

Due **October 21**

submitted oct 20 but edits can be made and re-submitted until 8pm oct 21

Notes:

1. From the [instructions](#): “Early submissions have a significant advantage because we have more time to look at them and engage with the founders.”
2. Come on dudes: “We may have questions about your application. If we have a question, we won't send you an email. Instead you'll see a link to it on this page and at the top of [Hacker News](#) (when you're logged in). So check HN regularly after submitting.”
3. P: you need to [make a y combinator user account](#)
4. We need to make a 1 minute video introducing the founders. Does that mean you and Mike?
5. A lot of this is phrased as if the organization/project doesn't exist yet. There is literally no information on what stage of development they are looking for for the nonprofits they fund, although the [FAQ for normal applicants](#) seems like it would include orgs that already exist and that have already gotten \$. Not sure, but still worth a shot.

Should be as concise and no-bullshit as possible.

put somewhere - <http://localwiki.org/blog/2013/jul/25/big-news-future-localwiki/>

Y Combinator Funding Application (Nonprofit)

Winter 2014

Application deadline: 8 pm PST on October 21, 2013.

Please try to answer each question in less than 120 words.

If you're about to answer a question by saying you can't tell us because the answer is classified or controversial, please tell us instead about an instance that isn't.

We recommend you **save regularly** by clicking on the update button at the bottom of this page. Otherwise you may lose work if we restart the server.

Your YC username:

philipn

Organization name:

LocalWiki

Organization url, if any:

localwiki.org

Phone number(s):

redacted

Please enter the url of a 1 minute unlisted (not private) YouTube video introducing the founders. ([Instructions](#).)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=B_uCdr6ITSo

**YC usernames of all founders, including you, philipn, separated by spaces.
(That's usernames, not given names: "bksmith," not "Bob Smith." If there are 3
founders, there should be 3 tokens in this answer.)**

marinakukso, philipn

YC usernames of all founders, including you, marinakukso, who will live in the Bay Area January through March if we fund you. (Again, that's usernames, not given names.)

marinakukso, philipn

What will your organization do?

We want to build the open, universal platform for local knowledge. We want anyone, anywhere to be able to learn about where they live — their local government, the history of their neighborhoods, streets, social movements, noteworthy local figures, social services, schools – every facet of life in their community.

We believe that giving people the ability to create and share knowledge about local issues radically empowers them to make change in their communities. E.g. http://localwiki.org/first_year/#look_inside_dwiki.

For each founder, please list: YC username; name; age; year of graduation, school, degree and subject for each degree; email address; personal url, github url, facebook id, twitter id; employer and title (if any) at last job before this organization. Put unfinished degrees in parens. List the main contact first. Separate founders with blank lines. Put an asterisk before the name of anyone not able to move to the Bay Area.

philipn

Philip Neustrom

29

Bachelor of Science, Mathematics, UC Davis (2006)

philipn@gmail.com

<http://mathburritos.org>

<http://github.com/philipn>

<https://www.facebook.com/philip.neustrom>

<http://twitter.com/philipn>

Last job: Lead Developer, Citizen Engagement Laboratory (<http://engagementlab.org>)

marinakukso

Marina Kukso

28

Bachelor of Arts, Cultural Anthropology, & Certificate, Documentary Studies, Duke University (2006)

marina.kukso@gmail.com

N/A

<http://github.com/mk30/>

<https://www.facebook.com/marina.kukso>

<https://twitter.com/marinakukso>

Last job: Editorial Manager of the journals *PLOS Neglected Tropical Diseases* & *PLOS Pathogens* at PLOS (plos.org).

Please tell us in one or two sentences about the most impressive thing other than this organization that each founder has built or achieved.

Marina:

Co-founded an inclusive, community hackerspace in downtown Oakland (sudoroom.org) which has now been running for over a year entirely on member support with large percentages of female and minority membership, all while being a non-technical person herself.

