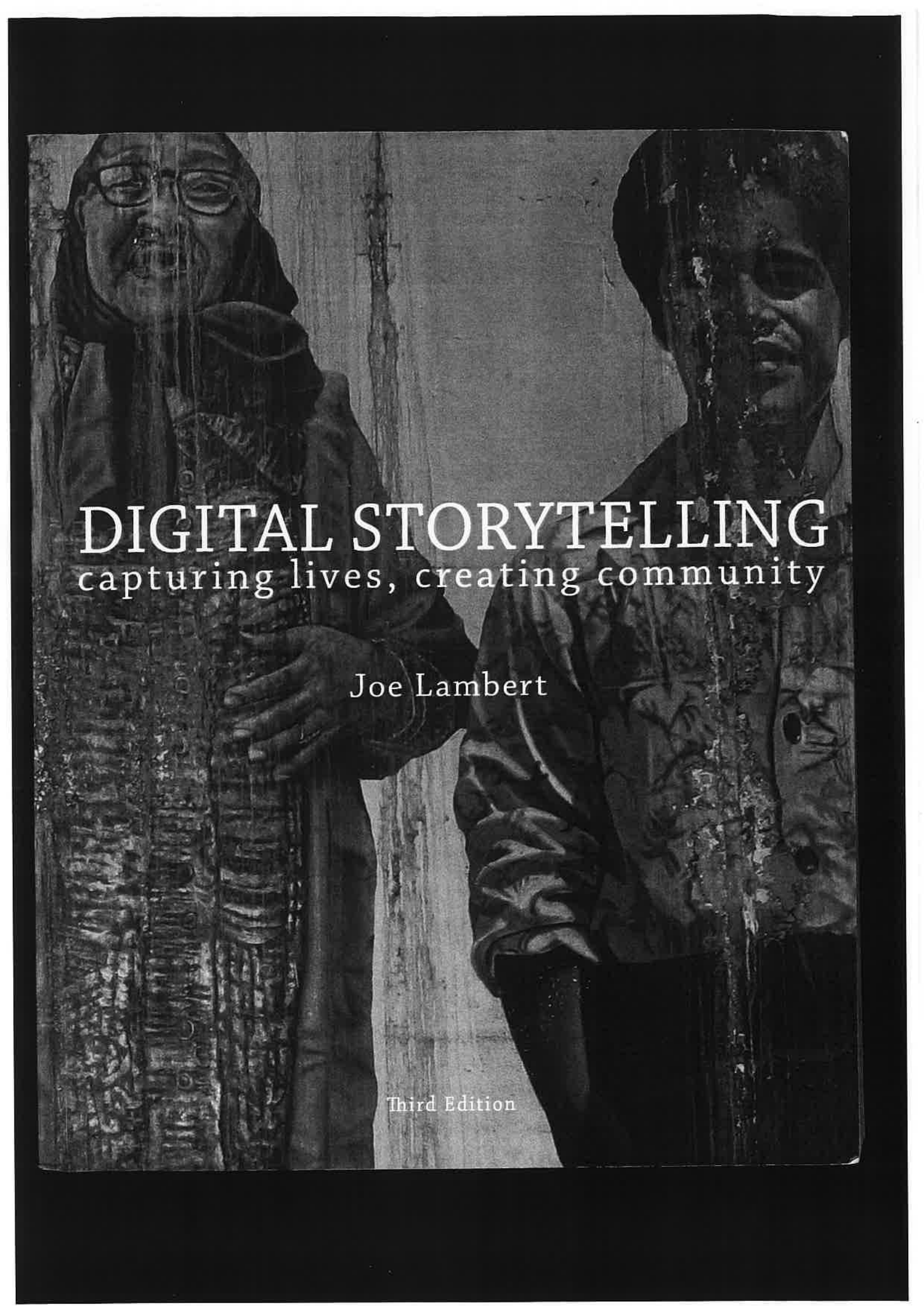




DIGITAL STORYTELLING

capturing lives, creating community

Joe Lambert

Third Edition

Digital Diner Press
1803 Martin Luther King Jr. Way
Berkeley, CA 94709
510-548-2065 phone
510-548-1345 fax
www.storycenter.org

© 2002, 2006, 2009 Joe Lambert
All Rights Reserved
First Edition published: 2002
Second Edition: 2006
Third Edition: 2009

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, photocopying, recording or otherwise without either the prior written permission of the publishers or author.

