

**Online Communication in the Digital Age**  
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**Indian Institute of Technology**  
**Lecture – 39**  
**Digital Storytelling**

Good morning, dear friends and welcome to this module. Today we shall look at digital storytelling, an emergent field in contemporary media and entertainment. As we know, storytelling began as an oral tradition where tales, myths and histories were orally passed down through generations as collective, racial and cultural repositories. Moving through the makeovers in print, TV and silver screen, there is now a transformative shift in the ways of storytelling with the advent of the digital age. Computers, internet and the multimedia technologies expanded the possibilities of how stories could be told and experienced interactively and innovatively.

## Digital Storytelling

- Documentarian Sheila Bernard places engagement at the root of storytelling: "A story is the narrative, or telling, of an event or series of events, crafted in a way to interest the audiences, whether they are readers, listeners, or viewers."
- The term "storytelling" often brings to mind the image of an old storyteller, following in the tradition of bards or Homeric narrators, enrapturing a live audience. As Coleridge imagined it:

*He holds him with his glittering eye—  
The Wedding-Guest stood still,  
And listens like a three years' child:  
The Mariner hath his will.*  
-The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (text of 1834)



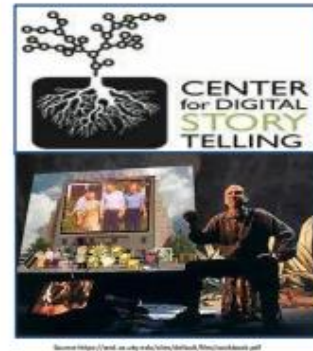
Source:  
<https://www.wsj.com/articles/grandparents-the-storytellers-who-bind-us-1522334268>

The term storytelling often brings to mind the image of an old storyteller following the tradition of old bards or Homeric narrators and enrapturing a live audience. Coleridge has imagined it so well in his famous poem, The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. He holds him with his glittering eyes, the wedding guests stood still and listens like a three-year's child, the mariner hath his will. Sheila Bernard places engagement at the root of storytelling. A story, according to her, is the narrative or telling of an event or a series of events crafted in a way to interest the audience, whether they are readers, listeners or viewers.

Coleridge's famous passage buoyantly exhibits the magical effect of a skilled storyteller, one who can mesmerise the congregation with wisdom, values and courage like the old

bards did in ancient times. Digital storytelling is the modern extension of this ancient art interwoven with digitised, still moving images as well as sound.

- The term Digital Story telling was coined by Dana Atchley.
- In the 1980s he started using multimedia as a prop in his performances.
- Using digital tools (Apple QuickTime, Adobe Premier and Macromedia Directoe), he devised a system that allowed him to tell stories through music, video, photographs and film.
  - CDS-Center for Digital Story Telling was established in 1994 by Atchley and Joe Lambert (now San Francisco Bay Area-based Story Center, since 2015)
    - Atchley and Denise, his wife, also founded the Digital Storytelling Festival in 1995.



• *"...digital storytelling combines the best of two worlds: the "new world" of digitized video, photography and art, and the "old world" of telling stories"- Dana Atchley*

The term digital storytelling was coined by Dana Atchley. In the 1980s, he had started using multimedia as a prop in his performances. He used various digital tools, some of them are listed here, and devised a system that allowed him to tell stories using music, video, photographs and films.

In 1994, Atchley and Joe Lambert established the CDS Centre for Digital Storytelling, which is now known simply as Story Centre. Atchley and his wife, Dennis, had also founded the Digital Storytelling Festival in 1995, which is continuing even now. Atchley has remarkably suggested that digital storytelling combines the best of two worlds, the new world of digitised video, photography and art and the old world of telling stories. New world is of digitised video, photography and art and the old world is of telling stories. This means that the old world of PowerPoint slides filled with bullet point statements will be replaced by a new world of examples via stories accompanied by evocative images and sounds with the help of the new digital media practices.

So digital storytelling should be considered as a form of digital media production that allows everyday people to share experiences and stories. It can also cover a range of digital narratives, web-based stories, interactive stories, hypertext and narrative computer games also. It is sometimes used to refer to filmmaking in general and of late it is being used to describe advertising and promotion efforts also by commercial as well as non-profit enterprises.

- A digital story is based on a narrative – fiction/non-fiction, personal/general. It often possesses compelling and emotionally engaging formats and can be interactive in nature.
  - The "short narrated films" definition of digital storytelling comes from a production workshop by Dana Atchley (1993), that was later adapted and refined by Joe Lambert into a method of training promoted by the Story Center.
- Melissa Beck and Janice Neil (2021) define "Digital stories" as "short vignettes that combine storytelling with still pictures, video clips, music, and text using a variety of video software."\*



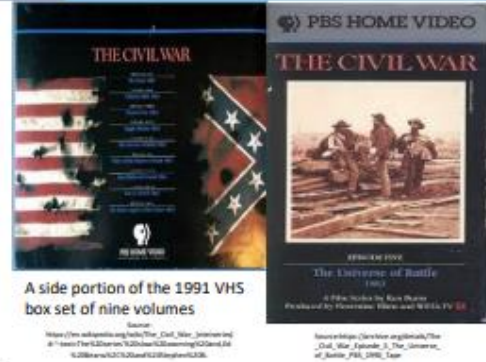
Source:  
<https://academictchnologies.it.miami.edu/explor-a-technologies/technology-summaries/digital-storytelling/index.html>

\*Dettin, Brian, Hughes, Maxwell E., Smith, David Harris (2020). "Digital Storytelling: An Opportunity for Libraries to Engage and Lead Their Communities / La narration (en) numérique... une opportunit  de pour les biblioth ques d'engager et de diriger leurs communaut s". Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science, 42 (3): 40-46. <https://doi.org/10.1002/cjils.1229>

A digital storytelling is based on a narrative. It can be fiction or non-fiction, personal or general, etc. But it possesses compelling and emotionally engaging formats and also can be interactive with the help of newly evolving digital tools. Initially in 1993, Dana Atchely had used the definition of short, narrated films like a short clip of about two to five minutes and it was later adapted and refined by Joe Lambert into a method of training promoted by the Story Centre. Digital stories have been defined by Melissa Beck and Janice Neil as short vignettes that combine storytelling with still pictures, video clips, music and text using a variety of video softwares. Storytelling in digital form found its early prominence in the work of Kane Burns. His 1990 documentary, *The Civil War*, is often regarded as one of the pioneering examples of this narrative genre.

