data generated by the Executive Branch of the Federal Government. The application has been used to help demonstrate new ways of visualizing government data.

"We're very pleased that the Library of Congress is supporting our collective development of this important work," said Eric Miller, former MIT Research Scientist and W3C Semantic Web Lead and now President of Zepheira. "The MIT Simile tools in general and *Exhibit* particularly have empowered individuals, organizations and communities who struggle with diverse data sets to explore their data in exciting new ways and share these insights with the community. The Exhibit 3.0 work allows us to expand this capability to larger and more diverse data sets and make it even easier to enable searching, browsing and visualizing data across applications and on the Web."

The Exhibit 3.0 project will redesign and re-implement *Exhibit* to scale from small collections to very large data collections of the magnitude created by the Library of Congress and its National Digital Information Infrastructure and Preservation Program (NDIIPP). The redesigned *Exhibit* will be as simple to use as the current tool but more scalable, more modular, and easier to integrate into a variety of information management systems and websites—offering an improved user experience.

In addition to the Library of Congress, the MIT Libraries and other organizations that manage large quantities of data will collaborate on the project for their own collections. A major focus of the project will be to build a lively community around *Exhibit*, of both users of the software and software developers, to help continuously improve the open source tool.

Another aspect of the new project will incorporate research by students at MIT's CSAIL (Computer Science and Artificial Intelligence Lab) on personal information management. The research will focus on improving the user experience working with data in *Exhibit*, and incorporating new data visualization techniques that allow users to explore data in novel ways.

"Impressive data-interactive sites abound on the web, but right now you need a team of developers to create them. *Exhibit* demonstrated that authoring data-interactive sites can be as easy as authoring a static web page. With Exhibit 3.0 we can move from a prototype to a robust platform that anyone can use to author (not program) rich interactive information visualizations that effectively communicate with their users," said David Karger, computer science professor with CSAIL.

The project will begin in January for a period of one year, and a new website and other communication channels will be publicized soon. For more information see <http://simile-widgets.org/exhibit3>

### **About the MIT Libraries**

The MIT Libraries are actively engaged in tackling the challenges of the 21<sup>st</sup> century library. They are at the forefront of both digital library research and the innovative use of technology for core business functions, and play a key role in the definition of technology used for the teaching activities at MIT. The Libraries conduct research in technology and other aspects of digital libraries, furthering library, scholarly, and educational initiatives. Results of this work include DSpace, an open-source software innovation developed in 2002 by the MIT Libraries and Hewlett Packard. Since its launch, DSpace has been widely adopted as the software of choice for institutional digital repositories, with over 800 organizations worldwide currently using the software.

### **About Zepheira LLC**

Zepheira is a US-based professional services firm comprising leaders in web architecture, semantic web standards, and linked data principles used to achieve integration of data stored in multiple systems and formats across organizations. Zepheira experts have a long history of leading Internet standards initiatives and delivering solutions founded in open standards and open source software. These solutions apply social computing principles and focus on allowing communities to collaborate around the analysis and curation of their data. Zepheira's solutions benefit a broad range of industries including memory organizations, manufacturing, financial services, medical research and life sciences. The company is privately held and has offices in Virginia, Ohio and Colorado. For more information, visit: <http://zepheira.com>.