

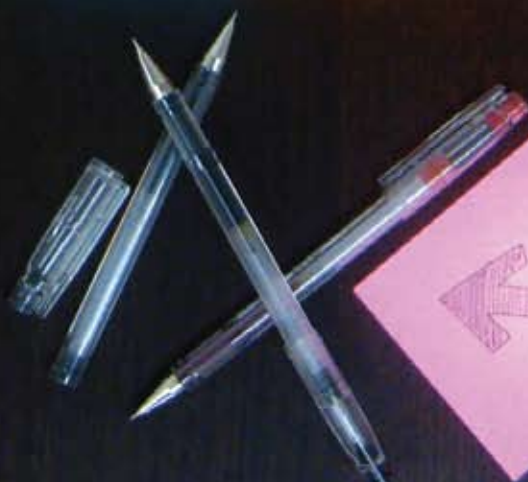
S T O R I E S

I N

S Y S T E M S

DESIGN MATTERS
FELLOWSHIP
SUMMER 2008

JONATHAN
JARVIS





My fellowship experience started with a UNICEF sponsored course about storytelling in the developing world. I travelled to the Caribbean to research with Youth Journalists and design a storytelling system where many people's only access is a mobile phone.

Meeting with the youth journalist group The Backlot in Paramaribo, Suriname.

A group of six school children, three boys and three girls, are posing for a photo outdoors. They are wearing white short-sleeved shirts and red skirts. One girl on the left is wearing a white cap and has a backpack. Another boy in the center is wearing a dark cap and a watch. They are all smiling and some are making hand gestures. The background shows a green pond, a paved path, and a grassy area with trees and buildings in the distance under a clear blue sky.

KIDS IN GROUPS

What happens when everyone's mobile phone goes off at once?

We designed content to be played on speakerphone and use only 1 minute of phone credit.



FROM Hi-Fi TO Lo-Fi

We compiled our research into this book, along with detailed wireframes for a project management system tailored to youth journalists.

[Browse the book here](#)



UNITED NATIONS HEADQUARTERS




INNOVATION TEAM

Crammed in the ninth floor of UNICEF Headquarters, our small but potent team developed global, open-source, communication systems, especially ones utilizing mobile phones.



We developed a storytelling program for the XO's - \$100 laptops being distributed around the developing world.

