Mapping and App-ing Los Angeles:
Connecting our City Through Photo Archives
at the *L.A. Times* and USC Libraries

Coordinators

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Summary

It is well documented that Americans feel less and less attached to their communities, which has resulted in a multitude of problems for the nation's political, economic, and cultural fabric ("What We Do Together: The State of Associational Life in America"). But this decline has also hurt the local news industry - in Los Angeles, for instance, Angelenos' lack of connection to their city has resulted in them purchasing fewer copies of *The Los Angeles Times*, forcing the newspaper to explore nontraditional ways of exhibiting the city's relevance.

Our collaboratory will address these dual issues of a disconnected Los Angeles and a declining local press by working in partnership with the *LA Times* to create an app that maps historic photos, both from the newspaper and USC Libraries archives, around the city. When a user is by a photo site, they can use their camera to overlay the old photo on top of the current view via augmented reality, connecting the city's history to its present. When the user clicks on an old photo, the app will display a detailed description of the photo's history, including links to news articles related to the photo. The app will also provide opportunities to share via social media the different photos/landscapes the user captures, furthering the app's reach.

This collaboratory will be coordinated by staff from the USC Annenberg Center on Communication Leadership and Policy (CCLP): Brianna Johnson (brjohnso@usc.edu), Max Lu (maxlvhao@gmail.com), and Jesse Ryan (ryanja@usc.edu). Students will also be guided by staff at the *LA Times* and tech leaders affiliated with LA-Tech.org. We are looking for highly motivated students who have any or all of the following technical skills: iOS/Android app development, graphic design, photography, GIS/mapping, and programming. But as this is a polymathic endeavor, we are also in need of students who may not be as technically-minded but want to delve

into the *LA Times* and USC Libraries historical archives, curating photos and researching their history in Los Angeles. Every aspect of the students' work will be toward the larger vision of the project, connecting the historical importance of Los Angeles and local journalism to the present in order to increase interest and investment in both.

Proposed Schedule

Our group will meet weekly for an hour on Monday mornings (sometime between 9am and noon). Based on our applicants' schedules, we will pick a time that most suits their needs. As the project gets more established and roles are clearly defined and known, we may reduce the meeting time to every other week.

Desired skills

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