



Massachusetts
Institute of
Technology

MIT 150th Anniversary Planning Committee

Request for Proposals:

A Platform for MIT's Global Challenge

Closing Date: 1/31/09

Please direct inquiries to:

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Responder warrants that prices provided in your proposal are no greater than prices being charged any other customer for similar items, quantities and schedules with similar specifications.

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Section 1: Executive Overview

RFP Overview

In 2011 the global MIT community will be invited to celebrate the 150th anniversary of a world-changing institution. In the spirit of celebration, innovation and service, the MIT Global Challenge will launch as an opportunity to involve the whole MIT community worldwide in innovative, multidisciplinary problem-solving and to reconnect alumni with the spirit of invention, entrepreneurship and service that pervades the Institute. Inspired by the success of the MIT IDEAS Competition, the Global Challenge is an opportunity to apply innovation as public service.

The MIT Global Challenge platform – the online infrastructure to deliver the Global Challenge – is envisioned as a unique, exciting space through which users engage at multiple levels in an ongoing, dynamic process to identify problems facing individuals and communities, propose solutions, reward the most innovative ideas, and report progress as winning ideas are implemented around the world. We see this as a welcoming, user-friendly “enabling environment” that combines a well-branded Global Challenge landing page and a robust engagement platform with a “many parts loosely joined” outreach strategy into key social networking sites that already bring people together around a shared interest in making the world a better place.

The MIT Global Challenge will invite several key audiences – the global MIT community, high school youth, community partners, and the general public – to participate in the interactive Challenge platform, comprised of several key features:

- News and information about the Global Challenge
- Forums to discuss global challenges and solutions
- A way for teams to form and register
- A mechanism for teams to submit proposals
- Voting tools to identify the most innovative proposals
- Workspaces for staff and judges to review proposals and determine awards
- A way to celebrate Global Challenge awardees and communicate next steps
- Tools to share stories around project implementation.

The MIT Public Service Center, in collaboration with several department and program partners at MIT, seeks a strategic online communications firm to work closely with us each step of the way to develop the Global Challenge platform, from design and development of the platform and its interface to shaping key messages and creative assets that will establish an exciting and welcoming look and feel.

About MIT, the MIT Public Service Center and the IDEAS Competition

The Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is a world-class educational institution that combines teaching and research, with relevance to the practical world as a guiding principle. In 2007, 4,172 undergraduate students and 6,048 graduate students from all 50 states, the District of Columbia, four territories, and 111 foreign countries enrolled at MIT. An active and engaged alumni – 120,746 living in 137 countries – have participated in a wide range of Alumni Association initiatives around the world. For example, in 2007 alone 8,891 volunteered on behalf of the Institute, 33,332 made a donation to the Institute, and “Tech Reunions” drew 3,449 alumni and guests to 139 events.

In 2011 MIT will celebrate its sesquicentennial anniversary (MIT150), marking 150 years of research and education. MIT150 planning began in the fall of 2006, and since then an MIT150 planning committee has defined the principles, scope, central events, and theme of the celebration. The planning committee – comprised of faculty members from all five schools, students representing the Undergraduate Association, the Graduate Student Council, and the class of 2011, and staff with related expertise or administrative responsibilities – has defined the 150th anniversary as a celebration that will be distinctive, participatory, demonstrate the values of MIT, celebrate the past and envision the future, break stereotypes, communicate to the world, and be as “green” as possible. The top priorities in programming events and activities are to be reflective of history, look to the future, and cement science and engineering as the cornerstones of an MIT education.¹ As part of the MIT150 celebration, the MIT150 planning committee has made it a priority to work with the MIT Public Service Center in the design, development and launch of the MIT Global Challenge in 2011.

The MIT Public Service Center (PSC) exists to motivate, facilitate, and celebrate the ethic and activities of public service at MIT. Its aim is to enrich the education and life experiences of students and other MIT community members – faculty, staff, affiliates, alumni, spouses, partners, and others – through leadership and service opportunities that match the innovative culture of MIT. To that end, the PSC provides the guidance, resources, and support to find or create fulfilling service experiences, locally and around the world. The PSC’s current programming is designed to attract and sustain student involvement in public service through a range of offerings that provides multiple entry points and ways to continue. Further, the content of offerings reflects the diversity of MIT student ambitions, learning needs, and interests. The programs also are designed to cover gaps that occur in the traditional technical educational experience, for example, in global issues, international development, ethics, communication skills, teamwork, leadership, and critical thinking. Working with more than 20 students groups across

¹ From, “MIT To Celebrate 150th Anniversary in 2011,” by R.J. Tyler in MIT News: <http://web.mit.edu/newsoffice/2008/150th-1104.html> accessed 12/5/08.

campus, the MIT Public Service Center support over 2,500 students annually in service-related work. Each year 50-60 students are awarded Public Service Fellowships; upwards of 200 students participate in IDEAS teams, and between 650 and 700 incoming freshman participate in CityDays service projects each year.