One Laptop Per Child



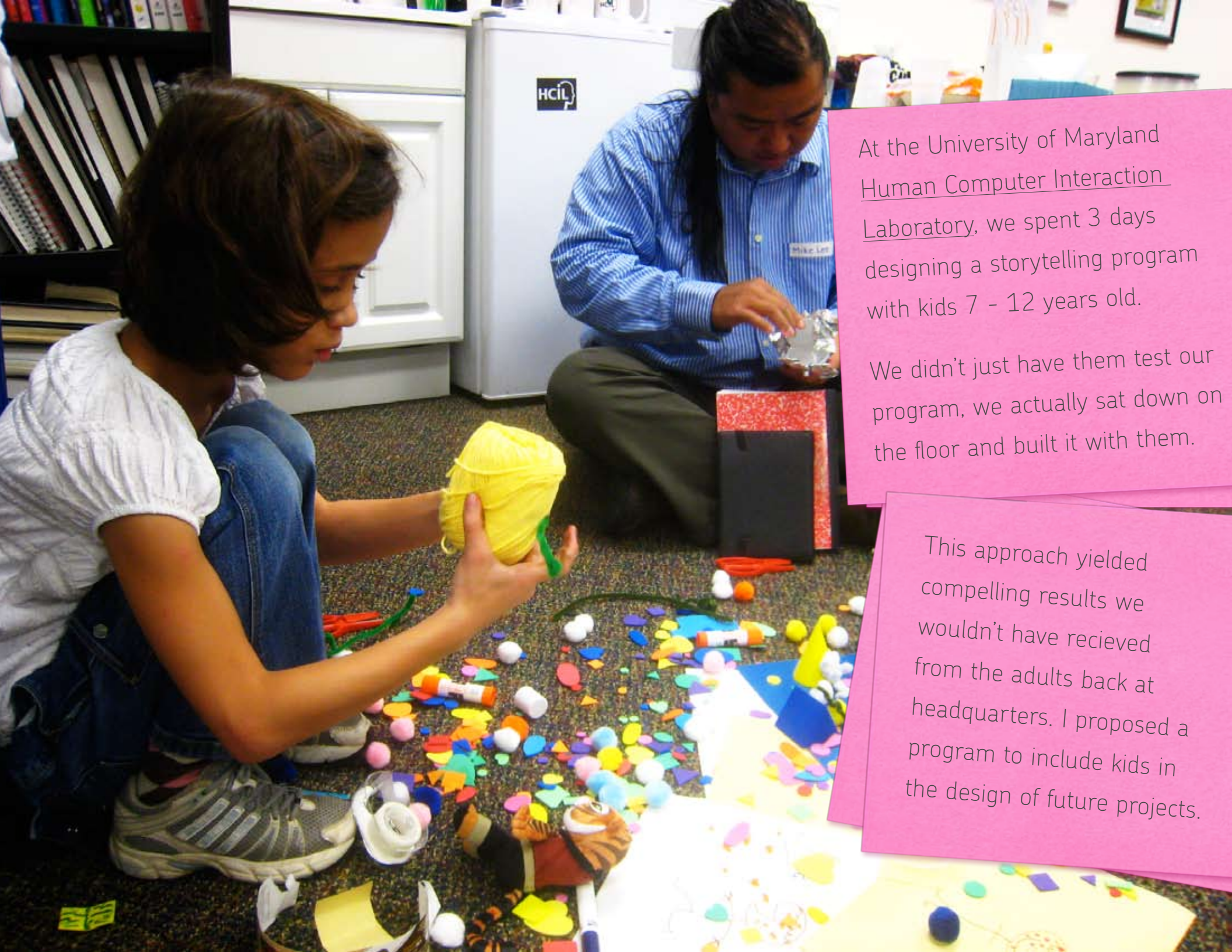
JUNIOR 8 SUMMIT

UNICEF's annual conference runs parallel with the G8 Summit, allowing youths the opportunity to dialog with world leaders. Our team developed the online platforms that allowed youth ambassadors to connect before, during, and after the summit.



HCIL

We were doing all of
this design for kids, so
where were the kids?



At the University of Maryland Human Computer Interaction Laboratory, we spent 3 days designing a storytelling program with kids 7 - 12 years old.


We didn't just have them test our program, we actually sat down on the floor and built it with them.

This approach yielded compelling results we wouldn't have received from the adults back at headquarters. I proposed a program to include kids in the design of future projects.

MODULAR



TANAGRAMS



I sort of fell in love with Post-It notes.

STOURIES
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STOURIES

STOURIES

OUR STORIES

My primary project was Our Stories, a project to collect personal stories from all over the world and arrange them on an interactive map - like a google map.

We experimented with different ways of marking stories





Our Stories home pages: -- Select one --

[Our Stories Home](#)

[About Our Stories](#)

[Founding Partners](#)

[Find a Story](#)

[Interview Guides](#)

[Press Center](#)

[Frequently Asked](#)

[Questions](#)

[Forms and Policies](#)

Welcome to Our Stories

The Our Stories™ project helps people share the stories of their lives, no matter where they live or how their stories unfold. We're providing resources to create and share personal stories from all over the world, starting with children in developing countries who are using One Laptop per Child (OLPC) computers or those who are working with UNICEF radio producers to record and share interviews. Children are asked to record the stories of elders, family members, and friends. You can listen to our growing collection of global voices on this site, which includes stories from Brazil's Museum of the Person and stories from Ghana, Uganda, Tanzania, and Pakistan (through UNICEF). Soon, stories from other countries will also be available for listening here. And in the future, we'll make it possible for people of all ages around the world to add their content to the Our Stories site.

Feel free to explore our site, listen to stories, and learn about the world through the voices of others. You may even be inspired to capture the stories of your own friends and family. Everyone has a story to tell. What's yours?

Listen. Learn. Live.

Browse Our Stories

Click on an icon on the map below to view stories from that part of the world.

