

iConference 2014: Student Social Media Expo

Berlin, Germany, March 4-7, 2014

iConference Home: <http://ischools.org/the-iconeference/>

### **iCONFERENCE SOCIAL MEDIA EXPO: Showcasing exceptional student research and development**

The iConference, in collaboration with FUSE Labs of Microsoft Research, is pleased to announce the second iConference Social Media Expo. The exposition is designed to showcase exceptional interdisciplinary research and development work from iSchool programs specializing in social media. Students are asked to form interdisciplinary teams of 3-5 students to conduct a specific research, design, development or community-engagement project. Each project should explore a technological solution to meeting a concrete need or opportunity around the theme of **leveraging social media to foster a smarter society**. (See below for more detail on this year's theme.)

Selection for participation will involve two stages. First, by November 1, 2013, a faculty sponsor must express an interest in participating in the iConference Social Media Expo on behalf of their students with a one page Letter of Interest. (See template Letter of Interest below.)

Second, by December 2, 2013, final projects will be submitted for consideration in the form of 4 page abstracts and a 3-5 minute video. (See below for Submission instructions.)

A panel of reviewers in the iSchool community will select the best student projects to be invited to present at the iConference Social Media Expo. Selection will be based on three criteria: clarity of the expressed need or opportunity; creativity in approach; evidence that both social and technological sciences contribute to the solution.

Participating iSchools will receive a grant of \$3,000 to cover an estimated 50 percent of the cost for their selected team to attend the iConference, with the expectation the school will cover the remaining costs.

The iConference Social Media Expo is only open to student teams from member-institutions of the iSchools organization (<http://ischools.org>). Although we seek to involve a representative team from as many iSchools as possible, this year's final selections will be made based on each project's merit. More than one group may be selected from a given school if so warranted by the quality of submissions.

All accepted submissions will be published in the IDEALS open repository: <https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/handle/2142/14872>

## TIMELINE

- **November 1, 2013:** Faculty sponsors for participating student groups submit a one page Letter of Interest.
- **December 2, 2013:** Student groups submit 4 page abstracts with 3-5 minute videos summarizing their group projects
- **December 16, 2013:** Student groups are notified if they are invited to participate in the iConference Social Media Expo
- **March 4-7, 2014:** iConference Social Media Expo 2014 at the iConference in Berlin, Germany

iConference 2014 takes place March 4-7, 2014 in Berlin, Germany. It is presented by the iSchools organization and hosted by The Berlin School of Library and Information Science at Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin; its program is administered by the Royal School of Library and Information Science, University of Copenhagen. The presenting sponsor is Microsoft Research; additional support provided by Emerald Publishing and De Gruyter.

## **THE 2014 CHALLENGE—Leveraging Social Media to Foster Smarter Societies**

In the past decade—with the advent of big social data and participatory social media—one of the most striking transformations in people’s everyday experiences with technology is that computing has extended its reach beyond the home and the enterprise and into the town square. [Citation: Smart societies: from citizens as sensors to collective action; <http://doi.acm.org/10.1145/2486227.2486249>]

Societal computing embodies a vision of social technology as an instrument for gaining awareness of societal patterns, and for supporting large-scale collective action. Looking to the future, we believe the most innovative work will emerge from interdisciplinary conversation and collaboration, and through the Social Media Expo we seek to inspire that conversation with a growing number of individuals and groups actively engaged with this topic.

## **How do we leverage large scale socio-technical systems toward a smarter society?**

Social media in particular has properties that enable emergent, networked groups of people to develop a new awareness of large-scale societal patterns, and to engage in large-scale collective action, collaborating to achieve common social goods. We see this often in the context of public, bottom-up, agile, ad-hoc organizations at the level of neighborhoods, cities, countries, and even global communities.

**Toward societal self-awareness:** Examining large-scale social data helps us understand and reflect on historical and real-time aggregate behavior. This information analysis is useful not only to governments and large organizations but also to average citizens, who can gain a deeper understanding of their society.

**Toward collective action:** These new social media tools, platforms, channels, and practices facilitate civic engagement—those civic and political activities motivated by a desire for social change—ranging from community awareness to voting, from government accountability to public dissent. Such **civic media** is motivated by a desire to foster social change in both local and global communities. The low-effort, participatory, networked communication of social media now enables a variety of individual and organizational structures to achieve the key tasks of collective action heretofore largely the domain of formal organizations: *identifying* people with common interests, *communicating* with them as a group, and *coordinating* their efforts.

**How would you, as an interdisciplinary team, recommend we foster our goals of societal self-awareness and collective action through socio-technical systems?**

FUSE Labs as an R&D team would approach this problem with a combination of user research, design explorations, prototyping, real world deployments with usage analysis, or community engagement. We encourage you to answer this question with a similarly interdisciplinary approach – involving at least two of these various stages. Through a combination of design stages and methodologies, your team should provide a strong argument for an innovative solution to the stated problem.

