Supporting the development of digital playful exploratory resources to combat mis/disinformation through online intergenerational co-design

Project Summary: The University of Washington iSchool (PI: Jason Yip) requests $249,745 from the *National Leadership Grants for Libraries* program for an implementation project grant (Goal 1: Objective 1.1). The overall need is to equip children (ages 6 - 13) with the resilience and knowledge they need to combat misinformation. The intended impact is to **co-design, promote, and nationally disseminate a set of innovative online play-based digital activities for children around combating misinformation in libraries nationwide**. To do this, we will develop online intergenerational co-design teams across the USA led by librarians and teens around misinformation. The partner organizations for this project are The Seattle Public Library (SPL), San Diego Public Library, and WA State rural libraries.

Project Justification: Growing up digital has had a tremendous impact on children today. This is a formative period where children gain their first exposure to different forms of misinformation via social media platforms (e.g., TikTok, YouTube), online digital games, and other digital platforms [3]. This exposure occurs outside the eye of parents, educators, and librarians. Children need effective resources and activities to equip them with the knowledge and skills they need to navigate misinformation [12]. While libraries have been delivering information literacy programs for children, current approaches have focused on workshops, one day events, academic web resources, and teaching strategies for better access and evaluation of information [1]. While important, these primarily employ top-down approaches where the information professionals teach children about misinformation [2], rather than focusing on what is important for children. Overall, we have few innovative implementation models about how libraries can support children in dealing with misinformation. In contrast, games and other playful digital activities have shown promise in building resilience to misinformation (e.g., *Bad News* and *Breaking Harmony* [10, 11]). However, most are for older youth and adults [5]. Our proposal fills this critical gap by developing **play-based digital exploration online activities for children** that librarians can utilize with their communities. Digital play can open up a number of potentials that allow children to experience unknown and difficult situations (e.g., misinformation) and experiment with decision-making [9]. We are proposing to co-create digital online activities that allow children to safely experiment and learn about misinformation without the pressures of negative consequences.

Project Work Plan: Our *process* for designing new play-based activities will employ teens (ages 14-17) as leaders of intergenerational co-design teams with children (ages 6 - 13), librarians, and MLIS students. [7, 13]. Our prior work in developing intergenerational co-design groups of children, teens, and librarians has proven effective for developing new digital curriculum [13], creating relational bonds between librarians and communities [7], and allowing teens to innovate in design [8]. By having **teens lead co-design groups of children as near-peer leaders**, we can better identify types of misinformation children commonly encounter and develop play-based exploratory activities that support their digital literacy transition towards adolescence. From 2017 - 2021, we have been at the forefront of online and local co-design groups at SPL, San Diego Public Library, and WA state rural libraries. Since COVID-19, our team has focused strictly on an online co-design implementation model, which is ready for collaboration now beyond the West Coast [6, 13].

Our *outcomes* will be a collection of play-based digital artifacts, curriculum, and programs, designed with connected learning principles [4], that equip children with the knowledge and skills to build resilience to misinformation. The specific forms will be determined by the co-design team; examples include escape rooms, digital games, scavenger hunts using TikTok, and tabletop/card games in digital spaces. Our design work is informed by field-leading misinformation research at the UW Center for an Informed Public (CIP), which has hosted the first Misinformation Day for teens, and UW GAMER group, which has co-created an escape room for misinformation education with CIP, as well as a digital card game and a VR game for supporting youth's mental health and wellbeing.

Project funding from IMLS will allow us to incorporate findings from our 2017 - 2022 co-design with librarians with our work in misinformation to develop a fully online digital curriculum and set of activities libraries can utilize with children. Our team is made up of Dr. Jason Yip (co-design research), Dr. Jin Ha Lee (new media and digital games research), Chris Coward (misinformation research), Dr. Lindsay Morse (immersive games), and Juan Rubio (The Seattle Public Library).

Year 1: Local co-designing, creation, and pilot testing
Process: In Fall 2022, we will build and co-design the digital experience with teen-led intergenerational design groups at SPL. In Winter and Spring 2023, the focus will be on pilot testing of the digital immersive collaborative experience on misinformation for children and libraries. For Summer 2023, we will deploy and evaluate a larger-scale test of the collaborative experience for children and libraries to four branches at the SPL (Columbia City, Beacon Hill, South Park, Rainier Beach), which serve a primarily BIPOC population.
Outcomes: We will work with CIP, GAMER Group, and SPL to transition aspects of their prior projects building playful digital collaborative immersive experiences for children specifically. At this time, we will continue work with teen-led co-design groups online and training new teens for co-design. We will work with teens as leaders to have them support the testing of the pilot activities.
Year 2: Expansion of co-design and testing
Process: We will work with new online library partners across the country beyond Seattle (e.g., San Diego, rural WA areas, etc.), specifically advised by University of Maryland (urban co-design) and Boise State University (rural co-design) teams who have worked with us before.
Outcomes: We will analyze the data, write up the findings, and produce the final second draft set of modular curriculum and activities for libraries for children.
Year 3: Large scale dissemination campaign
Process: We will conduct a large-scale dissemination campaign with UW CIP, Young Adult Library Services Association, the Joan Ganz Cooney Center (Sesame Workshop), WebJunction, and Loki's Loop to distribute our activities and digital collaborations across five branches in Seattle, three San Diego branches, and rural libraries in WA, CA, ID, and MD networks.
Outcomes: A final set of remote digital activities (e.g., TikTok scavenger hunts, escape rooms, digital games) freely available online for librarians nationwide with guides, videos, and other support materials.

Diversity Plan: The project is committed to selecting half of the participating libraries and youth from communities with significant rural, historically marginalized, or lower-income populations. We will also ensure that diversity is one of our guiding principles as we create the experience (e.g., diverse representation of names, persons, cultural elements). Advisory board members will include Dr. Tamara Clegg (play-based learning), Cindy Aden (former WA state librarian), Dr. Elizabeth Bonsignore (urban co-design, digital games), Dr. Jerry Fails (rural co-design), and the CIP.

Project Results: The outcome of this implementation will be three digital experiences, a modular set of digital curriculum and materials for libraries developed by librarians, teen-leaders, children, and MLIS students across the nation. We are also creating webinars, videos, and other support materials to help librarians integrate these activities into their communities. Finally, we will be creating guides and processes to support librarians run their own future online co-design teams.

Budget Summary: We request $249,745 including: $120,440 for faculty, research scientists, and student salaries and benefits; $20,000 for consultants, advisors, and library participant stipends; $10,000 for a subcontract; $4,500 for supplies; $37,478 for PhD tuition; and $57,327 for indirect costs (37%).

References: Located in Google Docs.