digital storytelling course

Common Good First
A Digital Storytelling Training Module

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Common Good First

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RHODES UNIVERSITY
Where leaders learn

In 2016, a project led by Glasgow Caledonian University in Scotland, was given a considerable grant from the European Union to create a network of people and groups trying to make a difference to their communities. These social innovators would be identified, initially, in South Africa and then across the world in order to be connected by a website which would showcase their projects to each other and to universities and potential sponsors and funders.

The initiative is called Common Good First and it has partners from twelve higher education institutions from Europe and South Africa. This group has, over the three years of the project, delivered a website - **commongoodfirst.com** - which will host a growing network of social impact projects, using easy-to-complete profiles in the style of Facebook or LinkedIn sites. These will be uploaded by the social innovators themselves, following a range of digital literacy classes, and feature text and images about their projects.

In some instances, Universities will work with community partners to create digital stories, using this specially-developed module to help groups take part in digital story circles.

Our goal is that this project - and the digital storytelling tools we will launch across South Africa during the course of 2019 - will create an equal voice for all storytellers so that engaging with each other's narratives and initiatives will help us work together to create a more just and prosperous community.

INTRODUCTION

This guidebook on digital storytelling is aimed at all those who participate in the arena of community engagement and social innovation – whether you are working for a community organisation, a student or a citizen. It is intended to be used as a resource and guide during a training event, where you will have a facilitator to take you through the processes. It will centre on the formation of a storycircle in which participants will work together with the facilitator to learn core skills and have access to resources to produce their digital stories. While the module could be run over a one day intensive workshop, the ideal timeframes would be to run sections 0.0-3 over 1-3 days, 3.0 over 1 day to a week, and 4-5 over 1-3 days.

You will find a lot of information in this guide book - but the interaction with other course participants and your facilitator will form an integral part of this training event. You will need guidance from your facilitator to navigate the technical processes required to produce your digital story. This module starts off with exercises that will help you bond with your fellow course participants, and then explores the origins of stories in our lives. But, the objective is for you to discover a story that you would like to tell, and then to go through the process of producing and sharing that story.

It is said that 'everyone has a story to tell', and many ordinary people have unwritten and unspoken stories from which we can learn. We can learn particularly from those involved in activities aimed at the 'common good', by bringing their stories to light, so that they can be shared with others who also strive to pursue the 'common good'. Digital storytelling is like a quiet citizen's revolution – a communication platform that can connect and inspire people with examples of courage, innovation, originality, creativity, kindness, compassion, worthiness and general humanity.

The very act of listening to someone else's story is one of generosity and learning. While many of us would regard ourselves as receptive to the stories of others, we may not feel confident enough to shape and share our own stories. This module aims to provide you with the guidelines to discover your stories, and how you can produce them in a format that can be shared with others who share your pursuit of the 'common good'.

Digital storytelling can provide you with a new communication platform and process which can serve to build a common human story. It can assist with advancing understanding of human interconnectedness and celebrating diversity in a world where intolerance and miscommunication has led to a lack of appreciation for the individual human being in fractured local and global communities.

Everyone loves a storyteller
🔊
Tell stories about your own life, what you know.
🎁
Tell stories about what you feel.
💐

GROUNDWORK

Developing a digital story can be an individual or a group exercise. Doing it alone defeats the object of sharing the process so that the stories and the production of the stories benefit all. To accomplish the training objectives of this module, we will start with inviting a group of participants to become a 'story circle'. Since the earliest times, people have gathered in a circle around a fire to share stories. It is an activity that generates a sense of community, providing a space where people can share their stories and experiences. In the conversations that take place, it is possible, to draw out the similarities that connect us, and the differences that can be better understood and overcome. Your facilitator will help you to do this. Your story circle will become a private group, ideally consisting of about 6-10 people – and you should feel comfortable that you are in a 'circle of friends' – like-minded people who will share your journey to finding and producing your digital story. Some people may feel vulnerable and intimidated sharing their stories, and so it is always useful to do some 'icebreaker' or 'warming up' activities that will get people to know each other in a relaxed and non-threatening way.

In your story circle, you will come up with an idea for your digital story. You will then follow a process where you research your idea and come up with ideas to tell your story. You will then learn how to make a storyboard and write a basic script for your story. You will then need to gather your images and audio before you can begin to produce your digital story. Your facilitator will assist you to put it all together to produce your digital story and then you can share the story with your story circle, and others if you wish to.

The next stage of the process will be to get feedback from your storycircle members on your story. The process of giving and receiving feedback is covered in this module. Remember to be kind to others about their stories - they have 'bared their souls' to you with their stories, and they may be feeling vulnerable and emotional about sharing with you. Feedback on your story will help you to reflect on how you have told your story. You may wish to make some changes, or you may be happy with the result.

So - the process you are about to embark on looks something like this :

Form your story circle
Come up with an idea for your story
Research and explore your story idea
Make a storyboard and write a script for your story
Gather/create your images, footage and audio for your story
Put it all together using available technology
Share your story
Get feedback on your story and reflect - make changes if necessary
Help other members of your story circle with feedback and reflection

REPEAT THE PROCESS AND MAKE ANOTHER STORY!

Invite the participants of the story circle to share the following exercises so that you can 'warm up' – the aim is to build connections and understanding, and start to develop a bond with each other.

'Break the ice' or 'warm up'?

Short group exercises to help participants in a workshop or training exercise to get to know each other are traditionally called 'icebreakers'. But this suggests that there is an 'icy' relationship between the participants to start with! Let's call our exercise, a 'warming up' exercise – one that brings a warmth of sharing and bonding to the story circle!

📢

UBUNTU

"Ubuntu is very difficult to render into a Western language. It speaks of the very essence of being human. When we want to give high praise to someone we say, 'Yu, u nobunto'; 'Hey so-and-so has ubuntu.' Then you are generous, you are hospitable, you are friendly and caring and compassionate. You share what you have. It is to say, 'My humanity is inextricably bound up in yours.' We belong in a bundle of life."

**No Future Without Forgiveness
by Desmond Tutu Doubleday 1999**

🎁

1. FACE PICTURES

Using Ubuntu as a point of reflection, discuss the idea

"I am because we are"

1. Ask members of the story circle to reflect on what this means to them and what it means for the work they do.

2. As part of this reflection, ask participants to share stories and examples from their own life experience in which Ubuntu manifested itself.

3. Examine the picture of Nelson Mandela in which some of his facial features are represented by words that are relevant to his life.
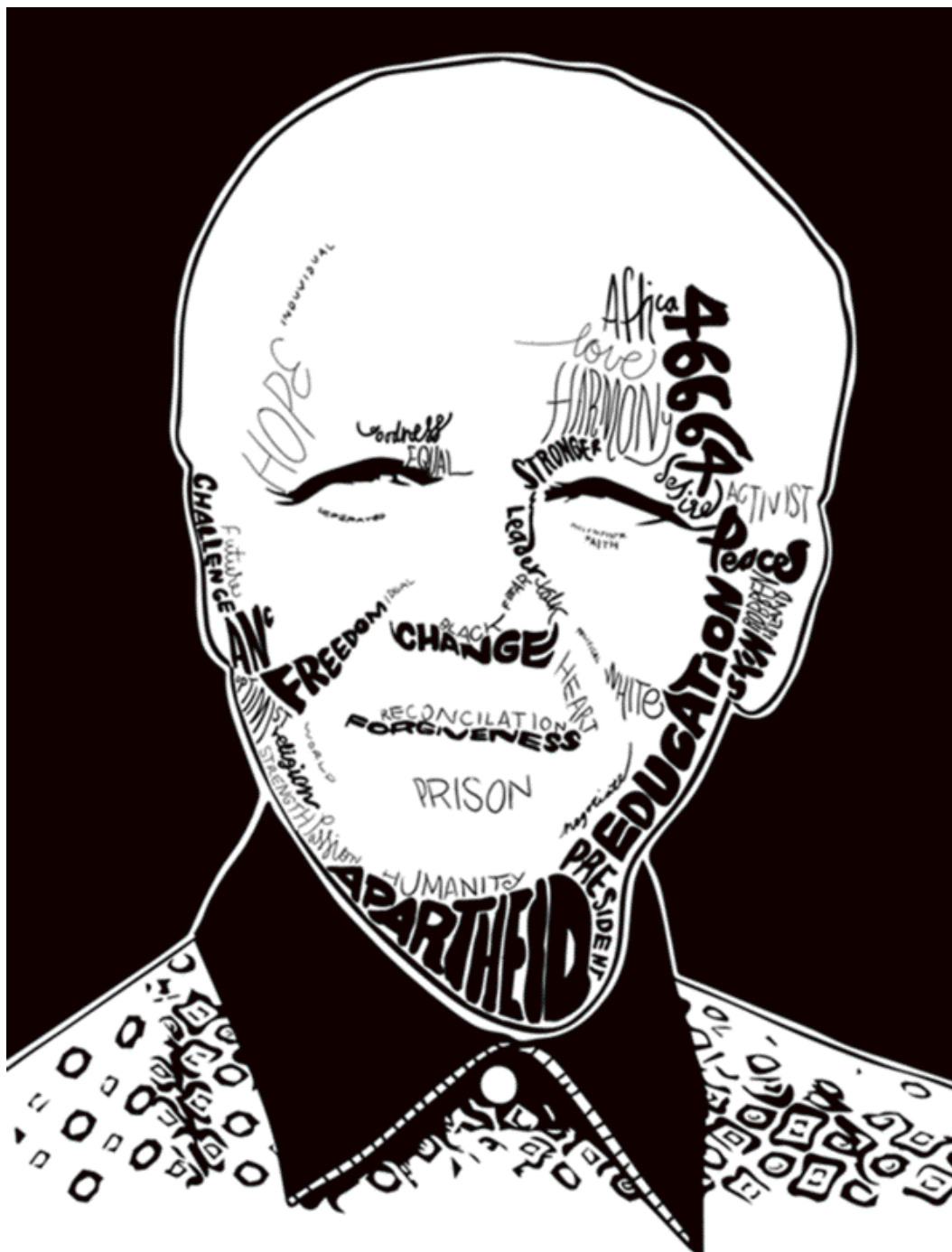
Now, take some quiet time now to fill in 'your' face using the face shapes below, with words to represent some of the life events that shaped your life. What does your face look like? What are the events, emotions, challenges, experiences that form your face picture?

