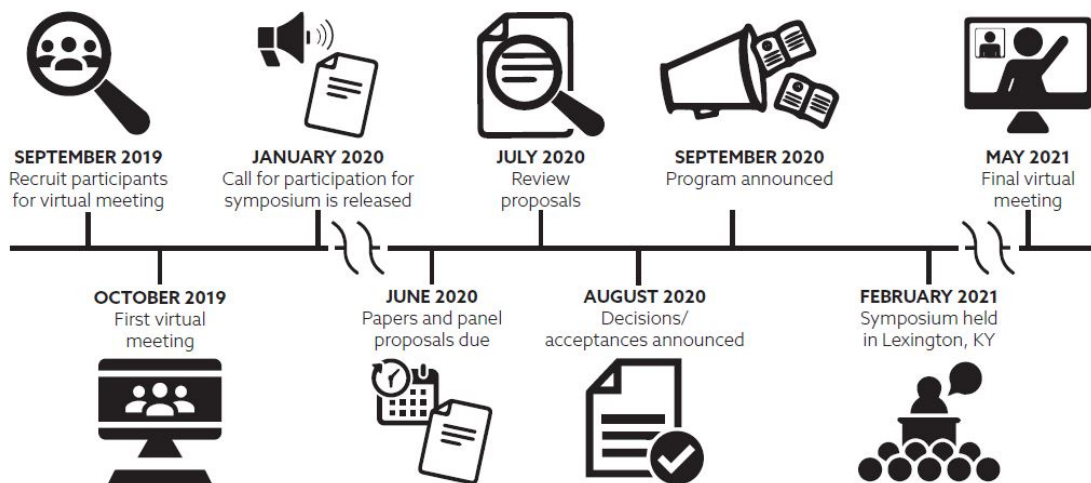**LG-12-19-0051-19 University of Kentucky School of Information Science**

This is a National Forum proposal that addresses the IMLS strategic goal of increasing public access through a focus on internet filtering and disparate access to information. Proposed work falls within the "lifelong learning" category because it addresses barriers that limit access to information resources. The total award sought is $34,634, with no cost sharing.

Statement of National Need: Internet filtering is mandated in public school and public libraries that receive e-rate federal funding. Approximately 94% of schools and at least 51% of public libraries use filters (ALA, 2012; Jaeger et al, 2009; note that the public library percentage is a very conservative estimate). However, implementation of internet filtering is idiosyncratic, as filtering companies use different algorithms, categories, and white- or black-lists to determine which sites get filtered. Researchers have demonstrated that various communities get, in effect, different internets due to filtering (Peterson, Oltmann, & Knox, 2017). This results in unequal access to information, constraining people's ability to find the information they need and desire. Because internet filtering is tied to federal funds, it is more likely to be implemented in low-income areas that need the funding assistance. Thus, information poverty becomes concentrated in areas of economic poverty, compounding injustice. In this national forum, we will investigate these interlocking conceptions of internet filtering and information poverty. This is a crucial area for libraries and their allies because of the resulting unequal access to information and opportunities in already-marginalized communities. However, the national conversation and research on these topics is scarce; this symposium is needed to rejuvenate research, spark new collaborations, and work toward resolving these inequalities. To the best of our knowledge, no similar national forum has been held since 2013.

Project Design: This project consists of three parts: a pre-symposium (first) virtual meeting, a 2-day symposium in Lexington, Kentucky, and a post-symposium (final) virtual meeting (see timeline below). In September 2019, we will begin recruiting participants for the first virtual meeting, to be held in October 2019; in this meeting, participants will generate ideas for research projects and opportunities in anticipation of the symposium. From this meeting, we will generate the call for papers for the symposium (to be distributed in January 2020) and an initial report of research questions/problems in this area. The call for papers will be based on the above statement of national need and will call for socio-economic, information science, library science, technological, or justice-based approaches to this issue. Paper and panel proposals will be due in June 2020, for competitive blind review.

SEPTEMBER 2019	JANUARY 2020	JULY 2020	SEPTEMBER 2020	MAY 2021
Recruit participants for virtual meeting	Call for participation for symposium is released	Review proposals	Program announced	Final virtual meeting

OCTOBER 2019	JUNE 2020	AUGUST 2020	FEBRUARY 2021
First virtual meeting	Papers and panel proposals due	Decisions/ acceptances announced	Symposium held in Lexington, KY

Proposals will be reviewed in July 2020, decisions announced in August 2020, and the program disseminated in September 2020 via email listservs and social media. Next, research activities and theoretical perspectives will be shared and discussed at the symposium held in February 2021. We will host two plenary

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speakers: C.M. Winters Palacio, Assistant Professor at City Colleges of Chicago (currently co-writing a book on information poverty) and a second, to be determined. From this symposium, we will generate papers appropriate for publication in peer-reviewed journal; in addition, a dedicated blog and a Twitter hashtag discussion will be utilized.

Finally, three months after the symposium, another national virtual meeting will take place to discuss future research plans, funding opportunities, and partnerships. From this meeting, we will generate a final, comprehensive report of themes, approaches, and collaborations. In addition, we will pursue relevant funding opportunities to continue this work.

Thus, the project takes advantage of technology to connect a broad research community. The calls for each part will be circulated in academic, industry, and practitioner circles to recruit a diverse participant pool. Dr. Shannon M. Oltmann, associate professor in the School of Information Science at the University of Kentucky, will be the primary convener. Logistical support will be provided by the School of Information Science. The organizing committee will include Dr. Emily J.M. Knox (associate professor at the School of Information Sciences at the University of Illinois) Chris Peterson (researcher at the MIT Center for Civic Media), a representative from the Office of Intellectual Freedom of the American Library Association, and someone from industry [still finalizing these representatives]. We also hope to secure participation from practitioners at schools or libraries that have struggled with implementing internet filters.

Diversity Plan: The calls for participation in the three different components will be circulated broadly, across several academic listservs, to practitioners in libraries and schools, and to potential industry contributors (such as Google, Microsoft, etc.). We expect to get participation from diverse personnel with these approaches. We expect our contributors to be diverse in terms of race/ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, socio-economic and educational backgrounds, and research orientations. To facilitate attendance by a broad range of participants, there will be no registration fee for attendees or presenters.

National Impact: This project has national impact in three senses. First, internet filtering takes place nationwide, in many communities in every state. Yet the impacts and consequences of internet filtering have not been well studied. Second, we will promote participation nationwide, recruiting participants from academia, research, industry, and practitioners. Finally, we anticipate wide impact resulting from the symposium, ranging from published articles to new research and practical collaborations to creative approaches to challenging internet filtering.

Demonstrated Expertise: Oltmann, Knox, and Peterson have conducted extensive research on internet filtering and access to information (particularly in Alabama; see citations below). In addition, Knox and Peterson participated in a symposium on internet censorship in 2013, hosted by Google Washington and the American Library Association's Offices for Information Technology Policy and for Intellectual Freedom; this proposal represents a further evolution of that conversation. Knox hosted (and Oltmann was on the planning committee) for the 2017 Information Ethics Roundtable, so they have experience planning and implementing a conference. Additional expertise will be brought by the participants in the forum.

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