

TECH2503-18 Community Media Production

Workshop Five: Sharing Stories

1 Introduction: Card Game (20 mins)

- Gather in groups with no more than four people.
- Play a couple of hands of rummy or another game.
- Discuss how you liked hearing stories as a child.

2 Activity - Storytelling

- Working in pairs, look at the following sections and links, choose and divide up the topics, and note the key characteristics of storytelling that is described in each section.
- Open a thread on Discourse and share your comments, links, screengrabs and observations with others.
<https://talk.our.dmu.ac.uk>
- Comment and respond to the posts that other people add, suggesting how they might investigate their topic further.

2.1 Digital Storytelling

“Digital storytelling is a natural progression from oral storytelling; one might even say that storytelling plus technology equals digital storytelling. Collecting and preserving oral histories became an academic endeavour beginning in the 1970s. Its popularity in academia declined during the 1990s, but the discipline has been reinvented and revived through digital media. Digital storytelling is not just about the transfer of knowledge; it is also a movement designed to amplify the voice of a community (Burgess, 2006). Everyone can participate because everyone has a story to tell” <https://librarydigitalstorytelling.wordpress.com/what/>

2.2 Digital Storytelling Practice

“Digital storytelling is a workshop-based process by which ‘ordinary people’ create their own short autobiographical films that can be streamed on the web or broadcast on television. This form of Digital Storytelling can be understood not only as a media form, but as a field of cultural practice: a dynamic site of relations between textual arrangements and symbolic conventions, technologies for production and conventions for their use; and collaborative social interaction (i.e. the workshops) that takes place in local and specific contexts. Digital Storytelling as a ‘movement’ is explicitly designed to amplify the ordinary voice. It aims not only to remediate vernacular creativity, but to legitimate it as a relatively autonomous and worthwhile contribution to public culture. This marks it as an important departure from even the most empathetic ‘social documentary’ traditions.” <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/6243/1/6243.pdf>

2.3 Aural History

Oral history is the collection and study of historical information about individuals, families, important events, or everyday life using audiotapes, videotapes, or transcriptions of planned interviews. These interviews are conducted with people who participated in or observed past events and whose memories and perceptions of these are to be preserved as an aural record for future generations. Oral history strives to obtain information from different perspectives and most of these cannot be found in written sources. Oral history also refers to information gathered in this manner and to a written work (published or unpublished) based on such data, often preserved in archives and large libraries.

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Oral_history

2.4 Aural History on the Web: Reconstructing the Past through Sound

The wealth of sounds now available on the web ranges from archival material to television and radio recordings to popular music, much of which is still released as album length CDs — even though it is largely acquired as tracks and experienced in shuffle. As Thompson points out, and as Damon Krukowski discusses in a thoughtful piece for Pitchfork, what is lost in all of this sonic abundance is any sense of context for what we are hearing. Digital delivery has given us a pick-and-mix economy that deracinates as it disaggregates. <https://mitpress.mit.edu/blog/aural-history-web-reconstructing-past-through-sound-0>

2.5 Just Do It

We all have stories to tell, stories we have lived from the inside out. We give our experiences an order. We organize the memories of our lives into stories. Oral history listens to these stories. Oral history is the systematic collection of living people’s testimony about their own experiences. Historians have finally recognized that the everyday memories of eve-

ryday people, not just the rich and famous, have historical importance. If we do not collect and preserve those memories, those stories, then one day they will disappear forever. Your stories and the stories of the people around you are unique, valuable treasures for your family and your community. You and your family members can preserve unwritten family history using oral history techniques. Likewise you and your community can discover and preserve unwritten history large and small. Oral history is so flexible that people of all ages can adapt the techniques of asking and listening to create and learn about history and historical narratives. http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html

3 Discussion - Co-Creative Media

- Based on the issues that you have noted in the previous activity, and the items listed below in this section, use the whiteboard to identify and produce a mind map that demonstrates how these storytelling techniques might be used in your community media café?
- How can storytelling be used as a way to articulate the concerns of the people and the community groups that you will be working with in your café?
- How can different forms of storytelling be used in the way that you share and explain what your café is about and seeks to achieve?
- How can you use storytelling to account for and evaluate the activities that you undertake in your community media café?