ISBN: 978-1-61623-849-0

First and Second Editions designed by Oakleaf Designs, Patrick and Eileen Milligan
Third Edition Cover Design and photo by Rob Kershaw
Copy Editing, proofing, and layout by Patrick Castrenze and Oriana Magnera
Pre-press by Helen Kershaw and John Munro, Lithocolor
Printed by Friesens

Cover Photo: *Street Tattoo* mural by Dan Galvez with assistance from Dan Fontes and Jos Sances, 1982, oils, 15x 220. Large scale portraits of various Oakland residents. San Pablo & West Grand, Oakland, CA (damaged from weathering)

To purchase a copy, or copies of this book, visit www.storycenter.org, e-mail orders@storycenter.org, or call 510-548-2065.

All proceeds to benefit the Scholarship Fund of the Center for Digital Storytelling, a project of Life On The Water, Inc, a California non-profit corporation, 94-2660844.

Printed in Canada

10 Applications of Digital Storytelling

Over the last fifteen years, digital storytelling has been applied to many different contexts, and has encountered an enormous range of possibilities. In the following chapters, we present conversations with a group of practitioners in the context of community activism, violence prevention, public health, education, and business. As a preface, *Chapter 10* addresses the potential scope of this practice as it has been adapted to meet the needs of those in an ever-broadening range of fields.

Telling an Organization's Story

Whether you are working for a commercial enterprise or a civic group, trying to capture an organization's story is a common idea for a digital storytelling project. For some, the story is just another piece of marketing material, a step up from a PowerPoint presentation, but a step below spending \$20,000 on a new promotional video. For others, the style of personal narrative in a piece that is produced with a minimal, but elegant design stands out as a new way of communicating meaning and values in relationship to the products or services the organization offers.

Our work in organizational storytelling has ranged from the smallest one-person consultations, to assisting marketing professionals working with large corporations. Dana Atchley has said that the thrust of organizational stories revolves around the question, what does the organization mean to you? And as the person whose work revolves around representing the organization, you need to have a good answer to this question. But no matter how good you are at making up reasons for your support, if your answer doesn't stir emotion or connect with an aspect of your life's calling, then in our book, you are not likely to be that effective in any of the materials you create.

Our approach always starts with a person's story that connects their own life experience to the organization's mission or brand. It may not be the story that makes it into your next speech, or the one that is showcased on your website, but until you share an experience with the audience, you won't be able to effectively represent other people's experiences and the resulting connection to the product.

Reflective Practice

We once had a student arrive at one of our open workshops in Berkeley who said that she was going to do a project about her boyfriend, and at the end of the movie, she wanted the final words to be a marriage proposal. It was our first marriage proposal digital story, and it told us that we had crossed yet another threshold with the potential of the form.

If we were to ask the students who come to our monthly workshops what brought them there, the majority would undoubtedly say they have a project due that is tied to some important part of their life—unique travel experiences or adventures, weddings, anniversaries, birthdays, memorials, work or academic achievements, etc. It is obvious, from our encounters, that digital storytelling serves these needs.

What is not so obvious is how digital storytelling works as a reflective practice. As storytellers, we have addressed how intimate our relationship is with many of our photos. We have also addressed the efficacy of story writing as a form of reflection. But what is more complex is describing how video editing, particularly with the addition of photographic manipulation and special effects, is in itself a powerful new set of reflective tools.

We have observed that as people speak and write about, as well as manipulate their images, the photographs themselves come to life. This reanimation and plasticity of change helps the participant manage the meaning that their artifacts take on for her/himself. In providing the space for these manipulations, the production process becomes regenerative in itself.

Health and Human Services

Everyday stories by local community members about pressing health and social problems have become a valued source of information and inspiration for providers, educators, and policymakers. In 1999 we launched our public health and violence prevention work with the Silence Speaks program (see interview with Amy Hill). While the broader health sector was at first slow to recognize the power of sharing stories digitally, the application of our methods has proliferated at a startling rate (see interview with Pip Hardy/Tony Sumner).