Share your face picture with your story circle. Remember – a story circle is like a circle of friends, and so all should agree to be respectful of each other's stories, and to keep confidentiality. That's what friends do for each other!

Draw your own face shape if these two are not anything like you!
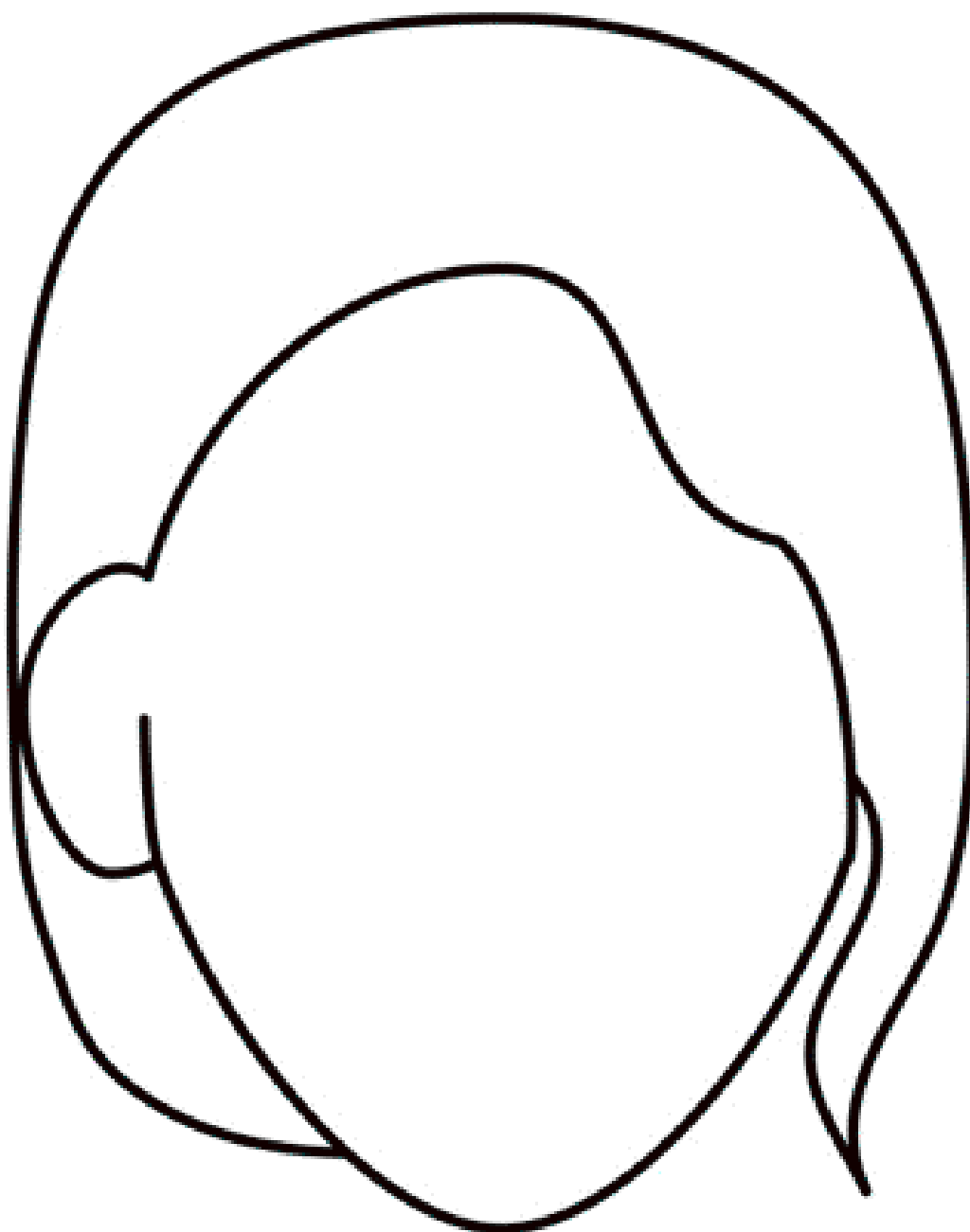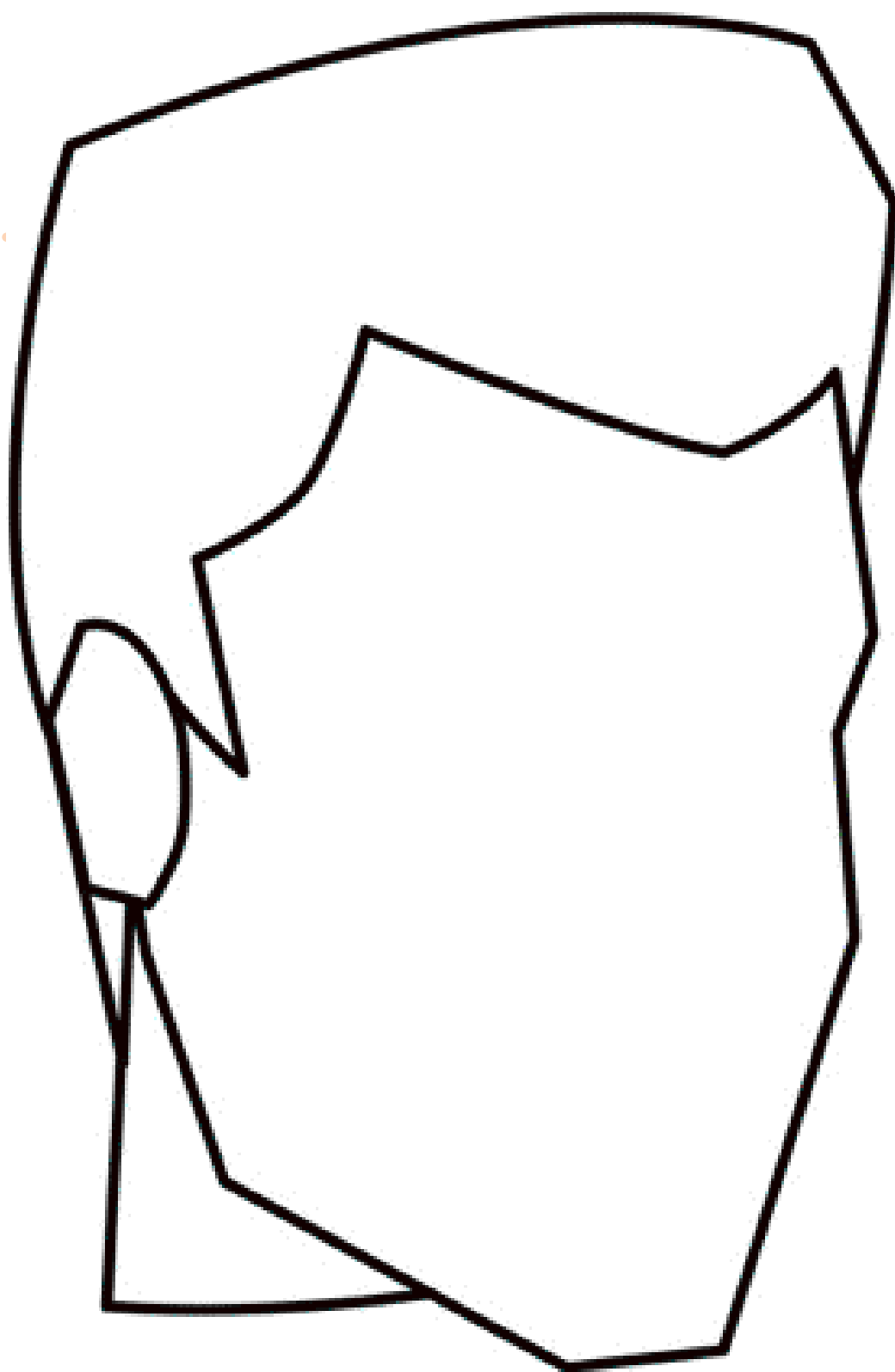
GETTING-TO-KNOW-YOU BINGO

Here is another exercise that you can use to get to know the members of your story circle.

It is based on the game Bingo. You will move around your story circle and find out from participants if any of the blocks on the Bingo card are true about their lives. Tick off the blocks as you find someone who answers "yes" to the statement. The first participants to get a full line across the page (i.e. one complete straight line) can shout 'BINGO'. By the time that this happens, you are likely to learn a lot about your fellow story circle members!

B	I	N	G	O
I come from a single parent family	I have been overseas	I have my driver's license	I can speak 4 or more languages	I love animals
I speak three languages	I was brought up by a grandparent	I have bank account	I am a vegetarian	I have experienced discrimination because of my race
I own a car	I love chocolate	FREE SPACE	I have had a cellphone stolen from me	I enjoy reading
I have never been in love	I can ride a bicycle	I own a camera	My parents are divorced	I can play a musical instrument
I have experienced discrimination because of my religion	I do not drink alcohol	I have personally met a celebrity	I have children of my own	I use Facebook
I have been in a car accident	I love hamburgers	I enjoy dancing	I would be lost without my cellphone	I have a younger brother/sister

BEST PRACTICE TO DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Once you have completed the exercises that will help you to get to know your fellow story circle members, you will hopefully feel that you have made new friends. It is important that all the members of the story circle understand the journey that you will take together – one where you will share stories that involve your thoughts, feelings, experiences, successes, disappointments, hopes, dreams, resentments, pleasures, pain, victories and defeats. You will expect your story circle members to listen to your feedback with respect – just as you will show respect for their stories.