Ibrahim's vision for his future and the future of Nigeria.

Our Stories tube

–Ibrahim
Recorded in Abuja, Nigeria
Source: [UNICEF \(Nigeria\)](#)

Site for Children

Interview Guides

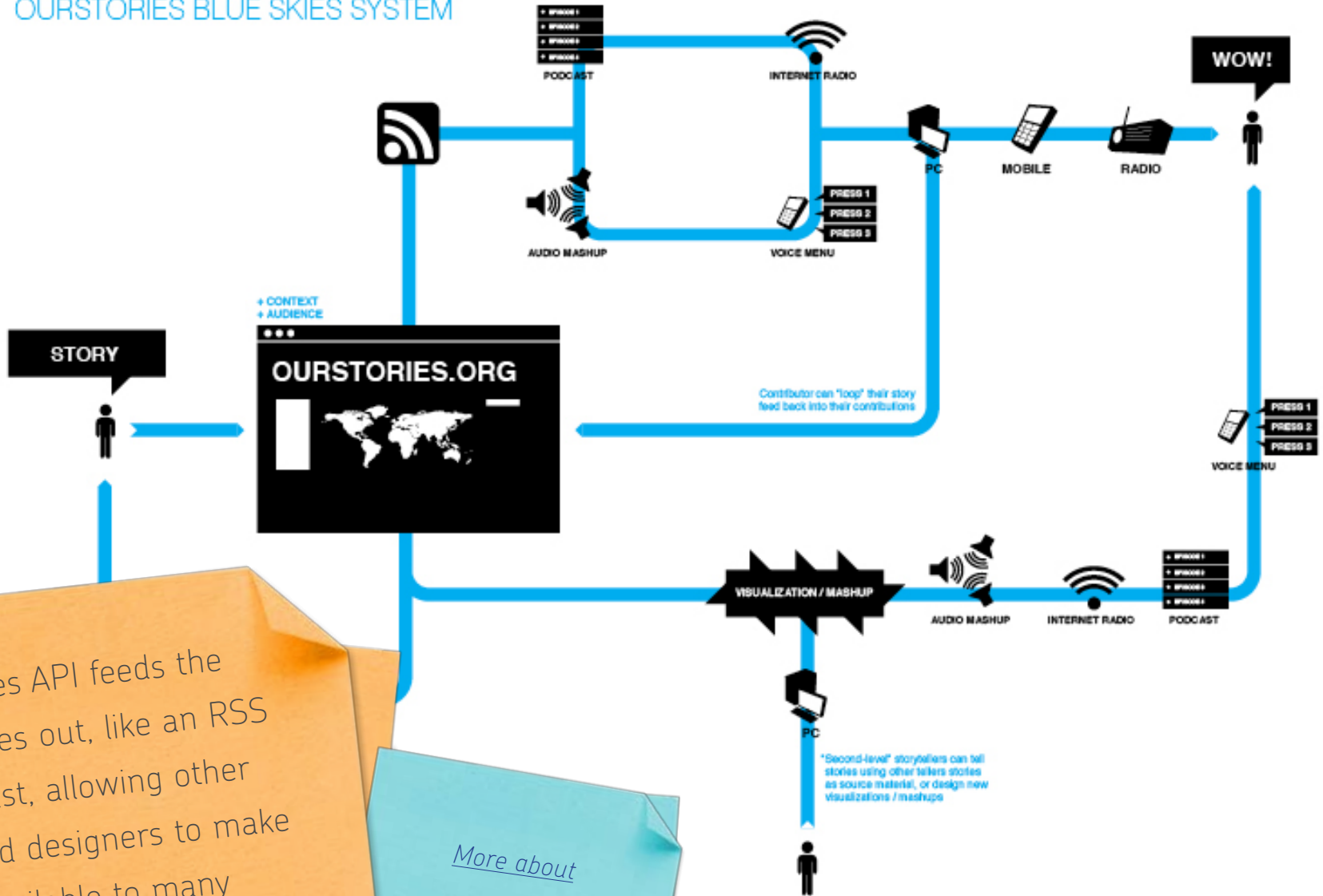
[Student](#) | [Adult](#)

Our Stories had to be accessible to the many kids around the world without Internet access. I designed Our Stories so that someone can call on their mobile phone and record her story, or listen to others.

