A Guide to Digital Storytelling

by members of the BBC Capture Wales / Cipolwg ar Gymru team

Contents:

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Photos by Carwyn Evans and Lisa Heledd.

Introduction

About Digital Stories *by Daniel Meadows, Cardiff University.*

Digital Stories are short, personal, multimedia scraps of TV that people can make for themselves.

They're 'mini-movies'. Desktop computers enabled with video editing software are used to synchronise recorded spoken narratives with scans of personal photographs.

This project requires commitment for, as well as all the technical stuff that must be learnt, script writing, picture editing and performance skills are also needed and these have to be worked on, which is why most Digital Stories are made by people attending workshops where participants can benefit from the help and advice of facilitators.

People of all ages and abilities make Digital Stories and many have testified how rewarding the experience is for, when their story is shared with friends and family or posted on the web, they find they have discovered a new voice.

There's a strictness to the construction of a Digital Story: 250 words, a dozen or so pictures, and two minutes is the right length. As with poetry these constraints define the form (e.g. a haiku is a poem written using 17 syllables, and the 14 lines of a sonnet are written in iambic pentameter) and it's the observation of that form which gives the thing its elegance.

Welcome *by Gareth Morlais.*

The Digital Storytelling team at BBC Cymru Wales has run monthly workshops all around Wales between 2001 and 2007. Our plan has always been to encourage others to adopt and adapt the skills of facilitating production and this has succeeded more than we ever dared hope and these activities are now thriving around Wales.

To coincide with a series of Digital Storytelling Gatherings around Wales, we decided to bring together some of the things we've learned during our time helping people to make Digital Stories. We cover the technical, the editorial, the storytelling, and more.

Whether you're an individual making your own or a facilitator helping others to make theirs, we hope you'll find this useful.

Happy storytelling!

The Ideal Digital Storytelling Venue

If you're running a Digital Storytelling or video workshop, you'll need a suitable venue. Karen Lewis and Gareth Morlais outline what to look for.

Look for a venue with disabled access to all rooms, including toilets and eating-places. There also needs to be reasonable access and parking for the van if your project is one that tours. Ideally, parking close by for people driving to the workshop. If this is not possible, let people know how to get to the nearest car park. The venue should be accessible by public transport.

It's useful to have three spaces available during the workshop:

1. Main Room
This is where the Digital Stories will be made. Best if it's lockable and alarmed if equipment will be left overnight. There needs to be enough space, tables and chairs to accommodate all the equipment and people. Power points along two sides of the room makes safe rigging easier. It's good if it has natural light and ventilation and can be made dark enough for images from the data projector to have impact. E.g. some kind of blinds or curtains for blackout.

If you're running a workshop - as opposed to one-to-one - set the furniture out classroom style, in rows, facing the screen. Allow space for the data projector to show from the back of the room. There also needs to be enough space in the room to accommodate additional equipment (scanners, printer, camera chargers, etc.) and to allow trainers to move comfortably between storytellers.

On different days, this main room may also be used for briefings, image capture and script sessions. On the storycircle day, up to 14 seats arranged around a big table seems to work well.

2. Sound-recording room
This room needs to be very quiet indeed. Switch off any noisy lights, air conditioning, fans, clocks, computers, etc. The fewer echoes in the room the better; clutter is good. This room needs to be available throughout the production workshop. It can be small - just big enough to accommodate three people, recording equipment and microphone. There needs to be power points.

3. Break-out space
People will be working intensively together, maybe over a longish period. This can become quite claustrophobic if there are no break-out spaces available. This could just be a cafeteria, a foyer with seats or even an outside sitting area. It just needs to be somewhere for people to wander to if they need a break.

Draw up a fresh risk assessment for each project.

Venue Checklist
1. The Recce
- Nearby parking and public transport.
- Accessibility for wheelchairs with no trip hazards.
- Main workshop room undisturbed all day and able to be blacked out with sufficient chairs and tables.
- Audio-recording room to be quiet with nice acoustic.
- Breakout space is nice to have too.
- Security issues thought about.
- OK to leave equipment overnight. (I.e. no basket-weaving class booked into venue in evenings).
- Mains power points.
- Ask about cost of hiring venue and payment method.
- Catering - times and numbers of people for teas/coffees and meals.
- Request food hygiene certificates from caterers.
- Draw up a formal risk assessment.

