

Digital Storytelling Workshop

An Introduction to Digital
Storytelling

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Workshop Facilitator
Justn Wylie



Day 1: Session 1

What is Digital Storytelling?

Everyone has a story to tell. Digital story telling allows individuals and communities to document, create and share their stories, histories, concepts or ideas with others.

Stories can be reflective, analytical, humorous, historical, instructive or persuasive- but the key feature is they are personal and individual.

Digital Storytelling refers to using digital tools so that ordinary people can tell their own real-life stories. (<http://www.wikipedia.org/>)

"*Digital Storytelling* takes the ancient art of oral storytelling and engages a palette of technical tools to weave personal tales using images, graphics, music and sound mixed together with the author's own story voice. Digital storytelling is an emerging art form of personal, heartfelt expression that enables individuals and communities to reclaim their personal cultures while exploring their artistic creativity. While the heart and power of the digital story is shaping a personal digital story about self, family, ideas, or experiences, the technology tools also invite writers and artists to think and invent new types of communication outside the realm of traditional linear narratives." By Bernajean Porter (<http://www.digitales.us/>)

Digital Storytelling is a relatively recent development of traditional or oral storytelling. Storytelling has been integral to our development, both in social & cultural terms. Digital storytelling has developed around the world, with particular reference to the work from pioneer organisations such as The Story Centre, in Berkley California www.storycentre.org and the Australian Centre for the Moving Image www.acmi.net.au

Digital storytelling is a powerful way for individuals and communities to engage with issues impacting on their lives, resourcing them with the tools and the authority to share their perspective.

Digital stories are like a mini-documentary, bringing together a narrated personal story with photographs, images, documents, music & sound effects. Generally the stories are between 1-3 minutes in length.

Digital storytelling is an exciting tool for:

- creative self-reflection
- community engagement
- community empowerment
- education
- intimate human connection
- self expression

Completed Digital Stories can then be shared via the Internet. Your digital story can impact on people from other communities, cultures or continents. Your story can inspire, educate, illuminate or illustrate!

Some Sample Digital Stories

<http://www.dhub.org/articles/978>

<http://www.dhub.org/articles/973>

<http://www.dhub.org/articles/967>

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cvQGV_G0wCs&feature=related

http://storiesforchange.net/story/you_are_only_a_stranger_once

http://www.acmi.net.au/video_community_people.htm

http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/movie_art_10.html

Day 1: Session 2

Creating a digital story may sound daunting, but we hope to dispel this idea as you work through the elements that make one up. The key benefit behind digital storytelling is that the equipment and software used is freely available (on either Mac or PC), and only requires basic computer skills.

One of the most important aspects of a digital story, besides the creative content is the methodical approach to how they are assembled. Digital stories are short, concise, thoughtful and creative personal stories that are quick to make and quick to download & view. They are in essence a mini- documentary, which follow set parameters in order to keep them achievable, engaging and effective.

A commonly used metaphor for producing a Digital Story is that of baking a Cake! A cake requires preparation & planning, deciding on a flavour, collecting the ingredients, preparing ingredients for use, mixing and then baking.

A digital story is much the same, requiring preparation & planning, deciding on a story, collecting of photographs & images, preparing images & audio for use, assembling the elements together, editing and final output.

By limiting the script to only 250 words, and keeping your digital story focussed on an issue, event or concept, you tend to be more creative in how you narrate your piece. Coming up with your own unique 'voice' is an exciting and rewarding process. This often informs the particular imagery or photographs you use. Although the opposite is also true, in that you may have particular images you wish to use that will inform the way your story develops.

Elements of a Digital Story

1. Concept
2. Script/Voiceover
3. Image or Photographs
4. Background Music
5. Camera Movements
6. Transitions
7. Supers

Q. What do you think is the most important element of the Digital Story?

Checklist for Creating your Digital Story

1. Brainstorm Concept/ idea
2. Write your Script (Max 250 words)
3. Storyboard your idea
4. Collect & compile you Photos and images in digital format
 - a. Scan photos
 - b. Resize and format digital images to screen format (ie landscape not portrait unless zooming in or out)
 - c. Verify for copyright clearance!
 - d. Scan or photograph artworks, documents, awards or objects
5. Record Voice Over
 - a. Record
 - b. Edit if required
6. Source Music & sound effects
 - a. Verify for copyright clearance
 - b. Record your own music or singing
7. Load all your digital content into your project folder and organise
8. Assemble your project using iMovie
9. Export a rough cut for preview and feedback
10. Final edit
11. Export (DVD, AVI, Quicktime)
12. Distribute or Upload

Your Script

The script for your digital story should be no more than 250 words. Your script is one of the main ingredients for your Digital Story.

Remember it's a personal story- this is about you, your experiences, your history, your own thoughts.

Getting started is one of the hardest parts- sometimes stopping is even harder!
Remember to keep the 250 word limit!

Some key things to think about when writing your script

Make notes about how this might effect your story idea, jot down ideas, make bullet points!

