



## Online Opportunities Open Doors for Filmmakers and Artists

Emily Carter

Independent filmmakers and visual artists, dubbed “starving artists,” often struggle to secure a consistent paycheck. However, online opportunities are changing the game, making it easier for creative individuals to share their work and form connections.

[HitRECORD](#), an open-collaborative production company created by actor Joseph Gordon-Levitt, allows writers, musicians, and visual artists to share their work, joining together to produce short films, books, music, and art.

The company originally launched as a means for Gordon-Levitt to solicit feedback for videos. However, in January 2010 at the Sundance Film Festival, hitRECORD introduced its new website which allows anyone with internet access to participate in collaborative projects. Through hitRECORD, artists can upload original work or download, review, and remix work posted to the site. Original work remains on the website, and everyone receives credit for collaborations.

When the company’s money making productions, such as books, live shows, and vinyl records, make a profit, hitRECORD splits earnings 50/50 with contributing artists. In 2013, the company paid contributors a total of \$737,175.09. Messiah alum Jonathan Stutzman (Film ’09) has had several short stories and an illustration published in “[The Tiny Book of Tiny Stories](#),” a book produced by hitRECORD.

Stutzman shared, “There is currently such great potential for independent artists. We can now share ideas and work together, no matter where in the world we are. And also, the fact that the audience is right there, a click away. You can make your own content and put it out there for the whole world to see in seconds.”

In Jan. 2014, hitRECORD released the Emmy award-winning television show, hitRECORD on TV. Hosted by Joseph Gordon-Levitt, the new take on a variety show features short films, live performances, music, animation, and conversation. Each episode focuses on a different theme, and artists are invited to contribute content via hitRECORD’s website.

Stutzman recently received word that one of his stories is being made into a short film for the second season of the show. He expressed, “So getting a credit as a TV writer on a Joseph Gordon-Levitt produced show? I’ll take that any day. Like I said it’s been an exciting ride, and anyone who’s creative out there should check out hitRECORD and submit your own work!”

HitRECORD serves as just one example of the tools and opportunities available to filmmakers and artists today. Professor Krista Imbesi noted, “Online distribution is an exciting development for small budget independent filmmakers. In the past, they would need to find a reputable distributor who would often only do straight to DVD options. Making DVDs costs money, and

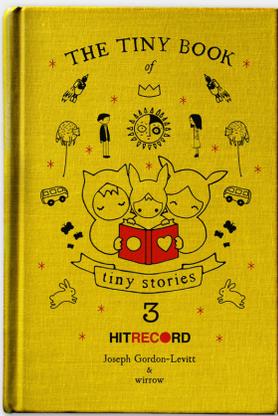
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HITRECORD



the distributor would often take a large portion of the profits, which would leave the filmmaker with much less than expected. With online distribution, the costs and profits are usually a little more streamlined, and you have the opportunity for your film to be seen by a wider audience. This is especially important for niche films with specific

audiences in mind.” 

## Partnership Produces Difficult Conversations Goes Professional

Emily Carter

On Oct. 14, students and faculty gathered in Brubaker Auditorium to attend Difficult Conversations Goes Professional. Co-sponsored by the Communication Department and Career and Professional Development Center (CPDC), the event featured role plays designed to educate and equip students to effectively and professionally communicate in difficult workplace conversations. Interactive audience brainstorming and discussion, as well as a reception, added to the evening’s activities.

Christy Hanson, Director of the CPDC, noted, “It was a wonderful opportunity for us to partner with the Communication Department to host the Difficult Conversations Goes Professional event. We appreciated the opportunity to share with students potential scenarios that may challenge their thinking and communication strategies, specifically within a professional context. For many students, these types of challenging scenarios may be unfamiliar territory, so the chance to think through responses and solutions critically with their peers allows them to be prepared for future situations.”

Members of Dr. Nance McCown’s event planning class gained hands on experience, helping to plan, promote, and execute the event, which also served as an alternate chapel. Sarah Ooi (‘16), a member of the logistics team, worked to create an event formulary,

budget, and timeline. She noted, “I met with Dennis Weller, the Conference and Event coordinator at Messiah, to formulate the layout of Brubaker Auditorium. We talked about table sizes, placement, and how to organize the stage. Through this event, I learned the importance of being flexible. When you are planning an event for hundreds of students, being able to go with the flow makes it easier to coordinate details with your team and guests, making sure all expectations are met.”

Kelly Gordon (‘17) had the opportunity to practice her acting skills, performing in one of the role plays. She shared, “It was really cool to see the process from start to finish and see how quickly everything got put together on the day of the event. There were so many different aspects of the event from just the event planning class to the three different skits and the Career and Professional Development Center working with the Comm. Department. That was really impressive seeing them all work together seamlessly.”

