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**School: Creative Industries**

**Researcher: Ruth Farrar**

**Project Title: Dear Carnegie Hall: Utilising Digital Technologies to Unlock Multiple Perspectives of the Past**

**UOA: 34 – Communication, Cultural and Media Studies, Library and Information Management**

300-Word Statement

Accounts of history inherently vary. This multi-component output investigates how digital technologies – specifically, apps – can be used to capture the complexities of understanding a history’s multiple perspectives. The output manifests as ‘Dear Carnegie Hall’, an interactive storytelling app commissioned by Carnegie Hall in New York to commemorate the music venue’s 125th anniversary, and a journal article. Contextual information comprises user testing documentation and footage of the app being used.

In terms of research process, Farrar collaborated with Barney Heywood and Lucy Telling from Stand + Stare, UK immersive theatre and interactive designers. ‘Dear Carnegie Hall’ applies app and image recognition technologies in conjunction with archive material and messages from patrons, backstage staff and audience members. The project provides an original contribution to the emerging trend of museums and galleries mediating digital technologies in apps to create new modes of understanding history. Such apps typically provide a one-way channel sharing history from the organisation’s app to attendee (see ‘The British Museum’ app (2016) and ‘Uffizi Gallery’, Florence (2017)). In contrast, ‘Dear Carnegie Hall’ explores how the affordances of an app can provide for a more democratic approach to narrating the stories of history. As well as the app curating stories of Carnegie Hall’s past, the user is able to record an audio postcard (Farrar, 2015) of their personal story connected to Carnegie Hall, which in turn aimed to position the app as that which broadened the diversity of the venue.

‘Dear Carnegie Hall’ demonstrates how using digital technologies can encourage a sense of play with the seemingly fixed stories of the past, which ultimately led to its users proclaiming a more measured, deeper and immersive understanding of the organisation’s history. From 2015 to 2019, the app was available as an iOs version on iTunes and Android version on Google Play.