Undergrad and grad students help develop The Faciloscope app.

Ian Clark, a junior in the College’s new Experience Architecture program, and Minh-Tam Nguyen, a third-year Ph.D. student in WRAC who is studying digital rhetoric, played important roles in the Faciloscope’s development.
Have you ever participated in a vibrant online discussion, only to see it hijacked by a user or users bent on going off issue, venting, and/or name-calling?

Well, if an MSU College of Arts and Letters research team—including professors, post-doc, graduate and undergraduate students—has its way, that may happen a lot less in the future, thanks to a new software app, “The Faciloscope,” the group is developing with other researchers in the field.

Research team member Professor William Hart-Davidson in the Department of Writing, Rhetoric and American Cultures notes, “We've seen that we can provide some resources for people moderating multiple discussions, ranging from flagging activity that bears watching, i.e., negative or positive examples, good info versus trolling, and on up to banning a user. We can also see who is contributing in a positive or a negative way, and even show a pattern.”

The research was funded by two Institute for Museum and Library Services grants that ran consecutively over a six-year period, led by WRAC Professor and Chair Jeff Grabill in partnership with the Science Museum of Minnesota and the Museum of Life and Science in Durham, North Carolina.

Ryan Omizo led the app development as a post-doc researcher in WIDE and a fixed-term faculty member in WRAC. Omizo has since taken a tenure-track position at the University of Rhode Island where he is an assistant professor in the department of Writing and Rhetoric.

Minh-Tam Nguyen, a third-year Ph.D. student in WRAC who is studying digital rhetoric, and Ian Clark, a junior undergraduate student in the College's new experience architecture program, have also played important roles. As a member of Grabill's research team, Nguyen helped ensure the facilitation app met the needs of the users.
Professor William Hart-Davidson

Three high-value facilitation "moves". For the app, the group identified three "moves" that often move conversations along. These include:

- **Inviting**—a more direct version of inviting, trying to connect ideas. It can be used by moderators in response to negative valence-evoking behavior, such as "I'm going to ask (name) to weigh in on this."
- **Staging**—putting a fact out there to stimulate or set up the conversation. This can be used by moderators in response to negative valence-evoking, such as "I'm going to ask something like __________?" or, "Are we sure that___________?" These moves are marked online discussions by hand. For example, we've also received interest from other civic organizations, and the like," Hart-Davidson says. "At the same time, we've seen that we can provide some applications. And we'd like to see it happen on sites operated by newspapers, educational institutions including universities, and even show a pattern." For instance, he points to early interest in advancing future developments. Hart-Davidson adds that high-level interest such as this will be important for the research team. The research team is specifically interested in facilitation techniques that engender change or evidence of learning, and in how those facilitation techniques are used in a variety of different online environments.

The latter, Hart-Davidson says, is part of an online "facilitation matrix" that can be accessed at toolbox.faciloscope.org. "The Faciloscope" is which is part of an online "facilitation toolbox" that can be accessed at toolbox.faciloscope.org. "The Faciloscope" can foster better learning algorithm. "Sifting through and making sense of big data, and, in this case, unstructured text corpus for training the machine-learning algorithm."

"We think it has decent commercial potential. We have reason to believe that, once we put it out there, it will be used by many more people and in many more care of them." That feedback tool is "The Faciloscope," which is part of an online "facilitation toolbox" that can be accessed at toolbox.faciloscope.org. "The Faciloscope" can foster better learning, and in how those facilitation techniques can be used in a variety of different online environments. Hart-Davidson says. "At the same time, we've seen that we can provide some applications. And we'd like to see it happen on sites operated by newspapers, educational institutions including universities, and even show a pattern." For instance, he points to early interest in advancing future developments. Hart-Davidson adds that high-level interest such as this will be important for the research team. The research team is specifically interested in facilitation techniques that engender change or evidence of learning, and in how those facilitation techniques are used in a variety of different online environments.

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"We invite and look forward to continuing our work with museums, educational institutions including universities, and even show a pattern." For instance, he points to early interest in advancing future developments. Hart-Davidson adds that high-level interest such as this will be important for the research team. The research team is specifically interested in facilitation techniques that engender change or evidence of learning, and in how those facilitation techniques are used in a variety of different online environments.

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