- Storytelling in digital form found its early prominence in the work of Ken Burns. His documentary "The Civil War" (1990), is often regarded as one of the pioneering examples of this narrative genre.

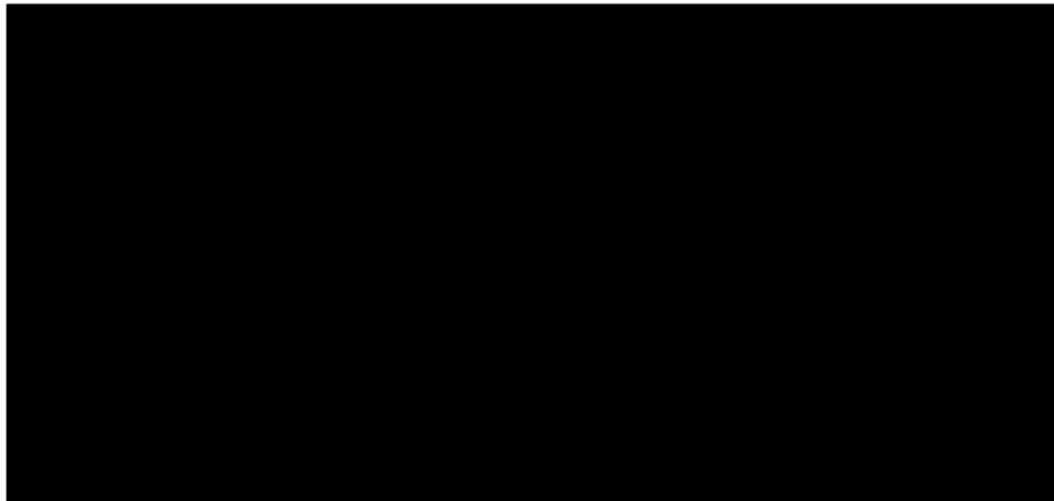
- Burns used first-person accounts to reveal several facets of the Civil War. By combining archival photos, primary source documents, interviews, and narration, Ken Burns created a compelling narrative that captured the essence of the American Civil War. (Sylvester & Greenidge, 2009).



A side portion of the 1991 VHS box set of nine volumes

- The use of digital techniques, such as panning and zooming on still images to create a sense of motion, added to the storytelling experience. Later on, this technique came to be known as the "Ken Burns effect".

Burns had used first person accounts to reveal several facets of the Civil War. He had combined archived photos, primary source documents, interviews and narration in order to create a compelling narrative that captured the essence of the American Civil War. The use of digital techniques such as panning and zooming on still images to create a sense of motion added to the storytelling experience. Later on, this technique came to be known as the 'Ken Burns Effect'. In the next slide, we have a brief video excerpt from Ken Burns documentary, The Civil War.



Source:  
<https://youtu.be/Y7HmBmWz9ml>

The civil war was fought in 10,000 places from Valverde New Mexico and Tullahoma Tennessee to St. Albans Vermont and Fernandina on the Florida coast. More than three million Americans fought in it and over 600,000 men 2% of the population died in it. American homes became headquarters. American churches and schoolhouses shoulder the dying. A huge forging army swept across American farms and burned American towns. American slotted one another hole sale here in America in their own cornfields and Peach Orchards along familiar roads and buy waters with old American names. In 2 days at shallow on the banks of the Tennessee more American men field in all previous American wars combined.

At Cold Harbor, 7,000 Americans fell in 20 minutes. Men who had never strayed 20 miles from their own front doors now found themselves soldiers in great armies, fighting epic battles hundreds of miles from home. They knew they were making history, and it was the greatest adventure of their lives. The war made some rich, ruined others, and changed forever the lives of all who lived through it.


This documentary is cited as one of the first models of this genre and became immensely popular, though it is sometimes criticized for its lack of coverage of slavery as a root cause of the war. Some other significant artists in this genre who should be named after the people who have been killed in the war are the people who have been killed in the war. The artists who should be named are Abedon, Brenda Laurel, and Pedro Mayor. Although digital storytelling encompasses various purposes, engaging a broad audience, relying on a broader spectrum of content, it can also be understood or practiced as a focused personal narrative.

- Anita Normann, a faculty at NTNU (Norwegian University of Science and Technology) defines digital storytelling as “a short story, only 2–3 minutes long, where the storyteller uses his own voice to tell his own story” (2011) .
- It is also often called a “micromovie”\* that could frame a story of “a very short exposition lasting from a few seconds to no more than 5 minutes in length”.
- The personal element is emphasized, and can be linked to other people, a place, an interest or to anything that will give the story a personal touch” (Normann, 2011).
- Therefore, the digital stories can even revolve around a single and a well-defined idea, and can expand in terms of time.
- The aim is to convey a message through imagery, which a lot of times can be more effective than if it is just conveyed through sound.