Dr. Kate Simcox was responsible for coordinating content for the event, beginning with soliciting scripts from students in her Communication Senior Seminar course. She also assigned coaches to assist actors and script writers, wrote audience discussion questions, and facilitated interaction between the writers and CPDC.

She added, “I think this was a wonderful collaborating venture with the CPDC office and a natural fit. Students who attended learned very practical, effective communication strategies they can use in various types of professional situations. They were also invited to consider what difference their Christian faith made in the ways they might respond to typical workplace challenges. I’m very grateful for

### Authors of the Skits

“Did I get the Job?”

**Kaitlyn O’Connor** (’15), Public Relations

“The Intern”

**Joel Hoover** (’15), Journalism

“Mumbo Jumbo”

**Hannah Teklits** (’15), Communication

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the great work everyone contributed to pull together this event—the event planning class, the Comm Department professors, the student writers and actors, and the lively audience members.” 

## “Houston, We’ve Got a Twitter Post”

Erin Zakin

Imagine getting up close and personal with the rockets built by NASA or seeing a rocket launch live and in-person. Ally Coonradt, a junior Public Relations student, knows exactly what those things feel like. NASA selected Ally as the only college student to cover the social media for the Orbital Sciences Cooperation’s Antares launch at NASA’s Wallops Flight Facility in Virginia after she applied to be a NASA Social Media Credential. As a selected NASA Social Media Credential, Ally completed a two-day visit at the Virginia headquarters, including press conferences, photo ops, tours, and VIP seats for the rocket launch, all of which she live-tweeted through Messiah’s Pulse media hub Twitter feeds.

When Ally saw NASA’s advertisement post about covering a rocket launch on social media, she jumped on the chance to pursue her interests. “I follow NASA on my personal Twitter account,” Ally explained, “I’ve always had an interest in astronomy. I have a lot of astronomy books.”

Ally also said the whole experience was very rewarding. “It was a fantastic opportunity. I did a lot of social media overall. I attended two press conferences [before the launch] and took pictures. We visited the launch site and got close to the rocket. The day of the scheduled launch, we went to the facility where they make the rockets.”



*The exploding rocket. Photo credit: Pulse.*

As with many NASA launches, a few complications arose over the course of Ally’s stay. “The first day, there was a sail boat in the hazard zone, and they weren’t able to communicate with him,” she noted. With only a 10-minute launch window, the procedure cannot continue if any individuals are within the hazard zone. After delaying the launch as much as possible, NASA shut off the countdown right after it started, postponing to the next day.

“The second day we were all excited. [The launch] was right on time, and it was only less than 10 seconds in that we knew something was wrong,” said Ally, referring to the explosion occurring immediately after the Antares rocket launched. “The big explosion we saw was the rocket hitting the ground and all the jet fuel exploding.” As it turns out, NASA knew something was wrong and hit a self-destruct button, exploding the rocket.

The good news is no one was injured, and all the staff members were fully prepared in the case of an emergency or a rocket explosion. “Multiple times before the actual launch, we were informed what to do if something went wrong,” Ally stated. “We all knew what to do in an emergency. When [the explosion] happened, that’s exactly what we did. We were out of there so quickly, I didn’t have the time to process what was happening.”

NASA handled the crisis extremely well, or as Ally described it, “textbook-definition perfect.” Everything from the initial preparation, to the actual crisis, to the press conference afterwards was well-organized.

Ally said the whole experience gave her a bit more insight towards her future career. “It made me realize I want to be the one in the press conferences,” she said, “I enjoyed seeing NASA unroll the crisis communication. They did their best and they were prepared. It makes me want to be more involved, even if it’s just with NASA.” Ally also said she has a strong interest working with a space-based organization. When asked why, she said, “[The projects] benefit humanity as a whole. I would love to eventually work for an organization that does space exploration.”

To check out some of Ally’s posts, search any of these tags on Facebook or Twitter: #AllyGoesToSpace2014 #NASASocial #Orb3 #Antares #PulseGoesToSpace2014 In addition, check out the Pulse [news package](#) that Ally, senior and

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the Swinging Bridge Editor-in-Chief Joel Hoover (journalism), and senior and Pulse Student Director Lauren Piccione (digital media) created. 



*Ally Coonradt ('16) posing at the field where the rocket launch was about to take place.*

## Alum Takes Love of Storytelling to the Big Screen

Emily Carter

“I have always loved telling stories, and I feel that storytelling is one of the most important methods of communication we have,” says Jonathan Stutzman ('09). “It’s a way to share thoughts & ideas, explore our existence, our connection to each other, the world, and to God.”

