

# Digital Storytelling Workshop: Ancient Art meets New Media

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## That reminds me of a story...

Cultural anthropologist Gregory Bateson was asked in the 1950s if he believed that computer artificial intelligence was possible. He responded that he did not know, but that he believed when you would ask a computer a yes-or-no question and it responded with "...that reminds me of a story," you would be close.

## Storytelling

Storytelling is one of humanity's most important communication tools. For centuries humans have passed down their culture and traditions through story. Story teaches us about who we are, where we came from and where we're going. We learn about our ancestors from the stories we are told. We learn about the world from stories and we learn to interact with others. Everyone remembers what happened to the boy who cried wolf and Pinocchio when they told a lie. We learn valuable lessons from such stories and we use story to teach life's lessons.



Storytelling brings people together.

Long before the radio and television people used to sit around the fire and tell stories. With the advent of modern media people are spending much less time together, getting their information from the Internet and other new media.

Digital Storytelling combines the tools of new media with the ancient art of storytelling. A digital story is usually short in nature because of its publication on the Internet. The Internet is a powerful tool that allows digital stories to be uploaded and watched by people all over the world.



## **Everyone has a story to tell**

The best digital stories are short and simple focusing on one topic. It is the simplicity of a story that gives a story meaning and appeal. Think about how you tell someone about the first time you did something or a trip you took. When telling your digital story you should make it simple and interesting. Digital stories are from the first person point-of-view. Digital stories are short personal narratives told from the “I” perspective. What makes digital storytelling unique from other forms of digital media is the focus is on personal life experiences.



## **Creating your digital story**

The best way to begin your digital story is to develop a short script 1 - 3 minutes long. A good exercise in writing your digital story is to use the front and back of a 4x6 index card to write your story. For some people it is easier to write a long essay than a short narrative. This exercise will help to keep your story concise and focused. It is best to pick one topic for the story and focusing in on that specific event. When writing your story remember that a digital story is oral, which is different than a written story.

## **Exercises for developing your story**

Writers Block is a typical hurdle that most people suffer when beginning their stories. The exercises listed are great ways to find the story.

**First Lines** - Find the first lines of books you enjoy. This exercise will help you to develop your first line. Below are examples of some great first lines.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. –The Bible

What can you say about a 25 year old girl who died? – Love Story, Erich Segal

The great fish moved silently through the night water, propelled by short sweeps of its crescent tail. – Jaws, Peter Benchley

Scarlett O'Hara was not beautiful, but men seldom realized it when caught by her charm as the Tarleton twins were. – Gone with the Wind, Margaret Mitchell

It was a pleasure to burn. – Fahrenheit 451, Ray Bradbury

### **Draw a map**

Draw a map of your old neighborhood or a place that holds memories for you. You don't have to draw the map as geographically correct but rather of places or people of interest. Many of the stories from our past lie within place and by drawing the places from our lives we give life to our story.

### **Story Circle**

After writing your story have someone listen to your story aloud. A story circle allows you to verbalize your story and to hear other people's stories. A story circle also allows for a safe place for feedback and experimentation.

### **Putting it all together**

A digital story is a multimedia story that combines a voice over of your script along with pictures, video, music and anything that can be scanned or digitized. Once you have the script you can then obtain the images necessary to tell your story. You can scan your pictures. Use digital pictures or video clips to give interest to your story. But remember it is not the fancy video tricks that make a good digital story. The core of a digital story is the *story*.

### **Links to popular Digital Storytelling websites**

Center for Digital Storytelling

<http://www.storycenter.org/>

Storytelling Cookbook

<http://www.storycenter.org/memvoice/pages/cookbook.html>

Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling

<http://www.coe.uh.edu/digital-storytelling/introduction.htm>

“There have been great societies that did not use the wheel,  
but there have been no societies that did not tell stories.”

—Ursula K. LeGuin

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## Digital Storytelling Storyboard

Script	Visual	Audio