Source:  
<https://www.ntnu.edu/employees/anita.normann>

\*Source: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital\\_storytelling](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_storytelling)

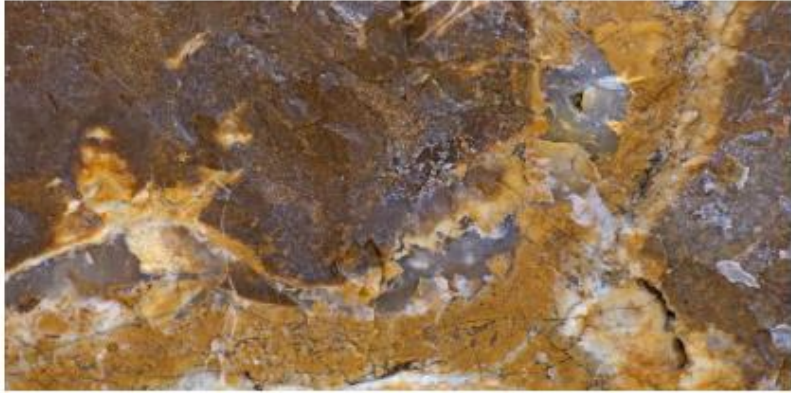
 

If you look at the first three points in this slide, we find that critics and practitioners are coming to different time limits, so to say. Norman has suggested two to three minutes. When it is called a micro movie, it can also expand up to five minutes. And the suggestion is

that the personal element should be emphasized, and linkages to other people, happenings, places, et cetera, should also be presented with a personal touch. We can say that the digital stories revolve around a single and well-defined idea, but at the same time, they can also leave different threads at different contours within the story so that they can be developed in different media formats later on. And that is why we find that the time limitations have also become redundant, as the media and the formats of sharing a digital story online have also grown. We will look at this point further in later slides.

The aim of digital storytelling is to convey a message through imagery, which a lot of times can be more effective than if it is just conveyed through sound. Let us have a look at a video. It is a personal narrative created with the help of digital tools. For example, still pictures, short clips of videos, text, and editors' own voice have been used in the depiction.

*Digital Storytelling*



Source: U of G Library. (2018, July 10). Digital storytelling example: MINE [Video]. YouTube. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RUFpM2\\_CWQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2RUFpM2_CWQ)

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Private property, contaminated. Caution, historic mine waste, health hazard. The signs appeared suddenly in my hometown. After more than 100 years of mining history, they just showed up. No explanation, no context, as if they had sprouted from the ground. Having been absent for so long, such warnings carry no weight. Too little, too late. My life is permeated with gold and molded by human efforts to extract it. I understand this, and I am not threatened by it. The old tailings piles are mine. In the winter, we built huge snow jumps at the bottom and skied off them.

Abandoned rusting trucks and pipes and machinery are mine. I discovered them with my friends. The old hydraulic ditches are mine, perfectly graded for my mountain bike. The old mine road leading to my blueberry patch is mine, and so are the jars of jam I made from the fruit. The swimming hole is mine, where the cold creek from the mountains merges with warm waters from the lake.

I know it's mine because I wrote my name on it hundreds of times with a stick on red, oxidized, muddy banks where no plants grow. Gold has a way of drawing people in, and history has a way of repeating itself. Chasing long-forgotten riches, the new signs mark the rise of a new mine in old country. They say my home has proven values, high grades, high returns, low environmental impact. They call my trees overburden, my rocks ore, and my streams contaminated.

The company answers questions I never asked. Who cares about high grades or high returns? Do the miners pick my blueberries when they are working beside the road? Do they put their feet in my creek? Are they making new tailings towels for skiing, new ditch lines for biking? Will they leave us new treasures in the bush? When the gold that defines this place is finally gone, what will remain?

This video was made by Mica Jorgensen, who specializes in law and environmental history. It was made for a workshop in digital storytelling in 2018. We find that here, Mica Jorgensen becomes the voice of the rural people of the Bakerville Gold Mine area in British Columbia, Canada. She uses vivid descriptions and personal anecdotes to engage the audience and make them empathize with the narrator's perspective. The video also provides insights into some of the most important elements of digital storytelling that align with the observations of Joe Lambert, the founder of the Digital Storytelling Workshop.

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## Joe Lambert: 7 Elements of Effective Digital Storytelling

- Point of View**: Digital stories should be personal, expressing the writer's own experiences and understanding.
- Dramatic Question**: Should have a question that gets resolved by the end, keeping the audience engaged.
- Emotional Content**: Evoke emotions like laughter, tears, or pleasure in the audience, making them more impactful.
- Economy**: Should keep the construction manageable with a sharp focus.
- Pacing**: Adjusting the story's speed when needed, making tough decisions about what to include or omit during script revision.
- Gift of Narrator's Voice**: Using own voice to narrate the story adds a personal touch and is essential for effectiveness.
- Soundtrack**: Adding music to the story enhances the narrative.



Source:  
<https://www.coursera.org/learn/digital-storytelling/lecture/7-elements-of-storytelling>

Lambert has suggested seven elements in terms of effective digital storytelling. The first point suggests that digital stories should be personal, expressing the writer's own experience and understanding. So, a personal point of view or a personal touch is the first element Lambert has talked about. He also talks about the dramatic question which should


be resolved by the end, keeping the audience engaged. With the further developments in digital modes of communication and media, we find that this issue is also being developed in different ways. For example, a particular question is resolved, but at the same time, it leaves threads which are developed later on in an independent manner. Certain examples would be discussed in the later slides. The digital storytelling should also evoke emotions and should also keep the construction manageable with a sharp focus.

The pace of the story should also be adjusted, making tough decisions about what to include or omit during the revision of the script or the different versions during the process of editing. Lambert has used the phrase gift of narrator's voice. That means that using own voice to narrate the story adds a personal touch and is essential for effectiveness. Lambert has also suggested that adding music to the story enhances the narrative, and he also cautions us about citing the sources and taking care of the legalities. Digital storytelling has evolved over the years from the simple narrated video to many forms that are more interactive in nature. These include websites, online videos, and even movies designed with various purposes in mind. For example, to convey important messages to entertain or to educate or to engage the audience. One notable example in this context is scrollytelling.