2. Between the formal booking and arriving for first day:

- Need contact details for keyholder and make arrangements for unlocking and locking.
- Specify seating layout and placement of tables.
- Firm up any additional requirements like screen, flipchart, etc.
- Confirm catering arrangements: times, locations.
- Think about extras like bottled water and glasses for storycircle.

Briefing Participants

It's important to brief people before they start making their Digital Story, so they feel both relaxed and fired-up, as Carwyn Evans explains.

We've all been in situations that are new to us. Since our first day in school, we often feel we're in unknown territory. Coming to a Digital Storytelling workshop or session is no exception.

Briefing participants as fully as possibly before embarking on the process is invaluable to the success of the workshop as it serves two purposes. One is to ensure that the participants are suitably prepared and the other is to alleviate any fears or concerns they may have with what lies ahead. Meeting the contributors beforehand is by far the best way of relaying the information required and in cases where this isn't possible, the necessary information should be shared over a phone conversation.

We call this bringing together of participants 'The Gathering'. This session is an introduction to Digital Storytelling and a chance for contributors to meet others and members of the team that they'll be working with over a cup of tea and biscuit! This informal session is very important as it sets the mood for the rest of the workshop... a non-competitive atmosphere of sharing and collaboration.

A lot of ground is covered at the Gathering. We watch different examples of Digital Stories to get more of an idea of what the final Digital Story could look like and to help develop ideas for how the story could be crafted.

It's important to cover the following aspects at the Gathering:

● Where Digital Storytelling comes from.
● Explain and show examples of the Digital Storytelling form that participants will be working with.
● Explain each step of the process necessary to complete the story.
● Go through the preparations required from the contributor in advance of the first workshop session.
● A small briefing on editorial and copyright issues. This is especially important as it could affect where the finished story may be displayed.
● Explain what happens to the stories once they're finished.

Participants should be allowed plenty of time during this meeting to raise any questions or concerns about the process. It's also good to leave contact details should participants wish to contact a member of the team in the time leading up to the first session.

The Gathering is a lot of fun and participants soon find themselves at ease with one another and those around them. People leave brimming with creative ideas on how they can approach their own story - some have even been known to delve in the attic for photographs straight away - and you, in turn, leave very excited about the sessions ahead.

Finding the Story

by Gilly Adams.

Remember that everyone has a story to tell and it's only a matter of coaxing it out of yourself or someone else, although most people don't need much coaxing!

● Running some kind of story circle with word games and memory sharing is a way of helping people to relax and stop being self conscious. If necessary, use some kind of stimulus: a picture or an object can provide a good starting point.

● Remember that grammar and spelling are not important. This is a spoken story and not a homework exercise. The crucial thing is to speak normally and sound like yourself.

● If you are stuck for a topic think of something about which you feel passionate or focus on an event in your life which provoked a strong emotion - happiness or anger or sadness.

● You don't have to change the world with your story but it is a special opportunity so use it so tell a story that is important to you: this needn't mean having to bear your soul or be too serious. Some of the most successful stories are funny.

● Remember that, ideally, this story will only last two minutes and be no more than 250 or 300 words long so if you have the material for a three-hour television documentary (e.g. the complete history of the place where you live), or a long novel (e.g. complicated ins and outs of your family history), it will not be suitable for this medium.

● Don't be put off by having to be brief. It seems daunting at first but your story will benefit by being boiled down to its essence.

Digital storytelling works best as a group activity. Of course, it's absolutely possible to make a Digital Story by yourself, but working together as a group enhances the experience.

- In the story circle participants bear witness to each other's stories and offer support and advice.
- The more computer literate are able to help those who are less so.
- Having company maximises the opportunities for having fun.
- The sense of achievement at having made a story can be celebrated fully when everyone gathers to watch the final films together and share comments and congratulations.

Getting the Story Down on Paper

by Gilly Adams.

