

Digital Storytelling

Digital Storytelling is the technique of combining images, video, text, and music in a dynamic and engaging way. Today's students are used to expressing themselves using the written word. Digital Storytelling allows students to express themselves using multimedia.



Guiding Questions

- What is digital storytelling and how can I use it with my students?
- What are the steps to create a digital story?
- Where can I go to learn more?

What's in this Handbook?

- What is Digital Storytelling?
- Getting Set Up
- Elements of a Digital Story
- Building Your Story
- The Process
- Sharing Your Story
 - Converting Your Story
 - Upload to YouTube
- Assessing/Evaluating a Digital Story
- Copyright and Educational Fair Use
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- References

Digital Storytelling

What is Digital Storytelling?

At weddings and funerals, it is often common to see a visual collage of the couple's or person's life. They can be very appealing – funny, nostalgic, and intimately engaging. This technique can also be used in the classroom. Digital Storytelling is the art of turning a story into a multimedia experience- into a movie. The “storyteller” combines images, sound, and their own creative voice to quickly and painlessly to visually tell their story. What results is a work that is original and a powerful expression of the storyteller.

Digital Storytelling can be used in a variety of ways in the classroom. For example,

- **Teacher and Student Introductions**

Participating in an online learning environment has many challenges, and one of those challenges is overcoming the barriers between instructor and student. The physical distance that exists often causes social and communication barriers that create a feeling of distance between the students and their instructor. One way to bridge this gap is through digital storytelling. This technology can help you get to know your students as well as letting them know a little more about you, the class they are enrolled in, and what you expect from them.

- **Educational Materials**

It can be used to explain historical or artistic materials when pictures with voice over can be more powerful than the written word. While the images are scrolling across the screen you can narrate them using your own words.

- **Multimedia Projects for Students**

Rather than writing a report or developing a presentation, students can create a movie. Another alternative on this approach is to have students produce a silent movie.

- **Personal Reflection**

If you ask students to write a personal reflection, creating a digital story is a great alternative. It encourages students to move from the intellectual domain to the affective domain.

- **Personal Narratives**

Storytelling is a powerful, universal medium. Stories connect us with each other. Personal narratives can be about people who inspired us, important events in our lives, places we have visited, or hobbies and pastimes.

- **Highlight Departments, Programs, or Events**

Digital Storytelling can also be used to highlight departments, programs, and events.



REFLECTION

Consider your courses and your personal life. Where might you be able to use Digital Storytelling?

Digital Storytelling

Getting Set Up

Software applications are needed to support different aspects of the digital storytelling. Reading the list lists below looks so complicated! But, there are ways to keep it simple. Video Creation software is used to actually produce the movies, but other applications may also be needed to record the movie narration and to manipulate image files. A player is needed for others to view the saved movie or digital story. Some of these applications may be installed on your computer by default (*). You can locate them by searching programs for them.

First, decide which software application you'll use to create your story. Photo Story is the simplest to use. It was created many years ago, but it is still available. iMovie and Windows Live Movie Maker generally come installed with a Mac or Windows computer respectively. If you have Microsoft Office installed on your computer, then Office Mix can be used with PowerPoint to create a digital story.

Software Application	Format	Cost	Windows	Mac
VIDEO CREATION				
Microsoft Photo Story	.wmv	Free	X	
iMovie*	several	Free		X
Windows Live Movie Maker*	.wmv	Free	X	
Microsoft Office Mix	several	Free	X	
Adobe Premiere Elements	several	\$	X	

If you plan on narrating your story, you may need software to make recordings. Photo Story and Office Mix have narration tools already integrated into the program.

Software Application	Cost	Windows	Mac
AUDIO			
Sound Recorder *	Free	X	
Audacity	Free	X	X
Goldwave	\$	X	
Adobe Audition 2.0	\$	X	

If you want to modify your images, you will need image editing software. Some of the applications have options for manipulating your images.

