

*Thank you*, by [Marco Verch Professional Photographer](https://www.flickr.com/photos/30478819%40N08/), [CC-BY 2.0](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/)

# Acknowledgements

A massive project such as this would not have been possible without institutional support and the hard work and support of many people. I would also like to express my gratitude to **The University of Texas at Austin** for institutional support of this project and other OER resources. Such resources not only benefit our students, but serve as a profound reminder of our mission to provide a high-quality, affordable education. I would like to thank **Dr. Carl Blyth** (Director of COERLL) for his leadership throughout all stages of the project. I began this with almost no experience using openly licensed materials and he helped guide me in learning how to use them in a pedagogically sound way. Through our numerous conversations I was able to learn how open content can truly meet the needs of our students. His encouragement and mentorship as I explored the affordances of openly licensed content were truly invaluable. I would also like to thank the COERLL team for their planning, technical, and logistical support, as well as their patience as I worked through the development process. I am indebted to **Sarah Sweeney** for her organizational support, as well as her considerable help documenting openly licensed content used in the textbook. **Nathalie Steinfeld Childre** created the beautiful *Reality Czech* logo and graphics and developed a website that enabled me to quickly and easily integrate all of the Google Docs and Youtube videos that make up the bulk of the curriculum. The materials are easily accessible (in a multitude of formats!) to anyone with internet access thanks to her.

The **Center for Russian, East European and Eurasian Studies** and its staff have also generously supported me throughout this process. **Dr. Mary Neuburger** (History, Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies - Chair) was one of the original visionaries behind this project. Over the past six years she has helped provide financial support for the project and has helped me in all my endeavors. I also could not have created this textbook without a model for best practices and I am indebted to **Dr. Thomas Garza** (Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies and Director of the Texas Language Center) for showing me the best ways to approach authentic texts. I would not have known how to use them to create such a truly communicative experience without his guidance. I am also grateful to him for providing me with critical feedback at later stages of the project. His teaching observations were instrumental in helping me hone the materials. I also owe thanks to **my many other colleagues** who have assisted me along the way, whether through questions and comments at presentations, or casual conversations about work. I have gleaned much wisdom through these interactions.

Additionally, I am thankful to have worked with fine colleagues in the field of Czech language instruction. Chief among them is **Dr. Susan Kresin**, who has been champion of both Czech and Less Commonly Taught Slavic Languages through her organization of poster panels and talks at American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL). I also began my own studies of Czech with her textbook (coauthored with Ilona Starý Kořánová) *Čeština hrou* and then subsequently taught out of it for many years. Anyone who has taught from it will see the many inspirations I took from it when creating *Reality Czech*. I would also like to thank my former colleague **Dr. Mark Hopkins** for helping me with the early planning stages for the textbook, filming interviews, and his work creating numerous Canvas quizzes used in the course. **Dr. Meghan Forbes** was extremely helpful in taking pictures in Prague one summer and creating Czech cultural notes to accompany the program. Another former colleague, **Petra Mert (Jelinková)**, single-handedly edited all of the Czech texts, exercises, and examples in the book, and transcribed all of the videos used in the course. Not only this, but she generously took part in the interviews themselves, and appears in many of the videos. I cannot thank her enough for her outstanding work.

I am also grateful to the many **students** who have trusted me with their Czech language education. The materials would not be the same without students who inspired me with their interest in Czech. Through their enthusiasm they helped add a lot of fun and whimsy into the course. My students also helped me fine-tune the materials, offering frequent feedback on what works (and what doesn’t), as well as helping me with smaller things like typos or omissions. I will always have fond memories of teaching and creating alongside you. Several University of Texas students helped out with the project more directly. **Nathanael Kupec** helped me tremendously with some of the logistical details of putting the interview videos online and doing attributions on early drafts of the textbook. I am also thankful to **Ryan Williams**, who edited nearly a dozen map videos to showcase interesting points around Prague. His initial designs helped give all of the videos used in the course the *Reality Czech* feel. I would also like to thank a former student, **Tracy Heim**, for her considerable work on ensuring license compliance in all Canvas quizzes and other parts of the textbook. Her hard work made it possible to publish many of the Reality Czech materials.

Czech Studies at UT exists largely due to the **Texas Chair in Czech Studies** endowment. Without this generous contribution from the Texas Czech community, we would not be able to offer the depth and breadth of Czech language courses, let alone fund a project such as this. I am thankful to the **Czech Educational Foundation of Texas** for all that they do to promote Czech studies here in the Lone Star State.

This textbook could not exist in its present form without the thousands of people who decided to place their pictures, videos, texts, etc. under an open license. The ability to build something based around open content presents a new frontier for content creation and authorship. Those who pioneered the **open source** and **copyleft** movements have enabled millions of people to share their content in the world, satisfied that others can also use their content to create. Creative Commons Licenses helped make this project possible, by creating a framework through which people can easily share their work over the internet. I in turn hope that others will find this work and choose to create their own works based on it.

Finally, I would like to thank **my family**, who have been patient with me and encouraged me along the way. My wife **Heather Rice** (Department of Slavic and Eurasian Studies) is often the first person I turn to when I am stuck, need help with an idea, or am unsure how to tackle a topic best. I am eternally grateful to her for her constant support. I am finally thankful to my son **Nathan** for his patience whenever I needed to finish “one last thing”, and who has always enjoyed watching me pick out pictures for the textbook (and got to pick out a few himself as well). I look forward to our next Lego building project.

*-Christian Hilchey*