This love of storytelling led Stutzman to pursue a B.A. in communication (film concentration) at Messiah College. Currently finishing his thesis for an M.F.A. in Screenwriting & Directing for Film at Temple University, Stutzman works independently in the creative field.

He described the “kaleidoscope” of projects he has been a part of, explaining that he enjoys the creativity and freedom afforded by his job description. “My work varies from shooting films and video work for companies, musicians, and weddings, to graphic design for companies, to photography for fashion bloggers & actors, and pretty much anyone else who wants a picture,” he noted. “I also publish writing and poetry. So my typical day can range from travelling somewhere for a shoot (sometimes as far as California), to staring at a computer screen for hours editing or writing.”

Stutzman explained how Messiah has prepared him for his career. “Messiah was the place I took my original passion for filmmaking and storytelling, which had sparked in my middle school and high school years, and was able to cultivate it,” he said. “Of course it’s been a continual process of learning and growing ever since graduation, too, but Messiah definitely laid the groundwork for my craft, and how this creativity relates to my faith.”

While in college, Stutzman completed an internship with CoLaborers International, a nonprofit organization that empowers indigenous-led groups to reach their communities in Zambia and India. He also worked for the State Department, serving as a U.S. Arts Consultant to the Afghanistan National Institute of Music. He recalled, “I met a lot of wonderful talented young musicians and artists, with beautiful stories to tell. Getting to share with them and hear about their lives was such a rewarding experience. Meeting new people and experiencing different cultures, breaking that bubble of comfort, is always an important step towards learning and personal growth.”

Stutzman has also had the opportunity to teach a few film and screenwriting classes, both at Temple and Messiah, as an adjunct. “The process of teaching, having to take the knowledge you’ve learned and instilled in your own brain, and turn it into something comprehensible for someone else, creates a whole new way at looking at your craft,” he explained. “It’s an amazing, and encouraging experience to share your passions and love of something, with other people who loved it too.”

While at Messiah, Stutzman was a member of the film society, played varsity basketball, participated in student government, was an RA for two years, and spent a semester in Philadelphia. He relayed his favorite college memory. “I wanted to make a film over j-term, and because free, cool locations are hard to find for student filmmakers, I thought, hey why not use my sister-in-law’s family’s beach house in New Jersey?”

After rounding up a few film friends and actors, the crew arrived at the beach house to find they had no heat, running water, or indoor plumbing. Stutzman joked, “Contrary to popular belief, beaches are not always warm year round. So during the day we froze on the windy beach, in 30 degree weather, and at night

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to start your career than now. So, get out there and do something awesome.” 

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## Study Abroad Enriches Understanding of Communication

Erin Zakin

Messiah College encourages all its students to study abroad, whether that means traveling for a J-Term or May Term cross-cultural or spending a semester studying in another country. Traveling abroad can help even Communication Department students with their communication skills (and that doesn't just mean learning another language). Studying abroad may include internship opportunities or learning how communication and culture work in another country. Here, several COMMunity students share their experiences studying in Australia and Great Britain.

### A View from Down Under

Junior communication major Susannah Goodman is spending fall semester in Brisbane, Australia, studying at Christian Heritage College. Centering around psychology and sociology, her classes include Personal and Social Relationships and Australian Society: Intro to Sociology. She is also taking two specialty courses about Australian history, culture, and society. Susannah says, “I knew almost nothing about Aboriginals prior to taking that class, but in addition to learning about them, I've learned about the importance of seeing how God is expressed in



*Susannah Goodman poses with other friends from the program.*

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we all huddle up in the room together trying to keep warm. I think the nearest bathroom was 5 miles away on a different isle. But it was an awesome weekend. We got to make a movie, we had a blast making it, and no one lost any toes from frost bite.”

In the short time since his graduation, Stutzman has received a number of awards. “Recently I had a great experience making a video for the Wake Up the World film competition, and was blessed when I won first place. They are flying me out to LA to meet with an NBC executive, so I'm excited about that adventure and the possibilities that might come from the experience,” he shared.

In addition, he received word that his story, “Fire Flies,” is being made into a short film for hitRECORD's TV show. He explained, “[HitRECORD](#) is a creative company/community run by Joseph Gordon-Levitt that is about utilizing the talent and creativity from people around the world to create projects together.”

A few years ago, Stutzman submitted some writing and poems to hitRECORD's book, “The Tiny Book of Tiny Stories: Volume 1.” He recalled his surprise when Joe personally picked one of his submissions. “I ended up getting three stories in Vol. 1, and then four more as well as an illustration in the next two volumes. Recently, I just found out Joe wants to make that original first story into a short film for the second season of their television show,” shared Stutzman.

