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Digital Storytelling

You, the reader, have clearly picked up this book because you are interested in digital scholarship and the ways that academic libraries can best support it. With this chapter, we are here to argue that you should commit yourself to digital storytelling when you develop or grow a culture of digital scholarship at your own college or university. We base this on a few different reasons, which we'll touch on in the coming pages: that an online digital storytelling workshop is relatively easy to establish, it builds the bedrock of goodwill with graduate students, and it has an alchemical way of leading teachers and students alike to more complex projects. We will also discuss our history and process as codevelopers and instructors of a digital storytelling workshop at the University of Washington (UW) Libraries.

WHAT IS DIGITAL STORYTELLING?

Digital storytelling can be a hard concept to define. Does any story produced with computers, devices, digital media, or the internet qualify as a digital story? Take Jim Dwyer's "Scenes Unseen: The Summer of '78" piece for the

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New York Times.[1] In it, Dwyer combines long-lost, analog color photographs from New York City parks and his own text—which users have to scroll through online, creating a lovely effect of unfolding—to evoke a sense of place and people. Contrast this with examples of born-online texts, such as Prezi presentations,[2] and completely nonvisual outputs, such as audio-based podcasts. Do these projects count as digital stories? Is one more authentic than another? We hear these questions often when co-teaching digital storytelling workshops to graduate students at the UW Libraries. They reveal that digital storytelling is impossible to define. Or, rather, it's very possible to define, but its definition relies on the technology the definers are using, not to mention the stories they want to tell. In this chapter, we have chosen to define a digital story as a short video that includes a combination of images, recorded narratives, video, music, sound design, and captions. We base this definition on our own work teaching a specific style of digital storytelling to UW graduate students—an approach adapted from the workshops offered since 1993 by Joe Lambert's Center for Digital Storytelling.[3]

HOW IS DIGITAL STORYTELLING RELATED TO DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP?

For one thing, digital storytelling can be used to explain what in the world digital scholarship even *is*. In academia, it's hard to pick a word vaguer than "scholarship," and to smoosh on another general word, like "digital," only compounds the problem. By contrast, with "digital storytelling," university researchers—faculty, graduate students, and librarians—can more easily imagine short videos and other practical projects with applications to their own work. They can also use it as a tool to highlight projects in digital scholarship that they are already working so other academics can understand what "digital scholarship" means to themselves or how it is defined at a particular institution. Admittedly, at UW, we have not done this kind of digital storytelling in the service of digital scholarship, but as our program develops and grows, it's something we predict researchers will want to do. For example, UW faculty members Walter Andrews and Sarah Ketchley have worked with colleagues to build Newbook Digital Texts, "an innovative digital humanities publishing house reimagining and restructuring traditional academic research, publication, and publishing."[4] Within Newbook, Ketchley has created the Emma B. Andrews Diary Project, which features unpublished journal excerpts from the eponymous Emma, a British traveler who was often in the vicinity of archaeological sites in Egypt in the late 1800s to early 1900s.[5] Ketchley has transcribed and edited these texts using the open text format TEI, pinned the rarely seen journal bits into layered digital maps, and included images from the time period. This is innovative, engrossing scholarship, but even here, we

feel challenged to describe it simply. To communicate the importance of the Emma B. Andrews Diary Project, it would be far easier, and far more direct and effective, if it was possible to share a digital story about it with you instead of this jumbled chain of phrases and clauses.

Another way that digital storytelling is linked to digital scholarship is that researchers might choose to include short video stories in larger works of digital scholarship. An astonishing example of this is the website Seoul of Los Angeles, which was created by Kristy H. A. Kang, an assistant professor at Nanyang Technological University in Singapore.[6] In this site, Kang delves into the history of Los Angeles's Koreatown through images, writing, interviews—and yes, digital stories. When we first started putting together plans to teach a workshop in digital storytelling at UW, we imagined our students eventually making websites similar to Kang's. Although this level of complexity has yet to happen, we have built up a much better understanding of what it means for a library to invest in digital storytelling and how such an investment ultimately improves and diversifies the digital scholarship taking place at a university.

ORIGINS OF THE DIGITAL STORYTELLING PROJECT AT UW LIBRARIES

Digital storytelling at UW began after co-author Perry's unit, UW Libraries Instruction Design and Outreach Services (LibID), conducted some revealing interviews with graduate students at the University. LibID consists of a team of four librarians and staff members who serve graduate students in dozens of online and hybrid degree programs collectively housed in UW's professional and continuing education (PCE) wing, the UW Continuum College. In 2016, Perry and his team conducted interviews with these graduate students to investigate their needs and how they differed from students in traditional, on-campus programs. Because these students are often online, at a distance, or work full-time, LibID wanted to know if PCE students also felt excluded from on-campus events or felt connected to the University outside of their studies.