It is important that you all AGREE to respect each other's feedback, and to treat each other with dignity and an attitude of support. Some story circle members may experience a significant degree of emotional pain and turmoil when they share their stories. If they feel that the story circle is a 'safe space' for them to express experiences that may be painful, they will be honest and open. They will need understanding and support. All the story circle members may be emotionally affected by the stories they hear. Your facilitator may even choose to assist them with additional therapy and counselling, depending on the seriousness of the emotional upset. However, in the first instance, the story circle should feel safe, non-judgmental and supportive.

Equally, in a diverse group of participants, there may be cultural differences which could become contentious and emotional. Your facilitator will attempt to mediate any differences to arrive at respectful and sensitive understandings. However, it is up to each story circle member to be sensitive to and tolerant of cultural diversity. The old biblical adage: "Do unto others as you would have done unto you" applies strongly. You will expect sensitivity and tolerance from your story circle, and equally, it will be expected of you to show such an approach.

Making a digital story means that you will be recording your story for others to see. If your story shares a painful experience which may implicate others in wrongdoing, or document evidence of such wrongdoing – participants need to remember the initial objective of this project – for the "common good". Digital stories produced as result of this module are aimed at social innovation and upliftment. Sharing painful experiences may be a part of arriving at such objectives – however, the motives for sharing such pain with others should not be as incitement to violence or antisocial behaviour, nor should it be to shame individuals or communities.

Sharing pain may have unintended consequences, but your facilitator will guide all participants towards the intentions of the project, and will ask you to be honest but responsible, authentic but dignified.

So you will need to ask these two questions of the story that you want to make:
- Will my story be for the "common good"?
  (i.e. will it be beneficial and positive for those who see it?)

- Will my story cause no harm?
  (i.e. will it cause no hurt to others or damage to communities?)

Digital storytelling is a powerful tool for social innovation, e-learning and personal expression. Because the personal nature of such stories, there are ethical concerns to bear in mind when creating and assessing digital stories. This booklet discusses some of these issues and how to ethically and legally gather footage of subjects in digital stories. It further addresses some ethical issues that facilitators of digital storytelling workshops may need to consider for the wellbeing of participants. Finally, it addresses some of the concerns relating to digital storytelling as a method of assessment in academic spaces.

When producing media content (digital stories, images, video or podcasts) about community engagement with vulnerable groups or children, the subjects discussed and portrayed in your project should be represented in a way that is empowering and fair. Being sensitive to your surroundings, the feelings, safety and comfort of those who are participating in your project is essential.

During the storytelling process, if you feel overwhelmed (as many people do) feel free to express your feelings to the group or to the facilitators. Conversely, if another member of the group is grappling with sensitive issues, allow them sufficient space to explore their feelings. Note that this is not a counselling session and qualified counsellors may not be present. It may be a beneficial idea to have a qualified counsellor present or co-facilitating the story circle process.

Who are 'vulnerable' groups

When we talk about vulnerable groups, we are typically talking about adults who are at risk or lacks basic life skills or needs often due to individual health issues or systemic social and institutional oppression. Generally, vulnerable groups include:

• Women and girls
• Refugees/immigrants
• Migrant workers
• HIV positive people/ people with AIDS
• Survivors of sexual violence
• Survivors of traumatic experiences
• The LGBTQI community

Children in the media

Representation of children has previously tended to subordinate children. Keep this in mind when creating stories about or involving children. Try and bring out their voices and perspectives rather than positioning them as dependant and helpless.

It is illegal to record footage of children without consent from the parents or guardians. There are ways to include portrayals of children without exposing their identities (discussed later).

Consent and masking identity

It is important to always get consent from subjects featured in your work. This is particularly true for portrayals of vulnerable groups, people who may find themselves in legal trouble from being recorded or people who could be threatened or put at risk for divulging information.

There are ways to include portrayals of children and people who do not wish to be seen on film without exposing their identities (this can also work if you are shy of being on camera).
• Enshroud the subject in shadows
• Take a photo from obscure angles
• Blur or censure faces
• Use stock images or a dramatization in addition to the original voice.

Privacy Laws

In South Africa, it is legal to take a photograph of a person in a public space without needing consent. Public spaces include parks, streets, concerts. Additionally, you can take a photograph of private spaces as seen from a public domain. In other words, you can take a photo of a person's flat if you are standing from the street. Note that not all spaces where people gather public are really public – shopping malls, bars, offices of non-government organisations and educational institutions may be privately owned (malls often have explicit no photography signs). Also keep in mind that members of the public do have rights in public areas where privacy is assumed or to be expected, such as changing rooms, public restrooms or medical institutions.

'Fair Use'

Contrary to privacy laws, it is generally acceptable to use footage of people for news, art, satire and educational purposes. In many cases, politicians are exempt from rights to privacy as they are public figures.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Digital storytelling does not easily allow for anonymity due to its reflective nature (affects anonymity of the creator) and its focus on content (affects anonymity of data). The creators of stories can omit or conceal their identity, but this creates the potential of exploitation, particularly where skewed power dynamics exist, for example between researcher and the research subject.

Even though participants can opt not to share their stories beyond the workshop group, it should be noted that confidentiality cannot be guaranteed. This should be upfront and clear to participants before they decide on what story they would like to share. The identities of parties (present or spoken about) implicated in illegal or otherwise sensitive situations cannot be guaranteed protection.

It is also necessary to inform students of the legal ramifications of naming people in their stories without consent.

COPYRIGHT LAWS

When sourcing footage for your story, ensure that you don't break copyright laws. Most of the time, your story won't be used to make money, so you are less likely to find yourself in legal trouble. However, to be on the safe side and to create a more complete project, you can use copyright free music and images which can be found from a number of online sources. Any images that are found on public social media sites, such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are free to use (if the user has made the image public in their settings, including profile photos).

US organisation, Creative Commons is a platform to share and develop a collection of media available to use under Creative Commons licenses.

Useful resources for copyright free media

Images	Music
Advanced Google Search	YouTube Audio Library
Flicker	Free music archive.org
Getty Images	Jamendo
Archive.org	ccMixter

Creating A Safe Story Circle Space

To ensure the wellbeing of participants of story circles, begin the session by establishing consensus among the group regarding ground rules for how participants and facilitators engage with each other. Ensure that participants fully understand the process, what is expected of them and that can withdraw consent at any stage.

General rules for story circles:

• Treat co-participants with dignity and respect

• Provide constructive criticism

• Be open to alternative perspectives

• Reserve judgement but feel free to express opposing opinions with respect

CONSENT

It is important for you to understand that your story belongs to you – and that you can decide who sees it and what happens to it. While the objective of this project, "for the common good" may broadly be to produce stories that will influence social innovation and upliftment, your personal story may be YOUR way of dealing with your own journey, and you may not want to share your story widely. It is your decision to make, and you are should be aware of the extent to which you are willing to let your story be viewed. It is advisable to come to an agreement with your facilitators about this. The best way is for you both to sign a consent form which can look something like this:

Common Good First Digital Story Consent Form

My name is:
_____

and the name of my digital story is:
_____

Tick boxes

☐ I agree that my story can be used online in appropriate forums, such as The Common Good Social Innovation Platform

☐ I would like my story to remain confidential

☐ I agree that my story be shared with my story circle members

☐ I agree that my story can be shared in projects and communities where it may contribute
☐ to social innovation and upliftment.

☐ I am happy for my story to be used in future digital storytelling workshops to help others discover their stories.

☐ I agree that my story can be used only under the following conditions:

_____

_____

• The content of this consent form has been explained to me by the project facilitators and I understand the implications of signing below.

• I can withdraw or change my conditions of consent at any time by signing a new consent agreement with the project.

Name: _____   Date: _____

Signature: _____

Contact details: _____

Remember – your story belongs to YOU!

Other important ethical considerations :

- If you use pictures of other people in your story, whether they be friends or family, it is a good idea to ask for their consent first before they appear publicly. This is especially true of children, especially at a time of concern about potential harm from exposure on social media platforms.

- If you plan to reveal information (through either visuals or narration) about someone that could be construed as private, speak to them about it first or ask them to read the parts of your narration which refer to them to make sure you have your facts straight, and they are not being caused emotional harm. While family members are unlikely to sue you should they feel a bit aggrieved by your representation, other members of society could see fit to take legal action if they feel harmed.

- And also, any information you include and publish about yourself or anyone else should not be incriminating! If you want to show a picture of how taking drugs was a bad part of your past, don't be tempted to show yourself or someone else taking drugs for your story, as this could have many harmful and legal consequences.

1. Scope, nature and history of digital storytelling

DEFINING DIGITAL STORYTELLING

What is digital storytelling?

We all know that 'digital' refers to the electronic and computerized technology that is all around us in the modern world, and 'storytelling' is the act of relating events or incidents, whether fictional or real, to hold the attention of others. So what exactly is 'digital storytelling'? And what about 'digital storytelling' makes it worth knowing about?

Digital storytelling is essentially a way of combining 'storytelling' as we know it, with the kinds of media that are available to us, with a view to sharing short, personal aspects of your life story online. A digital story is a story told by combining still photos, video footage, text, audio narration, music and sound effects into a short 'movie' that can be shared using the internet. Digital stories are often personal accounts of significant happenings in someone's life, or about some interesting point of learning or discovery.

But why? Why would you want to tell people stories about your life?

