

Digital Storytelling

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Class Objectives

- Learn effective digital storytelling techniques
- Master basic video and audio editing tools
- Create a digital storytelling video about a topic of your choosing

Day One (three hours)

1. Overview of class/expectations (10 minutes)
2. Watch examples (15 minutes)
3. Basics of storytelling (15 minutes)
4. Scriptwriting exercises (15 minutes)
5. Write the script (30 minutes)
6. Workshop concept/script with class (30 minutes)
7. Capturing quality photos, video and audio (30 minutes)

Homework - begin to collect assets (footage, interviews, photos)

Day Two (three hours)

1. Class check-in (10 minutes)
2. Google Images search techniques (10 minutes)
3. iMovie basics and class import (45 minutes)
4. Students edit (45 minutes)
5. Students continue editing or work on recording voice-overs (25 minutes)
6. Workshop project with class (30 minutes)

Homework - continue collecting images, video, other assets, continue editing

Day Three (three hours)

1. Soundtracks/Music Lecture (15 minutes)
2. Open Lab (2.5 hours)
3. Exporting and sharing (15 minutes)

Screening date -

Introduction

Humans are storytellers. Stories can entertain, educate, inform. We are bombarded with messages, but stories present information in a different way. Be aware of the “personal editors” in our heads that can interfere with the creative process. Digital storytelling enables a multi-media approach to conveying stories, increasing both emotional impact and cognitive retention.

Digital storytelling is a short form of digital media production that allows everyday people to share aspects of their life story. The media used may include the digital equivalent of film techniques (full-motion video with sound), animation, stills, audio only, or any of the other forms of non-physical media (material that exists only as electronic files as opposed to actual paintings or photographs on paper, sounds stored on tape or disc, movies stored on film) which individuals can use to tell a story or present an idea. [Wikipedia]

Kinds of Personal Stories

- Stories about somebody important
 - Character, memorial
- Stories about events
 - Adventure, accomplishment, decisive moment
- Stories about a place in your life
- Stories about what I do or my organization does
 - People that are impacted by you or your organization and how their lives are changed
- Other personal stories
 - Recovery, love, discovery

Elements of Effective Digital Storytelling (from the Digital Storytelling Cookbook)

1. Point of View
 - a. Through whose eyes are the viewers seeing the world? The person determines the perspective but also brings about a personal and emotional aspect of the story. Consider videos that would be made from a POV other than that of your org/staff.
2. Dramatic Question
 - a. Is there tension in the story? For example, what would happen if the person did not receive the service or support from the organization? What is at stake? What are the consequences?
 - b. For public speaking preparation, you often hear, “Tell them what they are about to see, tell them, and then tell them what they have seen.” This can also apply to digital storytelling.

- c. But don't forget, digital storytelling is a visual medium. You can tell them, but make sure you also SHOW them.
- 3. Emotional Content
 - a. The successful fundraising video model generated by [Benevon](#) recommends creating a 7-minute video to show at your fundraising events. They ask, "Does the video have three cry points?" In other words, does the video have three strong emotional tugs that will cause the viewer to become emotionally invested in the client's story, and consequently to donate to the organization that working to help these folks.
- 4. The Gift of Your Voice
 - a. The recorded voice telling a story makes the work authentic and real, as opposed to someone reading a script. Also, by making media you will find your voice as a digital storyteller. Use this to develop your own style, which will come to be recognized by your viewers.
- 5. The Power of the Soundtrack
 - a. Music has an emotional and physical effect on humans. Use music to help tell your story and to bring out the emotions in the story.
- 6. Economy
 - a. Effective stories can be told with a relatively small amount of resources, time and money. Remember, short and sweet is good.
- 7. Pacing
 - a. This is the rhythm of the story. Is it fast pace (i.e., urgent) or a slow pace (i.e., more deliberate)? Your story will have a consistent pace until you need to change for dramatic effect or to allow your audience to digest what you just shared with them.

Writing Exercises

- 1. The One Word Challenge
 - a. Hand out one word to each participant; they have 5-7 minutes to write an impactful story about it
 - i. rain
 - ii. elbow
 - iii. pigs
 - iv. oatmeal
 - v. earthquake
 - vi. slope
 - vii. eggs
 - viii. horses
 - ix. name
 - x. grape
 - xi. Pet

- xii. sister
- xiii. temper
- xiv. Grandfather
- xv. eyes

2. Postcard

- a. Give participants 5-7 minutes write a story about their vacation (or a day they would spend on their dream vacation) and it has to fit on the postcard--imagine sending this postcard to somebody explaining the story

3. What story do you want to tell in this class?

4. Write script

- a. Participants write what viewers see and hear

Interviewing Techniques: Preparing for the Interview

What is the message you want to get across and who is best to convey that message?

After you have identified who to interview, use these tips to conduct a good interview:

1. Make your interviewee comfortable
2. Do not ask yes/no questions, or you will get terse yes/no responses.
 - a. Example: Rather than asking, "Have you benefited from the work of our organization?" instead ask, "Tell me how have you benefited..."
3. Find a quiet location to conduct your interview
4. Try to let the interviewee's statements tell the whole story, without your narration or interpretation.
5. If they are having trouble speaking, ask them questions that will help to place them in their story. For example, "What do you remember seeing/hearing/smelling?"

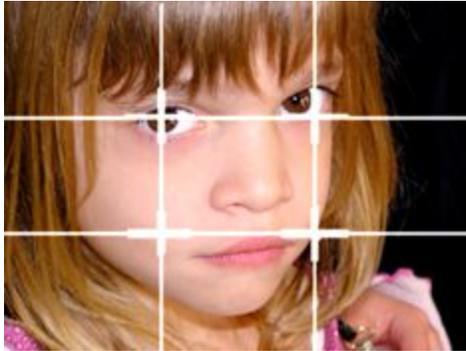
Shooting Quality Video

Tips:

1. Do not shoot vertical video (hold phones/tablets sideways)
2. Avoid bright backgrounds (silhouetted subjects)
3. Get microphone close to subject
4. When using a phone camera, keep camera close to subjects
5. Avoid zooming and camera movements.
6. Use the rule of thirds (see below)
7. Get a series of stills to add to your video (wide, medium, close-up, reaction, etc.)
8. Record in highest quality possible
9. Add lighting, if possible. If not, keep 3-point lighting in mind.

Rule of Thirds

When filming people, regardless of the shot (whether a close-up or wide shot) you want the subject's eyes in the top third of the frame. Any shot is aesthetically more pleasing to the viewer when the rule of thirds is followed. If you watch any professional video you'll see the rule of thirds being followed. Not following the rule of thirds will make your video look like amateur work right from the start. **If you only ever learn one thing about cinematography, this should be it.**



In an ECU (extreme close-up) the eyes are usually aligned with the top third, and the mouth along the lower third. Also, if your subject is looking off to one side or the other, they should be framed off-center such that there is more room in front of their face than behind it.