

## New website gives Black youth a voice

Written by

Tuesday, 10 November 2009 17:15

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(Chicago, IL—November 10, 2009) The Black Youth Project (BYP) announced today the launch of its new website — [blackyouthproject.com](http://blackyouthproject.com) — to provide a place on the web where young black people can speak for themselves. This first-of-its kind online resource explores the attitudes, actions and decision making of black youth by including their lives, ideas and voices. The purpose of the BYP website is to generate new media information, blogs, art, conversations, webinars, data, research, policies and movements that will expand the human and social capital of young black youth, facilitating their empowerment through highlighting their voices and experiences.

The current generation of black youth finds itself in the center of many of the country's political and social debates and the subject of numerous films, videos and media analysis. But more than any other group of Americans, black youth face the challenge of inclusion in the post-civil rights period as well as the challenge of web access and digital spaces to call their own. The Black Youth Project, a national research project that examines the attitudes, resources, and culture of African American youth, decided to create an online hub for black youth where scholars, educators, community activists, youth allies, and youth themselves could have access to an array of resources.

“This site gives us a voice,” says Jonathan Lykes, <http://www.blackyouthproject.com/blog/author/jonathan/>, age 19, one of the featured bloggers on the BYP website. “A lot of black youth have something to say now. We understand now and we want our voices heard now.”

“It is a place where the perspectives of young black people will be heard loud and clear,” stated Leigh Richie, web coordinator for the Black Youth Project.

“While this generation of young African Americans are much talked-about by pundits and the media, they are rarely talked with and asked to engage in real dialog,” said Dr. Cathy Cohen, the principal investigator for the Black Youth Project and a Professor of Political Science at the University of Chicago. “Finally, there's a place on the web where young black people can speak for themselves instead of having other people speak about them.”

The BYP site features a number of innovative and useful resources, including:

Rap Lyrics Database <http://www.blackyouthproject.com/byp-presents/rplyrics/> — the first public searchable database of rap music lyrics. A cyber storehouse that allows scholars, youth,

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cultural workers, and teachers to search through lyrics of Billboard Music's top rap songs from 1990 to February 2009 in order to create content to think critically about rap and hip hop just as one does about jazz and classical music.

"You can find a whole number of videos as well as articles and blogs that talk about hiphop in a way that respects young black people and the culture." — Alexandra Moffett-Bateau, researcher

Black Youth Blogging <http://www.blackyouthproject.com/blog/> — daily blogs that represent the voices and attitudes of young African Americans who are in their late teens and twenties. Content consists of conversations about popular culture, current news about politics, testimonials, and narratives about growing up being black, gay, straight, man, woman, transgender, working class, middle class, and differently abled in the US.

"The Black Youth Project is really cool because it is a space where people from various communities can come together and get information. You can search for anything you are looking for." — Summer McDonald, blogger

Data, Survey and Findings <http://www.blackyouthproject.com/survey/byp/> — the Black Youth Project Survey includes the most extensive dataset on black youth available to the public. Researchers can now download the original data set from the Black Youth Project, focused on surveying young people ages 15-25. Additional data sets will also be made available to the public.

"BYP's 2005 study was one of the largest-ever national surveys of black, hispanic and white youth on their attitudes about morality, education, marriage, politics, discrimination, justice and the future. A new survey that includes a significant number of young people and focuses on the impact of the Obama presidency will be released in 2010 through our Mobilization and Change, Political and Civic Engagement Project."  
— Cathy Cohen, Principal Investigator

Curriculum Workshop <http://www.blackyouthproject.com/byp-presents/curriculum/> — consists of educators, social workers, community activists, and artists creating innovative student-centered curriculum that focuses on the lives of young black people and uses data from the Black Youth Project.

"Educators can use the curriculum page as a great resource to borrow and generate lesson plans focused on black youth." — Fallon Wilson, blogger

Black Youth Create! <http://www.blackyouthproject.com/black-youth-create/> — This page calls out black youth to create and submit performance pieces, poetry, prose, and visual art to talk about what it means to be black youth in America.

"The Black Youth Project is an unprecedented website that sheds light on a demographic that has for too long been overlooked. It's the perfect space for young black people

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to express themselves and learn from others.” — Edward James, blogger

Black Youth In the News <http://www.blackyouthproject.com/resources/weekly-news/> — This page is a comprehensive archive of news stories in major U.S. newspapers written about black youth. This database will be updated weekly.

Research & Resources <http://www.blackyouthproject.com/resources/related/> — Listings/links to latest reports, research, books, films, documentaries, organizations and websites focused on black youth

A team of primarily young black researchers and writers created the structure and content of the BYP site. The team includes bloggers Tamara Curl-Green, Edward James, Jonathan Lykes, Summer McDonald, Fallon Wilson as well as BYP researchers and personnel Cathy Cohen, Nate Cook, Alexandra Moffett-Bateau, Tracye Matthews, Leigh Richie, and David Showalter. A short video featuring the site’s creators and contributors is at <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=b6utSojOdQE>.

As BYP Web Coordinator Leigh Richie says, “If you are a young black person or interested in black youth this site should be the first place you look for information.”