The saying goes, 'everyone has a story to tell'. The truth is that:
• we seldom tell our stories in such a way that we can share them with people beyond our immediate friends and family,
• we seldom have the opportunity to tell our stories in such a way that people can learn from our experiences,
• we seldom tell our stories in such a way that they can be stored for the future.

Digital storytelling is a way in which we can share personal stories that may have significance for others. The format of digital stories – short visual 'snacks' that can be viewed on phones or computers, make it an ideal medium to share stories that can inform and instruct. The fact that digital stories can be produced without sophisticated equipment, lengthy training and long experience on the part of the storyteller – makes it accessible to many people who have precious stories that can be captured for the benefit of others.

Digital storytelling is not a new communication format. It's been around for about 20 years, but with the advent of the smartphone and tablets, and the rising use of social media, the audiences for digital stories has grown. A story that catches the attention of viewers can be shared thousands of times in the matter of minutes, and therefore the impact of a digital story can be extensive. It can spark dialogue, build understanding, change mindsets.

The saying goes, "Everyone has a story to tell".

And so, what may have started as short, low-tech efforts by amateur filmmakers to share their stories, has now become a 'genre' – a form of communication that is being harnessed by educators, trainers, healthcare workers, politicians and communicators. But, digital stories remain a very personal affair. A digital story is not meant to be a training video, or a 'how-to' guide. Its intention is more reflective, more contemplative, more personal. The production of a digital story doesn't have to be a lonely journey where you fiddle with your cell phone and hope that your effort is vaguely viewable! The production of a digital story in a group where you are encouraged and assisted to find your story, and then supported to bring that story to life using the resources that are available to you is in itself a personal journey of discovery and transformation.

The nature of digital storytelling is very personal to the maker of each story. The final product is as important as the process by which the digital story is made - the journey that we take to find the story we want to tell, and then how we give it form. The process can affect us as much as our story might affect those that we share it with.

The best way to understand what digital storytelling is all about, is to watch some examples. It is important to note the following characteristics and features of the stories :

• The length
• The combination of multimedia sources for the images and the soundtrack
• The use of text
• The use of still images mixed with video images
• The use of music, narration and sound effects
• The theme or topic of the stories
• How the story starts, develops and ends
• Who are the people making these digital stories

Watch the following examples of digital stories :

https://tinyurl.com/yyw4bgpw
https://tinyurl.com/y5evwrpj
https://tinyurl.com/yxgj7baq
https://tinyurl.com/y58tnwh7
https://tinyurl.com/y2ecxwfe
https://tinyurl.com/yxcua7hd
https://tinyurl.com/y5c8xvp8
https://tinyurl.com/y2dvwjwo

The history of storytelling and the rise of digital storytelling

STORIES, STORIES, STORIES!

Think about your first experience of storytelling. Was it your mother or father telling you a children's story, at bedtime? Was it a movie that you watched on television? Was it a story told to you by a friend? Or a story being told in the classroom at school?

Let's look at the evolution of storytelling and how it has been a constant preoccupation of humans since the earliest times. Where did storytelling begin?

Stories have been used to preserve and pass down knowledge for generations. The earliest stories can be found in cave paintings, from a time before humans could write. Ancient cave paintings predominantly portray animals, probably because hunting animals was a preoccupation of prehistoric hunter-gatherer communities. It is not clear whether cave paintings were used for decoration, or to pass on information, but they have certainly provided modern historians with many clues about the existence of ancient peoples - they tell the stories of ancient existence.

Before the development of writing, stories were passed on verbally. One can imagine the tales of good hunting and heroic exploits that were shared around fires and at mealtimes. These stories were essentially memorized by children and adults alike, and passed on to each generation. Sometimes, stories changed over the years as people added their own interpretations. Many stories were based on actual happenings, but as the years went by, they became folk tales that were adapted as the storytellers changed. But stories were an important way of remembering the happenings of communities - the journeys, the good times and the bad, the personalities, the losses and the gains. Stories became the memorial of the times.

Oral traditions - the telling of stories through word of mouth, sometimes using songs, chants, poetry, music and acting, to groups of people - is present in cultures all across the world.

Oral African storytelling has even attracted its own descriptor, "orature" - a combination of 'oral' and 'literature'. While 'literature' is most often associated with the written word, there can be little doubt that oral stories, passed on through the spoken word, are equally important in terms of their content - epics tales, folklore, proverbs and songs. However, they need communities to survive. If communities no longer value the oral tradition - the stories can be lost.
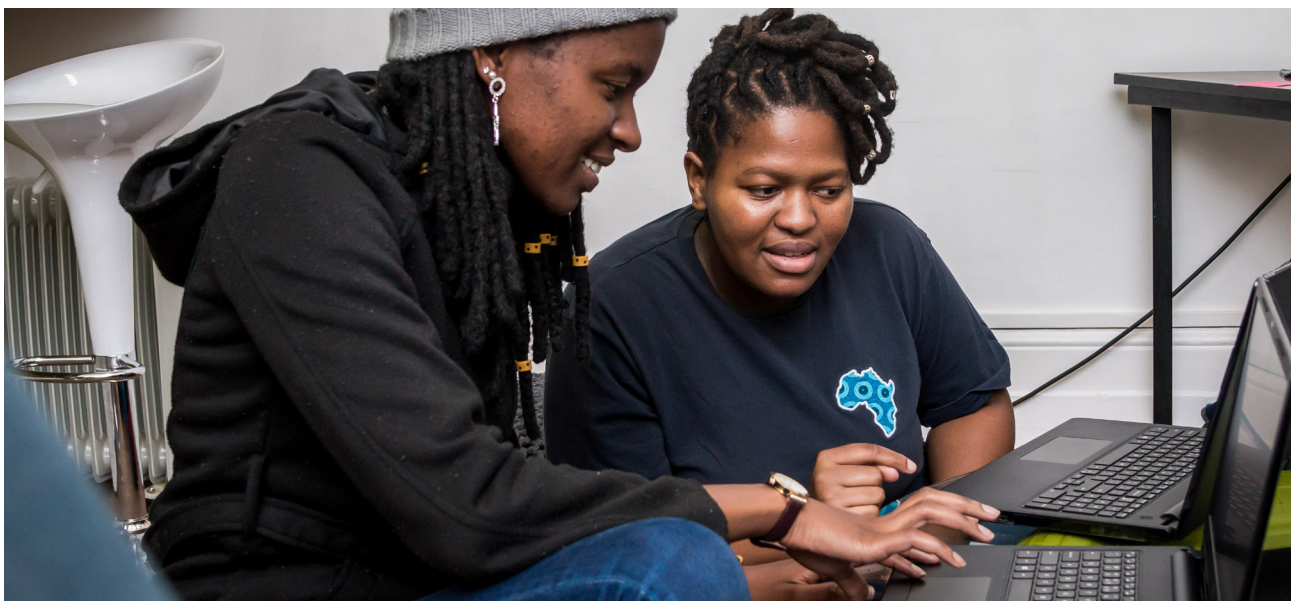
With the development of writing, humans were able to record their stories, first on stone tablets and later on papyrus scrolls. Once pen and paper became common, everyone was able to write and record their own stories. Typewriters made writing even easier, and faster. Of course, the invention of the printing press in the early 1500s profoundly changed storytelling, as books became easy to reproduce and so stories could be shared with large numbers of people.

Stories have been used to preserve and pass down knowledge for generations.

Newspapers and magazines gave easy access to all the stories of the day. Early word processors, and then computers meant that writing could be edited easily, and everyone was able to write their stories.

The advent of radio meant that people could listen to stories, even if they were not able to read. And movies and eventually television meant that stories became visual - people could see and hear the stories. Television meant that people could enjoy stories in the comfort of their homes. But, up until recently, the stories that we have enjoyed in the form of novels, movies, television plays, at the theatre, art, and many other mediums, have been "made for us" - produced by writers, movie directors, artists.

With the introduction of the Internet - EVERYTHING changed! From this point on, everyone is able to tell their own stories and share them widely - using blogs, YouTube, websites and social media. Creating digital stories and posting them on the Internet is an effective way of sharing them with people all over the world. Anyone with a smart phone, tablet or computer, linked to the Internet is able to view digital stories. With technology that has become accessible and easy to use, it is possible for anyone to produce and share their stories.

The age of digital storytelling is here!

WHO MAKES DIGITAL STORIES AND WHY?

Digital stories are used extensively in education and training environments, where students are able to record their journeys through their own learning. They can make up fictitious stories, or the story can be an authentic reflection of their experiences. Either way, both the student and the teacher can come to a deeper understanding of the learning process. This can only benefit teaching and learning.

Digital storytelling is also used extensively on social media - short personal stories that can be shared over and over again, featuring ordinary people making sense of the world in their own ways. It can be a form of social advocacy for causes that are close to their hearts.

Digital storytelling to teach history from the personal perspective of historical characters is another use of the genre, especially in museum settings. It is a way of recording social history. It follows that digital storytelling can be used in any developmental setting where individuals or communities are seeking change or processing past happenings. While each story may be intensely personal, the sharing of the story in a community or group impacts the whole, and quite possibly changes the individual's understanding of themselves and the group's understanding of the individual.

Digital stories are increasingly being used by NGOs to showcase their work to donors. The personal stories of recipients of development projects make for powerful reporting, while at the same time giving participants the opportunity to evaluate and contribute to the fundraising and reporting processes.

In short – anyone can make a digital story. However, it is most likely that your first guided digital story will be made within an educational or community setting, where the purpose will be to introduce you to the processes needed to shape your story and produce the story. The associated reflective and contemplative reactions may well be secondary to start with, but will be used by facilitators to encourage further story development, and to inspire deeper personal introspection and sharing. Ultimately, the purpose of telling personal stories is to take someone on a journey that will inspire them to reflect on their own situations, and hopefully to change, and act for the "common good".