What is your point of view?

What is the point you are trying to get across with your story? Who are you aiming the story at? When we tell or hear a story it generally has a moral, or a key point it is making. Why are you telling your story – what is it's purpose?

Hook, Line & Sinker!

Ask me a question, pose me a hypothesis or tell me a riddle. Captivate me and then give me your answer. Sometimes referred to as the 'Dramatic Question', the structure of a story is often based around such a question. As your story unfolds, you resolve the issue.

Make a journey

All good stories come from personal experience. We've all had to overcome challenges which life has thrown our way, or followed a path that has lead to somewhere unexpected.

Journeys are not always pleasant, but when we look back & reflect they are often insightful and interesting.

You, the storyteller

One of the most engaging elements of Digital Storytelling is the voice of the author. The truth that comes from hearing someone speak his or her own story is powerful. Your voice is one of the key ingredients- in all its natural beauty! Write in your own words, your own voice and in your own style. Then when you speak, it will come more naturally.

Background Music/ soundtrack

An often-underestimated ingredient is the soundtrack or background music. Used well it can create atmosphere and mood. Too much and it's a distraction. Sound effects can set up the location, create emotion or build tension. Copyright is an important issue to consider when selecting music – so record your own or find material that is free of copyright issues or has appropriate licensing. *(see links at end of document)*

Economy

Less is more! Keep it to 250 words or less. Between 10 – 15 images. Select images that really support what your are saying or contribute to the mood that your are conveying. You might like a photograph, but ask yourself whether it really fits this story- or will it seem out of place?

Pacing or timing

The tempo, pacing & timing of our storytelling are vital to how effective it is. The space between words or phrases allows the viewer time to take in what has been said, or to understand the meaning of an image.

The pacing is directly influenced by what you have scripted, how economical you have been with your story and how many images you are using.

Too much content and you risk making a 'life-flashing-before-your-eyes' movie. Keep your pacing natural, and take a breath.

Issues about Images

A typical Digital Story will use between 10-15 images. Too many images make your production too busy visually, and increase the pacing/ tempo. However- if your digital story warrants more- then use more. This is a general rule only.

Photographs, documents or objects need to be digitised by scanning or digital photography.

The higher the resolution of the original digital photograph or image, the more versatile its use.

A higher resolution photograph allows you to zoom in or out with a better result.

If you only have a very small scan of a photo, you are limited to how much you can zoom in before it goes chunky (pixelated). Larger the better!

Ideally save images as Jpegs.

Digital Image Sizes

Megapixels vs. Maximum Print Size Chart for taking photos

Megapixels	Pixel Resolution*
3	2048 x 1536
4	2464 x 1632
6	3008 x 2000
8	3264 x 2448
10	3872 x 2592
12	4290 x 2800
16	4920 x 3264
35mm film, scanned	5380 x 3620

If you are scanning photographs, aim for 300 dpi or above to get the most out of your pictures.

Create a Storyboard

A storyboard is a series of frames, stepping through your Digital Story concept. It is an important planning tool, which allows you to pre-visualise your idea.

The key benefits of a storyboard are:

- Planning your image and script sequence
- Planning camera moves & transitions between images
- Listing material you need or already have
- Planning your pacing/ tempo
- Getting feedback from others before you commit to production

Your storyboard is invaluable in tracking your progress, and keeping on task. That being said, there will always be variations you may choose to make from the storyboard when you come to the actual production.

Music/ Soundtrack for your Digital Story

If you have the equipment and skills you can record your own music, sound effects or atmospheric noise. Or you may choose to use some copyright free or creative commons licensed music from the Internet.

Either way, picking appropriate music or background to a production is important. Downloaded or recorded music should be in the .mp3 , .wav or .aiff format.

Day 1: Session 3

The Story Circle - My Art: My Story

The theme of the digital stories for this workshop is My Art: My Story. This will mean different things to different people. *It is important to remember is that there is no correct or single way to explore this issue.*

As an artist, you might consider various things when developing a concept. The same is true for your digital story.

You need to consider things such as:

- Available resources such as photographs, illustrations and images
- Permissions & copyright of material to be used
- Your intended audience
- Your own goals
- What you intend to do with your digital story
- The angle or approach you will be using
- Your unique voice

The 'Story Circle' has become an important way to brainstorm and develop ideas for a digital story. A story circle gives the opportunity for people to share ideas, and to get feedback from others. Sometime a story can be so personal and important, that having a third party reflect on what your concept is can be invaluable. Others have different takes or perspectives that might be helpful to hear.

Rules of a story circle

- Respect what others say
- Be respectful of others feelings and confidence
- Be open to feedback
- Don't be disruptive
- Be honest
- Be open to taking risks

Aim of the story circle

By the end of this session you will hopefully have a clearer idea of your Digital Story concept. Taking notes throughout is useful as you have something to refer back to later, especially any useful suggestions or comments that were made.