## Scrollytelling: Bring Content to Life

- The term was first coined to describe online longform stories characterized by audio, video and animation effects triggered by simply scrolling the page.
- It enriches the visual storyteller's repertoire through the harmonious union of scrolling and storytelling.
- This interactive treatment of digital content elevated information in a way that had not been achievable with static PDF reports, which also proved to be a more accessible format than PowerPoint or Keynote presentations.

Source: <https://shortand.com/the-craft/an-introduction-to-scrollytelling/index.html>



Source: <https://newsletter.dpdk.com/2022/04/>

Source: <https://shortand.com/the-craft/an-introduction-to-scrollytelling/index.html>


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Scrollytelling is a digital storytelling technique that allows the audience to explore the story in a nonlinear way by scrolling through the content. The term was first coined to describe online long form stories characterized by audio, video, and animation effects triggered by simply scrolling the page. It enriches the visual storytellers report higher through the harmonious union of scrolling and storytelling. This interactive treatment of digital content elevated information in a way that had not been achievable with static PDF reports, which also proved to be a more accessible format than PowerPoint or keynote presentations.

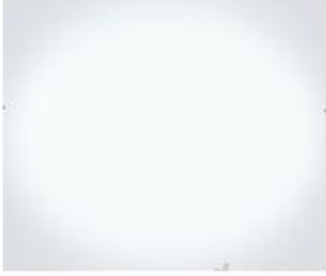


In this form of storytelling technique, with one part of the stories covered, and the next part is revealed. And this creates a sense of anticipation and also engagement for the audience as they are encouraged to keep scrolling to discover what happens next. One of the first examples of this style to gain widespread attention was Snowfall, the Avalanche at Tunnel Creek, made in 2012. It was published by the New York Times.

- **Scrollytelling** leverages some aspects of Cognitive Psychology such as chunking/segmenting and the innate human desire for exploration, offering a structured and interactive format that enhances comprehension, retention, and engagement through multimedia elements.
- For example: *Everylastdrop*: 'Save Water- Every last drop' is an award- winning website created by 'Nice and Serious' in partnership with WaterWise.
  - It is an interactive website which takes a detailed look at how much water is wasted on a daily basis, and how small changes can save water for the future generations. (<http://everylastdrop.co.uk/>)



Source: <http://everylastdrop.co.uk/>



Source: Ben Protogeropoulos (2016, February 04). Every Last Drop: How to save water. (in Video). YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8kP-85P28w>

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Scrollytelling leverages some aspects of cognitive psychology too, such as chunking or segmenting and the innate human desire for exploration, offering a structured and interactive format that enhances comprehension, retention, and engagement through multimedia elements. We can cite the example of 'Every Last Drop'. Save Water Every Last Drop is an award-winning website created by Nice and Serious in partnership with Waterwise. This interactive site sensitizes us to stop the wastage of water.

- The New York Times created a scrollytelling piece titled "*How the New Syria Took Shape*"\* (2019) that exemplifies the power of the storytelling technique in conveying complex geopolitical events to a broad audience.
- Visual scrollytelling can easily engage readers with historical facts, enabling them to interact with a map as they scroll.
- Through a combination of narrative elements, interactive maps, and multimedia, this piece also shows the evolving landscape of digital journalism and storytelling.



Source: <https://shorthand.com/the-craft/an-introduction-to-scrollytelling/index.html>

\*Source: <https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2019/10/30/world/middleeast/syria-turkey-maps.html>

The New York Times had created a scrawly telling piece titled ‘How the New Syria Took Shape’ in 2019 that exemplifies the power of this storytelling technique in conveying complex geopolitical events to a broad audience. Visually, scrollytelling can easily engage readers with historical facts, enabling them to interact with a map as they scroll for a clear understanding. Through a combination of narrative elements, interactive maps, and multimedia, this piece also shows the evolving landscape of digital journalism and storytelling coming closer. Scrollytelling thus goes beyond the traditional articles or reports. It transforms passive consumption of information into an active exploration of history, navigating through visual maps.

These varied aspects of digital storytelling reinforce ideas and appeal to different learning types in education also. By using digital storytelling, teachers can generate interest, attention, and motivation among students of the digital generation in classrooms.

## Uses in Education

- The educational goals for teachers using digital storytelling are to generate interest, attention and motivation for students of the "digital generation" in classrooms.
- The use of digital storytelling as a presentation tool also appeals to the diverse learning styles of students.
- It capitalizes on students' creative talents and allows their work to be published on the Internet for others to view and critique.
- Digital Storytelling can be used by a class to explore local community institutions as well.



SOURCE:  
<https://www.vectorstock.com/royalty-free-vector/digital-generation-banner-kids-playing-games-vector-27201276>



Swajanti



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Multimedia storytelling is effectively used as an educational tool. The educational goals for teachers are to generate interest, attention, and motivation for the digital generation in their classrooms. The use of digital storytelling as a presentation tool also appeals to the diversity which exists in the learning styles of heterogeneous classrooms.

It capitalizes on a student's creative talents and allows their work to be published on the internet for others to view and critique. So digital storytelling can be used by a class to explore local community institutions and local history as well.

- In a project conducted in Bengaluru district of Karnataka, India, students from seven government schools utilized digital storytelling to create narratives about their interactions with various local community institutions such as banks, primary health centers, libraries, post offices, etc.\*
- The project was designed to be participatory, with a team of students and teacher(s) visiting these institutions.
- The different tasks that were involved in this project- asking questions, seeking clarifications, taking photographs, recording interviews in audio or video formats.