APPROACHES TO STORYTELLING

It is clear that the process of developing a digital story can have multiple aims, both deliberate and unintentional for the storyteller, the viewer and the facilitator/teacher involved in the development of the stories. It is unlikely that inexperienced storytellers have clear ideas of the stories they will eventually tell, once guided through a process – and equally, they will not be able to predict the effect of their stories on viewers. They may well intend to spark certain responses, or trigger particular emotions – but whether their stories succeed in doing so is not guaranteed.

In the event of digital stories used in advertising and branding, the narratives will be carefully crafted by the producers to promote their products. However, in the context of community organisations and NGOs that strive for social innovation, the approach to digital storytelling projects will be to share stories for the 'public good' – stories from which others can learn, be empowered, lives can be transformed, behaviours adapted, changes encouraged, understanding advanced. In the context of South African society, which is so fractured from past injustices and present misapprehensions, giving people the opportunity to share their stories with a view to understanding the humanity that binds us can play a critical role in advancing compassion and empathy.

THE BENEFITS OF DIGITAL STORYTELLING

Digital stories help to bring people together to share in personal experiences. Listening to, or watching stories is usually a shared experience, and the enjoyment, assessment and analysis of stories gives people the opportunity to interact on a personal level.

Stories help people to understand complex concepts and ideas. We can use stories in a modern day context to tackle hard issues like inequality, gender bias, racism, homophobia, abuse. Stories establish trust between people. Someone who is listening to a story is usually receptive and open to the other person. They will engage their emotions and participate in the narrative if this is required. What better way to get someone's attention?

Digital stories can teach values and re-frame suffering. Stories have been used all over the world for healing and reconciliation. When people are able to share their stories of their hurt and pain, they are often able to start healing. We've seen this with stories of the violence in Northern Ireland, stories of reconciliation from the Rwandan genocide, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa.

Stories can be a release for people who have been keeping their suffering a secret. How often do we read in magazines of victims of abuse who come forward and say, "I need to tell my story". Sharing their stories helps them to change their lives, and often their stories resonate with other abuse victims, giving them courage and strength, and raising awareness and understanding of sensitive issues.

Stories help us to make sense of the world. We've established that stories and storytelling exist across all cultures, and the attraction of humans to stories is universal. It is as if our brains are wired to see stories as patterns in which we find meaning.

Exercise

Choose one of the digital stories offered as examples in this chapter, or find another example if you prefer. Watch the story, and analyse it by focusing on these four questions:

1. Why did this story interest you?

2. Could you identify the beginning, middle and end of the story?

3. Can you describe a dramatic moment and the emotion you felt when you viewed it?

4. In what way has the story moved or changed you?

<div align="center">

**The power of storytelling is exactly this:
to bridge the gaps where everything else has crumbled.**

Paolo Coelho

</div>

2. Finding your personal story

DIFFERENT KINDS OF STORIES

Some people are bursting with stories while others may feel quite blank about what to tell stories about! In choosing a story, one needs to remember that it doesn't have to be a lengthy exposition - it is a personal expression of something that is important to the storyteller. It could be something that makes the storyteller happy, or sad. It could be something that they have previously found difficult to express, but now they feel empowered to share the story. It could be an accomplishment that they would like to share as an inspiration to others, or a conquering of a skill, or fear, or challenge.

Here are some ideas for stories:

People stories
• a story about someone that is important to you
• a story remembering someone you have lost in your life
• a story of someone who you have loved
• a story about someone who has wronged you
• a story of a relationship
• a story about people that you took action with in your community

Experience stories
• a story to share an experience that has taught you something
• a story told to explain some sad or happy event in your life
• a story about an achievement
• a story about an adventure
• a story about your job and what it means to you
• a story about overcoming a challenge/crisis in your life
• a story about a moment when you understood your own power to make a change
• a story about the place where you live
• a story about a place that you have visited
• a story about your community and its characteristics, features, needs

Time stories
• a story about a particular time in history
• a story about another time in your life
• a story about a future that you would like to have
• a story about what could happen if……
• a story about what should have happened if only…

STORY STARTERS

When faced with a blank canvas, and a dearth of ideas for the focus of your story, there are a number of easy ways that you can use to help you find a story.
These include :
• **making a poster of your life** - a sort of 'road map' from birth to now, showing the big moments, the highs and lows. The poster can be a colourful expression of the happenings in your life, or it can follow a more linear 'timeline' format

• **talk about personal things that are important to you.** These can be pieces of clothing or jewelry, books, memorabilia, ornaments, childhood toys, special foodstuffs - anything that is meaningful and that can form a story that you'd like to share.

- **talk about old photographs.** There is nothing like old photos to stir up ones memories and recollections of past stories. If you do not have any photographs of your past, you can draw pictures to represent memories from your past, or find pictures in magazines or newspapers that represent memories from your past.
- **make a love/hate list.** By naming the ten things that you love most and the ten things that you hate most, you may find the essence of a story that you'd like to tell.

There are many other ways to source story ideas. However, they all require sharing your thoughts, feelings, memories and discussions with a partner or a group. Take your time - and if necessary, discuss your ideas with your story circle members. You may even want to do some Internet research to establish facts that are relevant to your story.

The creative process does not follow a formula - so take the time and space to think about your story until you come up with an idea that feels exciting and comfortable for you.

Once you have an idea of the story that you would like to tell, it is important to take your idea and refine it by asking yourself some key questions :

1. What is the main topic of my story?
2. What is the main purpose of my story? (i.e. what do I want to achieve with my story?)
3. Who is the intended audience of my story?
4. Is my story interesting and engaging?
5. Do I have all the information I need to tell my story?
6. Is my story logical and coherent? Does it have a storyline – a beginning, a middle and an end?

THE STAR OF THE SHOW - YOU!

You will be telling your story, and even if it is about someone else – this is your personal story about someone else. It will give your point of view, and show your emotions. It will use your voice to narrate the story, and it will feature your visuals and your ideas for a sound track. A personal story does not necessarily have to be about something deep and emotional, or a dark secret about your life. It does however help if your story is heartfelt and genuine. The more believable the story – the more it will attract the attention of viewers, and engage their thoughts, emotions and even actions as a result. It is important therefore to be clear about the message that you want to come through your story.

WRITING A SCRIPT FOR YOUR STORY

Once you've decided on the story that you would like to tell in your digital story, the next step is to write a script for your story. While the visuals for your story are important – if you do not have a coherent script – your story will not succeed in capturing the attention of your viewers. Your story should succeed as a script before it is produced – in other words, your story should sound good before you start to make it look good! You may be tempted to think about the fancy visuals that you plan for your story before getting your script completed, but this will be a mistake. Time taken on drafting, writing, sharing and perfecting your script will vastly improve the quality of your story. Do not expect to get your script done after your first attempt! The secret to a good script is to test it out by reading it to members of your story circle, and then to rewrite it several times until it 'works'. Take the feedback of your story circle members on board, and ask for their suggestions to make your script meaningful. **Remember, your script needs to:**

- Be short and simple – aim for about 250- 300 words (time yourself reading your script – is it the right length?)
- Contain the emotion that your story is about
- Have a connection with the visuals that you are planning for your story
- Make sense

Writing the script for your story is possibly the most important planning step in the whole process of making a digital story. There are techniques and tips that can make your script work really well.

The unfolding storytelling process is often said to move through seven stages, which were developed by the Center for Digital Storytelling as a starting point for your digital story journey:

The Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling (as developed by the Center for Digital Storytelling)	
1. Point of view	Remember that a movie script gives the words to be spoken by the different characters in a story. In your digital story, the main character is likely to be you – talking from your point of view. You will be the narrator, and you will need to take your audience into your confidence. How can you do this?
2. Pose a dramatic question	Pose a dramatic question at the start of your script. A dramatic question is the opening sentence of the story which is used to create tension and an inquiring approach in the minds of your viewers. It is used to draw the viewer into the story – and so it needs to be bold, intriguing, a bit dramatic! Ideally, your story will answer the question, or elaborate on the statement during the course of the story. While the opening sentence can be a question, it can also be a bold statement, like : "I was seven years old when I first saw a man hit a woman" "The day I learnt to read, my life changed completely" "I knew from the first moment that it was wrong to be his friend" Or questions like : "What would you do if you hadn't eaten in four days?" "Why do women always have to carry water in the rural areas?" "Where do you go to escape the one you love?"
3. Establish the Emotional Content that you will associate with your story.	Decide on the serious emotional issues that will come alive in your story and how you will connect your audience with these emotions. You will need to be courageous and honest with your audience to make your story authentic and believable.
4. The gift of your voice – your narration	Your voice and words telling the story, making it personal and intimate . Make each word count. Even make the silence count!
5. The power of sound	The music and sound effects that set the mood for your story.
6. Economy – keep it short and succinct (KISS).	Keeping your story short and simple – with just enough detail to keep the viewer engaged. Use your visuals to say things that words can't say.
7. Pacing – the rhythm of your story	How slowly or quickly you want your story to progress.

Your story should sound good before you start to make it look good!

MAKING A STORYBOARD – 'SEE' AND 'HEAR' YOUR STORY!

Once you have decided on the story that you would like to tell in your digital story, it is time to start planning how you will tell your story. For this purpose, we recommend that you make a 'storyboard' – a representation on paper of each step of your story. A storyboard will help you to arrange your story into a logical and coherent progression. You can make sure that your story has a clear beginning, middle and conclusion. It will help you to visualize and plan for the resources that you will need to record your visuals.

It is a good idea to take your script, and underline the KEYWORDS and PHRASES that you would like use for visuals. This will give you an idea of the kind of visuals you will need to source – photographs, video clips (which you might need to film some), graphics, interviews, props for photographs – and so on.