Philip:

When I was at Citizen Engagement Lab I did all the technical stuff for some big organizing campaigns including the campaign that resulted in a Glenn Beck advertiser exodus (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Color_of_Change#Glenn_Beck) and the campaign that got Lou Dobbs to resign from CNN after 30 years of anti-immigrant rhetoric (<http://bastadobbs.com>). I ran the largest coordinated video documentation project in 2008 (<http://videothevote.org>), worked with the guy who started Occupy Wall Street (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micah_M._White), and generally fought for underserved communities. Recently I made a cool weekend hack to license Instagram photos under CC licenses that ended up going viral (<http://i-am-cc.org>, <http://techcrunch.com/2012/08/24/gives-your-instagram-pictures-a-creative-commons-license-with-i-am-cc/>).

Please tell us about the time you, philipn, most successfully hacked some (non-computer) system to your advantage.

Me and a few friends crashed a city-appointed task force for like 6 months and slowly convinced them that their original plan for district elections in Davis wasn't good for the city and got them to instead endorse Ranked Choice Voting (Single Transferable Vote), a voting system with proportional representation characteristics in multi-winner elections. We ended up getting a ballot measure passed to move the city to Ranked Choice Voting (for multi-winner elections!), http://daviswiki.org/November_2006_Election/Measure_L. The only other city in the US with multi-winner Choice Voting is Cambridge. (Unfortunately, the city isn't yet using the system because Schwarzenegger vetoed a bill to make it legal for non-charter cities to change their voting system)

How long have the founders known one another and how did you meet? Have any of the founders not met in person?

Marina and Philip met last year through the hackerspace Marina started in Oakland. Around the same time we met, a group of people started getting excited about building a

LocalWiki for Oakland, and we bonded by nerding out over strategies and ideas for how to make the Oakland LocalWiki a success. Marina started to get way too into LocalWiki theorycraft and learning as much as possible about what makes LocalWiki projects take off. This gradually morphed into an interest in making the global LocalWiki effort succeed, and when we got some more funding to support the project Marina quit her job at PLOS and started working on LocalWiki full time.

Why did you pick this idea to work on? Do you have domain expertise in this area? How do you know this is going to work?

Philip co-founded the Davis Wiki (<http://daviswiki.org>) in 2004 as a fun way to share what he and other UC Davis students knew about the town of Davis. The Davis Wiki is now used by almost everyone in Davis (around one in six a day). “It’s like if wikipedia, craigslist, the yellow pages, and consumer reports were to have a drunken orgy and give birth to the most useful thing in the world, or at least the most useful thing in Davis,” as metafilter put it. Check out this video that shows a bit of the impact that the Davis Wiki has had in that community: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f_ZjtSsN28g.

In 2010 we got a bit of grant funding and created LocalWiki as a formal 501(c)3 non-profit. Since then, we’ve built an entirely new kind of wiki software designed for local collaboration and grown a global community of LocalWikians. Across all the LocalWiki projects we see something like 400,000 uniques / month.

We’ve already seen the effects of LocalWiki in communities like Davis -- where residents use it to do everything from finding lost pets to collaborating on changes to the city charter -- and are starting to see similar effects in other communities (e.g. <http://localwiki.org/blog/2013/jul/2/localwiki-shout-out-oakland-city-council-meeting/>).

What's new about what you plan to do?

We want to build the open, universal platform for local knowledge. There is currently no

global, open source, open content project that allows people to collaborate on sharing everything there is to know about the place where they live.

Everyone thinks “local” is important, e.g. Sheryl Sandberg recently said "Local is huge, it's the holy grail of the Internet." But all of these commercial efforts focus on the thin, easily-monetizable layer of local knowledge sharing -- restaurant reviews, coupon sales and consumer exchange -- and often have misaligned incentive structures (e.g. yelp). But there is so much more to our local communities than finding out when the latest tapas restaurant opens.

While LocalWiki has been around since 2011, what we want to do now is a bit different. We want to make things a lot easier on all levels and remove barriers that have prevented scaling. We've got a bunch of information here:

<http://localwiki.org/blog/2013/jul/25/big-news-future-localwiki/>

How far along are you?