Results from this assessment made it clear that students wanted more opportunities to meet and learn from others outside of their programs:

> I don't know anyone outside of my program . . . I wish there were more opportunities for getting together.

> I would like to see more collaboration for research. If we could work with other majors and have more of a social structure, that would be valuable. It's a missing element of working with others.

PCE students also wanted to find workshops or trainings that would help to develop presentation skills and facility with multimedia in order to be more competitive on the job market and in workplaces. Finally, these students

revealed themselves to be an underserved community with limited or no access to the events and programming available to their on-campus counterparts. This quote resonated with LibID:

> Because of the nature of our program, a lot of us are working full-time adults and we don't have a lot of time on campus. If I had more time, I could have felt more connected [to the University].

Thinking further about these interviews, Perry and his team entertained the idea of a fully online workshop in digital storytelling as a way to address some of these student needs. The workshop would be offered online to create a comparable experience for both distance and local student participation. LibID believed that the needs of these students were neither isolated nor unique and decided to partner with librarians in the Research Commons, the unit where co-author Elliott works, to create a pilot workshop in online digital storytelling that would appeal to all students. The Research Commons proved the perfect partner in this project as the space is teeming with graduate-student activity, and it acts as the UW Libraries' interdisciplinary hub of support for researchers. It is a space where graduate students can get experience presenting their research to interdisciplinary and diverse audiences and a place that provides one-on-one consultation for people working on digital scholarship projects. With the existing relationships that LibID and the Research Commons already had with graduate students—and with our interdisciplinary connections and interest in digital scholarship—it made perfect sense for us to collaborate on this experimental venture together. Although no one was specifically requesting online digital storytelling workshops, we felt that if we put something together, there was a good chance it would be successful.

DIGITAL STORYTELLING FELLOWS

Together the two of us have experience in teaching, instructional design, video production, and fiction writing, but neither of us was familiar with online storytelling. Before we began designing the pilot workshop, which we would come to call Digital Storytelling Fellows, we assembled a team to develop it. We reached out to a couple of the UW Libraries' graduate student employees enrolled in the University's iSchool to see if they'd like to join us on our project. These students came with rich experiences as teachers as well as an interest in instructional design. As a newly formed teaching team, we set out to explore existing online digital storytelling programs and locate trusted models to refer to and perhaps emulate. We looked to others in higher education for guidance and scanned the field to find the big players in academic digital storytelling. We identified four specific resources to guide us on the journey of launching our pilot program.

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One of these helpful sites was the Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling website, developed by Bernard Robin of the University of Houston's College of Education Department.[7] One of the goals of this website is "to serve as a useful resource for educators and students who are interested in how digital storytelling can be integrated into a variety of educational activities." The site includes materials on digital storytelling lesson plans, rubrics, outlines for evaluating and assessing digital works, and information on copyright and fair use. We used three videos from Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling as examples of stories that could be told through the visual medium. The site also highlights content from Samantha Morra, an educator and practitioner of digital storytelling. Her blog, *Transform Learning,* outlines an eight-step process for digital storytelling that guides storytellers from ideation of a project to putting it together and reflecting on the work.[8] The compendium of knowledge curated on Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling helped us wrap our heads around the concept of digital storytelling in an academic context. We also looked at the video portal—the format in which stories are collected, curated, and shared—as a model for hosting our own digital content online.

The next valuable resource we examined was *ds106,* a website dedicated to digital storytelling that also serves as an open and online course through the University of Mary Washington.[9] The course, initially offered by educator Jim Groom and later by Martha Burtis, is free for anyone to join. It allows participants to develop, create, and share digital stories in a variety of formats. We incorporated several ideas from *ds106,* particularly in the area of building online community around a single assignment. How the instructors defined digital storytelling through having an open and broad acceptance of various methods—imagery, audio, video, coding, and more—remains to be one of our most influential takeaways from *ds106*. We adopted this mindset by actively encouraging participants to enter into the digital storytelling process at any stage depending on individual context. For example, one student may have a series of photographs that highlights research in unique ways, while another has already recorded an oral history interview. Because *ds106* modeled variety, individualism, and creativity in digital storytelling, we developed our assignments, feedback, and reflection activities with these ideas in mind.