A storyboard will help you to plan each scene in your story from a visual perspective, as well as the sound track for your story. It should consists of two columns – one that will show the visuals of your story, and the other that will show the sound aspect. At its most basic, a story board is a table which shows the pictures on the left and your notes on the pictures, sound, music, text and visual effects on the right. Here is a basic example for you to follow. You will have as many rows as there are visual changes in your story. Try to put an approximate time that you envisage the visuals being played so that you can get an idea of the length of your story. Remember, the ideal digital story is between 2 and 3 minutes long. You need to make sure that every second of your story does the job you intend it to!

It's time to start planning!
Visualize your story.
Hear the soundtrack.

My Storyboard

[On this side, you can roughly draw or stick a photo of what the visuals will be in your story at this point]

Image Description:
Describe the visuals here – is a photo, a video clip, a drawing, text

Sound:
What is the narration / music / sound effect for this visual?

Effects:
Is there text required?

Transition:
How will this visual change to the next one?

Time:

Comments:
Anything else that is relevant for this part of your story

Image Description:

Sound:
Effects:

Transition:

Time:

Comments:

Image Description:

Sound:

Effects:

Transition:

Time:

Comments:

Image Description:

Sound:

Effects:

Transition:

Time:

Comments:

Total time:
between 2-3 minutes

EXERCISES TO HELP YOU FIND YOUR STORY

Exercise 1: Story, story, where are you?
Briefly write down 3 THINGS you LOVE about yourself or your skills that you use in community engagement or in your social innovation work.
Briefly write down 3 THINGS you FEAR OR INTENSELY DISLIKE about yourself or your skills that you could use in community engagement or in your social innovation work.
Read them out loud – members of the story circle will choose the most interesting of both lists.

Exercise 2: What's your name?
Use three minutes to think about YOUR story.
Create a short and descriptive title – two sentences max.

Exercise 3: The star exercise
List 5 story topics in three minutes and choose the most likely one.
Write one answer in each point of the star, starting at the top:
• Who are the main characters of the story? Include yourself.
• Where is the story set? It could be in more than one place.
• Think of your story as a mini-movie running in your head. How do you feel at the beginning of the story?
• What happens during the most important moment of the story?
• How does this event (or realization) change your life, or the way you feel about the world?
• In the centre of the star, write the answer to: Why do you want to tell this particular story?
Underneath the star: Write the first paragraph of the story!

The first paragraph of the story:

Who are the main characters of the story?

Where is the story set? Where does the action take place?

How does this event (or realization) change your life, or the way you feel about the world?

Why do you want to tell this particular story?

What happens during the most important moment of the story?

How do you feel at the beginning of your story?

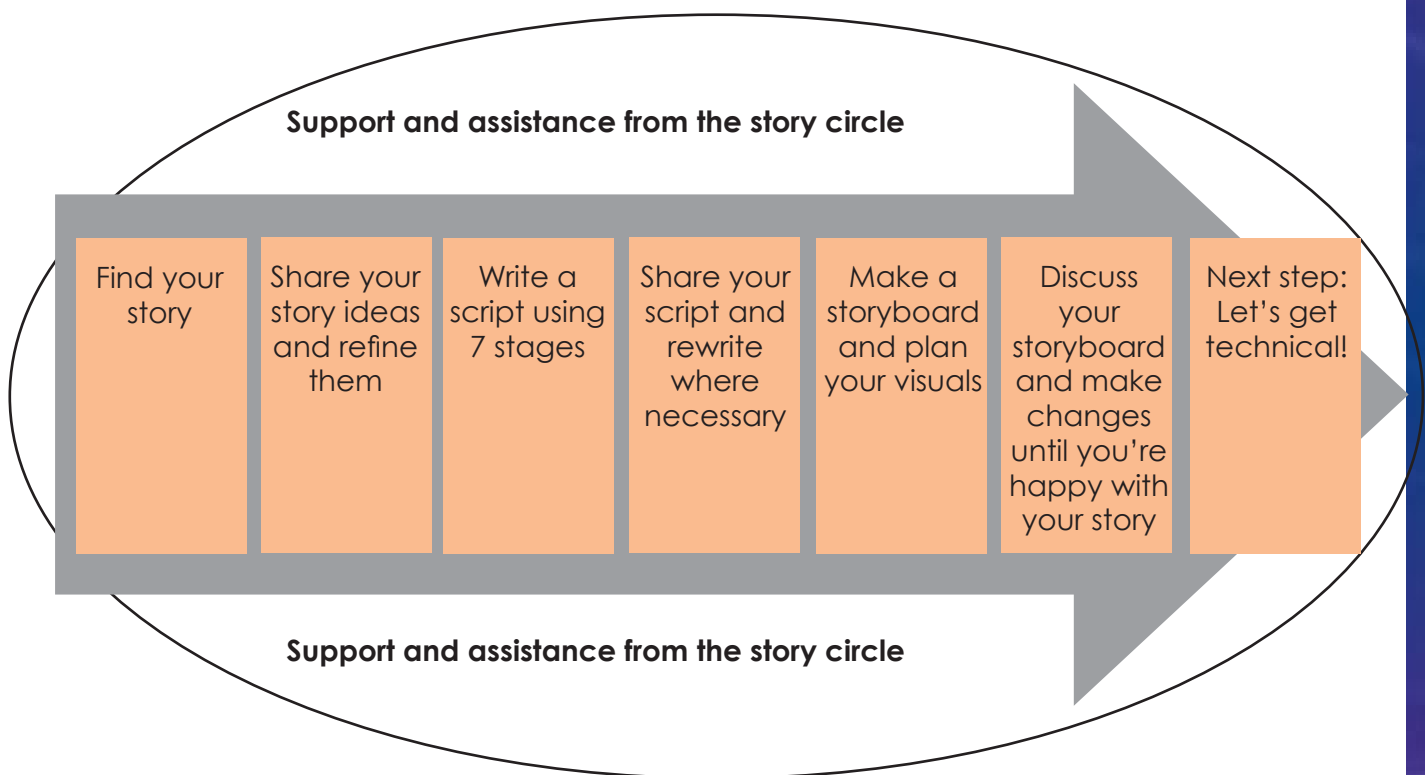## Exercise 4: Free flow writing towards a script.

The goal of this exercise is to write as much as you can, without considering style, corrections or limitations. Use a large sheet of paper and in 15 minutes, write as much as you can, using mind- maps, drawing a plan of your script which you will share in your story circle.

Rules:
• Do not edit, erase or dismiss
• All thoughts are to be included (feelings, moods, colours, images, sounds).
  No boundaries!
• Keep your pen running. Write continuously!
• Note all impressions and ideas you get in the process.

Where are you now?

The above exercises have all been aimed at getting you into the process of producing your own digital story. You should be able to follow this process, assisted and supported by the members of your story circle:

Support and assistance from the story circle

| Find your story | Share your story ideas and refine them | Write a script using 7 stages | Share your script and rewrite where necessary | Make a storyboard and plan your visuals | Discuss your storyboard and make changes until you're happy with your story | Next step: Let's get technical! |

Support and assistance from the story circle

STORY CIRCLE IN MOTION

Your story may burst into life, and be exactly what you want it to be!

But, you might also struggle to find the right balance between the story you want to tell, the length of time you have to tell it, and the resources you have to use to make your digital story.

This is where the members of your story circle can help you. They can tell you if your story 'works'. It will need to 'work' as a short piece of writing that tells your story, with authentic emotions and a piece of truth that you would like to pass on to your viewers.

Sit with your story circle, read your story aloud, and then ask them to assess it against the seven story steps to see where you can rework your story.

Point of view	Is this your story, told from your perspective, with your voice and insight shining through?	
Dramatic question	What is your opening dramatic question or statement?	
Emotional content	What emotions do you want to stir in your viewers with your story?	
Your voice	What is your narration for your story?	
The soundtrack	What music or sound effects will you use to set the mood for your story?	
Economy	Is your story 'short and sweet'? Where can you simplify and shorten it?	
Pace	What is the rhythm of your story - is it vibey and fast, or slower and contemplative?	

RECEIVING FEEDBACK ON YOUR STORY

Your story circle is a place where you can share your story with 'friends' before it is viewed by 'strangers' – people who have not been on the journey with you as you developed your story. Listening to the feedback from your story circle is a way of finding out how people will respond to your story – it is a way of 'practicing' your story before you go 'live'!

You will get feedback about how you tell your story – your use of emotion, your narration, the pace – and you will also get feedback on how you've arranged your story. You may get suggestions to cut certain things, or to rearrange your information.

Feedback will help you to organise your story, and improve it. In some cases, you may need to explain why you want to say certain things. Make the feedback session interactive:

– you don't have to take every suggestion on board, but learn to listen with an open and understanding mind.

When it is your turn to give feedback on the stories of members of your story circle, remember how it felt to receive feedback, and try to be the person who gives the useful, constructive and supportive feedback. You need to trust your story circle members and they need to trust you:

– to be kind, respectful, compassionate and yet honest, constructive and helpful.

Here is a useful way of **giving feedback**:

Start by saying what you liked about a story.

↓

Tell the storyteller if the story made any personal connection with your life experiences.

↓

Explain areas that you found difficult to understand.

↓

Make suggestions for rearrangments, changes, additions.

↓

Offer to answer any questions that the storyteller might have about your feedback.

And here is a suitable way for **receiving feedback**:

Show your appreciation for the feedback you've received.