In his spare time, Stutzman enjoys reading. “If I see a bookstore I'm going in, and most likely I'm coming out with a handful of paperbacks,” he shared. He advises students, “Do as much as you can now, as far as creating work, applying for internships, and checking out job opportunities. There is no better time

different cultures.” She also mentions that her time abroad has helped her grow spiritually and develop her relationship with God. One big difference is, of course, the communication. “While I was fortunate to study abroad in a country where English is the first language, I still had to work to decipher Australians’ speech,” Susannah notes. “Words and terms that I frequently use in the United States have very different meanings in Australia. I also found myself comparing Australian mass media to American mass media, and I realized how much American media has permeated Australian culture.”



*Sarah Beckmann expresses excitement about feeding baby kangaroos.*

Sarah Beckmann, another junior communication major, also studied in Brisbane at the Australia Studies Center. She took classes in Australian sociology, Australian Indigenous Aboriginals, theatre, and Australian government. Sarah said her favorite part was living with a host family because she felt “like I embraced and experienced more of the culture of the country than I would have had I lived in a campus dorm.” She also explained that she used all the communication skills she learned at Messiah. Similar to Susannah, Sarah worked hard to adjust to the Australian ways of communicating. She says, “I had to learn to understand a whole new culture, which included learning how they communicate with one another. Even though the idea of communication is not too far off from our American views, they definitely have a unique way of doing it. Simple things like their sense of humor or how they talk to/respect elders were very different, which was a struggle to originally adjust to.”

## **A British “Cuppa” Tea**

Heather Quirk (photo not available), senior public relations student, spent last spring semester in London through the London Internship Program. She had an internship at the Ritz London, where she worked in the Human Resources department. Heather’s classes included Creative Writing, Filming and the City, and Photography. One of her favorite parts of her experience was traveling around Europe, but there were times of struggle: “I love being independent, but this was really far out of my comfort zone. I had to learn so much patience, forgiveness, and love, both for myself and for those around me.” Heather also says she applied a lot of what she learned in her Business and Organization Communications class to her internship, noting, “Since Bus Org was one of my favorite classes here at Messiah, it was really cool to have the opportunity to use what I had learned to critically analyze the company I was involved with.”

Another senior public relations student, Elizabeth McNeal, is currently spending her final fall semester at Arcadia University London Center in London, England. Her studies include three classes, The Environment, Communities and the Arts, Britain and the EU, and Photography. She is also interning for 20 hours a week in the Ritz London’s Marketing Department. She works mainly with social media, such as handling the Ritz’s Pinterest page, writing news blogs for its website, brainstorming possible hashtags, and proofreading newsletters and press releases. Liz says, “I learned very quickly that Nance McCown and Kate Simcox have done a beautiful job preparing me for the professional world. I’ve been



*Liz McNeal takes a selfie with the British guard.*

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correcting a professional PR firm’s press releases and writing for the London Ritz website. I never knew I would have been capable of these things if it weren’t for this semester, and none of it would be possible without our amazing communication professors.” 

## Fall Extravaganza brings COMMunity building

This year’s Fall-themed COMMunity event provided a much-needed break from all the studying. Students painted pumpkins while listening to Halloween music, and sipped on Fall drinks, such as snickerdoodle coffee. Some students tried to pin the “Boo!” on the ghost, and others took silly photos in front of the photobooth. A costume contest for any student in-costume featured three categories: Scariest, Most Creative and Best Couple.



COMMunity students painted pumpkins, sipped on fall drinks, listened to Halloween music, ate cookies and candy, and posed for silly pictures at the photobooth.



Devin Dietrich, ('16), and Joel Hoover, ('15) both won special Halloween gift baskets for the costume contest. Devin won for the scariest costume, and Joel won for most original.



Members of the Event Planning class organized the Fall COMMunity event. The November event, A Charlie Brown Thanksgiving, will occur on November 20. Christmas Shenanigans is slated for December 8.

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CultureCONNECT THE 2014 ANNUAL LECTURE

**THE POWER OF SIMULATION:**

from  
THE MATRIX  
to  
AVATAR

Dr. Nidesh Lawtoo

**November 10, 2014 Parmer Cinema**  
Movie screening: 5:45 p.m. • Lecture: 7:45 p.m.  
Reception to follow

Futuristic science fiction cinema connects the “real” world with the “virtual” world, reflecting realities about the present. In this movie screening and lecture, Dr. Nidesh Lawtoo, Johns Hopkins Visiting Scholar, will discuss the power of simulations and the emergence of digital practices.

Admission is free and open to students in the Department of Communication.

For more information contact  
[Christine Walter cwalter@messiah.edu](mailto:Christine.Walter@messiah.edu)

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