In addition, we reached out to a local expert, practitioner, and digital storytelling instructor, Jane Van Galen, a professor at UW Bothell's School of Educational Studies. Van Galen uses digital media in the classroom to "enable the inclusion of more voices in deliberations about civic and cultural life."[10] We met with Van Galen to discuss her work and to determine the feasibility of a completely voluntary online workshop focused on digital storytelling in the visual medium. With her help, we were able to incorporate inclusive teaching practices that provided a safe space for vulnerable students to tell incredibly personal stories. Utility was another prominent theme in these discussions, meaning that each assignment, discussion, and interaction should

be in service to the overall goal of helping participants complete a video narrative. Van Galen suggested that we include specificity in our project scope in contrast to *ds106*'s method of project acceptance. These conversations helped us to solidify and scaffold our assignments appropriately within our estimated time allotted for project work.

StoryCenter, an organization started in the early 1990s by Joe Lambert, an arts activist from the Bay Area, was the final source of inspiration when developing our workshop.[11] StoryCenter's trainings are led by facilitators who coach aspiring storytellers to create short, personal, and meaningful digital stories based on their lived experiences. Of the two of us, Elliott was able to experience StoryCenter's methods firsthand through participating in the workshop for three consecutive seven-hour days. The workshop began with an ideation activity called the Story Circle, a group activity led by the facilitator where workshoppers talked through their ideas aloud and received feedback. Additional stages of development included scriptwriting and training on the use of WeVideo. Participants shared their work with each other and with the facilitator, Rob Kershaw, director of public workshops for StoryCenter. The facilitator's role included moving about the classroom, testing, challenging, and helping all with their work. In the last hours of the last day, the participants screened their work in a final event. Elliott was deeply affected by the Story Circle activity and felt that it helped participants develop their ideas and also established the community sharing, trust, and synchronicity that made the workshop meaningful. Towards the end of the workshop, Elliott pulled Kershaw aside to ask about the feasibility of bringing the StoryCenter method into a completely online environment. Kershaw replied that it could work, but that he'd never tried it before, nor seen it done at StoryCenter.

These resources, like many others, provided insight into the number of digital storytelling practitioners in the educational landscape who are developing, innovating, delivering instruction, and looking for others to build and grow their digital storytelling community. They served as our source of inspiration. Although none of them were exactly what we were looking for, we concluded that if we wanted to offer an online workshop centered on synchronous instruction, engagement, and sharing, we'd have to create it ourselves.

All told, this exploratory process of identifying and vetting resources filled the entirety of the summer and fall quarters—a total of seven months between July and December. We were fortunate to have ample free time in our schedules to meet with Dr. Van Galen and for Elliott to enroll in the StoryCenter workshop, but curating the resources in which we would base our initial course development took a majority of our available working hours. As we could not identify any existing online digital storytelling workshops at the time, we developed our best practices alongside our instructional design practices while building the course and the workshop content. Using our knowledge of the UW graduate student community and our familiarity with

elements of each of these resources, we began constructing our online digital storytelling pilot workshop.

THE PILOT SEASON

Pre-Production

With graduate students as our target audience, we chose "Digital Storytelling Fellows" as our program's title because we wanted to emphasize both the academic nature of the workshop as well as the hope that participants would come together as friends and peers—a community of people committed to helping one another and united in the desire to tell stories. With respect to those stories, we decided to focus the theme of the workshop on those that highlight graduate-student research. Early on, we thought a tagline could be "Tell the story of your research—or your relationship to it." We decided we'd accept up to ten students into the workshop and that we'd ask them to make two-to-three-minute digital stories.

We knew Digital Storytelling Fellows would also have to include a schedule that would meet the needs of the busy online graduate students we worked with. We had to find the sweet spot of a time line for participants to ideate, design, develop, and produce a digital project without being too overwhelming and without overcommitting the time of our teaching team members to this single endeavor. Through many discussions, we settled on a three-week workshop with five to six of those hours devoted to synchronous working meetings.

To be inclusive of the underserved populations who are not usually afforded these types of high-touchpoint interactions with Libraries staff, we chose not to charge a fee to students to participate in the program, even though similar professional development opportunities can cost in the hundreds, if not thousands, of dollars. Deviating from traditional norms such as high registration costs was just another way we thought our program would differ from existing physical storytelling workshops, and we believed this would work in our favor because students are unlikely to attend such a workshop if a fee is involved.