The MIT IDEAS Competition (IDEAS) – in part the inspiration for the MIT Global Challenge – is an innovation and entrepreneurship competition in which teams address the needs of under-served communities worldwide. IDEAS – an acronym for Innovation, Development, Enterprise, Action, and Service – began in 2001 to engage MIT students in community service in a way that matches their abilities and institutional culture. Designed specifically for MIT, IDEAS was launched as a collaboration between the MIT Public Service Center and the Edgerton Center. Each year, at least six teams win IDEAS awards of up to \$7,500 to further develop and implement their projects.

Now in its seventh year, IDEAS engages more than 200 students annually in teams that focus on solving humanitarian issues in collaboration with communities around the world. IDEAS combines aspects of existing invention and business plan competitions with new features that emphasize community service. The benefits of the MIT IDEAS Competition are many, including:

- Promoting innovation, entrepreneurship, teamwork, and real-world problem-solving
- Increasing awareness of community needs
- Providing resources and support for students to implement plans and products that meet community needs
- Encouraging interaction with organizations that serve communities world-wide
- Empowering students with the knowledge that they can make a difference in the world

The Competition enables students to take active leadership roles while applying their skills and knowledge to address community issues. Designing projects to serve real communities gives teams firsthand experience of needs analysis, project management, and the product development process.

Section 2: The Global Challenge Platform

The purpose of the Global Challenge platform is to engage the whole MIT community and their collaborators worldwide in a celebration of MIT's legacy of service by enabling users to work together to address community problems through innovation.

The MIT Global Challenge platform is envisioned as an elegant, engaging solution to a common design challenge for broad-based, user-centered online communities: enabling user access to content and roles in ways that anticipate both a range of comfort-levels (usability) and varying band-width conditions (accessibility). At the same time, the Global Challenge poses unique challenges around the

scope and depth of user interaction online: the platform must enable meaningful yet limited public interaction, in-depth collaboration among members of the global MIT community, and site management and administration functions while accounting for the unique roles of community partners and youth in the Global Challenge cycle.

Audience

The Global Challenge must engage four key audience segments throughout the interactive cycle, each with different degrees of access to the process. These are the global MIT community, the general public, community collaborators, and high-school aged youth.

1 – The Global MIT Community

The MIT community includes more than 100,000 alumni and their immediate family around the world. It also includes students, faculty and staff. As the MIT community forms the “core” constituency of the Global Challenge, members will have access to the entire process, including discussion, proposal entry, award process, mentoring, and reporting.

2 – The General Public

The Global Challenge invites the global public to play an important role in defining urgent challenges, identifying solutions, and identifying projects for a Global Challenge award through an online rating/voting process. Celebration events should be widely viewed, and people worldwide should be able to view news, updates, etc.

3 – Community Collaborators

Community partners – NGOs, local government agencies, entrepreneurs – help to clarify problems and potential solutions (for example technical, geographic and/or cultural variables), should be a part of a team’s proposal preparation, and are required to be a part of winning teams’ implementation strategies.

4 – High School Youth

A core value of the Global Challenge is to inspire the next generation of global leaders to pursue innovation as public service. The Global Challenge will invite high school youth to work alongside world-changing MIT alumni and their collaborators as they learn first-hand about problem-solving and innovation, and develop and share their own ideas for making the world a better place.

The Global Challenge “Life Cycle”

The “life cycle” of the Global Challenge platform turns around four distinct phases of an annual process: identifying and learning about global challenges, exploring solutions and forming teams around areas of common interest and intent, submitting proposals and rewarding the most innovative and

feasible solutions, and sharing stories from teams and community members as solutions are implemented.