Our Stories Alpha Site

DIAGRAM

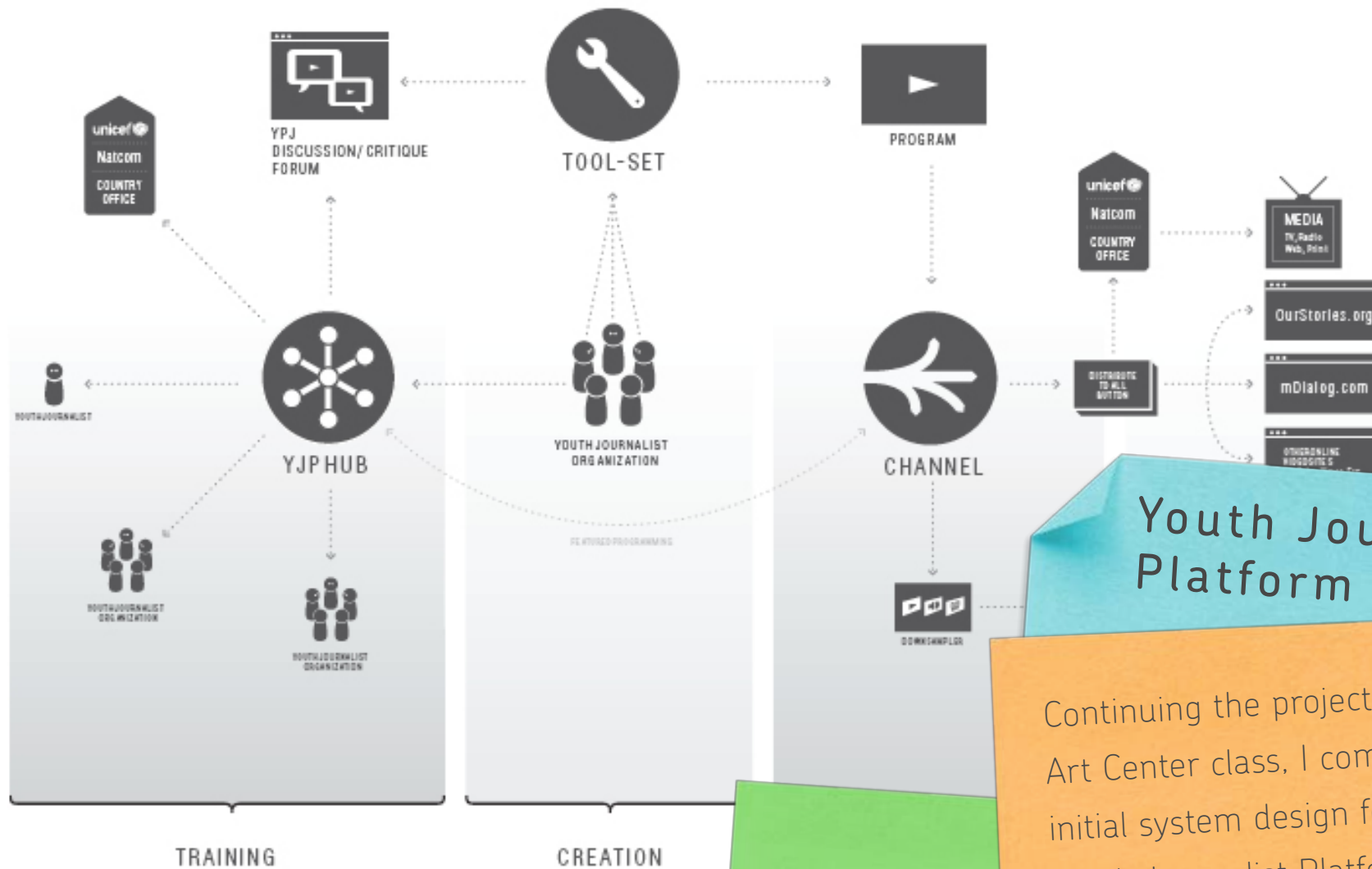
OURSTORIES BLUE SKIES SYSTEM



The Our Stories API feeds the collected stories out, like an RSS feed or podcast, allowing other advocates and designers to make the stories available to many different audiences, even areas without Internet connections.