3.1 Collaborative Cultures

How can existing community-based infrastructure and new media affordances be combined to stimulate broad-based, population-wide innovation through creative participation?... The core hypothesis of this research was that these sectors have significant potential as facilitators of participatory digital media culture but that re-purposing them in this way requires more than a technological shift or a name change. <http://digitalstorytelling.ci.qut.edu.au/linkage>

3.2 Community uses of co-creative media. Digital storytelling and Co-creative Media

The role of community arts and media in propagating and coordinating population-wide creative practice. "Community, cultural and broadcasting organisations with commitments to promoting storytelling in the public interest are using co-creative approaches in inventive ways to broaden and deepen audience, community and citizen development and engagement. This report gathers qualitative descriptions and findings to provide insights into the ways that these organisations are stimulating and harnessing the creativity of Populations" <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/85235/>

3.3 Storytelling Drivers

Two key qualities underpin this system and its inventive capacity. These can be described as a capacity to:

- Go outside disciplinary silos and
- Articulate a social purpose

3.4 Impacts

Careful Co-creative Media project design has demonstrable social benefits. These arise from privileging practices such as:

- Designing for public participation
- Embedding methods such as participatory action research and socially-engaged arts in new ways
- Leveraging digital media and communication technologies and platforms
- Extending a capacity for curatorial creativity to users
- Mobilising enterprising cultural solutions to address intractable social problems
- Supporting creative expressions of identity
- Building resilience through storytelling
- Using offline work as a critical precursor to online engagement
- Seeking to create connected, skilled and adaptable communities

4 Activity - Aural Story Telling Crossovers

- Read through the issues outlined in this section and note how storytelling is used in different forms of media.
- Can ideas from visual forms of storytelling be used to inform how we might undertake aural storytelling?
- Continue to add comments to your thread on Discourse <https://talk.our.dmu.ac.uk>

4.1 Lomography

From their website (www.lomography.com) come these '10 Golden Rules of Lomography':

1. Take your camera everywhere you go
2. Use it any time - day and night
3. Lomography is not an interference in your life, but a part of it
4. Try the shot from the hip
5. Approach the objects of your lomographic desire as close as possible
6. Don't think
7. Be fast
8. You don't have to know beforehand what you capture on film
9. Afterwards either
10. Don't worry about the rules

Lomography represents itself as a democratic form of photography, and these 'anti-rules' are clearly intended to offer resistance to the ways in which the rules of 'professional photography' repress 'ordinary' creativity and continually redraw the boundaries between amateur and professional. <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/6243/1/6243.pdf>

4.2 Mundane Media Production

In thinking about how a politics of 'ordinary' cultural participation might articulate with the 'democratization' of technologies, Atton's (2001) article on the representation of the mundane in personal homepages is significant. This is because it disarticulates the spectacular and the radical from the concept of alternative media, redrawing the field to include everyday cultural production and therefore 'ordinary' cultural producers in the field of alternative media studies:

What happens when 'ordinary' people produce their own media? I want to explore some aspects of popular media production and its intersection with everyday life. To do so will be to [...] take to the notion of 'everyday production' and its place in identity-formation to a different place: to that of the originating producer within everyday life. Popular media production might then be considered a primary form of everyday cultural production. (n.p.) <http://eprints.qut.edu.au/6243/1/6243.pdf>

4.3 British Library – Oral History

About the collection - Our oral history collections cover a wide range of subject areas relating to British life, work, culture, and experience. We collect audio and video interviews, and suitable original oral history material that provides insight into aspects of UK personal memory, identity and experience. Where the curators are unable to accept an offered collection every effort will be made to help identify an alternative archival repository to which the donor can be referred. Further information can be found in the Oral History Collection Development Policy. We also carry our own programme of life story recordings through National Life Stories, an independent trust within the Oral History Section of the British Library. National Life Stories' main focus and expertise has been oral history fieldwork; interviews are carried out on a project basis and all NLS collections are held in the British Library. <https://www.bl.uk/collection-guides/oral-history>

