West Virginia University has been awarded a $1 million grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation to develop a new academic publishing platform for mixed-media scholarship.

Multimedia-rich work is a growing area of interest in scholarly communication, as academics, journals, and university presses begin regularly experimenting with publishing nonlinear and nonprint-like scholarly objects. However, traditional publishing workflows separate written content from its design, which can remove meaning from the content and impose technical defects in the underlying code of multimedia-rich pieces.

Vega addresses this problem by providing a new online, open source academic publishing system designed with a unique editorial workflow that allows form and content to be reviewed and edited together. It will incorporate features to help editors and publishers provide a flexible and collaborative environment for authors and readers. These features will help publishers engage in building multimedia-rich, peer-reviewed content.

Vega aims to accommodate print-like and multimedia journals, books, and data sets. It will support the peer review, copyediting, and publication of scholarship across disciplines. Vega will be available free of charge, and it will be completely customizable in order to suit the needs of individual publishers.

Cheryl Ball (Associate Professor in the Department of English at West Virginia University) and Andrew Morrison (Director of the Center for Design Research at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design) are co-principal investigators. Once complete, Vega will be housed at the West Virginia University Library. Preliminary development is under way in partnership with the journals program at West Virginia University Press.

Vega is scheduled for release in 2018. To learn more or get involved, visit vegapublish.com or email contact@vegapublish.com.