\*Source: Digital Storytelling, an ICT-based method of Co- Constructing and Transacting Curriculum. (2017). *Voices of Teachers and TeacherEducators*, 6(1).  
[https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/publication/journalsandperiodicals/vtte/vtte\\_aug\\_2017.pdf](https://ncert.nic.in/pdf/publication/journalsandperiodicals/vtte/vtte_aug_2017.pdf)



Swajanti



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I would refer to a project which has been conducted in the Bengaluru district of Karnataka, India, in which students from seven government schools utilized digital storytelling to create narratives about their interactions with various local community institutions, such as bank, primary health centers, libraries, post offices, et cetera. The project was participatory in nature with a team of students and teachers visiting these institutions and interacting with the employees. The different tasks that were involved in this project were asking questions, seeking clarifications, taking photographs, recording interviews in audio or video formats, and ultimately creating a multimedia story.

- These include the following:

- Research skills by finding and analyzing information when documenting the story
- Writing skills when developing a script
- Organization skills by managing the scope of the project within a time constraint



Source:  
[https://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/example\\_stories.cfm?storyid=9](https://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/example_stories.cfm?storyid=9)

- Faculty and graduate students at the University of Houston have created a website, "The Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling", which focuses on the use of digital storytelling by teachers and their students across multiple content areas and grade levels.

When students participate in these multiple steps of designing, creating, and presenting their own digital stories, they also build on several literacy skills. While developing a script, the writing becomes better organized. Organization skills by managing the scope of the project within a time constraint also teaches them to finish the given task within the given time period. Research skills are also strengthened as they have to find and analyze and choose the information while preparing the final documentary. We find that these practices now are used internationally in the field of education, as illustrated in the second point on this slide.

Digital storytelling as an instructional strategy to help others in society has emerged now as a powerful tool. It promotes health advisories, say about AIDS, cancer, et cetera, and highlights concerns in partnership with marginalized communities. It is a type of critical narrative intervention that allows people to reflect on their experiences and connect with others, promoting health and addressing social inequality.

## Uses in Public Health and Social Services

- The development of the *Silence Speaks* project in 1999 under the direction of Amy Hill of the StoryCenter led to the expansion of digital storytelling in public health.
- Projects developed with the Centers for Disease Control and the Open Society Foundations include work in gender-based violence prevention with groups in California, Texas, New York, and Minnesota.
  - Additionally, projects involve collaboration with the organization *Sonke Gender Justice in South Africa*, the widespread utilization of digital storytelling with *Foster Youth*, and the integration of digital storytelling into public campaigns related to substance abuse prevention and community mental health programs.



Source: <https://www.storycenter.org/ss-about>



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Use of digital storytelling in the fields related with public health was an initiative of Amy Hill of the Story Center. Projects were developed with the Centers for Disease Control and the Open Society Foundations, which included work in gender-based violence prevention with groups in different cities in the USA.

Additionally, certain other projects were taken up with the organization Snoke Gender Justice in South Africa and the widespread utilization of digital storytelling was also done with the network of foster youth.

## Use in Therapy

- Kim Anderson and Jonathan Cook describe digital storytelling as a “trauma narrative intervention” including children and survivors of intimate partner violence, to share their personal experiences and foster resilience and healing.
- Their research article “Challenges and Opportunities of Using Digital Storytelling as a Trauma Narrative Intervention for Children” (2015) discusses the use of digital storytelling as a *therapeutic tool* for children who have experienced trauma.



Source: <http://www.patientvoices.org.uk/>




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Kim Anderson and Jonathan Cook discuss the use of digital storytelling as a therapeutic tool for children who have experienced trauma. Their research suggests that sharing the personal experiences with the children teaches them resilience and encourages healing in a more productive manner. Digital storytelling is also used by several museums also at an international level. Museums use it in interpreting and making community history easily accessible.

## Uses in Museums

- The largest project, *Culture Shock!*, started in 2005, is led by the North-East Regional Museums Hub in partnership with Culture Unlimited.
  - It has recorded over 550 different stories from people across the region and added these digital stories to the relevant museum collections.
  - The National Gallery of Art in Washington D.C. also held a series of classes to integrate arts education curriculum with digital storytelling from 2003 to 2005.
  - In 2007, the Colorado Historical Society collaborated with *StoryCenter* to create a program, *The Italians*, about Italian American History.



<http://www.northeastmuseumshub.org/2012/02/28/culture-shock/>

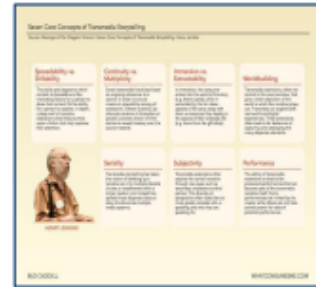
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The largest project in this context, Culture Shock! was started in 2005. It is led by the Northeast Regional Museums Hub in partnership with Culture Unlimited. It has recorded over 550 different stories from people across the region and added their digital stories to the relevant museum collections. We find that similar initiatives have been taken up by the National Gallery of Art in Washington, DC and also by the Colorado Historical Society. The Colorado Historical Society in 2007 collaborated with the Story Center to create a program, The Italians, to discuss the Italian American history.

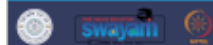
The museums work with communities to use contemporary collected oral histories alongside those from archives to interpret the local history from a personal point of view. Finished digital stories also can have many uses. For example, advertising an upcoming exhibition, preserving a short-term project, building relations with communities, et cetera. They also provide skills to volunteers and can be permanently displayed in galleries. Another interesting and emerging area in this context is transmedia storytelling. It connects to different media platforms. Henry Jenkins, an American media scholar, had first coined this term in 2003. He had further expanded upon it in his writings and lectures.

## Transmedia Storytelling

- Transmedia storytelling (also known as transmedia narrative or multiplatform storytelling) is a technique of telling a single story or story experience cohesively; across multiple platforms and formats using the latest digital technologies.
- In the words of Henry Jenkins, it “represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically ...for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience” (2007).
- It goes beyond the imitation or adaptation of a particular fiction, as each new platform offers fresh insights to the story.