Software Application	Cost	Windows	Mac
IMAGE EDITING			
Paint*	Free	X	
Paint.net	Free	X	
The GIMP	Free		X
Adobe Photoshop	\$	X	X
Paint Shop Pro	\$		
Fireworks	\$	X	X

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One of the challenges of creating a digital story, or any multimedia project, is saving it in a format that can easily be viewed by your audience. For example, Windows Photo Story and Windows Live Movie Maker save the end product as a .wmv file which requires the Windows Media Player. However, the Windows Media Player is not available for the Mac. In those cases, it's suggested to take an extra step to convert the video to MPEG-4 (.mp4) format for publication.

Software Application	Format	Cost	Windows	Mac
Windows Media Player*	.wmv	Free	X	
VLC Media Player	Several	Free	X	X
QuickTime Player*	.avi, .mp4, .mov	Free	X	X
Adobe Flash Player	.flv, .swf, .mp4	Free	X	X
YouTube	Streamed	Free	X	X
Office Mix	Streamed	Free	X	X



RESOURCE LINKS

A list of free resources for digital storytelling.

- Microsoft Photo Story
<https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/download/details.aspx?id=11132>
- Microsoft Office Mix
<https://mix.office.com/en-us/Home>
- Audacity
<http://www.audacityteam.org/download/>
- Paint.net
<http://www.getpaint.net/download.html>
- The GIMP
<https://www.gimp.org/downloads/>
- YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/>

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Elements of a Digital Story

A good starting point for developing a digital story is to understand these 7 elements (Robin, n.d.):

- 1. Point of View**
What is the main point of the story and what is the perspective of the author?
- 2. A Dramatic Question**
A key question that keeps the viewer's attention and will be answered by the end of the story.
- 3. Emotional Content**
Serious issues that come alive in a personal and powerful way and connects the audience to the story.
- 4. The Gift of Your Voice**
A way to personalize the story to help the audience understand the context.
- 5. The Power of the Soundtrack**
Music or other sounds that support and embellish the story.
- 6. Economy**
Using just enough content to tell the story without overloading the viewer.
- 7. Pacing**
The rhythm of the story and how slowly or quickly it progresses.

The image on the next page explores these ideas further.

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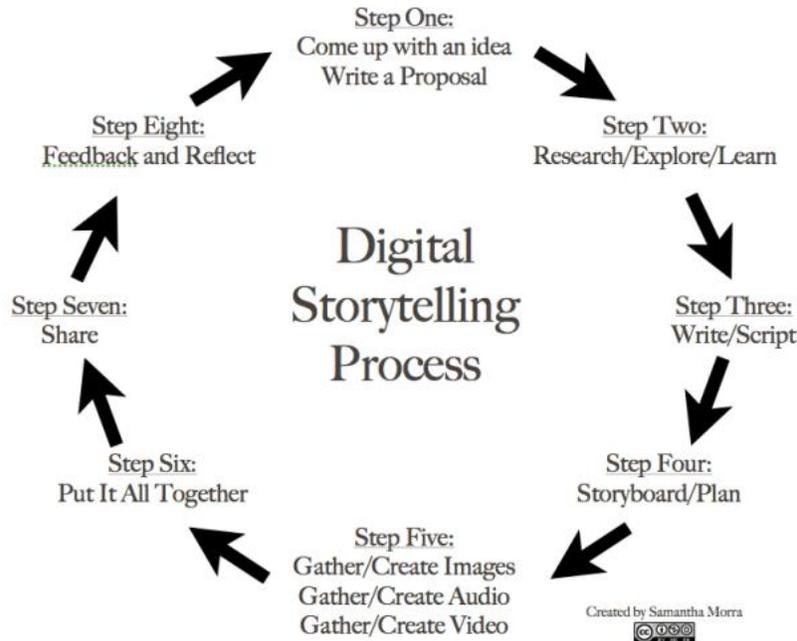


Wayback Machine: <http://atr.k12.hi.us/tutorials/tutorials/digstory/images/elementsdiagram.gif>

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The Process

In her article, [8 Step to Great Digital Storytelling](#), Samantha Morra outlined a process for developing a digital story (Morra, 2014). Visit the article to learn more about each step.