Digital storytelling today has been employed not only as a tool for professional reflection, but also as a method for capturing intimate stories by service consumers. In the tradition of narrative medicine, for example, these stories assist providers in understanding the nuances of how race, class, language, and culture

inform
differen

At the c
market
examp
ra, Cali
both h
health
tes. Fro
context
ing thi
equity

When
greate
Like P
munit
Latina
and tr
prom

Whet
cating
inspir
hones
play a

Inte

When
quick
conn
arou
Bay
num
doze
assis
zatic

Cros

inform people's understanding of their own health and wellness in ways that are different from western medicine's views on illness.

At the community-based level, digital stories have played a critical role in social marketing campaigns for individual and community-wide behavioral change. For example, our work with the Partners for Fit Youth Network (PFY) in Santa Barbara, California, and a project on chronic disease prevention in Salinas, California, both have positioned local voices and images as the message bearers of critical health promotion information, as a way to prevent adolescent obesity and diabetes. From these two brief examples, it is clear that stories are being crafted and contextualized to point to the social determinants of ill health. Therefore, sharing this work on a larger scale enables public health advocates to call for health equity and highlight the ways in which inequities impact communities.

When compared to other service sectors the health sector has witnessed the greatest adoption of digital storytelling as a qualitative research methodology. Like Photovoice, for example, our process has been adapted as a form of community-based participatory research (CBPR) to examine the attitudes of young Latinas regarding pregnancy and mothering; barriers to breast cancer screening and treatment for rural women; and the role of traditional knowledge in health promotion among Alaska Native communities.

Whether the focus is on healing and reflection for providers and consumers, educating remote communities with relevant and meaningful story-based content, inspiring systemic change, or research/program evaluation, we know that the honest, first-person voices that arise from digital storytelling will continue to play a pivotal in the health and human services sectors in the years to come.

Intergenerational Connection

When we began our work at the Digital Clubhouse in Silicon Valley in 1996, we quickly discovered that digital storytelling was an excellent tool for fostering connections across generations. Since its inception, the Clubhouse was organized around a principle of serving a diverse cross-section of the South San Francisco Bay community, with an emphasis on seniors and youth. Since that time, a large number of senior focused workshops have been organized, including over a half dozen World War II Memories projects. The seniors bring the stories, the youth assist with multimedia production, and the middle generation acts as the organizational glue.

Cross-generational storytelling provides a platform for our elders to share stories

community, especially for the younger populations. Instead of experiencing new technology as just a digital playground, they see the potential impact it can have for all people involved. Digital storytelling also affords young people the opportunity to confront frailty, aging, mortality and disability associated with aging. Furthermore, digital storytelling is also an appropriate adjunct to community or university-based oral history projects with elders.

Disability

It was also at the Digital Clubhouse where we began exploring the relevancy of digital storytelling practice for the many differently-abled people in our communities. One of our first projects was, "My Life As A Movie." The project was predicated on the fact that many high school-aged youth with disabilities face difficulties in finding appropriate part-time or full-time employment; we believe that providing these youth with a chance to create a digital reflection about their lives, their strengths, and their skills, could help them in their job search.

In the course of the workshop, we met many extraordinary youth, several of whom became an integral part of the Clubhouse youth program. We also were first familiarized with the advances in assistive technology that allow participants like Kevin Lichtenberg, who operated the computer using an infrared mouse/tracking device attached to his forehead, to design and create their own stories. Giving voice takes on new meaning when those with hearing disabilities can "see" their voice for the first time displayed as a waveform on a computer screen.

Since this time, we have had several opportunities to work with members of the disability community to develop digital stories. In particular, in our collaboration with Professor Sue Schweik at the University of California, Berkeley, and activist/artist Neil Marcus, we developed a digital storytelling component within a college course on Creative Writing and the Body. The class aimed to foster dialogue about disability and many of the larger cultural issues that are raised by our perceptions of self and our bodies. This meant confronting issues about the notion of limitation, and talking about how our stories are shaped whether we are perceived to be visibly whole, visibly limited, or invisibly limited in countless ways.

The stories of struggle, the stories of resolve, and the stories of frustration and beauty were captured elegantly in the digital storytelling process. The larger canon of literary and creative accomplishment coming from differently-abled communities continue to be served by various adaptations of digital storytelling processes.

Youth Programs

Three months after we started the San Francisco Digital Media Center in 1994, we found ourselves working with Ron Light, a local educational media expert, to develop D*LAB. D*LAB would remain a program of our center for almost four years, allowing us to sustain an active body of work with teens from throughout San Francisco's many diverse communities. In our projects we explored digital video stories, as well as web-based stories and special workshops with specific schools. Additionally, we looked at the Title IX program of the San Francisco Unified School District, and also worked with Native American youth.