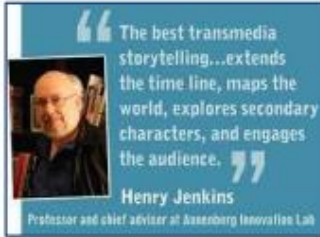


Source: <https://interactivejacks.com/wp-content/uploads/2022/09/1JENKINS.png>



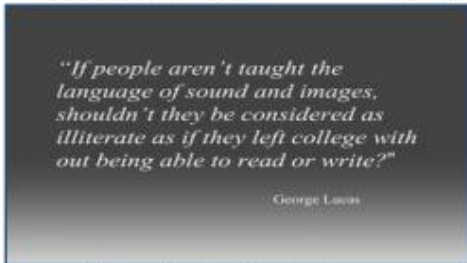
Transmedia storytelling is also known as a transmedia narrative or multi-platform storytelling. It is basically a technique of telling a single story or a story experience in a cohesive manner across multiple platforms and formats using the latest digital technologies. It represents a process where integral elements of a fiction get dispersed systematically for the purpose of creating a unified and coordinated entertainment experience.

We may say that it goes beyond imitation or adaptation of a particular fiction as each new platform offers fresh insights to the story. Jenkins has mentioned seven fundamental principles of transmedia storytelling, which can be seen in the image in the slide. These are spreadability versus drillability, continuity versus multiplicity, immersion versus extractability, world-building, serility, subjectivity, and performance. In transmedia storytelling, each medium adds its distinct value to the development of the story. It assists in the telling of a story and also helps us in unveiling new aspects.



Source: <http://documentation.azoresberg.com/pt-br/1-usuarios/magazine-introducao-ao-conceito-de-transmedia-ficcao/>

- Jenkins describes transmedia storytelling as a process where elements of fiction are dispersed across multiple media platforms in order to serve the purpose of creating a coordinated entertainment experience.
- A good transmedia text does not simply supply information, instead it allows the fans, or fandom, to interact with the world within the text.\*

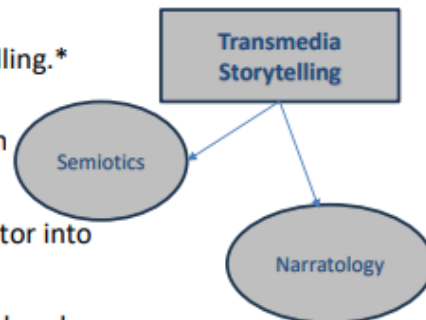


Source: <https://www.slideshare.net/djakes/digital-storytelling-quotes>

\*Source: <https://www.2013james.com/pt-br/1-usuarios/magazine-introducao-ao-conceito-de-transmedia-ficcao/>

Jenkins has described transmedia storytelling as a process where different elements of fiction are dispersed across multiple media platforms to serve the purpose of creating a coordinated entertainment experience. In today's world, we find that a good transmedia text does not simply supply information. Instead, it allows the fans or fandom to interact with the world within the text.

- Carlos Scolari (2014) suggests that semiotics and narratology are ways to analyze transmedia storytelling.\*
- Semiotics is the "science of signs" and a discipline concerned with sense production and interpretation processes.
- Narratology looks at how structure and function factor into narrative with regards to its themes and symbols.
- Transmedia storytelling is a narrative structure that breaks through both language (semiotics) and media (narratology).
- Often the same text may create different kinds of implicit consumers.




\*Source: Scolari, C. A., Bertetti, P., Freeman, M., Scolari, C. A., Bertetti, P., & Freeman, M. (2014). Conclusions: Transmedia Storytelling and Popular Cultures in the Twentieth Century. *Transmedia Archaeology: Storytelling in the Borderlines of Science Fiction, Comics and Pulp Magazines*, 72-77.

As Carlos Scolari has suggested, semiotics and narratology are also ways to analyze transmedia storytelling. Semiotics is the science of science and a discipline concerned with




sense production and interpretation process. Narratology looks at how a structure and function factor into narrative with regards to its themes and symbols. Transmedia storytelling is a narrative structure that breaks through both language, that is, semiotics, and media, that is, the narratology here. Often the same text may create different kinds of implicit consumers. A transmedia world is a point at which storytelling and technology intersect. It is the art of communication that constantly travels from one medium to another, from online to offline, and vice versa, engaging audience to co-create stories.

- An effective strategy of transmedia storytelling does not take a passive approach, instead engages with popular culture making a story its own and providing new context.
- One example that Jenkins gives is of the media conglomerate DC Comics.
- This organization releases comic books before the release of its related films so the audience understands a character's backstory.
- Much of transmedia storytelling focuses on larger complex worlds, where multiple characters and plot lines can be sustained for a longer period of time. It attract larger audiences.



Source: The Future of Storytelling (Berkeley, CA: UC, August 27, 2014)  
Introduction to Transmedia Storytelling: Robert Taylor (online) | YouTube  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ygE1P7uAE>

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An effective strategy of transmedia storytelling does not take a passive approach. Instead, it engages with popular culture, making a story of its own and providing new context. One example that Jenkins has given is of the media conglomerate DC Comics. This organization releases comic books before the release of the related films so the audience understands the backstory of the character. Much of transmedia storytelling focuses on larger complex worlds now, where multiple characters and plot lines can be sustained for a longer period of time. It also attracts larger and diverse groups of audiences.

- Transmedia storytelling exists in the form of transmedia narratives, which Kalinov and Markova define as: "a multimedia product which communicates its narrative through a multitude of integrated media channels".
- In his book, *You're Gonna Need a Bigger Story* (2017), Houston Howard describes transmedia storytelling as "the art of extending a story across multiple mediums and multiple platforms in a way that creates a *better business model* for creators and a *better experience* for the audience."