FINDING MATERIALS

Resources for finding copyright free materials.

- Public Domain Images
<http://edtechteacher.org/tools/research/finding-images/>
- WikiMedia Commons
https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
- Find and Download Royalty-Free Music and Sounds
<http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/page.cfm?id=23&cid=23&sublinkid=95>

Building Your Story

In general, you'll want to follow these steps as you build your story.

1. **Create a Title Slide**

The title introduces the story and can set the tone for the entire story.

2. **Order Images and Videos**

Once the images, videos, and other multimedia elements are placed along the timeline for the story, you can organize them and re-order them. It is very common for the story to go through several revisions.

3. **Add Transitions Between Images**

Transitions are techniques to move seamlessly between one scene in a movie into another scene. The software will have lots of options. Most professionally made movies stick with a few basic transitions:

- Straight-cut, scene changes directly to the next
- Fade to black before switching scenes
- Fade through black
- Cross-fade, two scenes appear to merge together

Keep it simple, and be consistent.

4. **Record and Add Narration**

It is best practice to write a script before recording narration. You may want to practice, and try several times before getting it the way you want it.

5. **Synchronize Images to Narration**

Adjust the timing of the narration to the images for maximum impact.

6. **Add Background Music**

Adding music will greatly enhance your story.

7. **Include Credits**

Add a slide at the end to provide the credits for your story.

8. **Save Movie in Desired Format**

Every application varies in the options it provides for saving your movie. These options vary depending on how you want to share your story. If possible, save the movie in a MPEG-4 (.mp4) format.

Each application you select to use to put together your digital story will have similar features, but will vary in how they are used. Below are resources for several of the applications.

• **Microsoft Photo Story**

- Using Microsoft Photostory 3, by David Jakes
<http://www.jakesonline.org/photostory3.pdf>
- Video: Photo Story Tutorial
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=06MFnTRqcKM>

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- **iMovie**
 - iMovie Tutorial
<https://msu.edu/course/tc/243/iMovie%20Tutorial.pdf>
 - Video: How To- iMovie Basics
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEjvhnA1wQ>
- **Windows Live Movie Maker**
 - Working with Windows Live Movie Maker
<https://library.albany.edu/imc/pdf/WindowsLiveMovieMaker.pdf>
 - Video: How to Use Windows Live Movie Maker
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sLTnsWV2tjE>
- **Office Mix**
 - Video: How to Create an Office Mix for Digital Storytelling
<https://mix.office.com/watch/1m4ma1im2jatj>

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Sharing Your Story

Once you've created your story, you will want to share it. If you share it directly, your viewers will need to have an appropriate player installed to view it (pg. 4). Whenever possible, you will want to share your story as a MPEG-4 (.mp4) file. If necessary, you can convert the story file to an .mp4 file, and post it to a streaming server such as YouTube.

Converting a File

An easy way to convert a file is a free online service – Zamzar. (*Zamzar can only convert files up to 100MB*).

1. Go to <http://www.zamzar.com>.

The screenshot shows the Zamzar website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the Zamzar logo, a search bar, and links for 'Login | Register', 'Developer API', 'Manage Files', 'Formats', 'Blog', 'FAQ', and 'Signup'. Below the navigation bar is a banner image of two frogs with the text 'Have you ever wanted to convert files without the need to download software?'. To the right of the banner is a social sharing section with 'Share Zamzar with friends!' and buttons for 'Tweet 10.9K' and 'G+1 9.9k'. Below the banner is a main content area with four tabs: 'Convert Files', 'URL Converter', 'Send Files', and 'Manage Files'. The 'Convert Files' tab is active, showing a four-step process:

Step 1	Step 2	Step 3	Step 4
Select files or URI to convert (up to 100MB - want more?)	Choose the format to convert to:	Enter your email address to receive converted files:	Convert (by clicking you agree to our Terms)
<input type="button" value="Choose Files..."/> <small>or drag and drop files</small>	<input type="text" value="Convert files to:"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="button" value="Convert"/>

2. In the dialogue,
3. Select the file to convert. Assume you can convert the file. You will get a message if the file format can't be converted.
4. Select the format to which you want to convert.
5. Enter your e-mail address.