Daniel Weinshenker's many years of working with the Downtown Area Visual Arts program leading youth through the process of developing high quality stories, has also demonstrated how youth can meet the challenge of writing meaningful and powerful prose. The 826 Center movement, Streetside Stories, the National Writing Projects' local youth programs, and many others, have made digital storytelling a critical part of youth media strategy.

These experiences affirmed our attitude that young people, despite feeling adept at multimedia tools, long for environments where freedom of expression is possible—where they can choose what story to tell and decide how it should be told. After-school environments are often where effective youth-based projects can best be developed. These efforts give youth a sense of real world consequence that is a critical component of a constructive educational philosophy. And for the most part, the students and instructors are not weighted down with the criteria of assessment and bureaucratic inertia that plagues many of our public school settings.

As has also been stated by a number of our colleagues working in the context of media literacy with youth, digital storytelling plays an ideal intermediary role between the observations and analysis of media (the classic media literacy curriculum), and full-on film and video production. We learn most about the way media affects us by manipulating media and making our own editing decisions.

Youth video, animation and film projects have for years demonstrated that the desire to speak in the language of film is virtually universal among young people. However, the expense in time and resources in organizing film production inhibits accessibility. Digital storytelling puts the participant in the editing chair with a minimal amount of preparation, and without the lengthy process of shooting, reviewing, capturing and working with video clips. Young people walk away from their first video-editing experience with a new set of eyes and ears, as they see how special effects and design decisions are constructed and work upon the minds of viewers.

With the commitment to educational technology use in classrooms and youth programs throughout the developed and developing worlds, digital storytelling and other forms of digital media publishing are becoming key parts of curricula and programming at many youth centers and after-school programs.

Identity and Diversity

African American historical leader W.E.B. Dubois' incandescent pronouncement that "The problem of the twentieth century is the problem of the color line," informs our work in the twenty-first century as well. Much of the discussions about digital divides, "serving those at-risk," and "cultural equity" are sophisticated euphemisms for discussions of race in the public sphere. No cultural work can be promulgated without addressing a point of view about race and other markers of identity.

Digital storytelling has been seen as a vector for two of the more complex aspects of this discussion. First and foremost from our point of view, people within every culture have the right to carry on conversations, form organizations, and amalgamate their own stories outside of the mainstream cultural discourse. Integration into a dominant society that sustains aspects of the legacies of genocide, segregation, and racism in many of its institutional practices is not the end goal of cultural pluralism. We have encouraged the development of programs to assist people within African-American, Latino, Asian-Pacific Islander, Native American and LGBTQ communities to capture their own stories, using approaches and methods that reflect both historical cultural practices and contemporary expressions and ideas within these communities. Our conversation with Thenmozhi Soundararajan in Chapter 11 addresses these issues in more detail.

As an example, we were involved in the Spring of 2001, through our associates China Ching and Thenmozhi Soundararajan, in a workshop with a group of Native Californian activists who were part of the Circle of Voices project. On principle, the workshop did not allow visitors or observers to attend, and the artifacts photographed for inclusion in stories, many of which represented sacred items to the various communities, were not shared with a community outside the circle of participants. As a final precaution, none of the associated digitized materials at the end of the project were allowed to remain at our center, nor were the stories distributed or exhibited in any fashion.

Another aspect of a culturally democratic practice is to provide media-based mechanisms for people who have felt excluded from the channels of economic and political access to share their stories publicly. We have encouraged all of our participants to imagine their stories as having broad relevancy to a larger public, and where appropriate, work directly with our collaborative partners to seek broadcast (radio and television) and other venues for distribution.

Inevitably, changing from an "I" point-of-view to a "we" becomes a more sensitive dialogue in these particular pieces that address racial and social justice. Giving witness as an individual coalesces with a sense of collective will, and with a view that suggests any document reporting on the conditions people face need also include a sense of collective responsibility.

Since our beginnings, we have sought to sustain a diversity of participation in our workshops held throughout the country. We have an ongoing scholarship and outreach effort to engage communities of color, and much of our specific work in public health, community development, and social services focuses on low-income and immigrant communities. When possible, we also provide pro bono technical and production support to the grassroots efforts of our colleagues working both locally and internationally.