Source:  
<https://www.amazon.in/Digital-State-Internet-Everything/dp/0749468858>



Source:  
<https://www.amazon.in/Youre-Gonna-Need-Bigger-Story/dp/0692849009>

So, transmedia storytelling exists in the form of transmedia narratives, which Kalinov and Markova defined as a multimedia product which communicates its narrative through a multitude of integrated media channels. In his book, *You Are Gonna Need a Bigger Story*, published in 2017, Houston Howard describes transmedia storytelling as the art of extending history across multiple mediums and multiple platforms in a way that creates a better business model for creators and a better experience for the audience.

So now we find that ultimately digital storytelling also has to find its practical side, and that is the business. Simone Pont, in his 2013 work, *Digitally State* how the internet is changing everything, has also presented this aspect in detail. Pont cites Ridley Scott's alien prequel *Prometheus*, released in 2012, and the three viral films produced by 20th Century Fox as part of the *Advanced Global Marketing Campaign*, which is also a vivid execution example of transmedia storytelling theory.

For example, DC Comics released coloring books to attract younger audience, and they may also leave gaps in the plot lines or character development to begin another extension of transmedia storytelling, such as fan fiction.

- Robert Pratten, CEO at *Transmedia Storyteller* identifies three types of transmedia story; franchise, portmanteau and complex, to describe the relationship between the media.\*
- The first describes a story-world that is conveyed in multiple stories using multiple media, the second describes a single story that consists of multiple media and the third is a combination of these two.
- Focusing on franchises, Jai E. Jung describes a transmedia franchise taxonomy that focuses on individual texts and their narrative-based temporal relation to other texts in the franchise e.g. prequels, sequels, interquels, midquels etc.

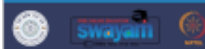


Robert Pratten



Source:  
<https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/30281029/>  
 pratten between 2014 and 2020: were going to see an  
 explosion in complexity in transmedia storytelling/  
<https://www.transmedia-storytelling.com/>  
<https://www.transmedia-storytelling.com/>

\*Source: <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6993987/>



Robert Pratten has identified three types of transmedia story, franchisee, portmanteau, and complex. To describe the relationship between and across the media, the first describes the story world that is conveyed in multiple stories using multiple media. The second describes a single story that consists of multiple media, and the third is a combination of these two. Focusing on franchisee, Jung has described a transmedia franchisee taxonomy that focuses on individual text and their narrative-based temporal relation to other text within the franchisee, prequels, sequels, interquels, midquels, et cetera.

To elaborate further on the point made by Robert Pratten, we can illustrate the idea of franchisee transmedia storytelling by referring to the Matrix series, which involves not only the movies, but also the comic books, video games, animated series, all contributing to the overarching narrative. As an example of portmanteau transmedia storytelling, we can cite the Marvel Cinematic Universe, where characters from various comic book storylines are brought together in a cohesive narrative across movies, TV shows, and other mediums.

Complex transmedia storytelling can be seen in projects like Ingress and the Lizzie Bannon Diaries, where the story unfolds across multiple platforms, inviting audience interaction. Among several widely renowned examples of transmedia storytelling, let us look closely at the famous Harry Potter saga and its journey to become a transmedia storytelling franchisee.

- Jenkins describes transmedia storytelling as a process where elements of fiction are dispersed across multiple media platforms in order to serve the purpose of creating a coordinated entertainment experience.

A good transmedia text does not simply supply information, instead it allows the fans, or fandom, to interact with the world within the text.\*

- One of the best contemporary examples is perhaps the Harry Potter saga by J.K. Rowling.

\*Source: <https://www.123dharma.com/essay/samples-of-transmedia-storytelling-in-the-harry-potter-world/>



Source: Rowling, J.K. (1997). *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone* (2002). Official Trailer. Warner Bros. Entertainment. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t100000000>



Swayam



The first point on the slide is a reiteration. To underscore the significance of Jenkins' idea, a good transmedia text does not simply supply information. In a state it allows the fans of fandom to interact with the world within the text. Harry Potter is perhaps the best illustration.

- Initially a young adult book series, *Harry Potter* has evolved into a transmedia phenomenon that spans multiple forms of media.
- It began as literature for children in 1997, followed by the first Harry Potter movie, which was released in 2001, but matured alongside its audience; expanding into movies that closely followed the books.
- Beyond this, it embraced transmedia storytelling, using various media to enhance the story rather than duplicating it.

Source: Rowling, J.K. (1997). *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*. Warner Bros. Entertainment. YouTube. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9t100000000>




Swayam



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Beyond this, it embraced transmedia storytelling using various media to enhance the story rather than duplicating it. Rowling created a detailed, wizarding world by setting the story in a real-life location and by creating texts within the story, which she would later publish as books of their own, such as *Fantastic Beasts and Where to Find Them*. Movies, fan clubs, comics, ceremonies, et cetera are also available to us.

- It has allowed fans to interact with each other and the story moves across multiple platforms.
  - Fan fiction such as fan made videos (e.g. Harry Potter Puppet pals on YouTube)
  - Social media fan groups (including the sharing of memes), video games
  - Harry Potter Merchandise (The Peppy Store)
  - Harry Potter World at Universal Studios in Florida
  - 'Pottermore'
- Pottermore** was an official Harry Potter website created by J. K. Rowling.
- It started in April 2012 as a joint venture by Rowling and Sony.
- This was a website where fans can create accounts, explore the story deeper, get sorted into their own Hogwarts house, play games, take quizzes to find out their Patronus, and more.



So, we find that in an interactive manner, the story has moved across multiple platforms. So, we have fan fiction, such as fan-made videos, social media fan groups, Harry Potter merchandise, Harry Potter World at Universal Story, at Universal Studios in Florida, in Pottermore, an official Harry Potter website, which was created by J. K. Rowling herself. It was started in April 2012 as a joint venture by Rowling and Sony. And this was a website where fans could create their own account and could explore the story in a deeper manner.