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6. Click on Convert.

The screenshot shows the Zamzar conversion interface with four steps:

- Step 1:** Select files or [URL](#) to convert (up to 100MB - [want more ?](#)). Includes a "Choose Files" button and "or drag and drop files" text.
- Step 2:** Choose the format to convert to: mp3 (selected in a dropdown menu).
- Step 3:** Enter your email address to receive converted files: linda.merillat@washburn (entered in a text field).
- Step 4:** Convert (by clicking you agree to our [Terms](#)). Includes a "Convert" button.

Files to convert:

File	Size	Progress	
podcast for module 3.wma	2.6 MB	Pending	Remove File

7. *Wait.* You'll receive an e-mail when the file has been converted. It usually only takes 2-3 minutes.
8. The e-mail is very messy. To keep it simple, just click on the link in the middle of the e-mail.

Hello from Zamzar !

The file that you submitted for conversion is now available for download from Zamzar - all files will be stored for **1 day** from receipt of this mail.

Grab a Zamzar account !

- It takes **less than a minute** and you'll get:
- Faster conversions (usually delivered in less than 5 minutes)
- Larger conversions - up to 1GB in size
- Personal inbox to manage and store up to 100GB of your files
- No intrusive adverts
- And much more ...

Sign up at: <http://www.zamzar.com/signup/>

Alternatively click on the following link to download a copy of your converted file:

<http://www.zamzar.com/getFiles.php?uid=bf538d370d281a48482c3b33fc2b-41f4887a86070e4&targetID=pmVo4ovEokmiaZ3aE0P2hw | |>

The following file was successfully converted from **wma** to **mp3** format:

podcast for module 3.wma

Want to have access to your files for longer than **1 day** ? Upload your file(s) to [FilePigeon](#) and store your file(s) for **7 days**.

Please do not reply to this automatically-generated email. If you have any questions, please email us at support@zamzar.com

Thanks again for using Zamzar.

<http://www.zamzar.com> - Free online file conversion

9. The link takes you to a web page. Again, very messy. Click on the **Download Now** button.

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The screenshot shows the Zamzar website interface. At the top left is the Zamzar logo with the tagline "Free online file conversion". To the right are input fields for "Email address" and "Password", along with "Login" and "Register" buttons. Below these are links for "Developer API", "Manage Files", "Formats", "Blog", "FAQ", and "Signup". The main content area features a large image of two chameleons on the left and a blue box on the right with the text: "Have you ever wanted to convert files without the need to download software?". Below this is a section titled "Download your converted file" with the instruction "Click below to download your converted file:". A link "Why not sign up for a Zamzar inbox to manage your files?" is present. A file entry shows "podcast for module 3.mp3 (3.7 MB)" with a red-bordered "Download Now" button. Below the file entry is a "Share your file with friends ..." section with "Tweet" and "G+1" buttons. At the bottom of the page is a Prezi advertisement with the text "Shine. Discover the software that makes you a great presenter." and a "LEARN MORE" button. The footer contains links for "About Us", "Tools", "Advertise", "Terms of Service", "Privacy", and "Donate", along with the copyright notice "© Zamzar 2006 - 2015".

Upload a Video to YouTube

1. Sign into YouTube.
2. Click the **Upload** button at the top of the page.
3. Before you start uploading the video you can chose the [video privacy settings](#).
4. Select the video you'd like to upload from your computer. You can also create a video slideshow or import a video from Google Photos.
5. As the video is uploading you can edit both the basic information and the advanced settings of the video
6. Click **Publish** to finish uploading a public video to YouTube. If you set the video privacy setting to Private or Unlisted, just click **Done** to finish the upload or click **Share** to privately share your video.
7. If you haven't clicked **Publish**, your video won't be viewable by other people. You can always publish your video at a later time in your Video Manager.
8. Once the upload is completed we will send you an email to notify you that your video is done uploading and processing. You can then forward that email to friends or family for easy sharing.