Activism

While many dialogues about identity and diversity reflect a certain degree of activism, we see the implementation of digital storytelling as part of the community organizer's tool kit as having a unique set of considerations as well.

When my father arrived in a small, east Texas town to begin a labor-organizing project at the local garment factory, his first project was the creation of an agitational newsletter. The newsletter captured stories about what was going on in the plant, what abuses were being perpetrated by which managers, what plans the company had to keep employees in line, and what funny incidents demonstrated flashes of spontaneous resistance. He told stories, as much as possible, in the words of the folks living the experience.

In my own activist experience, while I prided myself on being able to knock out an effective, rabble-rousing speech, I knew what made my arguments for change and resistance effective were the most direct examples of courage and leadership that I had observed. Capturing these stories was what breathed life into our ideology.

Of course, part of the problem with political people on both the left and the right is that they often make sure that the stories projected suit their ideologies and political programs. The "politically correct" stories are the only ones that surface in their campaigns. In a long-range view, common sense suggests that the activist would do well to leave the sifting of arguments within a range of stories to the audience, and instead focus on facilitating voice and educational empowerment as broadly as possible.

Your own political stance aside, imagining how digital storytelling can be easily

integrated into strategies for change is not difficult. In our own programs, we have worked with countless activists to develop projects that address the issues they care about so deeply, and the media has been presented as part of community meetings, assemblies, policymaking venues, political rallies and in organizing packages distributed to their constituents.

In addition, using the digital storytelling workshop as a team-building exercise has been shown to be effective. If the resources are available, gathering a group of organizers together to share their own stories and learn the process and tool set can orient and energize a campaign.

International Development

As our work spread from its initial base in California across oceans and continents, it began to find a place in the development sector, which for decades has explored and promoted the value of participatory communications strategies. With its emphasis on first-person narrative and meaningful involvement in the media production process, digital storytelling represents a user-friendly approach to participatory video, a method practiced widely in the context of international health and community development initiatives in Africa, South Asia, and Latin America.

Those involved in international projects face many challenges when implementing a storytelling process that is appropriate for resource-poor environments. For example, what adaptations are required for digital storytelling with individuals and communities that lack a written literacy or even a written version of their first language? And in terms cultural sensitivity, how does one approach issues related to representation, privacy, story ownership, and program sustainability in the context of colonialism and media exploitation—two factors that are pervasive in development work?

Our approach has been to emphasize partnerships with local NGOs well versed in the needs and issues of their area, and to push for work that goes well beyond the mere documentation of stories to integrate personal narrative into existing health and human rights agendas. Flexibility has been key to the success of projects in Uganda and South Africa, where we have brought testimonial practices into the process of story development, and worked closely with skilled interpreters to capture and edit the narratives of workshop participants. While digital story creators have historically relied on personal archives of photos and video clips to develop visual treatments for their stories, work in the development sector has required the integration of photography and artful creation for participants who lack such image collections.

An emphasis on organizational capacity building and sustainability has also characterized much of our international work. In Brazil, we trained staff at the Museu da Pessoa (Museum of the Person) on digital storytelling methods and supported them in adapting the process for a large-scale youth voice initiative. In South Africa, our ongoing collaboration with the Sonke Gender Justice Network has also involved facilitator training and mentoring for staff, as well as additional partnerships to ensure a long-term presence to support the continued evolution of the work throughout the region.

K-12 and Higher Education Curricula

Educators from K-12 schools as well as colleges and universities have been an integral part of our practice from the start. The leading proponents of educational technology for project-based learning identified digital storytelling as one of the most obvious and effective methods within a broad cross-section of curricular areas. Writing and voice, reflections on civic processes, oral histories, and essays on major subject areas are just some of the ways the work has been integrated into curriculums across grade levels.

We imagine a much broader role for digital storytelling in an integrated constructivist learning setting that easily could address science and math as well. We agree with the philosophy that if children remember the stories of their own learning processes and can readily apply their unique sets of strengths and intelligences, they will develop their own strategies for learning. Because it goes well beyond the facts and formulas they are expected to regurgitate as evidence of their mastery of knowledge, digital storytelling will service not only the academic success of students but also their life success.

Building a portfolio of how students approached problems through digital storytelling could provide a vivid and enjoyable mechanism for charting the development of their learning over time. Just imagine a student capping her/his educational career with an interactive performance of stories showing work on projects from kindergarten through college, and projecting them at the graduation party.