● Don't sit about looking at a blank sheet. Give yourself a time limit and just write. Don't judge at the beginning.

● Remember that spoken words are only heard once, in contrast to the written word which can be re-examined. Clarity is important. Avoid repetition unless it is deliberate. Find other words. Don't use literary expressions or connecting phrases like "as I mentioned before". They will jar on the ear.

● Find your own voice. Don't imitate. Be aware of how you like to use words and have the confidence to use your own idiom.

● Picture what you are writing about in as much detail as possible - feelings, colours, textures, smells. This will influence how you write.

● You don't have lots of words so plunge in. There's no need to tell the story in a linear way, even though it will require a beginning, middle and end. Find what's most arresting and start there. It may be from any point in your narrative.

● Don't get too attached to the exact facts. Don't let them get in the way of the truth.

Refining and Completing the Story

by Gilly Adams.

● Try your story out on others and get feedback. What works and what doesn't? Are you being clear? Have you left out something important that was there originally?

● Less is more. Expect to re-write and re-write. Edit rigorously. What is the essence of your story? Attempt to express that in one sentence. Now make sure that you have nothing unnecessary. Does everything move the story on?

● Avoid cliché and banal sentiments. Phrases like "he's always there for me" are exhausted. Look for a fresh form of words.

● Generalities are lazy and close things down. The specific, well observed detail is what will resonate.

● Remember that, whilst an anecdote can meander, a story needs structure. The end needs to have some connection with the beginning to be satisfying. Think of stepping stones. When you reach the other bank of the river you should still be able to see the bank from which you started the journey.

● And the stepping stones are important. They are the steps that build the story. Make sure you haven't missed a vital step out.

● Treat your story with respect as though it were the best story in the world.

Tips on Good Practice

Here's a round-up by Lisa Jones. of some of the things to keep in mind when making a Digital Story with a view to sharing it later.

If you're thinking of submitting a completed Digital Story to a broadcaster, website or maybe film festival for public screening, take a look at the following guidance on good practice for publication.

Three Golden Rules
1. Use your own words - write as you would speak.
2. Use your own photos - stick to the family albums.
3. Use your own music - if you want music in your story, write, perform and record it yourself if you can. But don't worry, there are exceptions listed later.

What not to avoid
Other People's Work - avoid the following:
● Commercial music, that is to say music taken from a published CD / DVD / vinyl record or cassette tape.
● Photos taken by anyone other than you, your family or friends.
● Photos or clips of other people's children (under 18 years of age).
● Photos or images of artistic works.
● Scans or images from newspaper or magazine articles, CD or book covers, works of art etc.
● Grabs or clips of any DVD or video other than your own family.
● Grabs or images from websites.
● Posters, calendars, brochures or maps - even if they feature in the background of a photo.
● Company brands and logos such as Nike, Adidas, Coca Cola etc.
● Quotes or lines from poems, songs, books, magazines, pamphlets, websites etc.
● Letters written by people other than you or your own family because the person who wrote the letter owns the copyright, and not the recipient.

What you can use:
- Non-commercial music that has been composed and performed by you or a member of your family or a friend.
- Traditional music where the composer is anonymous (as long as it's not taken from a commercial CD). For example, you or a member of your family could sing Auld Lang Syne.
- Music composed by someone who has been dead for more than 70 years (as long as it's not taken from a commercial CD). For example you or a member of your family could play Chopin's The Minute Waltz on the piano.
- Nursery Rhymes as they are mostly anonymous.
- Quotes or lines from books, magazines, poems, letters if the author has been dead for more than 70 years. For example you could use a quote from a Shakespeare sonnet or Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice as long as it is spoken by you.

If you are tempted to use any of the above, ask yourself why you want to use someone else's work? You can have just as good, if not better, effect by using your own words and materials in a story.

Issues to be aware of:
Do you intend to describe sensitive issues regarding another person or group of people which may involve matters of violence, abuse, sexuality, unhappy family background, marital problems, privacy, fairness, etc which might cause hurt to them or anyone else now or in the future?

Do you think your story might:
- Be libellous, for instance, contain an untruthful statement about someone that injures that person's reputation?
- Affect the safety of other people, especially children and young people?
- Be so one sided in opinion that it may be considered to lack balance in that the other person does not have the right to reply?

