

Found Footage Final Report

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Project Summary

With the generous grant conferred by the Kathryn Wasserman Davis 100 Projects for Peace Initiative, we created Found Footage – an innovative new website which features a video database of raw war footage. What is unique about this site is that all the video footage is collected from independent individuals and serves to reveal the true realities of war from a firsthand perspective – a perspective too often lost in mass media and government mediated representations of war. With this site, we also aim to expand our visitors' conception of war from its traditional meaning. We believe that the notion of war is rarely unambiguous and therefore welcome footage of all types of violent conflict, whether in a refugee camp in Chad or during a bombing in Afghanistan.

We worked with many generous groups and individuals to create Found Footage, including our valued project advisor, Ingrid Hale, and our hard-working website developer, Evan Sherwood. This project was also made possible by Colgate University's Information Technology Department, Print Shop, Peace and Conflict Studies Department, and our legal advisors. The Internet-based focus of our project conveniently allowed us to communicate and collaborate online from various corners of the country. The scope of our project was extremely far-reaching. In order to institute this website, we had to address: website development/design, website content/maintenance, legal affairs, human resources/hiring, administrative tasks, financial operations, and promotion/outreach. We divided the responsibilities and pursued these various parallel tracks continuously throughout the summer.

Project Results

An amazing feature of our project is that it will truly live on beyond the project deadline. Our initial timeline predicted website completion by August 1st and allotted time in August for video collection and website publicity. However, as with any technology-based project, we hit some inevitable roadblocks. First, due to our limited experience in website creation, we had to hire a knowledgeable and patient website developer/designer in order to make our vision a reality. For this important role, we hired Colgate University graduate, Evan Sherwood. Together, the four of us dealt with many obstacles related to developing and designing a fully functional website. These ranged from designing a logo to choosing the right website hosting service to designing the complex infrastructure of the website. We also faced one huge and unexpected issue

related to both website creation and video collection: legality – mainly concerns over copyrights and licensing. In addition, strategizing how to spend our budget within a limited time frame to finance a fundamentally ongoing project was difficult in and of itself.

These challenging factors have shifted our timeline backward; as a result, we are still working to collect video submissions and promote the website. As of the project deadline, the website is fully functional and ready to display footage; all promotional materials are printed and ready to distribute, and all documents needed to solicit and collect footage are completed. Despite the setbacks mentioned, we are proud of our accomplishments and excited to continue working on Found Footage.

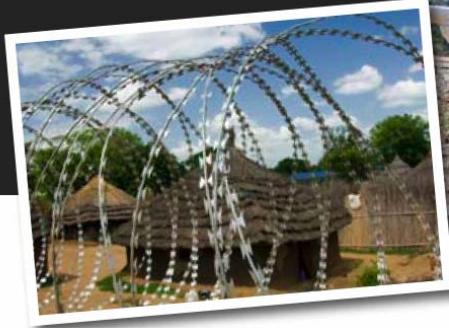
Implications

In the spirit of promoting peace education, Found Footage serves to reveal the realities of war and to trigger a greater commitment to activism. At the onset of this project, each of us felt unaware of the everyday effects of violent conflict, in large part due to our physical distance from violent situations. We wanted to combat this invisible barrier using video because it provides a higher degree of reality than other mediums: nothing quite compares to actually viewing firsthand footage of these tragic experiences. We hope that our viewers are equally affected by the videos on our website and will feel compelled to further their personal efforts to build peace. We, too, will do our part to continue collecting footage, maintaining the website, and promoting this resource in the future.

We cannot begin to detail everything we have learned throughout our work on Found Footage – from specific, tangible skills to larger life lessons. Sachi learned about html coding, Emily is now well versed in managing a budget, and Alyssa gained experience with graphic design. Moreover, we learned the importance of being thorough, working together, communicating, and motivating ourselves and others to maintain a positive work ethic. We clearly took on a project beyond our individual capabilities, and thus discovered the value of others' skills, time, and most importantly, their generosity and willingness to help. Finally, we learned the importance of balancing great ambition with feasibility, without losing sight of either. In short, this opportunity has provided invaluable experiences for each of us, and we feel tremendously grateful to the Kathryn Wasserman Davis 100 Projects for Peace Initiative for making our project possible.

*Emily, Alyssa, and Sachi are all originally from the United States.

Capturing the realities of war.
Firsthand.



please visit our website: www.foundfootage.org