Totally outdated, but a good overview of our first year: http://localwiki.org/first_year/.

More under “where we are right now” here:

<http://localwiki.org/blog/2013/jul/25/big-news-future-localwiki/>

Since we started the LocalWiki project in 2011, we've been primarily focused on building a new open-source system for creating super easy-to-use geographically-rooted wiki sites. We built the first 100% rich text wiki engine, an entirely visual HTML diff system, the first real geographic diff, some cool database versioning things, and some interesting geo-api stuff (e.g. “show me all pages tagged ‘park’ that intersect with this provided linestring”).

We've also built an international community of contributors who use LocalWiki in over 70 cities and towns to document and share what they know about where they live (some stories on our blog <http://localwiki.org/blog/>). Our goal now is to build an open local knowledge platform to massively scale the project.

If you have an online demo, what's the url? (Please don't password protect it; just use an obscure url.)

The current, public incarnation of LocalWiki is live at <http://localwiki.org>. You can see the new stuff we're working on now (so rough it's embarrassing) at <http://localwiki.net>.

If you're already incorporated, when were you? If you've had funding, how much and from whom?

We became a 501(c)3 non-profit in late 2009. We've been supported by the Knight Foundation (\$350,000 in 2010 & \$200,000 in early 2013) & over 400 individual community backers.

If we fund you, which of the founders will commit to working exclusively (no school, no other jobs) on this project for the next year?

Both founders will work exclusively on this project for the next year.

For founders who can't, why not? What level of commitment are they willing to make?

N/A

Do any founders have other commitments between January and March 2014 inclusive?

No.

Do any founders have commitments in the future (e.g. finishing college, going to grad school), and if so what?

No.

Where do you live now, and where would the organization be based after YC?

We both live in the Bay Area and are based here.

Are any of the following true? (a) You are the only founder. (b) You are a student who may return to school when the next term starts. (c) Half or more of your group can't move to the Bay Area. (d) One or more founders will keep their current jobs.

(Answering yes doesn't disqualify you. It's just to remind us to check.)

No.

If you had any other ideas you considered applying with, please list them. One may be something we've been waiting for.

No.

**Please tell us something surprising or amusing that one of you has discovered.
(The answer need not be related to your project.)**

Surprisingly, there's no good freely-licensed aerial imagery of the different US Antarctic stations, which lead me down this insane rathole:

<http://localwiki.org/blog/2012/oct/10/localwiki-antarctica/>

(Clicking on update doesn't submit your application; it just saves it to disk.)

Notes:

Philip Neustrom is one of the co-founders of the Davis Wiki, used by nearly half of Davis residents in a given week, and nearly every resident in a given month. It is now the primary media channel in the city of Davis where residents use it for everything from finding lost pets to proposing, refining, and organizing around changes to voting laws in Davis.

Co-founded an inclusive, community hackerspace in downtown Oakland which has now been running for over a year entirely on member support with large percentages of female and minority membership, all while being a non-tech.

developing an extremely easy-to-use open source software that allows people to come together and collaborate on creating knowledge about their community.

Our simple, intuitive software breaks new ground in usability and makes it possible for anyone to collaborate with their neighbors.

LocalWiki projects are a long-term investment in community power. From our experience, we've discovered that it can take several years for new projects to cement themselves in the community. What is needed now are the resources to turn this energy and

momentum into a strong, self-sustaining movement.

Since starting this project in 2011, we've developed an entirely new kind of open source wiki software designed specifically for local, geographic collaboration. Using this approach, we've seen robust LocalWiki projects start in over 70 communities.

Imagine if communities all had the power to use technology to focus on local issues.

* philip:

- voting reform in davis?
- getting head of newspaper fired by bluffing

glenn beck after he made race-baiting comments

We met about two years ago at the hackerspace that Marina co-founded in Oakland. After hearing about LocalWiki, Marina thought that there needed to be one in Oakland and started the Oakland LocalWiki. As they collaborated on helping the Oakland Wiki project get off the ground, Marina became interested in the global LocalWiki effort and joined the team in 2013.