We expect projects may incorporate user research, design, prototyping, and/or system evaluation around topics such as:

- Collecting and evaluating big social data
- Statistical/algorithmic work for detecting and summarizing societal patterns
- Visualization of societal patterns
- Designing for large scale collective action
- Supporting emergent, community-based civic activities in addition to direct governmental involvement

## **TEMPLATE LETTER OF INTEREST**

Faculty: Please use the following template for your Letter of Interest, adapted to your particular school, program, or course. The information to be provided by you is in brackets. Once you submit your Letter of Interest, you will receive an acknowledgment. Faculty sponsors are expected to provide some guidance to

student groups in submitting their projects, and one faculty sponsor from each school will be required to provide reviews (in short form) for submissions from his or school. Please send your Letter of Interest via email to Shelly Farnham ([shellyfa@microsoft.com](mailto:shellyfa@microsoft.com)) by November 1, 2013.

**Date:** November 1, 2013

**To:** Shelly Farnham, FUSE Labs Microsoft Research ([shellyfa@microsoft.com](mailto:shellyfa@microsoft.com))

**From:** [School's faculty sponsor and primary contact person]

**Subject:** Letter of Interest for the iConference Social Media Expo 2014

I am writing to express interest on behalf of [your program, your school, student group(s)] in participating in the iConference's Social Media Expo.

**About us:** [Provide a description of your school, related social media program(s) or course(s) involved, if applicable, and the character of students involved.]

**Participating student groups:** [Provide a description of how you expect student groups to participate: as a part of a class, several classes, independent study, on their own.]

We acknowledge that our submission is not guaranteed acceptance; final selections for presentation at the iConference Social Media Expo will be decided by the committee based on merit. We further acknowledge that should our entry be accepted, we will receive a \$3,000 US grant, expected to cover about 50 percent travel and conference fee expenses for our school's participating student group—and that we will make our best effort to cover the remaining travel costs through our own fund-raising efforts. Finally, I agree to provide reviews (short form ratings) of the projects submitted from my school. [Note: in the previous year, 1-5 projects were submitted from each participating school; this year, more than one entry per school may be selected, if quality so warrants.]

My contact information is provided below:

[Name]

[Title]

[Department]

[School]

[Email]

[Phone number]

## **ABSTRACT SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

**Length:** Abstract can be up to 4 pages, no more than 2,500 words.

**Format:** Submissions should be in PDF format. Copy should be single-spaced, 1-inch margins, 12-point Times New Roman font, no title page. All submissions must be in English.

**Submit:** Upload the abstract to the iConference submission site:  
<https://www.conftool.com/iConference2014/>

## **VIDEO SUBMISSION GUIDELINES**

**Length:** 3-5 minutes.

**Format:** We accept any format that may be successfully uploaded to YouTube, including QuickTime Movie, MP4 Video, Windows Media Video. Accepted submissions will be posted in our 2014 YouTube channel, so we recommend that you please test your submission's formatting by uploading and playing it on YouTube.

**Size:** Video file should be 130 megabytes or less.

**Title Slide:** Include a title slide in your video that has your project title, student names, and school.

**Submit:** Submit your video by uploading it to a file sharing system and sending the link to [shellyfa@microsoft.com](mailto:shellyfa@microsoft.com). Be sure to give your file a unique and easily identifiable name. Dropbox or SkyDrive preferred.

### **Tips for improved video submission quality:**

- Immediately state your problem, and describe how your project explores or answers the problem
- Avoid too many talking heads, use a voice over instead
- Use illustrative slides, screen animations, photos, or video clips where possible
- Add an underlying music track
- Review last year's videos for more insights:  
<http://www.youtube.com/channel/UCE5Kx8gxiooOVwDejxvrbBg/videos>

### **Recommended video editing software:**

Most Macs and PCs will have pre-installed or free-to-download video editing software, such as MovieMaker or iMovie. (See: <http://www.digitaltrends.com/computing/best-free-video-editing-software/> for recommendations.) Tools such as Camtasia may be used for screen capturing presentations or software demonstrations with voice-overs, and often come with free trial periods.

## **SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS**

**Letters of Interest:** email to Shelly Farnham ([shellyfa@microsoft.com](mailto:shellyfa@microsoft.com)). Due Nov. 1, 2013.

**4-Page Abstract:** upload to the iConference submission site:  
<https://www.conftool.com/iConference2014/> Due Dec. 2, 2013

**3-5 Minute Video:** Upload a file sharing system, Dropbox or SkyDrive preferred. Send the link to Shelly Farnham ([shellyfa@microsoft.com](mailto:shellyfa@microsoft.com)). Be sure to give your file a unique and easily identifiable name. Due Dec. 2, 2013.

## **ORGANIZING COMMITTEE**

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## **About FUSE Labs**

Microsoft Research, FUSE Labs is a world-class research and rapid prototyping lab focused on innovation in social technologies, thinking 3-5 years out. The lab works in partnership with product and research teams to ideate, develop, and deliver new social, real-time, and media-rich experiences for home and work. FUSE Labs experiences give users new ways to create, connect and collaborate with the people, information and ideas that matter to them. Learn more at:  
<http://fuse.microsoft.com/>

## **About the iConference**

The iConference series is presented by the iSchools Caucus (<http://ischools.org>), a growing association of Schools, Faculties and Colleges in North America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Participation in the Social Media Expo is limited to iSchool member-institutions. However, affiliation with the iSchools is not required to participate in the iConference—all information scholars and practitioners are invited.

Learn more at: <http://ischools.org/the-iconference/>