Tell them what you found useful about the feedback

Explain any areas where you feel your intention was misunderstood, and how the feedback will help you to improve those areas to make your intentions clearer

Ask for any further advice or feedback

Remember that your digital story is still just a script and a storyboard! You will have to move onto the next steps where you:

1. Film and record your digital story
2. Share it for feedback from your story circle
3. Finalize and finish your story
4. Upload it and share it
5. Review your experience as a digital storyteller

3. Producing Your Story

MAKING YOUR STORY LOOK GOOD AND SOUND GOOD

This section of the module will take you through the process of producing your digital story from the storyboard that you have developed.

You will be introduced to the technological steps that you must follow to make your digital story. There are many resources available to help you to make a digital story using images, sound and video clips. Your story does not need to be sophisticated. It can be a set of pictures with some narration from you and some well-chosen music. It can also be a little fancier – with more complicated audio and visual effects, but, the point of this exercise is to make your story to share with others, not to show off your 'movie-making' skills!

However, it does help to know a little about how to make your story look good and sound good! We will learn how to record your images, record sound, and then how to use the software to edit your material into your first digital story. You may have access to equipment and software from the project you are working with, but it is also possible to make your own story using your mobile phone, a computer and some free programmes designed to edit material for digital stories. We will go through the basics so that you can use the resources that are at your disposal.

There are essentially three main steps that you need to follow:

1. **Visuals:** Collect your images, by finding photographs or taking new photographs, taking video clips, and any other visuals that you want to use.

2. **Audio:** Decide on your audio for your story – the soundtrack that will accompany your visuals. It could include music, a voiceover of you narrating your story, or other sound effects that you want to use.

3. **Edit:** Using appropriate software, mix your visual and audio so that they run together to make your digital story. You will need to use a software programme to do this.

So, visual, audio, edit! Ready, steady go!

We will start with how to capture your visuals, and we will assume that you will be using your mobile phone and a camera if you have access to one :

There are two kinds of visuals that you can use.

1. **Still images** are pictures that stay 'still', like photographs. You can collect personal photographs or pictures from magazines and newspapers. Your images can be of anything – people, text, landscapes – anything that illustrates your story.

2. **Video footage** is different from 'stills' in the sense that it 'moves' – like a movie. You can record video footage on your phone, and use it together with still images.

How to capture your visuals

Using cameras and phones for recording and capturing still and moving images can be a simple exercise. If you are familiar with taking pictures or selfies and recording video on your phone, you are ready to start shooting your story. All you need are a few guidelines to keep in mind that will help you create the best possible version of your work.

These are the important things to remember when recording video footage :

• Shoot with the sun behind you so that your subjects are in full colour and detail, and not silhouetted.
• When using your phone, hold it sideways (landscape mode) so that you don't have vertical black stripes surrounding your footage when editing.
• If you don't have a tripod, place your phone on a stable surface to shoot what is called a wide shot, such as a grouping of people, trees, houses in a street, etc.
• You are not making a professional movie, so a bit of camera shake is acceptable and adds to the feeling of the narrator being immersed in the story, but bouncing shots will make your viewers dizzy! This means that you should hold the camera or phone as steady as possible.
• If you want to pan (the shot that begins at one point, moves horizontally and ends on another point), hold your shot still for about three seconds at the start and end of the camera movement so that when you edit your clip, you won't have chopped off a nice moving visual.

How to frame your video or stills shots

• Pause before pressing buttons and look at what is in your camera frame.
• Have you chopped someone's head or feet off?
• Have you given them enough space to move in your frame without losing sight of them?

Here are some descriptions of different shot frames that you can use when filming your story:

• A wide shot: an establishing visual that gives context and location to what you are filming.
• A medium shot: of a person, this means filming from the waist up.
• A close-up shot: of a person, focussing on their face, or hand for instance.
• A two-shot: usually shot in wide or medium frame where you can fit both people in.
• Low angle shot: filmed with the lens pointed up at the person, giving the impression they are authoritative and looking down on the viewer.
• High angle shot: the opposite where you shoot from above the person's eyeline, creating the impression they are smaller. This framing is also useful to shoot very wide shots in order to get the whole picture of something.

Words that filmmakers use

Edit: The joining of one image or piece of video with another, and putting down a soundtrack with the visuals.
Footage: a video that you have recorded
Shoot: to photograph or film something
Tripod: a three legged stand on which you can attach a camera so that you can keep it still while you film
Shot: a photograph or piece of video footage
Pan: to move your phone or camera horizontally to record/ film moving object of person in view, or to capture a wide area of landscape.
Clip: another word for a piece of footage
Angle: this is the specific position of the camera or phone when you take your shot
Close-up: a shot where the picture is up close to the person or object being photographed, without any background, e.g. just the eyes and mouth of a person, or just a face.
Zoom: this refers to the technique when you change the focal length of your shot from far to near (zoom in) or from near to far (zoom out).

How to make your soundtrack

Once you have got your visuals recorded, you can decide on the soundtrack that you want with your story. Will you use music, narration, sound effects, other people's voices? You will need to record your sound. There are some limitations to the technology used in digital story telling for sound.

Have you ever been disappointed in the sound quality of audio captured by your mobile phone? That is an example of where using 'low tech' can let you down. If you are going into a very noisy environment and want to record an interview, you might lose that voice in the background noise. If you don't have access to a microphone that clips onto your subject's collar, rather wait to record that audio when it is quieter. Audio is a vital part of a digital story and it should be carefully controlled. If you need the visuals as well in the background, shoot your subject in that environment doing something and replace the interview you wanted with some narration instead. There are always solutions to be found in the creative process of storytelling!

If you are looking for a quiet spot to record your sound, a good idea is to climb into a quiet car with windows closed and record your voice. You can also wrap yourself in a heavy curtain or sit in a shut wardrobe full of clothes to record your voiceover – all recommended for trying at home.

In some of the editing phone apps, you can only record your voice, or import a voice clip per one video clip at a time. This is actually a good thing as it encourages you to really try to match the duration of your narration to each storyboarded visual block. When you record your voiceover, it will be the right fit for your visuals.

Digital Storytelling Editing Software Guidlines

It is important to remember that your story is more important than the technology you choose to produce it with!

Digital storytelling is exciting because there are different software programmes that help you put your story together. You will need to download a free programme and try it out. New programmes are being developed all the time, and so you can try out different programmes until you find the one that suits you best. The only way to familiarise yourself with them is to PLAY around, practise – find out what works for you.

If you're working in small groups and spending a lot of time with one another in your story circles, it makes sense to choose one particular programme to edit with. If there's a big group, such as a class of students, with less time to spend with facilitators and story circles, there is leeway for individual choices.

Here are some video editing programme and app suggestions.

For Smart Devices: Android and iPhone
1. **FilmoraGo**: FilmoraGo is suitable for Android and IOS mobile phones and easily downloaded. It allows for both video and audio editing. Recording of voice-over is a simple match to a video clip to match storyboard guides. This is a popular app as it allows for more non-linear editing. This means there are more features and you can use editing tools such as Picture-in-Picture (PiP) to cover one clip with still images. This app takes some exploring but it is fun to use, with the timeline displayed horizontally. The prompts are very clear and it is also intuitive.

See the step-by-step breakdown in picture form below for FilmoraGo.
(Sourced from: youtube.com/ watch?v=KKiUewLBbxE / Published by Filmora MVP)

Go select clips and trim:
1. Open app
2. Create New Video
3. Select your video and/or stills from your phone
4. Add them to your project and use the 'trim clip' button to select your video and discard what you do not want to include.

Arrange order of clips

Check your storyboard: swipe the clip icons around to create a sequence that matches your storyboard.
You should also check your clip durations as they need to be long enough to hold your narrated script.

Your project is now on a timeline and ready for an audio track.

(Storyboard source: tinyurl.com/y2l8tw4p)

Record voice-over video clips and adjust levels

On your project page scroll down to the Edit Tools button on the right hand side and press the voice-over icon.

You have two options:
- record your voice over individual clips (it must be the same length as the clip)
- OR save your project to the Camera Roll function of your phone and import it as one clip if you want to read your whole script without breaking between clips.

Adding text at the press of a button

In your edit tools menu, choose Subtitle. Manually adjust the height and width of the text bar space for your subtitles and type in your text.

Music selection and trimming

Use the Music icon on the right hand menu bar to open up a library of royalty free options. Royalty free means that it is music that you can use without asking for permission or paying to use the music.

Remember music is a storytelling aid and should be used to give your story atmosphere and meaning. Choose the music you use carefully and ask yourself how the music relates to your story and if it is the most appropriate sound effect for your story. Make sure that the music is not too loud if there is narration at the same time.

Adjust the music and voice-over levels using your Adjust tool in the edit tool menu.

Other apps that you can try for your mobile devices are:

1. **WeVideo:** Download the app from the iStore and Playstore. Great for simple, linear timeline editing by adding images from your phone's library, recording voiceover and adding text and music. The timeline scrolls vertically, with each clip clearly segmented.

A note on voiceover: lay clips down first and record your voice to the clips. A very simple, intuitive and straight forward app.

2. **KineMaster:** This app can be downloaded form the Google Store. It is a subscription service, but you can use it for free as a trial version for personal, non-commercial puproses. You can view the app tutorial here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X- NxiXqIF7Uk

Laptops and PCs

If you are going to edit your story on a computer, you can try the following free programmes:

1. **Wondershare Filmora:** free download and another intuitive programme, the PC version of FilmoraGo.

2. **WeVideo:** this is editing on the cloud, so it requires you to register your email address and provide a password. You get one publishable project per month in the free version, which contains a watermark. You can laydown a multitude of video and audio tracks, and the timeline displays horizontally. Again, the prompts are fairly intuitive with trimming function and the ability to manipulate audio levels.

3. **Shotcut:** free download and very intuitive programme.

Exercise

Getting busy producing your digital story. The story should not exceed 2 minutes.

Write your script on a computer or tablet. Max 200 words. This is the basis for the recording of the story. Use the words – and dialect – you normally use. Printing the script, preferably in a large font, makes it easier to use when recording.

