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AVATAR Lecture Series

The Katrina Summit: My Reflections on the Creation of A Social Network in the Service of Social Transformation

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Manship School of Mass Communications D. Jensen Holliday Forum
March 26, 2008 - 10:00 am

Abstract:

Hurricane Katrina was a devastating natural disaster, but it also acted as a magnifying glass, revealing to us tears in the social fabric that should unite us all – social justice and equity, broken connections and the need for community healing. While Katrina brought these issues into sharp focus in New Orleans, these are issues that every community must face in order to be strong and united. In September 2006, Katrina: After the Storm – Civic Engagement Through Arts, Humanities and Technology utilized the advanced technology of the access grid to create a virtual community, connecting Urbana-Champaign and the University of Illinois with sites across the country, including LSU, in order to share common concerns and ignite dialogues that emphasize our interconnectedness. Dr. Clark will discuss and share examples from the summit that weaved together inspiration and input from the arts, humanities, and technology to spark creative, innovative suggestions for mending our torn social fabric while engaging all members of our community. Katrina: After the Storm – Civic Engagement Through Arts, Humanities and Technology was the September event in the year-long Year of InFormation, a series of events supported by HASTAC (the Humanities, Arts, Science and Technology Advanced Collaboratory). Our theme under the HASTAC Year of InFormation umbrella was "InCommon," and it is fitting, since Katrina: After the Storm at its core was about discovering what we have in common—values, dreams, even fears. In the process, we discovered our common humanity.

Speaker's Bio:

Allison Clark is the co-director of the Seedbed Initiative for Transdomain Creativity at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. Through Seedbed, Clark explores the feasibility of using technology to create self-sustained interdisciplinary communities of collaboration involving technologists, social scientists, artists and humanists from around the world. Her research interests include examining culturally specific approaches, particularly the combination of information technology with hip-hop culture, as an intervention strategy to aide in the creation of digital equity.