For educators at either the K-12 or college levels, learning not only how to facilitate digital storytelling but also how to articulate judgments about the design of video with the same authority they have in relation to text can take years of training and practice. But today, the necessary toolsets and the training of educators to use them have found their way into classrooms across the U.S. and around the world.

Scenario Planning/Futures Thinking

In 1997, we began a multi-year collaboration with the Menlo Park-based Institute for the Future (IFTF) to look at the role of digital storytelling in scenario development. IFTF has always integrated a narrative approach into its reporting methodology by combining essays that examine major technological trends with fictional scenarios involving characters as consumers and managers a decade or more into the future. They were also involved in looking at the ways that new media technologies could be more thoroughly integrated into knowledge management and organizational communication practices. Because digital storytelling fit so well with their own methodologies and practices, in 1998 they commissioned us to create a white paper on our work (several articles from this paper are excerpted in this book).

Of particular interest to us were a pair of projects involving educators and high school youth (2000), and then community members (2001), where IFTF and members of our staff collaborated on extended workshops to both educate participants about the implications of the trends being examined in IFTF research, and gather stories about their views of the future and the impact of technology on their lives.

In the work with educators and students, we were struck by the ability of each group to imagine the impact that technological progress would have on their personal and professional lives. With the community members who were also involved in a longer assessment of their then-current attitudes toward technology, we were impressed by the ease with which they imagined integrating the commitments and values they held most dear into a future, and with their ability to envision some of the enabling technologies on the horizon. In both cases, workshop participants recognized that technological progress had a Janus-like role in their lives, enabling and oppressing at the same time.

The stories themselves were surprisingly powerful, given that the style of speculative writing and the notion of illustrating the future in image was new to all participants. We found that the process assisted all of the participants in thinking more broadly about historical change in their communities. We hope to see the emergence of much more elaborate programs for capturing and developing stories about how individuals view their futures, as a process for initiating dialogue about large-scale community development and the impact of global climate change and other pressing issues.

Professional Reflection

Myriad approaches to periodic review and assessment exist within various professions and sectors. Management consultants in both the commercial and civic

arer
opp
tuni
as v
pro
cab
tive

In t
pro
ass
sion
the
wic
to s
nev
car
tex

Wi
ing
in
fo
sp
of

W
in
pc
ta
Th
in
or

To

D
b
w
to
c

arenas have developed numerous ways to give organizations and individuals the opportunity to take stock of their development and morale. Storytelling opportunities have been presented in group settings, or as one-on-one dialogues. And as with any reflective practice, the process is usually more important than the product. Unfortunately, written reports usually disappear into files and filing cabinets and never again see the light of day and have little in the way of reflective substance.

In the last five years, we have witnessed interest among a growing number of professionals to use digital storytelling as a way to give the product of their assessment processes new and more enduring meaning. Capturing one's professional process over the course of a year as a classroom teacher, for example, with the production of a multimedia story as the final assessment piece, provides a wide array of topics to explore. The professional can look at her/his relationship to students by recording the students at work, or at their own development of new styles of teaching and testing by documenting themselves as teachers. They can also explore themes and issues around their personal life or the larger context of their school or district as a way of setting the backdrop for a story.

With a grant from the Spencer Foundation, we worked with the National Writing Project to collaborate with a group of rural educators from around the U.S. in a project to encourage this kind of assessment. The resulting stories have found their way into countless dialogues with other educators and have inspired numerous school districts to consider projects to capture the reflections of classroom teachers.

When stories are completed in an environment of shared reflection, they can inspire and lead to more in-depth reflections by the storytellers' peers. The portfolio of these teachers' stories offered a treasure trove of ethnographic detail, and in the case of NWP, valuable information about education and teaching. These multimedia stories provide an effective and entertaining way of presenting the arguments of administrators and managers about changes needed in organizational thinking.

Team Building

During the height of the dot com boom in the late nineties, hardly a week went by without a national news story about how project management professionals were busy cooking up "experiences" that would enable the members of teams to bond more closely. The examples included fire walking, rope courses, sports camps, extreme hiking, and other outdoor adventures.

Undoubtedly, people who are forced by circumstance to execute complex projects over intense periods will operate more effectively if they are initiated through an ego-stripping test of endurance and nerve. The physical test as a communal rite of passage is an ancient ritual.