With these design decisions in mind, we began developing the online learning environment for students. We chose Canvas as our content hub for all workshop resources. To facilitate our synchronous meetings, we settled on Adobe Connect, a popular web-conferencing tool. We also needed a platform to develop and produce our digital stories, so we created concept pieces using a variety of them, including Microsoft Sway and Adobe Spark. Ultimately, however, we decided to use the platform-agnostic option of WeVideo, the same tool introduced to Elliott at StoryCenter. Familiarity and access to UW students and staff were the driving factors behind our tool selection.

For lesson planning, we identified benchmarks and milestones outlined for the course. In the first week, we planned to hold the first synchronous meeting and start the session by encouraging students to generate a community agreement. This idea came from one of the graduate students on our teaching team who had experience as a talented, compassionate educator as well as a graduate student in an online program. A community agreement isn't a list of ground rules checked off by a facilitator nor is it a catch-all boilerplate policy. It is an opportunity for everyone in the workshop to speak about permission, consent, and respect together and without preference for whoever is a facilitator or storyteller. In our review of online digital storytelling materials—and in our participation in StoryCenter's program—we had never encountered community agreements, so we were excited to include this practice in our new design. After coming to a consensus on a community agreement, we thought it would be good to have participants work through a modified Story Circle activity, based on StoryCenter's model, in which they would think aloud about their ideas, propose stories to tell, and invite feedback. Unlike other digital storytelling workshops, we chose to be far less prescriptive about what people should do, trusting instead that the community agreement would serve as a guide in the event of strong emotions, difficult memories, or conflicts.

In weeks two and three, we imagined participants would draft stories in WeVideo and bring them to the next synchronous session. At this session, students would receive feedback from peers, although the teaching team would hold an open forum for technical assistance with video editing. We thought we would ask that scripts be completed by this session and media planned for incorporation into the project be collected and uploaded to WeVideo. Teaching team members would provide script feedback through Canvas and via email, assist with media gathering, and field general questions throughout weeks two and three.

By the final synchronous session, participants would have completed their video compositions. We thought this last live session should be optional and serve as a celebratory engagement for all involved to wrap the workshop. We would air digital stories and ask students to reflect on their experiences.

Implementation: Here We Go!

Our initial goal was to entice up to ten students to join the inaugural cohort of Digital Storytelling Fellows. However, in the three days after the pilot was announced, we received a whopping forty-six applications and had to close registration to stem the overwhelming demand. These workshop applicants represented over twenty different departments such as Museology, Anthropology, Nursing, International Studies, Education, Geography, and Electrical Engineering. Participants were in various stages of their graduate careers, and the group's overall makeup consisted of students from all three UW campuses

as well as a number of students in PCE managed programs. With difficulty, we winnowed this group down to just ten participants, chosen with respect to their diversity as well as the order in which their applications were received.

This inaugural group of Digital Storytelling Fellows created an array of video projects that ranged from heart-wrenching, thought-provoking pieces to informative, persuasive calls to action. Participants enrolled in the workshop with varying degrees of technical expertise. Some had developed previous video projects using commonly available editors, whereas others had zero experience with creating or editing video or story development. This highlighted the need to share knowledge among group members so that those who were savvier could help the technologically anxious. More important than technical skill and prowess, the workshop allowed participants to truly hone in on their stories. They were able to identify, with great specificity, an audience for their projects. Sometimes, the focus shifted from participants' initial perceptions of who their audience was or what stories they wanted to tell.

One student from an Interdisciplinary Arts and Sciences program pitched an idea for a story on Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) that the student had hoped to share with colleagues. The project provided details on a story wherein an anthropomorphized ADHD cartoon character would guide a narrative about warning signs of ADHD and how to manage daily activities for children. Through the Story Circle activity, we discussed an idea to refocus the narrative and change the audience from departmental colleagues to children afflicted with ADHD. This idea proved to be a revelation to the student, and the final product portrayed a character managing life with ADHD. This character discussed how to identify triggers and warnings of oncoming ADHD panic attacks for children and how kids with ADHD could interact with others.

Another personal experience was related by a student in the Museology program, who told a story about working in a "big important museum" and how gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender, and queer experiences were not represented in any of the exhibits or displays. The student, who self-identified as a queer woman in the video, mentioned that museums are perceived as authoritative purveyors of history and knowledge. Despite bringing this issue to museum leadership, the student intimated that inclusivity was not a top priority at this particular organization. During a workshop feedback activity, another participant acknowledged a lack of thought about representation in museums. This student then posed a question, "Who else isn't being represented in museums?" This triggered an ah ha! moment for everyone in the workshop and the storyteller decided to cover the racial and ethnic demographics of museum curators, conservators, and educators in leadership roles (spoiler alert: they're overwhelmingly white). The student argued that museum curation should be a community-driven process and that diversity among museum staff and museology graduate programs needs to be a priority.

