

AP gets Knight funding to create journalistic tool

June 22 2011

(AP) -- The Associated Press will be among 16 news organizations and Internet entrepreneurs sharing \$4.7 million in funding to design innovative ways to find and deliver news in the digital age.

The funding, announced Wednesday, came through the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation's Knight News Challenge.

The AP's grant will fund a project to help journalists mine large documents for stories. The system, called Overview, will create an interactive, visual display that maps out frequently occurring keywords and shows the relationship between topics, people, places and dates.

In a [proof of concept](#), Overview scanned 400,000 documents from the Iraq war logs and plotted each incident as a colored dot. The dots were clustered based on shared keywords, such as "blindfolded" and "handcuffed." The resulting image quickly highlighted certain themes that guided further exploration.

Knight said the project will get \$475,000 over two years.

The AP plans to share its tool with other news organizations, groups and individuals.

AP [Senior Vice President](#) and [Executive Editor](#) Kathleen Carroll said such a tool would be useful for journalists to analyze data obtained through Freedom of Information Act requests.

"A tool that helps make sense of the material in those caches will help journalists and citizens alike better understand the world," she said.

Among other grants awarded:

- \$150,000 to create Panda, from the [Chicago Tribune](#), Investigative Reporters and Editors and The Spokesman-Review of Spokane, Wash. The set of Web-based tools, like Overview, will seek to find relationships within large data sets.

- \$320,000 to develop a new feature on the Investigative Reporters and Editors' DocumentCloud, a project the Knight News Challenge funded in 2009 to help journalists analyze and share documents online. The new feature will allow newsrooms to invite readers to help pore through and comment on such documents.

Other projects that received funding include iWitness, which a company called Adaptive Path is developing to collect user-generated content over social media during big news events. A nonprofit group, Media and Place Productions, won a grant to build Zeega to help people make multimedia presentations.

Also funded is NextDrop, a system that will inform residents of Hubli city in the Indian state of Karnataka when valves controlling the infrequent flow of water are opened. The project comes from students at Berkeley and Stanford.

Over the five years of the Knight News Challenge, the Knight Foundation has reviewed more than 12,000 applications and funded 76 projects for \$27 million. This year, Google Inc. contributed \$1 million in funding but was not involved in picking winners.

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Citation: AP gets Knight funding to create journalistic tool (2011, June 22) retrieved 24 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2011-06-ap-knight-funding-journalistic-tool.html>

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