[More about Our Stories](#)

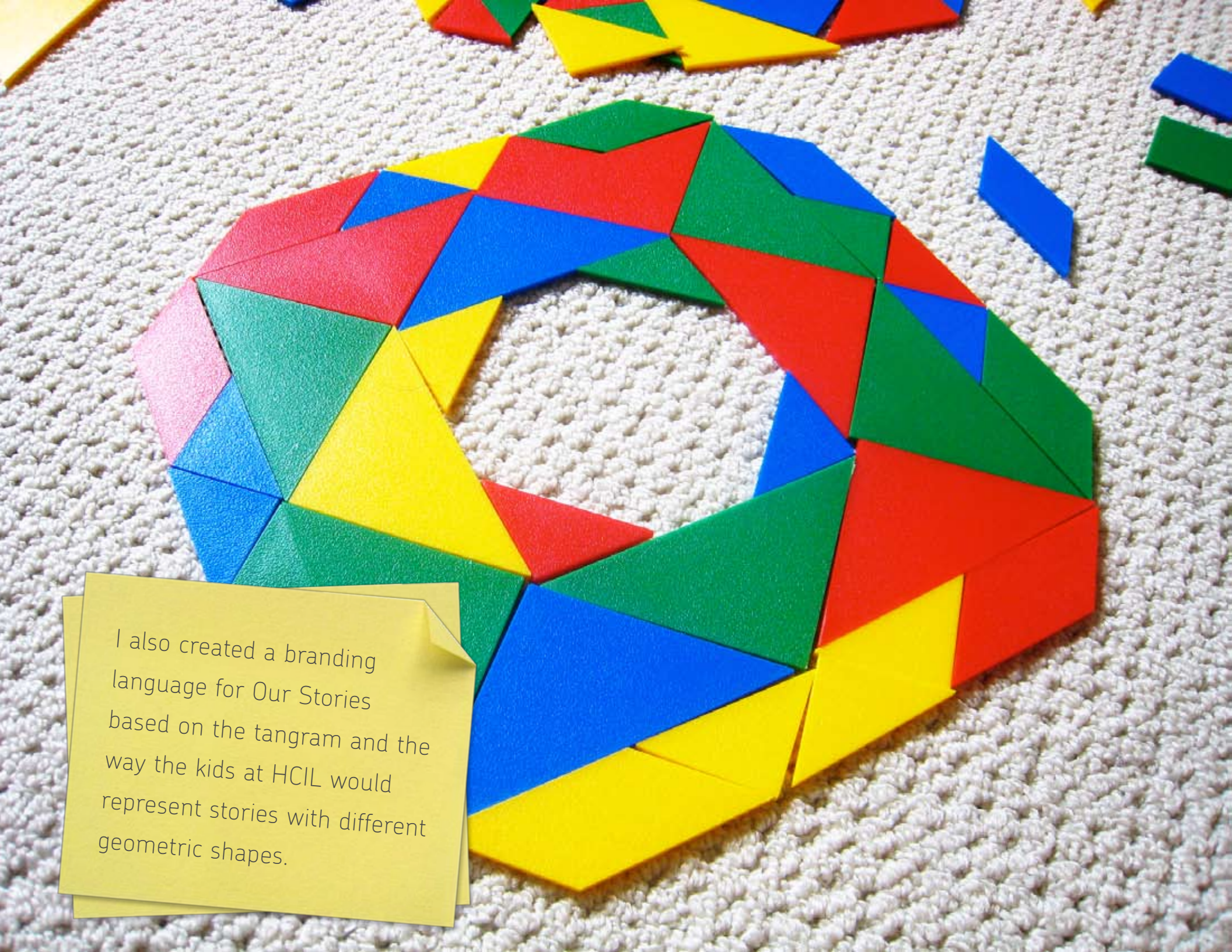
THE YJP SYSTEM:



Youth Journalist Platform

Continuing the project from the Art Center class, I completed the initial system design for the global Youth Journalist Platform, which connects, assists, and distributes youth journalists and their programming around the world.

