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 Magis Grant for Spring '14 semester
 Final Report

At the end of last semester, I embarked on a creative project to exercise my various areas of study, synthesizing it into an independent study advised by Professor Tommy Xie. While my capabilities have been exponentially expanded thanks to my augmented arsenal of media equipment, and I have started produce some packages that excite me for the prospective possibilities, it has taken all semester to bring the project together.

My expenses for the project varied only slightly from my initial outline of the project. Only because as I began to produce content, I had a better idea of what I needed and what I didn't. For example, I realized that a 1300mm lens was insanely impractical, or that a GoPro offers a fisheye frame so I didn't need a fisheye lens for my camera. I spent a intense amount of time deliberating where my grant money would best serve. As you can see from my receipts, I returned two different pieces of equipment because I found it both impractical and not conducive to any kind of professional production or in the case of the GoPro, found a better deal through a family member.

Project expenses:

Nikon D3100 camera body - \$327.79

An extra camera body was profoundly helpful in successfully covering events, offering the use of two different lenses. This particular camera is excellent for shooting HD video and has an AV output jack for an external microphone.

Monopod - \$39.95

Monopods stabilize video like tripods but are far more mobile. It also serves as a boom stick for an external microphone and a platform for external lighting, allowing me to angle the light higher and farther out to get a more natural look to the image.

Tripod ball head - \$18.95

I needed a head to mount on the monopod in order to angle the camera when on the monopod. This allows for a wide range of interesting angles when shooting stills or video.

Nikon Speedlight - \$347.71

The external flash was a must for photographs. Without it, shooting events in low light is near impossible without using the built-in flash which produces amateurish and artificial looking images that make it hard for people to take the content seriously.

Rode VideoMic - \$158.46

An external microphone was essential for good video. Prior to it, when I would film an interview or event, the audio was muffled and non-direct. The microphone focuses the audio.

GoPro Silver Edition - \$191.68

The GoPro is a fantastically versatile tool, which enables film, photography and time-lapse capabilities in harsh environments or rough conditions, inhospitable for Nikons. The image is naturally fish-eyed by design, which maximizes the frame and nulls the need for a fisheye lens.

GoPro tripod mount - \$4.00

The tripod accessory for the GoPro is important because otherwise, I cannot mount it on a tripod for longer stationary projects, namely time-lapse or wildlife sequences where my presence inhibits the natural content.

32GB micro SD - \$24.99

A large memory card is necessary to record for any length of time or take enough photographs on the GoPro. I have found the time-lapse feature produces extremely interesting shots but requires a large time and memory commitment, what with taking a picture every

minute for a number of hours.

GoPro head mount - \$10.64

The head mount is a brilliant tool for hands-free filming during any number of activities. For example going for a hike or a run makes continuous filming nearly impossible without a head mount.

LowePro camera bag - \$143.95

While I have accumulated miscellaneous camera bags, all of them are small compared to the amount of equipment I might have to carry with me, in particular on longer jobs. This camera bag is much larger and allows me to pack all of my equipment. Additionally, it gives me security, knowing that it is waterproof and the only access to my cameras is out of a zipper on the back, which is hidden by my back.

Flexible tripod - \$15.25

This small tripod is necessary for my GoPro. I have been exploring time-lapse photography but was always extremely nervous about leaving my camera out in the open, untethered. The flexible tripod allows me to mount the GoPro and ground it so no passing wild animal swoops in and takes the shiny box away.

Variable neutral density filter - \$9.99

Neutral density filters allow for slow motion photography by filtering the light that reaches the camera. This enables the shutter speed to slow down capturing more motion without blowing out the picture with too much light. This is particularly useful for capturing natural motion of water or the flow of traffic on a city street and makes for some fascinating and captivating pictures.

L bracket - \$7.49

The L bracket is an addition to a camera that allows the external mount of two accessories off to the side. This creates lighting from a different angle, or a better audio position. It also provides a handle to take a hand off the camera, which reduces video shake when recording.

Step-down adapter ring 72-52mm - \$4.49

The step-down adapter ring is so that I can use the neutral density filter, which has a 52mm ring with my 25-200mm lens, which has a 72mm ring.

Glidecam XR-1000 - \$179.00

The Glidecam is a video stabilization tool for shooting on the fly video. By mounting it on a counterweight system hinged on a gimbal joint, it smooths the camera motion by eliminating hand jitters. While a tripod is great for a static frame, say for interviews, it is difficult to shoot video while moving and not get the bumps and shakes of handholding.

SD card wallet - \$5.49

A cardholder is extremely helpful to keep track of extra SD memory cards not in use. They normally come in small single cases that go everywhere. A wallet that has all of the cards not in play is a far more economic tool. Especially when one is trying to make a card switch on the fly during a shoot. Also, considering how expensive SD cards can get, keeping track of them is important.

LCD hood - \$7.26

An LCD hood is meant to protect the screen on the back of a DSLR. It also flips up into a covering over the screen to block glare from bright lights. With the Nikons, I can only shoot film through the LCD view. When it is bright out, I can't make out what is on the screen. The hood allows me to know what I am filming in blinding conditions.

LED video light - \$12.49

When filming in dark environments, a light can make an otherwise impossible scene, possible. For my purposes of documentation, a video light is a good safeguard against a botched interview, where I'd have to reschedule or worse, a missed moment that was too dark to see on film.

Total: \$1499.50

This project has been a severely complicated one at times. I know the type of content I want to include, but I have had a hard time putting it into words, so to speak. Ultimately, through the gradual and careful post entries I have published, I arrived at a theme that I feel is specific enough to give readers with an accurate expectation of the kind of stories they will find on the site but broad enough to allow for consistently interesting investigations on my part.

The concept that I have developed to guide my discernment in choosing topics is more or less an echo of what Prof. Lacy and I mentioned in passing early last semester. Namely, a publication purposed toward the betterment of our world through the readers and in turn, society.

By presenting articles, photographs, film, poetry and illustration, *be cause* magazine aims to encourage a more mindful concept of the global condition and instigate biocentric passion. This includes cultural explorations and appreciations, commentary on humanitarian problems and efforts, and investigations into environmental phenomenon and concerns. To this end, topics can range from the 18th century Enlightenment influence on human rights to NGO efforts in wildlife conservation to the vanguard neuroscientific research on the health benefits of meditation.

I have begun to reach out to various professors and departments at Fairfield University for contributing content. This adds an additional job of editing other's work, but is a new and welcome experience. And I have received some encouraging feedback from professors and some students. However, most posts are still my own or have been augmented by my visuals, be it photography or illustration. It is to this end that I have used the grant money. With careful consideration, I have purchased important equipment to expand my documenting capabilities.