This website has recently been closed in 2019 and has been replaced by [wizardingworld.com](http://wizardingworld.com), which has combined Harry Potter with *Fantastic Beasts*, the prequel to the Harry Potter franchise. Jenkins had suggested that the most useful tool in transmedia storytelling is creating an area where fans can expand and immerse themselves into this story. Harry Potter has done it effectively.

- Transmedia storytelling is influenced by the economics of media consolidation, a concept known as "synergy".
- In today's media landscape, companies are "horizontally integrated", which means that they have interests across various formerly separate media sectors.
- Large media conglomerates are motivated to extend their brand and franchises across numerous media platforms.
  - For instance, in the case of DC Comics, owned by Warner Brothers, the studio behind films like Batman Begins and Superman Returns.
  - DC published comic books ahead of these movie releases.



https://www.warnerbros.com/center/dc-comics-to-brain-entertainment-entertainment-weekly/04/04/2018/entertainment-weekly\_dc\_movies

Transmedia storytelling, as we see, is influenced by the economics of media consolidation, a concept known as synergy. In today's media landscape, we find that companies are horizontally integrated, which means that they have interest across various formerly separate media sectors. Large media conglomerates are motivated to extend their brand and franchises across numerous media platforms. For instance, DC Comics, owned by Warner Brothers, is the studio behind films like Batman Begins and Superman Returns.

It also published comic books ahead of these movies. These comics provided additional backstory, enriching the film experience, and also served as a promotional tool to generate excitement for the upcoming films. And this blurs the line between marketing and entertainment in today's digital media world.

- Frequently, transmedia narratives don't revolve around individual characters or isolated storylines; instead, they center on intricate fictional universes capable of supporting numerous interconnected characters and their narratives.

- For example, The Matrix, The Hunger Games etc.

- This act of constructing these expansive worlds sparks a desire in readers to delve into every aspect of the universe, which continuously extends outside the audiences' complete understanding.

- This experience offers a distinct form of enjoyment compared to the sense of closure typically found in traditional narratives, where the audience anticipate leaving with a complete understanding of a specific story.



Source:  
[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Matrix\\_franchise](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Matrix_franchise)

Source:  
<https://in.pinterest.com/pin/485825878524723346/>

A frequent trend, which we witness in the field of transmedia narratives, is that it does not perhaps revolve around a single character or an isolated storyline. Rather, it prefers to center on an intricate fictional universe, which is capable of supporting numerous interconnected characters and their narratives. We can, of course, cite the example of The Matrix and The Hunger Games, et cetera.

The act of constructing these expansive worlds sparks a desire in readers to delve into every aspect of the universe, which continually keeps on extending just outside the complete understanding and reach of the audience. This experience in itself offers a distinct form of enjoyment to them. The idea of a neat ending of the story does not exist anymore in the conventional sense. So, we can say that the conventional idea of a neat ending or a clear convincing conclusion of the story does not exist anymore.

The extensions of this transmedia story also serve a variety of functions. It refers to the additional content or materials that may expand upon or complement a primary narrative, typically across different media platforms. Let us now look at certain examples.

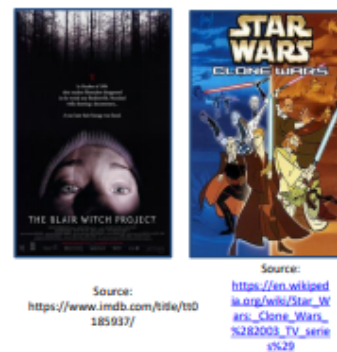
- The BBC used radio dramas to maintain audience interest in *Doctor Who* for almost a decade during which no new television episodes were produced.
- The extension may provide insight into the characters and their motivations:
  - Websites surrounding *Dawson's Creek* and *Veronica Mars* reproduced the imaginary correspondence or journals of their feature characters.
- It may also expand newer aspects of the fictional world.
  - As in the web version of the Daily Planet published each week by DC comics during the run of its 52 series to "report" on the events occurring across its superhero universe.



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These extensions also expand newer aspects of the fictional world, as in the web version of The Daily Planet, which was published each week by DC Comics during the run of its 52 series to report on the events occurring across its superhero universe.

- Extensions can bridge between events depicted in a series of sequels.
  - An example of this is the animated series - *The Clone Wars* - which was aired on the Cartoon Network.
  - It served to bridge over a lapse in time between *Star Wars* Episode II and Episode III.
- Additionally, the extension may enhance the overall sense of realism in the fiction.
  - This may be achieved through various means, such as creating fake documents and timelines for websites associated with projects like *The Blair Witch Project*.





Extensions can also bridge between events depicted in a series of sequels, and it can also enhance the overall sense of realism in the fiction.

## Conclusion

- Digital storytelling has revolutionized narrative expression through multimedia and interactivity in the digital age.
- Transmedia storytelling expands narratives across multiple platforms and mediums, enriching the overall storytelling experience and encouraging audience exploration of interactive possibilities of fictional and real worlds.
- In today's interconnected world, digital and transmedia storytelling are essential tools for conveying messages, entertaining, educating, and connecting with audience, with the potential for further evolution and innovation in the future.



Digital storytelling thus has revolutionized narrative expression through multimedia and interactivity in the digital age. Transmedia storytelling expands narratives across multiple platforms and mediums, enriching the overall storytelling experience and enriching audience exploration of interactive possibilities of fiction and real worlds.

In today's interconnected world, digital and transmedia storytelling are essential tools for conveying messages, entertaining, educating, and connecting with audience. It also has the potential for further evolution and innovation in the future. In the next module, we will expand further on this discussion by looking at some interactive films and games. Thank you.