

The Art and Science of Digital Storytelling

Digital stories derive their impact by weaving together images, music, narrative, and voice to give depth and dimension to the narrative. By using the Internet and other forms of digital distribution, digital stories can be seen across distances and boundaries to create new communities through a sense of shared meaning.

There are four stages to the digital storytelling process.

1. Finding the Experience

We start with an appreciative inquiry approach to find meaningful experiences while we explore story styles and the power of personal narrative to facilitate a "re-storying" process that encourages deep reflection around the experience for a more evolved understanding of how our stories define who we are and how we walk through the world.

2. Telling the Story

Once we have "found" the story, we explore the best way to tell that story. Asking questions like who is our audience, what are we really trying to say, and what is the best way to say it. This includes writing the script in a way that works digitally and finding images that are both literal and symbolic. We download digital images and scan photographs and mementos. Then we are able to put the audio and visuals together using quick and easy storyboarding techniques.

3. Creating the Piece

At this stage it is all hands-on. Editing begins by combining the audio and visuals together using digital video editing software like iMovie4, Premiere, Pinnacle, or Final Cut Pro. Once in the software and after creating a rough cut, we add special effects, transitions, and titles to get to our final draft. As we move through the process, we also take note of problem areas around and with the technology, so that we learn easy solutions to common problems. As every artist knows, the process of creation is transformative. This is where we become producers of multi-media, not just consumers.

4. Publishing the Work

We publish the stories that we have created to a variety of platforms: CD, DVD, VHS, and web. Having created the stories, the natural next question is how do we use these stories, whether as learning tools and we develop curricula around them, for social activism, and program development, or as a tool for reflection, for healing.

The above text is excerpted from KQED's Digital Storytelling Manual. The full text of the manual can be seen at <http://dsi.kqed.org/index.php/workshops/about/C66/> For more information on KQED's Digital Storytelling Workshops, please contact Leslie Rule, Project Supervisor, Digital Storytelling Initiative at lrule@kqed.org. For details on how digital storytelling can be used with adult learners, please email readsantaclara@ci.santa-clara.ca.us.