The story circle should help you clarify your approach and prepare you for the homework you need to do for Day 2 of the workshop.

Home work for Day 2

1. 250 word script
2. Between 10-15 photographs and images that you will be using to support your story. Bring these images in digital format on USB Flash drive, CD or DVD (as data).
3. Storyboard: a rough sequence of the photographs and matching segments of the script. You can indicate camera moves or transitions

Resources

Production Resources

Storyboard template
Script template
Digital Storytelling Workshop Day 1 handout

Digital Storytelling websites

<http://www.storycenter.org>
<http://www.storytell.com.au/>
<http://tech-head.com/dstory.htm>

What is Digital Storytelling?

http://www.acmi.net.au/dst_about.htm
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nI0KNz63ubM>

Digital Story Examples

http://www.southbank.qm.qld.gov.au/learning/nsw/digital_stories.asp
http://www.acmi.net.au/video_community_people.htm
<http://www.dhub.org/articles/966>
http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/arts/yourvideo/queries/all_clips.shtml
http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/audiovideo/sites/yourvideo/pages/stephanie_roberts_01.shtml
http://pool.org.au/video/claudia_taranto/michele_di_sisto
http://pool.org.au/video/inspireevery1/my_story
<http://artpost.abc.net.au/AND-IN-OTHER-WORLDS/video/940957/50484.html>
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0WyQHwg0_yo

Tutorials

<http://storiesforchange.net/resources>
<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/artpost/tutorials.htm>

What to do with your digital Story?

<http://www.pool.org.au/>
<http://storiesforchange.net>
<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/artpost/>

Copyright free or Creative Commons Music

<http://dig.ccmixer.org>
<http://creativecommons.org/legalmusicforvideos>

What to do with your digital stories

<http://www.abc.net.au/tv/artpost/wall.htm>

www.youtube.com

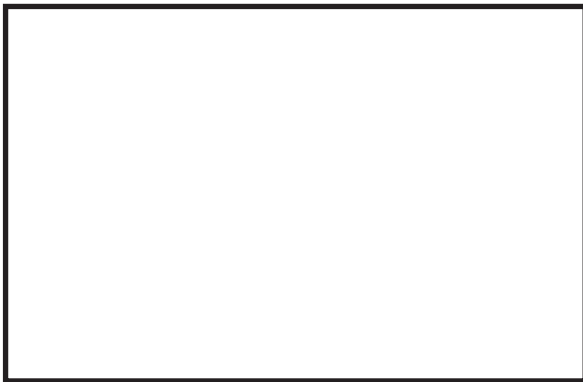
www.vimeo.com

www.storiesforchange.net

www.pool.org.au



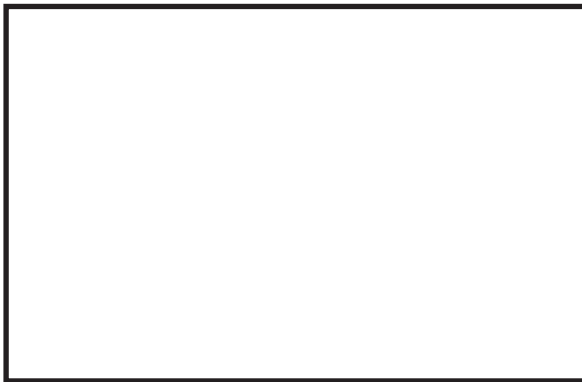
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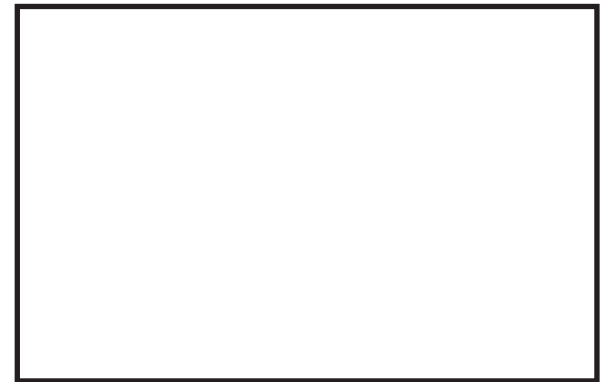
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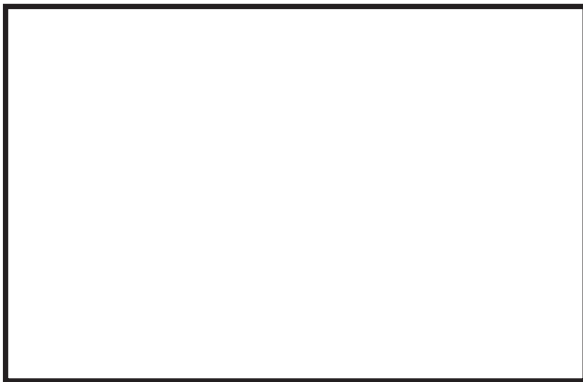
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