More about Youth Journalist Portal



I also created a branding language for Our Stories based on the tangram and the way the kids at HCIL would represent stories with different geometric shapes.



OUR STORIES



NUESTRAS HISTORIAS



MIKAYATNA



NOS HISTOIRES



OUR STORIES



NOSTRE STORIE



HABITHI ZETU

These shapes represent peoples' stories in a universal way across the many languages Our Stories caters to.



META-DATA



They can be brought together to form a map of the world, but they can also be rearranged in endless ways.

Imagine scrambling them all up with your hands and rearranging them together in a different way, like a mobile phone, a radio — like the open API.

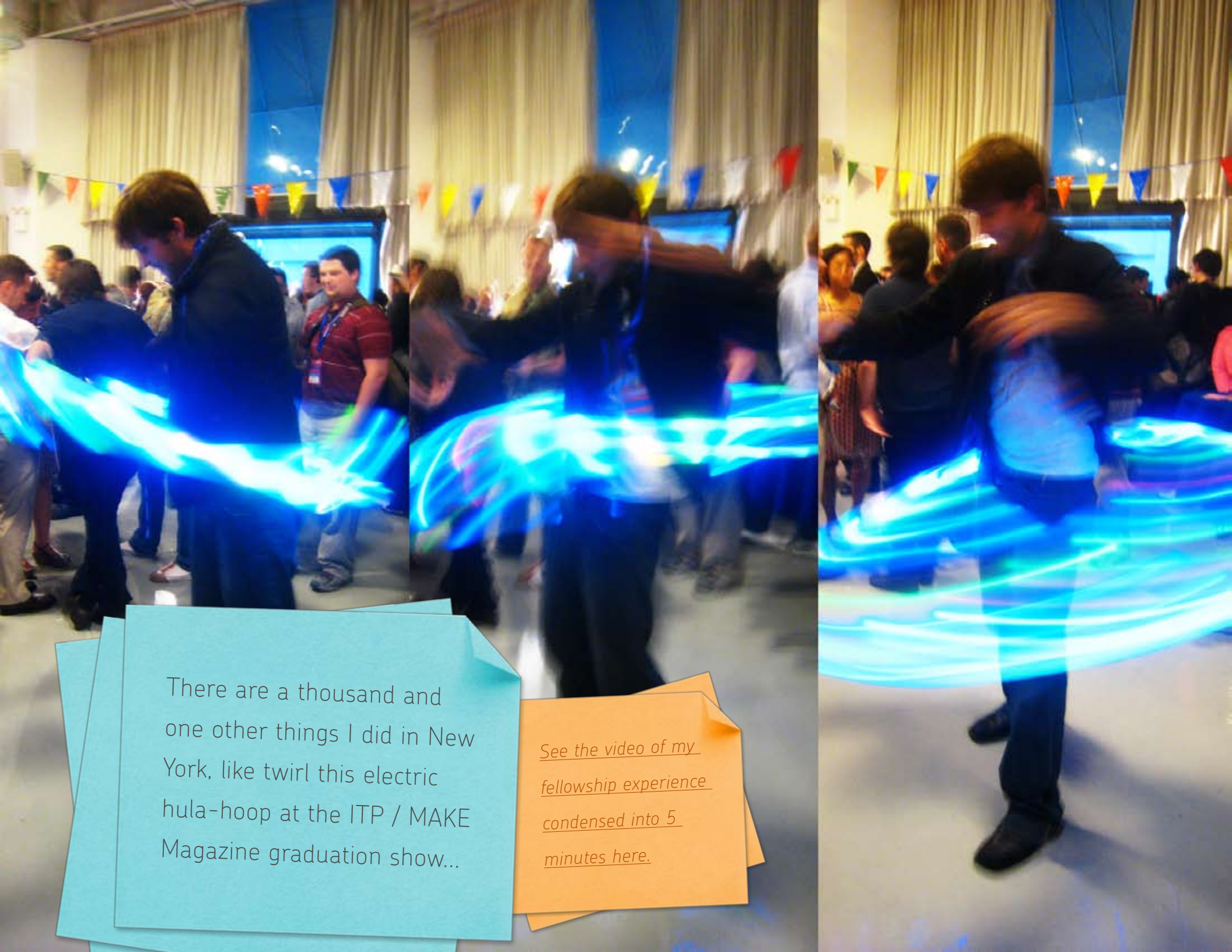
See the world in tangrams.



