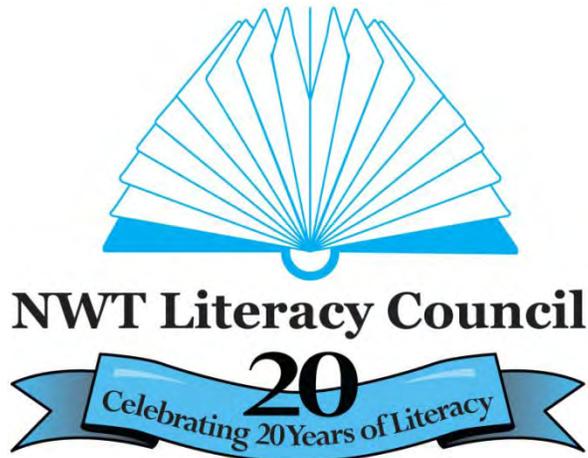


Digital Storytelling

A Great Way to Engage and Inspire
Learners



*Writing digital stories ignites a love of learning
and creates powerful teaching stories for others
to share and enjoy.*

Storytelling is an important part of Aboriginal culture. People tell stories to teach lessons, share information, teach about the old ways and for pure entertainment. Now there is a new and exciting way to share stories with pictures, narration, video and music. Storytelling can now be shared across countries and cultures.

Scenario

Johnny wants to learn more about his Grandmother's life. He decides to do a digital story about her life. He interviews her, uses photos from the past, uses some drum dancing music that he has recorded. He finds out more about her life from other Elders in the community. He then puts it all together in a digital story. He can now post his story on YouTube, on Facebook or Slideshare. But best of all, he has captured his Grandmother's life in a story that he can share with his family and whole community.

What is Digital Storytelling?

Learners want to be engaged in their own learning. They also want to learn and use new technologies. Digital storytelling allows learners to develop their skills and talents to tell stories in the digital age.

Digital storytelling is about using computer-based tools to tell stories. As with traditional storytelling, most digital stories focus on a specific topic and contain a particular point of view. However, digital stories usually contain some mixture of computer-based images, text, recorded audio narration, video clips and/or music. Digital stories can vary in length, but most of the stories used in education typically last between two and ten minutes.

The topics can range from telling personal tales to the retelling of historical events, or exploring life in the learner's own community.

When learners create a movie or interactive slideshow to tell their story, learning becomes personal.

With digital storytelling, learners can:

- Improve their writing.
- Show creativity.
- Have a voice.
- Learn about new technologies.
- Share their work with others.

Brain researchers say human beings are hardwired to tell stories.

“Teach me in new ways.

Connect with me.”

“Be THAT teacher.”

By incorporating digital storytelling into learning, you can reach today’s learners and at the same time, help them to develop the skills they need to be successful in our complex technology-rich world.

Digital storytelling learning projects may not be a cure-all for reluctant learners, bored learners, learners who have trouble retaining information, or those who are chronically absent or late. However, the experience of learners and teachers in classrooms around the world confirms that this approach is an exciting and compelling way to engage learners in the learning process and to inspire them to become lifelong learners.

Some ideas for digital storytelling projects are:

- **About my family.** Learners interview family members and include personal narratives about their family.
- **Research project on a historical figure.** Learners research information about a historical figure and produce a digital story that captures the essence and humanity about the particular person they are researching.
- **Research a historical event.** Learners research information about a historical event and present a digital story about the event.
- **Interview an Elder.** Learners interview an Elder and present their information in a unique and creative way.
- **Tell a traditional story.** Learners research a traditional story from their community and tell their story digitally. They can draw pictures, scan them in and find information on the Internet.
- **Personal struggle.** Learners create a digital story about a personal struggle they have had.
- **Teach a skill.** Learners create a step-by-step guide for a skill they are good at. For example, skinning a caribou, setting traps, or making moccasins.

Telling digital stories or digistories:

- **Encourages learners to write and to work at becoming better writers.** Many learners don't think of themselves as writers or are daunted by the writing process. Writing, revising, and editing scripts for digistories makes this process natural and enjoyable.
- **Gives learners a voice.** Digital storytelling allows learners the freedom to tell their own story in their own unique way. And many learners find that sharing their digistories is far less threatening than reading their writing out loud.
- **Tells a personal narrative.** Helps learners share information about themselves, such as a key turning point in their life or their family history.
- **Helps learners retain knowledge longer.** Research tells us that the emotional aspect of telling stories improves learning because it helps learners remember what they have learned.
- **Helps learners communicate more effectively.** It also promotes classroom discussions, community awareness, global awareness, and a connection between what learners do in the classroom and the wider community. Student's work can be posted on a blog, Facebook or YouTube.
- **Encourages creativity.** Digital stories help learners look at new ways of thinking about and organizing material. This new medium promotes different ways of learning and creating.
- **Promotes digital literacy.** Learning new digital skills is fundamental to learners' success in this new era.

It's Easy to Do!

You can create a digital story with little or no technical background.

Tell a great digital story

Step One: Find your story

What kind of story best suits the sort of project you're working on? Is your story about a great artist or scientist or more a story of struggle or discovery? Do you want to present what you learned about an environmental issue? Or do you want to tell your story?