1 - Identifying Global Challenges

A key feature of the Global Challenge platform will be a dynamic, thoughtful and welcoming space that provides essential background information about the MIT Global Challenge; describes key drivers of major global challenges to human health and prosperity and illustrates barriers to progress; provides important updates related to the challenge, including news and events; and a publicly accessible forum where these issues – and possible solutions – can be discussed. The tools must be simple, responsive, and to some extent self-propagating (or viral). The platform should make use – and enable the sharing – of text, video, images and, where applicable, social media “widgets,” for example Flickr badges or Twitter feeds.

2 - Exploring Solutions and Forming Teams

The Global Challenge platform must provide a secure space for members of the global MIT community to form and register teams that will work together to develop solutions to specific challenges. The platform must address the personal privacy and security of MIT community members and enable them to invite non-MIT collaborators into the team-building process. This process must be simple yet robust, enabling users to track one another’s contributions, form relationships and self-organize into (and out of) teams. The platform should account for learning opportunities for high school participants, for example enable them to form mentoring relationships within the MIT community through which they can meaningfully advance their understanding of global challenges and their ideas to address them.

3 - Submitting Proposals and Rewarding Ideas

The central purpose of the Global Challenge is to enable the MIT community to engage in global public service through a participatory award process. The platform must enable verified MIT community members to, during a specified period of time, submit their innovative solutions (“proposals”) to the Global Challenge site, involve the public and appointed judges in identifying the best ideas, and give a monetary award to a certain number of winners each year. The process and tools for rewarding ideas must be transparent, fair, and fun, celebrating both the achievements of participants and the spirit of innovation, entrepreneurship and service. We’d also like to be able to use the platform as a vehicle for fundraising to sustain award-making to address a growing set of problems.

4 - Sharing Stories/Reporting

To maintain accountability within the Global Challenge process and to inspire the MIT community and the world to get involved, the Global Challenge platform will enable Global Challenge winners, their collaborators, and members of the communities with whom they are working to share stories as projects are implemented. The tools for sharing stories should again be simple, secure, responsive, and to some

extent self-propagating (or viral). The platform should make use – and enable the sharing – of text, video, images and, where applicable, social media “widgets,” for example Flickr badges or Twitter feeds.

5 – User-driven Improvement

We want the Global Challenge platform to be open to its users for further development and enhancement, much in the way open source content management platforms like MediaWiki, Drupal, and Plone benefit from user-centered innovation. We’d like to ensure that the Global Challenge is similarly poised to benefit from user improvements to the platform in three specific areas – the platform (software, interface, data stores), the process (entering, judging, awards, reporting) and their promotion (involving others, communicating the process and outcomes). In terms of innovating upon the platform itself, we envision a progression of increasing openness over time, for example during year one participants can customize their interface, during year two we open up the API, and during year three we make the source code itself available for user improvement.

User Roles

There are at least seven user “roles” anticipated to effectively manage the interactions among groups using the Global Challenge platform. These include the general public, participants, high school students, entrants, mentors, judges, community managers and administrators.

1 - Public

Verified non-registered users can read “public” content, post to limited discussions, rate project proposals, and use social web features to “share” items.

2 - Participants

Registered users with and without an “mit.edu” address maintain a basic profile, contribute to discussions, make connections with others, vote for project proposals, and invite their collaborators to participate in the Global Challenge.

3 – Students

High school-age students will be able to manage limited profiles, access MIT alumni, students and staff as mentors and observe project teams work. They will also have access to youth-friendly discussion areas where they can explore their own ideas to make the world a better place through innovation.

4 - Entrants

Participants with an “mit.edu” email address register teams and team members and submit entries into the Global Challenge contest to become eligible for awards.

5 - Judges

Invited individuals review, comment on, discuss and rate Global Challenge entrants, identify winning teams, and recommend awards in specific challenge categories.

6 - Managers

Moderate users, user-generated content, and feedback as well as edit publicly accessible content.

Monitor user behavior and feedback and recommend site modifications.

7 - Administrators

Maintain basic site functionality, including navigation, content administration, user roles, and the addition/removal (or “on/off” function) of key modules and feature sets.