Stephanie Sigg, an Art Center Alum and Creative Director at McCann Erickson, periodically met with fellow Designmatters Fellow Justin Cram and me to discuss our projects and experiences throughout the summer.



I visited and did some work for Johnson & Johnson's Global Strategic Design Office, where several MDP alums work.



There are a thousand and one other things I did in New York, like twirl this electric hula-hoop at the ITP / MAKE Magazine graduation show...

[See the video of my fellowship experience condensed into 5 minutes here.](#)



....And visit Coney Island



[Video of Fellowship](#)

[Personal Essay](#)

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[jdjarvis.com](#)
[My Site](#)



DESIGNMATTERS FELLOWSHIP

by Jonathan Jarvis



The overall experience of the Designmatters Fellowship was tremendous. It facilitated significant personal growth by placing me in a challenging environment. I had to define my own role—was I a project manager, a systems designer, interaction designer, graphic designer? I have an interest in creating a role that perhaps none of these titles communicate: Using my skills as a designer to contribute at the strategic level. This, I think, I was able to achieve at UNICEF.

The Innovation Team at UNICEF gave me the opportunity to explore this role while working on projects with a global scale. Our Stories is a project to orally collect personal stories from youths, adults, and elders across the globe. We organize their stories across a virtual map, giving them locations and relationships amongst each other. But what makes the project special is the interesting way it becomes accessible: the stories become an open API (a feed, a source of content that can be plugged into other models).

With the goal to collect the personal stories of the world, we need to make these stories accessible to the world—not just the part of the world with high-bandwidth internet access that can view an interactive map. By channelling the stories into a feed, advocates, artists, and designers can use them in ways that are accessible to their own audiences: via mobile phone, broadcast over the radio, projected at a UN presentation, in the classroom, etc. There is no one right way to organize the world's stories, but by making it open we enable each advocate to organize them in the right way for his audience.

Our Stories shows my contribution at a strategic level. We reworked the project from a map with stories to a global platform in line with the Innovation Team's open-source philosophy. I presented this idea to Stephan Cho, Google's Vice President of Applications, who took a strong interest in the project and generated support from within Google.





Stephan was one of many interesting people I met. Jonathan Harris, a favorite artist of mine, was interested in Our Stories as well and came to our office on my invitation. Stephanie Sigg, a Creative Director at McCann Erickson and Art Center Alum, served as my mentor in New York. Jessica Carey, a design executive recruiter at RitaSue Siegel, was another great contact. Jared Hendler at Edelman Digital, a host of Media Design Program alumni at Johnson & Johnson Global Strategic Design, numerous Art Center alumni all over New York, the list goes on.

Working with Allison Druin, Director of the Human Computer Interaction Laboratory at the University of Maryland, was another incredible opportunity. HCIL runs an innovative program that includes children in the design process for large corporate projects. Co-creating systems and their interfaces with kids strikes a level of empathy and insight unattainable with traditional techniques. After our session at HCIL, I proposed a program to periodically involve kids in the design process of future Innovations Team projects.

Designing in the realm of Non-Governmental Organizations presented its own unique set of challenges. For example, each project's name and brand must function across languages. Securing funding and approval for projects also proved difficult. But the social consciousness of the organization is second to none. Working with the high profile of UNICEF lends an incredible potency to your work, and generates a level of excitement, fulfillment, and collaboration that is unique to the NGO sector. Everyone is interested in working with you!

I was able to work across a wide variety of projects—from continuing the Youth Journalist Platform we began in the Art Center class, to an emergency response system integrating UNICEF's different international branches—from designing logos and branding, to managing a team of developers in Cairo. All while experiencing as much during my first visit to New York as possible.

A tremendous experience indeed.

[More on my fellowship](#)