Renewed and Revised

Overall, the initial launch of the workshop was a success. It was relatively easy to set up and establish. We were able to build the workshop with platforms already available to us (e.g., Canvas and Adobe Connect) or that were inexpensive, like a fifty-user WeVideo license. We had support from our supervisors, who saw the value in this project and were understanding about the time we devoted to it. Of the ten students we accepted into the inaugural Digital Storytelling Fellows program, half completed the workshop by producing and publishing the final drafts of their videos.

Since the pilot, we've offered the workshop four additional times, and graduate students continue to show great interest in it and apply in droves. Typically, we see forty to fifty students apply for each workshop; overall, we have accepted fifty-nine students from over 190 total applicants, the latter pool representing over fifty UW departments. Though the excitement about the workshop has remained constant, that doesn't mean that the workshop itself has remained unchanged. Whenever we bring Digital Storytelling Fellows to a close, we always meet as a teaching team to reflect on how things went; to review our materials, practices, and assignments; and to look for areas of improvement and revision. In one of these meetings, Perry described our priorities as a teaching team to be "process over format," and since then that phrase has proven to be the most honest and aspirational summation of how we work and what we value. To us, "process over format" means the *what* doesn't matter nearly as much as the *why*. Ask yourself, *why* is this content relevant to my learners? *Why* am I teaching this way? *Why* do we select the tools and platforms used in our workshop? *Why* do we choose our instructional strategies? *Why* do we incorporate reflection, interaction, and assessment as part of our workshop process? Ultimately, *it doesn't matter* what tools we use. They are means to an end.

Process over format provides a way to think like an instructional designer and evaluate the efficacy of your online or offline pedagogy. As digital scholarship practitioners, it's important to remember that products, platforms, and formats are all rooted in a specific place and time. They change rapidly and without warning. Ensuring that your own practices of instruction, your pedagogy, and your methods of evaluation originate from places of discovery, curiosity, experimentation, and critique will help your processes remain evergreen and timeless.

To illustrate process over format in action, let's talk tools and platforms. We learned early in the workshop that the tools we use must be evaluated before each workshop and reevaluated immediately after a workshop. Whether it's due to software or platform updates or better available options, or because the spirit of a workshop is moving in a different direction, we always make sure not to become too attached to any of our tools. Rather, we enter with this mindset: *it doesn't matter what tool you use, as long as students benefit from it*.

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Content: The main criteria for our content hub is that students needed to have some familiarity with the platform. Canvas acts as our repository of learning objects and is the main portal for asynchronous learning in the workshop. With its pervasive nature on campus and in departments, Canvas seemed like the best and easiest choice for hosting content. At UW, Canvas like other LMS platforms, is restricted by default to UW students, staff, and faculty. Although we benefit by being able to experiment in this private space, we would like to eventually move to other platforms on the open web for increased transparency, openness, and reuse of workshop materials. Ultimately, it is *you*—not the institution—who must decide what tool or platform is best to host content for your participants. *It doesn't matter what platform you use, as long as students have access to it at their convenience.*

Communication: The platform for workshop communication needed to meet a few specific criteria: we needed a platform that could (1) provide teaching team members with shared governance of all workshop-related communications, (2) facilitate collaborative chats ranging from one-on-one direct message style conversations to full team (ten+) channels, (3) be easy to use, (4) be available in a variety of formats, and (5) be 100 percent free for students.

The criteria were established following our pilot workshop (after which Elliott served as the primary point of contact for all workshop-related communication). All messages were routed through Elliott, which was ultimately unsustainable, put a huge strain on our resources, and closed off communication to all but a single teaching team member. In subsequent workshops, we moved communications from email to Slack, a collaborative online chat tool that supports multiple administrators or owners for a single channel. Slack fits our needs perfectly. It is well-enough known that many students have heard of it in passing, and some students had used it in other contexts. The change of platform reduced the number of messages to students, provided real-time and asynchronous communication in a single platform, and promoted open group communication. We also removed discussion threads from the Canvas course and shifted student interactivity and engagement entirely to Slack. *It doesn't matter what platform you use, as long as students have access to you and your messages.*