Key Challenges

Identifying and developing the right “promise, tool, and bargain”² – the why, how and rules of the platform – will be essential to the success of the Global Challenge. We anticipate a several tensions that we’d like respondents to address:

- 1) We don’t want to create another social network; how do we enable participants to do the “heavy lifting” of creating project proposals wherever they are most comfortable working?
- 2) The Global Challenge must serve the global MIT community as its primary audience while making a compelling invitation to the public to participate. How do we serve these groups without alienating one, the other, or both?
- 3) We are concerned about the vulnerability of public voting tools to gaming by individual and coordinated action. How do we create a publicly accessible online rating and/or voting system that optimizes the opportunity to “bubble up” the best proposals while minimizing vulnerability?
- 4) One of the most difficult challenges faced by grant- and award-making groups is receiving timely, accurate, and substantive feedback around implementation. How can the Global Challenge incentivize storytelling from winning teams while they are implementing their projects?
- 5) The Global Challenge platform must appeal to a wide range of users. How do we make the Global Challenge platform simple, “clean” and elegant enough for those who do not live online, while robust and engaging enough for those who do? Furthermore, the Global Challenge platform must be inviting, safe, and secure for high school students.
- 6) The Global Challenge will attract participants from around the world, working and living in a range of circumstances. How can the Global Challenge contain a rich variety of media while accounting for varying bandwidth conditions and processing power of its users?

² From Clay Shirky, Here Comes Everybody (2008: Penguin Press)

- 7) We'd like the Global Challenge to benefit from the knowledge and experience of its users to improve the platform without compromising either the stability of the site or the security of its data. How can we both open the platform to user-driven improvement and maintain the necessary safeguards?

Deliverables

The developer of the Global Challenge will be responsible for the generation of six specific products:

- 1) A secure website that motivates and enables the MIT community and their collaborators to accomplish the following:
 - a. Explore problems
 - Register as users
 - Maintain personal profiles
 - Discuss challenges and solutions
 - Communicate privately
 - Invite new users
 - b. Enter solutions
 - Form and register teams
 - Identify mentors/mentees
 - Match mentors with high school age users
 - Submit proposals
 - c. Celebrate and reward innovations
 - Rate proposals
 - Award and communicate solutions
 - Fundraise among users and visitors to sustain award-making
 - d. Report outcomes
 - Post important news and events
 - Maintain project profiles and updates
 - Post project stories (reports), lessons
- 2) Secure administrative backend that enables staff to manage core Global Challenge activities and maintenance tasks such as:
 - a. Update content
 - b. Manage calendar events
 - c. Turn "On" and "Off" core Challenge features – such as submitting projects and voting – according the Global Challenge lifecycle
 - d. Manage users, roles
 - e. Enable mentor matching

- f. Create, manage communication, such as
 - eNewsletters
 - RSS feeds
- g. Enable judges to privately view, rank and comment on proposals
- h. Administer awards
- i. Track and communicate with teams
- 3) Enable “many parts, loosely joined” to interact with the platform, for example one or more of the following (and others as identified):
 - a. MIT Alumni Association’s “Infinite Connection” alumni database
 - b. Social “utilities” like Facebook and LinkedIn
 - c. Youth engagement spaces like TakingITGlobal, YouthActionNet, and Cogito
 - d. Online “better world” communities like Razoo, Care2, Change.org, and Wiser Earth
 - e. Existing “challenge” sites like NetSquared
- 4) A strategy and tools necessary to enable user-centered innovation over time, including:
 - a. User customizable interface
 - b. A Global Challenge API
 - c. Global Challenge codebase and sandbox
- 5) A framework for anticipating (and budgeting for) the maintenance and long-term performance needs of the Global Challenge platform.
- 6) A training and/or user manual to ensure ongoing transfer of basic knowledge for use and administration of the Global Challenge website.

Section 3: Evaluating Success

The Global Challenge platform will be considered a success if it creates an inviting, exciting, and rewarding experience in global problem-solving for its wide range of users. At a minimum, by the time it is ready for public launch in January 2011, the Global Challenge platform must:

- 1) Create an atmosphere of celebration around the 150th anniversary of MIT
- 2) Communicate excitement around the purpose and background of the Global Challenge
- 3) Enable users to register; maintain user privacy and security
- 4) Surface challenges and solutions through online dialogue
- 5) Enable teams led by members of the MIT community (to register
- 6) Enable teams to submit project proposals to the Global Challenge competition

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- 7) Enable users to identify their favorite projects and aggregate results
- 8) Manage, document, and summarize a proposal review and judging process
- 9) Celebrate winning proposals through an online award event
- 10) Communicate outcomes of projects through timely and compelling storytelling

The Global Challenge will use the following general indicators to assess its success:

- 1) Visibility - Publicity, front page hits, links, and email newsletter and RSS subscriptions.
- 2) Performance - How well the system handles traffic, serves specific functions, responds to users' context, and enables effective administration.
- 3) Impact - Level of user engagement and results.
- 4) Feedback - Include articles, correspondence, comments, and customized tools such as surveys.