4.4 Technology Facilitated Storytelling

The power of community storytelling lies not only in the stories created – but also in the process of their creation. Storytelling itself has a unique power to engage — that hasn't changed since the dark ages. Is there anything more compelling than a great story? If we sniff one out, don't we hunt it down tirelessly and even try to be the first to report it out to others? And if we have one of our own, most of us can hardly wait to offer it up to whomever will listen. It's what we do, and what we have done since the beginning of time. Imagine if we could come together, within the physical and virtual communities we live in, to tell our stories as a community — to be a part of something bigger, part of something that matters to us. We may not be a leader in each community, but we know we have something special, something important, that only we can contribute. And we recognize and acknowledge those members who respond to, and are inspired by, our contributions. <https://www.wired.com/insights/2014/01/power-community-storytelling/>

4.5 Storytelling in Collaboration

One answer is clearly to get the community involved. People love telling stories and love exploring their own creativity, especially when they can earn recognition and status among a community they identify with. Engaging someone in a creative process is not only compelling, but it gives them ownership that translates into promotion and amplification of the brand to new audiences outside its current reach. But can community-generated stories actually prove engaging? The answer is absolutely. If the community is invested and engaged in creating the story, then virtually by definition... the story is engaging — to the community that created it, since the audience and the creators are one. And that is

what matters most. But that doesn't mean that all contributions will be appreciated equally. Within the community not all members can or will share the same perspective — nor will they necessarily have the same skills or tastes in their delivery. They may share a common story, but with different perspectives, points of view, passions, skill levels, etc. <https://www.wired.com/insights/2014/01/power-community-storytelling/>

4.6 A Platform for Collaborative Storytelling

Digital platforms that facilitate community storytelling offer us the ability to reach far beyond the artificial boundaries that have confined our stories, and our storytellers, for years. To date, so much of the focus on digital media technology has been placed on the distribution end of the value chain. But far more expansive are the opportunities on the front end — the opportunities to create entirely new types of stories, and new levels of engagement within communities that have stories to tell. A story lies at the heart of virtually all media. Providing the ability to tell and deliver new kinds of stories, born of collaboration and community, uniquely and personally engaging their highly focused audiences, has the potential to transform the media landscape as dramatically as anything we've seen to date. It also has the potential to bring together the worlds of marketing and media into a far more intimate dance, where brands and their target audiences are working together in a process of creation to achieve a common purpose. <https://www.wired.com/insights/2014/01/power-community-storytelling/>

4.7 East Midlands Oral History Archive

We are gathering information about oral history in the East Midlands and want to share information about all the holdings and projects in the region. Look here - East Midlands Oral History Pages <https://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/>

4.8 Leicester Audio History Trail

This is the third of 12 tracks on the Leicester Oral History Trail. Using voices from the collections of the East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA), the trail takes you from Leicester's Town Hall Square, through the Market, past the Clock Tower, round the back of Highcross, and back to the Clock Tower along Silver Street. The trail can also be downloaded from the Empedia website, which has a free iPhone app, at <http://empedia.info/maps/29> and the EMOHA website (where there is a printable map of the trail) at <http://www.le.ac.uk/emoha/community/audiotrail.html> <https://youtu.be/rFUXwiWEdzI> <http://www.leicestermercury.co.uk/crow-pie-among-one-traditions-explored-in-updated-oral-history-archive/story-29543967-detail/story.html> <http://liberalengland.blogspot.co.uk/2016/04/leicester-oral-history-trail-5-clock.html>

5 Activity - Blogging

- Start a new blog post that can be shared on DIY-DMU.
- Based on the evaluation and discussion that you have undertaken in this session, can you identify the skills, knowledge and experience that you would like to develop to become a proficient community storyteller?
- Can you list the things that you are good at in relation to storytelling, and what evidence you have for this?
- Can you suggest areas of improvement and how you might develop your skills as a storyteller?
- Is it useful to share and discuss your storytelling ideas with other people?
- How might you incorporate storytelling practice into your community media café?