Step Two: Map your story

How do you want to tell your story? Identify the key elements, and arrange them into a beginning, a middle, and an end. Map out the story using a storyboard.

Step Three: Capture your audience's attention

Some stories start with a dramatic question, others with a shocking statistic or image. Find a way to grab your audience's interest right away.

Step Four: Tell your story from your unique point of view

Telling a story is about persuading others to see something about the world as you have understood it. Make sure you know about your subject so you can present it fairly.

Step Five: Use fresh and vivid language

Even digistories have to use words. Don't let the words take a back seat to

the power of the images and sounds. Be clear, be specific, and use metaphors and similes to help your audience understand at deeper levels.

Step Six: Integrate emotion – yours and the audience's

Every story has a tone or emotional feel that affects the audience. Figure out what yours is, and make sure the words, images, and sounds fit the mood of the story.

Step Seven: Use your own voice, in the script and in the audio

When you write the script, write it in your style of speaking. When you record your script or voiceovers, be yourself.

Step Eight: Choose your images and sounds carefully.

Use images and sound to compliment and expand on your audio.

Step Nine: Be as brief as you can be

Create a story that will be interesting and engaging but don't try to tell everything. Select only the details or events that will sharpen the story and keep it moving.

Step 10. Make sure your story has good rhythm

Rhythm is the heart of all stories. If a story isn't moving it is boring.

The Process

Part One: Select a Topic

1. Choose a topic for your digital story.
2. Your topic can be about yourself, about your community, about someone else, about history, a traditional story, or a how-to tutorial.

Part Two: Collect and Decide

1. Create a folder on your desktop where you can store photos, clip art or videos that you need for your project.
2. Search for images online including pictures, drawings, photographs, maps, charts, etc.
3. Or you can take pictures or use pictures that you already have.
4. You can also locate audio resources such as music, speeches, interviews, and sound effects. Save these in your folder too.

Part Three: Select, Import, Create

1. Select the images you would like to use for your digital story.
2. Select the audio you would like to use for your digital story.
3. Import the images into Photo Story.
4. Import the audio into Photo Story.
5. Modify the number of images and/or image order, if necessary.

Part Four: Decide, Write, Record, Finalize

1. Decide on the purpose and point of view of your digital story.
2. Write a script that you will use as narration in your digital story AND provides the purpose and point of view you have chosen.
3. Use a computer microphone and record the narration of your script. You can do this in Photo Story 3.
4. Finalize your digital story by saving it as a Windows Media Video (.wmv) file.

Part Five: Demonstrate, Evaluate, Replicate

1. Show your digital story to your class or teacher.
2. Gather feedback about how you can improve or expand the story.
3. Post your digital story to You Tube, your Blog, Facebook or other online places
4. Send the NWT Literacy Council a copy of your digital story and we will post it on our website.

Software for Digital Storytelling

Microsoft Photo Story 3

[Photo Story 3](#) is a free, easy-to-use program from Microsoft that lets you create slideshows using your own digital photos and images you download from the web or scan from old photographs, documents, books, magazines or newspapers. You can touch-up, crop, or rotate pictures, add special effects, music, and your own narration to your photo stories. Photo Story 3 does have some limitations: it is only available for Windows XP and Vista; the stories created with the program can only be played back with Windows Media Player on PCs running Windows and not on Macs; and it only supports the use of still images, not full-motion video clips. You can download for free!

iMovie

[iMovie](#) is Apple's answer to Photo Story and is a good choice for Mac users who want to create digital stories. This digital movie creation and editing program has most of the same features as Photo Story, however, it also supports the use of full-motion video clips. Like Photos Story 3, iMovie lets users add titles, effects, and transitions to their digital story projects. And like Photo Story, iMovie has some limitations too, including: it generally just supports video clips in the MOV format; and it is not free, although it often comes installed on new Macintosh computers.

Windows Movie Maker

[Windows Movie Maker](#) is a video editing software application that has been included as part of the Windows operating system since 2000. This program has suffered poor reviews by users for many years because it lacked sophisticated features, but more recently, the program's capabilities and reputation have improved and many educators use it because it is readily available and generally supported by school technology services. A new version of Movie Maker is bundled with most versions of Windows Vista. One limitation of Movie Maker is that it outputs files only in the AVI and WMV formats.

Check out the NWT Literacy Council's website at www.nwt.literacy.ca under Digital Literacy for more information on digital storytelling. You will find:

- Examples of digital stories that we have developed and links to other examples.
- Links to tutorials on how to use different software.
- Information and links to downloads that will help you get started.
- Links to excellent websites on digital storytelling.
- An example storyboard and a blank storyboard that you can download.

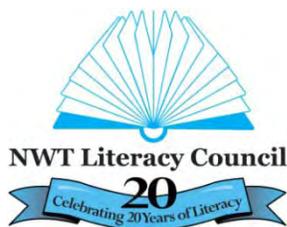
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Information from this booklet courtesy of the *Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling* website <http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/> and from Microsoft "Tell a Story, Become a Lifelong Learner"

http://www.microsoft.com/education/teachers/guides/digital_storytelling.aspx



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