Examples of specific targets include:

- 1) Engage a sizable portion of the MIT community, > 3,000 users
- 2) Attract substantial public engagement, > 1,000 unique visitors per month
- 3) Generate > 50 proposals in its first year
- 4) Involve > 5,000 visitors in voting for proposals
- 5) Award > 10 innovative and feasible proposals
- 6) Demonstrate results, for example at > 50% of community partners report progress and tangible community benefits.

Section 4: Activities Schedule

The Global Challenge will work with the successful respondent during four distinct phases of the project over two years:

- 1) Initial development - Create the basic strategy and core features of the Global Challenge platform. April 2009-September 2009
- 2) Alpha/Beta testing and usability - Implement an internal cycle of testing, feedback and revisions with the 2010 IDEAS competition cohort. October 2009-April 2010
- 3) "Soft launch" - Campus-wide application of the platform for use during the 2011 IDEAS competition. September 2010-April 2011

- 4) "Public Launch" - Open the Global Challenge platform to the entire MIT community worldwide and their collaborators. January 2011-December 2011

Summary Timeline

<u>TASK</u>	<u>COMPLETION DATE</u>
• Proposals Due	January 31, 2009
• Offer Made	February 28, 2009
• Contract Signed	March 15, 2009
• Begin work	April 1, 2009
• Alpha test and usability cycle	September 2009-April 2010
• Beta launch	October 2010
• Public launch	January 2011

Section 5: Proposal Preparation and Delivery

Responses to the Global Challenge RFP must be submitted no later than 6:00 pm Eastern Time on January 31, 2009. To be considered, proposals should contain the following information:

- Cover letter: Introduce the responding individual and/or company, summarize the proposal; include an authorizing signature (please limit to no more than 2 pages).
- Proposal (please limit to no more than 15 pages):
 - Vision: Help us imagine what an online celebration and challenge process could look like
 - Approach: Outline the basic philosophy and strategy guiding your proposal
 - Solution: Describe the basic elements of the proposed platform and its feature-set. Include a discussion of how you'd approach integration with third party social websites and their APIs.
 - Challenges: Respond to the key challenges articulated (page 7) and define others unique to your approach
 - Timeline: Identify key deliverables and their dates
 - Cost: Estimate the cost of the proposed work and describe the cost variables. A cost range is acceptable; please describe the differences implied by the range.
- Organization: Briefly introduce the contracting company or organization.
- Past projects: Provide up to 5 summaries no more than 250 words each of past projects. Include a url for each project.
- Principals: Summarize the background of key personnel who would be involved
- Attachments: Provide screenshots, slides or other supporting documents.

Evaluation Criteria

The following criteria will be used to evaluate each proposal, which will be scored on a 50 point scale:

- Approach: Does the proposal reflect an understanding of the core values and purpose of the Global Challenge and respond to our core needs? (20pts)
- Usability: Does the proposal respond to the challenge of “simplicity and robustness” and address context concerns (bandwidth, hardware, software)? (10pts)
- Feasibility: Does the proposed work respond well to the development timeline, and is it achievable? (10pts)
- Organization: Does the respondent reflect personnel and a history of projects that inspires confidence, competence and creativity? (10pts)

Completion Instructions

Respondents are responsible for making a careful examination of the scope of this RFP and to comply with its terms and requirements. Respondent must supply clear and concise answers to questions within this document and be as jargon free as possible.

All responses to this RFP become the property of the MIT 150th Planning Committee. We reserve the right to use any information in this proposal to the benefit of the MIT 150th Planning Committee.

Please ensure that the proposal cover letter is signed by an authorized official of the responding company. The MIT 150th Planning Committee reserves the right to issue revisions in writing to this RFP at any time prior to the closing date.

It is the respondent’s responsibility to deliver their proposal on, or before the deadline. Proposals received after the time specified will be considered late and may be disqualified at the discretion of the MIT 150th Planning Committee.

Delivery Instructions

Proposals must be submitted electronically as a .pdf file with accompanying attachments no later than 6:00pm, January 31, 2009. Send an email with “MITGC RFP” in the subject line to:

Lars Hasselblad Torres
Global Challenge Coordinator
lhrtorres@mit.edu