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Assessing/Evaluating a Digital Story

If you give students an assignment to create a digital story, a rubric is an ideal to assess the student's work. Below is a sample rubric.

Criteria	Excellent	Good	Needs Improvement
Overall Purpose	Establishes a purpose early on and maintains a clear focus throughout.	There are a few lapses in focus, but the purpose is fairly clear.	Is difficult to figure out the purpose of the presentation.
Narrator's Point of View	Unique perspective of storyteller is conveyed. Narrative has dramatic effect. Strong awareness of audience.	Uses expression and speaks in a conversational style.	Perspective of storyteller is muddled. Limited purpose or engagement with audience.
Dramatic Question or Questions	A key question used to keep the viewer's attention and that will be answered by the end of the story. Engages viewer emotionally.	A key question is used to gain the viewer's attention.	Question not posed, or presentation does not address.
Choice of Content	Content is accurate, in depth, and well presented. It is obvious that the student thoroughly researched the topic.	Content is generally solid, and minor inaccuracies do not detract from the overall content. Research is generally good, but may be superficial at points.	Information presented is largely inaccurate and presentation is overall superficial. Some glaring errors and inaccuracies.
Pacing of the Narrative	Engaging rhythm; suggestions of emotions using sound effects; use of "white space"; enhanced vitality.	Engaging rhythm; use of "white space"; good use of sound.	Mechanical rhythm; limited use of punctuation; limited vitality.
Meaningful Audio Soundtrack	Sound is well confused with video; sounds/music add meaning or tone; speakers are easy to understand.	Sound is mostly well suited to the meaning and tone of the video, but it may be uneven (too loud or too soft) in place; speakers are mostly clear but difficult to understand in some instances.	Sound is uneven and distracting; sound is not coordinated with video; sound or music is gratuitous and does not add to meaning or tone; speakers are difficult to understand.
Quality of Multimedia Elements	Sequential composition; succinct; images & sounds creates an atmosphere and/or tone; may communicate symbolism and/or metaphors.	Sequential composition; images & sound create atmosphere and/or tone.	Sequential composition; images do not match purpose.
Economy of the Story Detail	The story is told with exactly the right amount of detail throughout. It does not seem too short, nor does it seem too long.	The story composition is typically good, though it seems to drag somewhat or needs slightly more detail in one or two sections.	The story needs extensive editing. It is too short or too long to be interesting.
Good Grammar and Language Usage	Grammar and usage were correct and contributed to clarity, style, and character development.	Grammar and usage were typically correct and errors did not detract from the story.	Repeated errors in grammar and usage detracted greatly from story.

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Copyright and Educational Fair Use

When using materials from other sources, it's important to talk about copyright and educational fair use. When digital stories are created by students and educators for non-profit, educational purposes use of multimedia items will often be covered by Educational Fair Use. It's important that you consider your institution's policies and follow them accordingly. To learn more about the issues, visit this discussion at the University of Houston

(<http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/page.cfm?id=24&cid=24&sublinkid=45>).

More Resources

- **Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling**
<http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/index.cfm>
- **How-to-Guide Digital Storytelling Tools for Educators**
<http://langwitches.org/blog/wp-content/uploads/2009/12/Digital-Storytelling-Guide-by-Silvia-Rosenthal-Tolisano.pdf>

References

- Morra, S. (2014, March 14). 8 Steps to Great Digital Storytelling. Retrieved February 17, 2016, from <http://samanthamorra.com/2013/06/05/edudemic-article-on-digital-storytelling/>
- Robin, B. (n.d.). What is Digital Storytelling? Retrieved February 17, 2016, from <http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/page.cfm?id=27>