Conferencing: Our video conferencing tool also needed to meet three specific criteria: it needed to be (1) easy to use, (2) allow for webcams and microphones, and (3) enable teaching team members to host meetings at no cost. Adobe Connect fulfilled two of our three requirements, but the main criteria—ease of use—was missing. Each session required twenty minutes of technical support just to begin a

discussion. We switched to Zoom, a web conferencing tool that serves as a hybrid of video conferencing, online meetings, and chat, and found that it met and exceeded all of our expectations. We are able to cover Zoom basics in less than a minute's time. As a practitioner, you could incorporate similar tools such as Google Hangouts or Skype. You could also consider having students record responses to prompts or presentations via tools like Flipgrid or VoiceThread. Ultimately, you should think about the user experience, how you want to engage with students, and how they will engage with each other. *It doesn't matter what platform you use, as long as students have access to you and each other.*

Project Development: When choosing a project development tool for video editing, we needed an editor that was (1) platform-agnostic, (2) cloud-based, and (3) easy for most people to use.[12] WeVideo fits these needs. However, the service isn't perfect and subsequent evaluations have identified accessibility and usability issues with the software. WeVideo is also a paid subscription service. We pay for fifty seats on an annual basis, though other payment options including individual plans are available. *It doesn't matter what platform or device you use, as long as students have the ability to tell their stories in their own voice.*

DIGITAL STORYTELLING LEADS TO MORE DIGITAL STORYTELLING

By describing how we developed Digital Storytelling Fellows, ran its pilot workshop, and revised it through iteration and our guiding phrase "process over format," we hope you feel motivated to start an online workshop like ours. Or, if you're already offering digital storytelling workshops to graduate students or other audiences, perhaps what we've shared here gives you something new to consider.

And though we've put substantial time and effort into Digital Storytelling Fellows, we still believe it has been much easier to establish than many more general digital scholarship programs. For all of us on the teaching team—librarians, staff, and graduate students alike—the workload has never been onerous. We've been able to incorporate it into our jobs, and in some ways, because many of our responsibilities are concerned with graduate student life and research, Digital Storytelling Fellows has led to new and valuable connections to individuals, programs, departments, and disciplines. We have never needed a new physical space or expensive digital infrastructure for this program, we didn't have to hire new staff or apply for a grant, and we haven't had

to purchase expensive gear that would quickly become obsolete. Aside from our time, the only budgetary expense has been a yearly fifty-seat license for WeVideo, which has become something of a multi-tool in the Libraries. For example, librarians in other units are using it to make marketing or tutorial videos. We've also used it to teach digital storytelling to high school interns in a summer program.

We've found that Digital Storytelling Fellows has helped us build goodwill with graduate students. After all, this work is done for the benefit of our students. They were happy that it was offered, and we were pleased that Digital Storytelling Fellows met their needs.

Our respect for students highlights the importance of program evaluation and assessment. In our general workshop workflow, we weave assessment, evaluation, and reflection throughout the course. Assignments are given feedback from multiple members of the teaching team to account for different perspective and viewpoints. Additionally, cohort members are able to provide feedback on specific assignments during our live synchronous sessions. At the end of the workshop, we ask participants to evaluate the program via a workshop survey.

Because we also wanted to assess the efficacy of this program through a long-term evaluation, we checked in with students long after their workshop had concluded. Of the twenty-five students who completed the workshop, nine responded to a request for a sit-down interview to talk about their experiences in the workshop and what, if any, digital storytelling projects they had worked on since their time as Digital Storytelling Fellows.

Interviews were conducted with students from the inaugural workshop offering in winter 2017 up to the most recent workshop in Winter 2018 to generate a broad range of perspectives. Students recounted a wide array of experiences such as incorporating digital storytelling into their teaching as graduate students, using their work to enhance their resumes, and adapting existing projects in their portfolios to include more storytelling and video elements.

Students from the earlier cohorts found it challenging to incorporate digital storytelling into their day-to-day work because it is often seen as a "novel" approach, but we see that students from more recent cohorts are incorporating more digital scholarship into the classroom. From the assessment process, we learned the importance of providing inspiration to participants and modeling instruction for future teachers and practitioners was a key takeaway. The results are illuminating when looking at the comments given on the evaluations from a long-term perspective:

> Expectations were clear . . . but it seemed really fast-paced. Everything was good and [the instructors] were supportive, but what didn't work well was that there should have been more time, not meetings, but more time to do the work.