Select images you want to use, 8 -15 images will normally be enough. Possible sources: your own digital images, open sources on the internet, scanned or photographed drawings, texts, newspaper or magazine cuttings.

Select suitable sound effects and music to go with your story. We recommend using instrumental music rather than singing, as this may compete with your voice recording in the story.

4. Assessing and finalising your story

Nearly there!

Now that you have recorded your digital story, it is time to finalize it and eventually distribute it. Once again, we will turn to the trusty story circle for feedback and an honest assessment of your digital story. Whereas before, they were hearing your story idea from your script – now, they will see the result of your filmmaking.

A constructive feedback session

The first time viewing the digital stories of your group is not a competition! The objective is not to find the best or worst story. A feedback session is a two way process – an opportunity for each storyteller to ask for help in areas where they have doubts about their stories, and for the story circle to respectfully give honest and constructive feedback.

REMEMBER : Each storyteller has dug deep into their emotions to tell the story that you will be viewing. It will be natural that there will be emotional responses. Sometimes, silence is also an appropriate response. The important thing is to be supportive if you're giving feedback and open if you are receiving feedback.

We will need to look at how successful the story is, as well as the production of the story. For this, we will return to the Seven Steps/ Ten Point Quality Checklist to assess the technical production of the story. Here are the questions that we must ask about the story:

Does the film 'work'?

Seven Steps/ Ten Point Quality Checklist	Ask these questions about the story:	What can you do to improve the story?
1. Purpose of Story	Is the purpose of your story clear from early on, and does it have a clear focus all the way to the end?	
2. Point of View	Is your point of view clear and does it connect with the overall story?	
3. Dramatic Question	Is the dramatic question/statement made at the start, and does the story address the question/statement clearly?	
4. Choice of Content	Does the visual content of the story create the tone and connect well with the meaning of the story? Does the use of images communicate meaning clearly?	
5. Clarity of Voice	Is the voice narration is clear and audible throughout the story?	
6. Pacing of Narrative	Is the pace of the voice narration suitable for the story, and does it help the audience to engage with the story?	
7. Meaningful Soundtrack	Are music and sound effects suitable for the story and do they match the visuals well? Does the soundtrack add to the emotional content of the story?	
8. Quality of Images	Are the images well-chosen and do they represent the story meaningfully, adding to the atmosphere and tone of the story? Is there good use of symbolism and metaphors?	
9. Economy of Story Detail	Is the story not too short and not too long? Is it told with the right amount of detail?	
10. Grammar and Language Usage	Is the grammar and language usage appropriate and correct as far as possible, and in keeping with the character of the language usage of the narrator?	

You can assess your own story in terms of the questions above. It is said that you can be your own harshest critic! Be constructive with your assessment and all the way – think of how you can improve your story. Do not think that you have failed if one of the aspects on the checklists is problematic. That is the beauty of making a digital story – everything can be edited to make improvements!

Feedback Session

So, here is the process to follow for the feedback session :

1. Before the story circle views the story - give the storyteller the opportunity to speak about their experience of making the story. They can explain challenges they faced, and ask for help in areas that they feel need improvement.
2. View the digital story with the checklist and make notes
3. Each member of the story circle can give feedback using the checklist as a guide.
4. The story teller can have the opportunity to clarify feedback and ask for suggestions.
5. Make sure that the story teller feels positive and certain of the changes that need to be made to the story before moving on to the next digital story.

Finalising your story

Don't be upset if you have A LOT of work to do after your feedback session. The creative process is a brutal one, and your objective is to make your digital story as good as it can be. By "good" - we mean that it must succeed at communicating your story, and hopefully be able to inspire others to change or act in the "common good" as a result of what you have shared with them.

If you need to change some of your visuals – do this. If you need to rerecord footage – just get on with doing it. You may need to record your soundtrack again. Just do it in a spirit of making your story the best it can be. Never be afraid to redo something so that it is better. Giving up is not an option! Your story could be really important to someone.

Resolving technical issues

Viewing your digital story with members of your story circle can be a daunting task! Suddenly you will see and hear mistakes or flaws that you can fix. You may want to change the sequence of your visuals, or add some or remove some. You may want to remove unwanted sounds, or rerecord your narration, change your music.

DO NOT FEEL DEFEATED OR DEMORALIZED!

This is all part of the process of reviewing and resolving technical issues so that your digital story will be better. Take the time to resolve the techinical issues that emerge with the first version of your story

NOTES

Ideas

Things to do

Things to say

Other stories

What I've learned

5. Distributing your story and final reflections

Distributions platforms

Engaging in the process of making a digital story presupposes that you are going to share it with other people. Once you've finished your digital story, it will be time to 'make it public' – sharing it on platforms where it can be viewed by people other than your story circle. We call this 'distributing' or 'publishing' your story.

But remember: you do not have to distribute your story if you would like to keep it private. You can save it on a CD or flash drive and keep it for yourself or to be viewed with people of your choosing. If this is the case, hopefully the process of and participation in the development of your digital story will have been an empowering and reflective experience for you. Perhaps you will gain the confidence to share your own story now that you have a heightened awareness of the role of digital stories, and the impact they can have.

If, however, you feel comfortable sharing your story on a wider platform, there are a number of options. Depending on who you intended as the audience of your story, you can decide how and where to share it.

Video files are usually large digital files – too large to share via email, and so you will need to 'park' your story somewhere on the internet, and email the link to your contacts so that they can access it. Here are your options:

Common Good First Social Innovation Platform
Available here: **commongoodfirst.com**
The platform developed by the Erasmus + CGF Project is a hub on which social innovation stories generated through participation in the module can be shared in order for new partnerships to emerge between diverse groups, since social innovation projects and ideas often overlap across sectors but do not find common ground in everyday practice. Importantly, the Erasmus + CGF platform will allow for the stories from diverse stakeholder groups to be shared in a democratic way such that an equality of voice can be given to all storytellers. Engaging with each other's narratives and initiatives promotes the philosophy that all stakeholders are participating in the development process, working together to shape a more just and prosperous community.

YouTube
The easiest and most common video sharing platform is YouTube. You can upload your story to YouTube as an unlisted video, and then share the link on email with the people that you would like to invite to view it. They can pass on the link to others, so this is not a completely private way to share the video – but it means that you can control the first group of viewers, and possibly invite their feedback on the story.

Social media
Social media is a great way of sharing your digital story. You can use Facebook, Twitter, Instagram or all of these platforms. Videos on social media receive a lot of attention with likes, comments and shares meaning that your story will spread to a wide audience. You can mark your stories with hashtags # to mark keywords and topics that can be searched and linked by people who are interested in the content of your story.

On Facebook, you can load your story on your own Facebook page and set the privacy settings to limit the group of users that can view your story. You can also tag facebook friends in your story so that they can be notified that you've posted your story.
Other potential ideas for distribution can include some of the following platforms:

Your own website
You can start your own website on Wordpress and feature your digital story on the site along with other personal ideas and information.

Partner websites
The organisation you work for may have a website that will be willing to feature your story, or there may be websites connected to your area of work that will be willing to post your story if they feel it will contribute to their mission.

Events
There may be community events where you can arrange for your story and those of others in your story circle to be viewed.

Hard copies
Saving your story on a CD, DVD or flash drive and making it available to libraries, community organisations, family members and friends is a great way of distributing the story. Obviously this will involve the cost of the hard copies, but this investment may be well worth getting your story 'out there'.

Attracting and building your audience

Your story is unlikely to be seen unless you work at building the audience. Getting your digital story distributed on a wide variety of online platforms is one way of getting an audience, but it is your response to any comments, likes or responses to your story that is likely to build your audience. Being a storyteller means that you enter into an interactive process with your viewers. Make sure that you check your social media platforms, and respond and reply to people who have viewed your story.

Your target audience: You are likely to have a good idea of who will be interested in your story. Ask yourself : Who will benefit from seeing my story? Who will enjoy my story? These people will be your 'target audience' and you should take the necessary steps to get your story to them. These people are likely to know others who will benefit from, and enjoy your story, and so you can find new viewers to engage with. If you are available to engage with your target audience, you will build a following. You may engage on line, or in person.

Reflecting on the storytelling process

Can you believe that you have made your first digital story? You have been through a process which has resulted in a 'product' which can now be used to benefit others.

How do you feel? Are you ready to make another story? Did you enjoy the experience? What impact has your story had on you, and on others?

Spend some time with your story circle looking back on the process you have been through. Ask yourself these questions :
• What were your original goals for the project?
• What did you hope to achieve?
• How many people have seen your story?
• Is the response what you hoped for?
• Did the audience "get" the message you intended?
• What will you do differently if you were to do it again?

REMEMBER: Reviewing your work doesn't mean comparing your digital story to the stories of others in your story circle. You are all in this project to learn!

Keeping the story circle alive into the future to support each other for new stories

You are likely to have made powerful connections with the members of your story circle! You have probably shared some secrets and life experiences which have become part of your digital story. Make sure that you can keep in contact with your story circle members, perhaps with a view to making further stories, or just to follow the progress of each person. Here are some ways to make this happen:

• Exchange phone numbers and other contact details.
• Start a WhatsApp group where you can talk to each other
• Plan a reunion in the future.
• Plan to make more stories.
• Share ideas to build your target audience.

Exercise 1:

Describe the purpose of distribution for your story
List your intended audience
Select the most suitable platform(s)
Draft extra information needed for chosen platforms
List extra activities required by chosen platform(s) for attracting and building an audience.

Exercise 2:

After playing and discussing the stories, use the story circle space to reflect on:

• What you learned from making a digital story
• How this process influenced you
• How digital stories can be used by you, as a tool in your professional work, and in your daily life.