



Stanford University

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Professor Bernd Girod, Director
Brown Institute for Media Innovation
Stanford University

Dear Prof. Girod and the Brown Magic Grant Evaluation Committee,

We are writing to submit our proposal to the Magic Grant program at the Brown Institute for Media Innovation. We are a **bicoastal team** combining the crowdsourcing and human-computer interaction (HCI) background of Stanford's Computer Science Department and the natural language processing (NLP) experience of Columbia's Computer Science Department. Our team combines the pioneers of crowdsourcing in HCI with forefront of the understanding of narrative in natural language to tackle the most important and most illusive aspect of communication: emotional impact.

The proposal is titled **Generating Emotional Impact in Narrative**. People live their lives by stories. We respond to stories not only because of the information they contain, but also because stories have emotional impact. They make us laugh and cry, they surprise us and they leave us awestruck. Our goal is to decompose the act of creating emotional impact into a process that novices can follow. We first focus on the domain of writing humor. Our preliminary work has decomposed humor and enabled novices to write jokes as funny as experts 37% of the time and is continuing to improve with use. People want to be funny, especially on social media because it is a place to influence friends and a way to be heard by strangers. **We will build a website to make our humor process available to the world.**

We will generalize to our results to other domains. In this grant we will extend our work to capture the fear and suspense in life and death real life narratives mined from the Internet. In the next five years, we think it is possible to extend our insights on emotional impact to improve the engagement and effectiveness of educational materials.

Please feel free to contact us at:

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Sincerely,

Professor James A. Landay