> I thought the amount of tech support and staff and instruction and how available everyone was amazing. I've never had an online class with that amazing, immediate feedback. Helped bridge the gap between online and in-person.
>
> The teaching was really well ramped up. It was great to get our feet wet before the training. The pedagogical choice was amazing, as was the tech help. A lot of people can be turned off by scary video software, but there was so much scaffolding and support, so it wasn't scary for me.
>
> I liked the accessibility of it. That you could stay in contact with the teaching team pretty easily through email, [Z]oom, etc. I also liked that the schedule was very . . . really loose. It was easy to fit into everything else that I was doing, work, other classes. I put forth a lot of effort ...., but it wasn't very time-consuming. I could put forth energy, but it was not too demanding.

Positive and constructive comments like these illustrate how there is a kind of alchemy that can happen in these workshops. What we teach may be challenging, but it also could have been taught in 1993 or even 1923 (absent the digital component). And, amazingly enough, despite all that graduate students do—all the research, the writing, and the teaching—they consider their time in Digital Storytelling Fellows not only memorable, but meaningful.

We have enjoyed teaching digital storytelling because we've seen how it's used more and more, and how it results in even more ambitious and complex projects in digital scholarship. One way we can prove this—as demonstrated by both the long-term assessment we've been doing and our continuing relationships with graduate students—is by looking at how participants have incorporated it into their teaching.

Former Digital Storytelling Fellows, most of whom have been from the English Department, have gone on to teach digital storytelling in their classes. Sometimes we've worked with them in one-shot sessions to provide assistance. It's been fascinating to see how these former Fellows have brought digital storytelling to their students. One instructor teaches a course with a service-learning component in which students are matched up with local organizations. As a culminating assignment, the students make digital stories related to the work of these organizations. Students are asked to consider if their story is *about, for,* or *with* the people in the organization—a question that prompts them to think deeply about the rhetorical uses (and misuses) of digital media. One former Fellow teaches a class that focuses on J. K. Rowling's *Harry Potter* series, the research that informs it, and the scholarship that currently surrounds it. The students in this class write a heavily researched academic article for a scholarly audience during the first two-thirds of the quarter. At the end of the quarter, they make a short digital story in which they explain their research to a general audience. In both of these instances, we've assisted

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by providing students with guidance and discussed activities related to script-writing and video-editing. We have also delved into exploring copyright, fair use, citation, and metadata with them. We've found this instruction to be a wonderful mashup of media creation, information literacy, critical information literacy, and digital-project management. At the moment, we have been able to field the requests we've gotten for these one-shot instruction sessions, but if the use of digital storytelling continues to grow exponentially, we might have to reconsider how to build capacity for classroom support.

DIGITAL STORYTELLING LEADS TO MORE DIGITAL SCHOLARSHIP

We firmly believe that a solid digital storytelling program leads to more, and better, digital scholarship. We have seen this phenomenon happen not only with graduate-student teaching, but also with their research interests.

Previously, we mentioned a graduate student who, after having taken our workshop, started to assign digital storytelling projects to students who were working with community organizations. This graduate student's research interests are in access and inclusion, African-American history and literature, and kinesthetics and automobility. In our workshop, he made a digital story about Tory Sanford, an African-American man who got lost driving in Missouri and who, for unknown reasons, police officers captured and booked. Under muddy circumstances, Tory Sanford died in jail, and the student from our workshop made connections among this underreported case, the dangers of driving while Black, and the history of the *Negro Motorist Green Book,* which is a reference resource published from the 1930s to 1960s that Black people used to navigate racist places. When we did our long-term assessment and got in touch with this student again, we learned that he had applied for and gotten into another competitive fellowship program on our campus—the Mellon Summer Fellows for Public Projects in the Humanities. Now, instead of making a three-minute video, this student is working to shoot and compose a full-length documentary about the history of redlining policies and the uses of the *Negro Motorist Green Book* in Seattle. What's more, this student wasn't the only Digital Storytelling Fellows graduate to later become a Mellon Summer Fellow. Another student, this time from the geography department, was accepted to the same program. The student was able to develop an existing digital story about the first gay bar in Seattle into an app-based walking tour of queer history in the historic Seattle neighborhood of Pioneer Square.

The distance learning component of Digital Storytelling Fellows helped to cultivate digital scholarship interests in UW graduate students. For instance, while conducting our long-term assessment, we learned of a third former Digital Storytelling Fellow who had taken the workshop while living in Zimbabwe.

The student often called into our Zoom meetings from a wildlife park that had a strong WiFi connection and once left a session early, saying "I am told there are lions nearby and I have to go immediately."