But it would seem that the extremity of some of these experiences is perhaps a bit overstated for the relatively mundane application of the average professional project, no matter how stressful such a project may become. They also seem much more suited to a traditional view of male-dominated cultures where physical prowess and leadership are considered interchangeable.

A number of our clients in both civic and commercial organizations have suggested that the strongest application of our work is in amplifying the process of the personal story exchange. While developing intimacies through personal stories is a common part of informal professional life, storytelling circles, and the more intense production madness of a digital storytelling workshop, gets to the heart of the matter much more directly.

We have witnessed the solidarity that typically develops among people in the context of workshops, and while thus far this outcome has been unintended, we are watching with interest to see where and when it will be taken up and examined more fully.

Journalism

Particularly in the last five years, and since the advent of widely available high-bandwidth internet access, journalism has emerged as a sector that is exploring many innovative uses for digital storytelling. While it would seem that the journalistic profession is built on story, ethical concerns have tended to divorce authors' personal experiences from their treatment of stories. But for many of us, emotional content is at the heart of effective journalism.

Our colleague, Jane Stevens, formerly with the New York Times and now working as an independent science journalist, has developed her own approach and theories about new multimedia authorship for journalists. In this context, she approached us to collaborate on a few workshops to train some of her peers on digital storytelling practice.

Back in the late 1990s, Jane was one of the first people to correctly point out that the traditional divisions of labor between print journalists, photographers and video journalists were dissolving as more and more news was developed as entertainment. At the same time, online journalism and the number of freelance

journalis
journalis
see jour:
styles, a
own sto

Followin
digital s
line bro
ism" apj

Today, r
multime
generat
size the
process
with jo
immen:

Techn

Ironica
skill se
organiz
socio-e
in the I
tool se
ally, so

At the
commu
tools. A
techno
people
curricu
profit
in-dep
better
than t

journalists were growing, and a much more complex relationship between journalists and audiences in the reporting of news resulted. Stevens continues to see journalists as both multimedia storytellers, often with recognizable personal styles, and news facilitators, working with sources that are helping to craft their own stories, and developing their own web-based platforms for sharing them.

Following the initial work with Jane, we were asked to train staff at the BBC on digital storytelling methods, and they subsequently launched a large-scale online broadcast initiative called *Capture Wales*, the first of many "citizen journalism" approaches to our methods to emerge.

Today, news outlets around the world offer incredibly sophisticated forms of multimedia-based online journalism, and YouTube collects and shares user-generated content that is equally popular. In our work, we continue to emphasize the value of first-person narrative, participatory production, and group processes for shaping and sharing meaningful stories. When these values align with journalism and other media outlets, both storytellers and viewers benefit immensely.

Technology Training

Ironically, technology training, perhaps the most obvious application for the skill set we use in digital storytelling, is in some ways the least interesting to us organizationally. We realize that the digital divide is alive and well along both socio-economic and cultural lines, as well as along lines of age and gender—both in the U.S. and throughout the world. Getting access to digital media production tool sets is far from a closed issue, especially as these discussions expand globally, so providing access is a critically important part of our work.

At the same time, we are not overly concerned about the ways that innumerable communities seeking access will ultimately be able to put their hands on the tools. As costs decrease, creative community solutions such as community-based technology access centers can pool their resources and service a large number of people. We also recognize that digital video/multimedia production and training curricula has been developed and refined over the years by a plethora of non-profit media centers, as well as colleges and universities, for people who want in-depth knowledge of the tools. Opportunities such as these may represent a better option than our workshops, which emphasize narrative and story rather than the intricacies of software use.

Digital Storytelling and Urban Planning

In the appendix on the World of Digital Storytelling, we discuss the potential of geographic information systems (GIS) like Google Earth and Google Maps. Countless opportunities now exist to integrate stories into places on a map, thereby realigning stories with their place-based origins. One of the most exciting uses of this material is related to community-based learning and urban planning. In the last five years, beginning with our collaboration with the Ukiah Players Theater, located in Mendocino County, we have been examining place-based storytelling in these contexts. In Houston, Texas; New Orleans, Louisiana; and Tuscaloosa, Alabama, we worked on a prototype workshop process to engage community members in talking about their community, and linking the stories to the discussions of redevelopment and resource development for communities. This work has been captured on the website, storymapping.org, which has also shared the stories of several other place-based projects from around the world.