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|  | **STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT FUND**  **APPLICATION FORM** |

**Name of Proposal:** Applied Digital Cultures Lab

**Name of Project Coordinator:** David N. Wright

**Date of Submission:** Oct. 17, 2011

**Concept:** A written concept paper must be submitted to the Vice President’s Academic Council (VPAC) for all newprogram proposals. Verbal notification to VPAC is required for significant program changes as per the Strategic Development Fund Guidelines.

**Proposed Project:** (Provide a brief description of the specific project activity for which you are seeking funding. Include information regarding the available faculty

resource for successful completion of the project and planned contribution of professional development and/or accountable time.)

**Deliverables:** (List the specific deliverables or outcomes that will be achieved if the project is funded.)

**Timeframe:** (Provide an outline of the general timeline; i.e. start and finish dates and dates for completion of specific deliverables.)

**College and Faculty Strategic Directions:** (Describe how this project fits with both the College and your Faculty strategic directions.)

**Strategic Gains:** (Describe how this proposal will enhance the educational environment of the College.)

**Rank:** (If more than one proposal is coming forward from your Faculty, indicate the priority ranking assigned to this project.)

**Resources: N/A**

**Faculty Release Time Requested:** N/A

**Other Resources Requested:** $2650

**Applied Digital Cultures Lab**

David N. Wright (Research and Scholarly Activity)

Total Amount of Request: **$2650**

The creation of the Applied Digital Cultures Lab, housed within the Office of Research and Scholarly Activity, will provide a space for faculty to experiment with, and develop projects using, emerging digital tools for research and dissemination. Taking its cue from current trends in Humanities scholarship toward a more collaborative environment that encourages the use of on-line communities and modes of dissemination, the lab will provide a “storefront” for external funding and position the College as an innovator in supporting modes of digital practice for post-secondary education in the Lower Mainland.

Once established, the Applied Digital Cultures Lab will be entirely self-supporting. Culling resources from faculty on the vanguard of current trends in research and pedagogy, the Lab aims to build an on-line “sandbox” where individuals—students, faculty, community members—can employ digital tools to develop research projects or engage in collaborative environments. All software associated with developing these “sandboxes” for digital research and the presentation / dissemination of research underway at the College will be open source and free. In fact, one of the initiatives of the Applied Digital Cultures Lab will be to encourage the manipulation of open source platforms so that they are tailored to the specifics of the research itself. One of the Lab’s primary goals is to identify and develop the different subject-area requirements for integrating current research practices into emerging modes of digital scholarship.

Ideally, the Lab provides a structure where the College asserts its stake in building and nurturing digital environments that engage faculty and students. Experiential and experimental in nature, the Lab creates pathways for institutional collaboration with other emerging digital research / pedagogical initiatives such as CultureNet (Capilano), Digital Café (Kwantlen), the Electronic Textual Cultures Lab at the University of Victoria, and the “Digital Literacy and the Digital Humanities” project in the Language and Literacy Education department at the University of British Columbia. In short, there are a number of burgeoning enterprises in precisely the areas covered by the Applied Digital Cultures Lab; we would be remiss to let ourselves be left behind.

The Lab’s existence would also provide a forum for sharing integrated practices and involving students in research. A consistent problem for the College’s attainment of outside research funding is the difficulty—particularly in the Humanities and Languages—in finding ways for faculty to integrate students as assistants in their research. The Lab, with its cross-disciplinary and cross-platform approach, provides precisely the space in which, for example, a student enrolled in Computer Science courses could work with a faculty member in Biology or English to create an on-line database, website, or otherwise, for the faculty member’s research. Moreover, the Lab would support a faculty member wanting to develop an international project or partnership by utilizing the collaborative tools for digital scholarship, allowing for ongoing work without the demands of international travel. While not all digital tools relevant for higher education translate into corporate or community settings, the Lab nonetheless provides a space where students can understand the demands and apparatus for digital communication, something they will no doubt find invaluable as they move on into other pedagogical and professional venues.

The Applied Digital Cultures Lab, as its name implies, seeks to provide a space for the application of emerging digital cultures—social media, blogging, database development, data mining, collaboration—in research and pedagogical practices at the College. While there are numerous sites for the application of digital tools in research and pedagogical practice at the university level, colleges remain an underserved and nascent space with a distinctive set of institutional demands. As the College moves forward into more on-line teaching, encouraging student engagement through its on-line portals, and an even greater international profile, the Lab will represent a space for innovation and experimentation, providing venues and support for faculty and students to connect, and produce a variety of digital “storefronts” showcasing our position as a leader in the creation and support of digital cultures in post-secondary education.

**Support Requested:**

1. The College recognizes the existence of the Applied Digital Cultures Lab, allowing the Lab to then apply for external funding and begin to recruit interested individuals.
2. The College provides dedicated server space on the College website, or an outside server within Canada, for the Lab, and that this space **not** be administered or supported by CEIT. The annual cost for an outside service would be $150.00
3. The College covers the cost for David N. Wright to attend the week-long 2012 Digital Humanities Summer Seminar at the University of Victoria in order to initiate partnerships, publicize the Lab, and continue training in digital tools for research and pedagogy. The cost of the seminar, including accommodation and travel, is $2500.00.

**Timelines:**

1. November 2011 through May 2012: establish the Lab, establish web presence, and collate possible projects for the Lab.
2. May 2012 through September 2012: publicize the Lab, investigate and initiate partnerships with similar structures at other institutions locally and internationally. Prepare to integrate the lab with on-line pedagogical professional development.
3. September 2012 through January 2013: apply for SSHRC startup grant, begin projects as possible, investigate and initiate liaisons with programs at the College (Business / Humanities Fine Arts Degree / Media Studies in LLPA / Environmental Ecology / Training Group / The Library). Support faculty moving into on-line pedagogical environments as needed.
4. January 2013 through May 2013: Assess the viability and success of the Lab, refine or develop as needed. Continue with ongoing initiatives and projects.
5. May 2013 through September 2014: Sponsor a summer institute for College-level students and faculty in digital scholarship, or an “unconference” on digital practice in post-secondary education. Investigate and initiate a course in the Digital Humanities as a cross-Faculty course.
6. September 2014 through January 2015: Investigate and initiate a Digital Studies program that puts into practice the applications developed in the Lab over the preceding two years of its existence.
7. January 2015: examine the viability and success of the Lab. Reassert strategic directions to align with College strategic directions.