

# A Web 2.0 Enabled Content Management System for Rural Youth Photographers: Social Computing Supporting Community Empowerment

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## Growing Tennessee: Rural Youth Cultivate Common Ground

Youth from rural Appalachian and migrant / seasonal farm families join to learn photography skills, lighting, film development. Children aged 11 to 16 learned techniques from local professional photographers

### Growing Tennessee Project Goals

Provide a creative educational outlet for rural youth

Promote cross-cultural awareness

Through shared experience, identify cultural similarities

Develop youth self-esteem

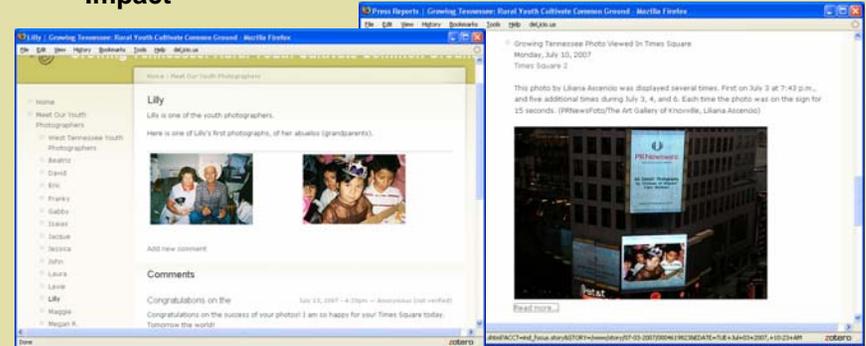
Improve aesthetic, media literacy

Encourage youth to continue education beyond high school

"The children are already very proud of their cultural traditions, and it's great to be able to help them share them with each other. One of the goals of the project is to get children of different backgrounds interacting on a deeper level than they might otherwise."

- J. Crowe

## Impact



"My desire [is] to go to college and participate in programs like this ... to show people who don't understand our culture or the way we live that we aren't bad. I don't want to be another girl who doesn't go to college or make a difference in the world if I have a chance to."

- Lilly, 16, youth photographer

## Implications

System design / requirements can be expressed informally

Large-scale Free / Open Source software development projects rely upon technology-mediated, informal methods (Sandusky & Gasser)

Community members unlikely to know software engineering conventions, processes, or formalisms

Notes from meetings and phone calls, e-mail constitute data to create use scenarios to drive system design

System development can be geographically distributed

Face-to-face, personal contact is essential to learning about each other, establishing trust

First iteration of Growing Tennessee Web site developed by participants in Tennessee, Illinois, and Massachusetts

Technologists can cede control over structure and content to the community

Let many flowers bloom: embrace community ideas and innovation

Gently guide discussions and offer suggestions

Perform the more complex tasks with community guidance and feedback

Scalability of approach is unknown

Will distributed, egalitarian approach scale to include:  
Dozens of youth photographers?  
Other volunteers?  
School of Information Sciences graduate students?



## Future

Expand range of media included in the program

Creative writing: biography, fiction, poetry, blogging

Time-based media: audio and video; digital storytelling

Information and communication technologies: information systems design, image manipulation, content creation and posting, mashups

Youth-led presentations of the project and creative activities

Opportunities for youth to influence design

Youth participation in CMS administration and design activities

Research on effectiveness and impact

Expand range of participants

Urban youth in Tennessee  
Migrant seasonal farm families in other regions  
School of Information Sciences graduate and undergraduate students



Franky

Miranda

Maggie

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