This ethnomusicology student was in Africa to learn about matepe music and produced a digital story about one specific group of matepe musicians. After the workshop, we learned that the same student applied for and was accepted into a prestigious UW program called the Simpson Center Digital Humanities Summer Fellows. In this fellowship, four graduate students spend eight summer weeks learning new media skills in specialized seminars and developing a project in digital scholarship. Our former student chose to make more short videos about her research in matepe music in Zimbabwe, but this time for a more specific audience: people in southeast Africa who might be curious about her research. With this audience in mind, the student focused on creating digital stories that play particularly well on phones and social media. Such a progression from basic digital storytelling to more complex digital scholarship is one more example of how a program like Digital Storytelling Fellows can catalyze and encourage student researchers to become active and successful digital scholars.

SPINOFFS AND SYNDICATION

The experience of developing and offering UW Libraries' Digital Storytelling Fellows workshop highlights the fact that digital storytelling is an evolving process that requires reflection and iteration. It is also a scholarly activity that uses unique and innovative methods of presenting research. It is digitally born, technology-based, and represents a shift from traditional storytelling methodology and is part and parcel of the larger endeavor of digital scholarship. Indeed, we truly believe that online digital storytelling will improve an institution's culture of digital scholarship. Just as a good story will captivate its audience, digital storytelling has the power to inspire and ignite a passion for digital scholarship across a campus. And, because digital storytelling is becoming a distinct genre, its growth can spark interest in academic staff, faculty, and students alike.

Digital Storytelling Fellows has made a lasting impact on both students and the teaching team. We have been able to foster a spirit of creativity and discovery for our students and staff through its development. Our students have gone on to teach digital storytelling as instructors and use their newfound skills and knowledge to chase other digital scholarship pursuits. It completely shifted the trajectory of one student's academic career:

> I have had a major academic lane change [after completing the workshop]. I am going more towards cinematography and film. This class was a really big part of me realizing this [is] my passion. It was literally

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> through this class that I realized how much I love video editing and photography. That got me on the path to cinematography.

Although we can't promise that an equally profound moment will come from your own digital storytelling endeavors, we *can* promise that launching some type of digital storytelling program or workshop in your library is achievable. In the meantime, we plan to continue developing additional long-term assessment, to institute this assessment process more regularly, and to broaden our outreach to additional departments. We also are exploring new genres of digital storytelling by delving into the world of audio storytelling and podcasting. Our goal is to continue inspiring students and faculty to see digital storytelling as a viable option for course assignments, perhaps by making our workshop's instructional materials and course content free and open in the future. We also hope that what we've presented in this chapter has helped you to see the value of digital storytelling, and to understand that it leads to continued digital scholarship in a myriad of ways. Perhaps the next story we read will be of your own adventure into digital storytelling.

Takeaways

- Digital storytelling leads to more digital scholarship, thus seeding and growing the culture of digital scholarship on campus.
- When designing a digital storytelling workshop, everything needs to be done in service of the student. Our philosophy of "process over format" guides in continually improving our workshop, and also in enhancing the student experience.
- Give students the space necessary to learn from you *and* to teach you about their work and their processes. Ensure that you are both serving the role of student *and* teacher; sage on the stage *and* guide on the side; mentor *and* mentee.

NOTES

1. Jim Dwyer, "Scenes Unseen: The Summer of '78," *The New York Times,* April 27, 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2018/04/27/nyregion/newyork-parks-photos.html.
2. For future technology archaeologists: This was an online presentation program that human beings started using in 2009. It made many people motion sick with its animations. You can find it at https://prezi.com/.
3. The Center for Digital Storytelling is now called StoryCenter. You can find it at https://www.storycenter.org/.
4. Newbook Digital Texts, "Welcome to Newbook Digital Texts," www.newbookdigitaltexts.org/.

5. "Emma B. Andrews Diary Project," www.emmabandrews.org/project/emma-b-andrews-diary-project.
6. Kristy H. A. Kang, "Seoul of Los Angeles," http://seoulofla.com/.
7. Bernard Robin, "Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling," University of Houston, http://digitalstorytelling.coe.uh.edu/.
8. Samantha Morra, "8 Steps to Great Digital Storytelling," *Transform Learning* (blog), June 5, 2013, https://samanthamorra.com/2013/06/05/edudemic-article-on-digital-storytelling/.
9. *ds106,* http://ds106.us/.
10. "Jane Van Galen, Ph.D.," University of Washington Bothell, https://www.uwb.edu/education/faculty/janevangalen.
11. StoryCenter, https://www.storycenter.org/.
12. The term "platform-agnostic" refers to something that can be used regardless of operating system.