If the answer is yes to one or more of these, in the interest of fairness, some organisations may be reluctant to publish your story. Putting into practice the above guidelines should lead to a rewarding experience.

Good luck!

Equipment checklist

If you're submitting a bid for funding to buy equipment to help people make Digital Stories, here's a handy shopping list by Gareth Morlais.

This isn't a list of everything you'll need - it's just the beginnings of a kit list of things that you may find useful if you're setting up or running a Digital Storytelling or video production workshop project.

1. Computers - you may be able to use existing equipment at a local community centre, school or cybercafé. If you need to buy new equipment, you need to decide between Apple and PC. Laptops are easier to transport and need fewer mains points than tower units. They've also got their own power-cut protector built in (battery). How many do you need? Well, as many as you'll have people making stories at one time plus at least two designated and set up for the trainer and audio editor.

2. Software. E.g. iMovie, Premiere, etc. for video editing; Photoshop Elements, iPhoto, etc. for image editing; Audacity, SoundStudio, etc. for audio editing.

3. Image scanner. A slimline one which can be powered from the USB lead, not by being plugged into the mains.

4. Printer. So storytellers can print their script for themselves and the person recording their voice. Having a bluetooth-enabled one saves cabling.

5. Digital cameras with fast, large memory cards and a good solid tripod.

6. Voice recording set-up. Nowadays we normally use portable flash-card audio recorders. Examples include Zoom H2, M-Audio Microtrack and Edirol E-09. You can also use a good-quality microphone via a USB audio interface by a company like Edirol, M-Audio or MOTU to capture audio. If you do this, you'll need a microphone stand, cables, windshield, clip and a script stand.

7. Portable powered speakers.

8. DV camera for archiving stories. MiniDV tape, not disk or flashcard unless you're confident you can deal with compression and keyframe issues. The camera needs to have DV-in enabled.

9. Other appropriate capturing/authoring devices as required for workshops (e.g. mobile phones, disposable cameras, webcams, etc.)

10. Data projector and portable screen.

11. MiniDV tape, blank DVDs, memory cards and other storage stock.

12. Portable storage - external hard drives and data sticks, external USB floppy drive and card reader.

13. Cables - USB and firewire cables and mains extensions/splitters.

14. Gaffer tape, rubber mats, cable ties and other sundry items.

15. Strong boxes for transporting equipment.

16. Porter's trolley to help move heavy gear.

17. Access to transport suitable for carrying equipment will be needed by trainer.

18. Other equipment, as advised by trainer and people locally.

Ten things to show someone who's never used a computer before

A computer crash course, as suggested by Gareth Morlais.

When you're facilitating a Digital Story or video workshop or session, you may work with people who've never used a computer before. Here's a checklist of ten of the first things you need to let people know about if they're unfamiliar with computers:

1. How to switch your computer on and off.

2. How to sit comfortably; tilt the screen to optimise the quality of the picture you see on it; take screen breaks for eyes and posture; be aware of trip hazards like cables.

3. How to use a mouse; it can be re-configured and moved if you're left handed. (Try to remember how it felt the first time you used one).

4. Discuss key differences between PC, Mac and Linux if applicable.

5. How to create a new folder and move it to somewhere else on your desktop.

6. How to re-name a folder using only the characters a-z, 0-9, _, - and using no spaces or other characters.

7. How to open and close a folder.

8. How to re-locate an opened folder window.

9. How to re-size an opened folder window.

10. How to minimise or hide everything so you can see your desktop.

As Digital Storyteller Huw Davies often tells novices: "What you need to be able to do is: open a file, do what you want to it, then save it somewhere where you'll be able to find it later."

Reassuring people is a good approach to take. After all, they're only using the computer as a tool to help them tell their story.

Taking Digital Photos

Here's how to get the best possible digital photos to put in your Digital Story or video. By Carwyn Evans.

Digital stories in the main are created from our own personal archives; from those cherished photos kept carefully in albums, biscuit tins and drawers. This is the "invisible nation" which is made visible by the Digital Storytelling process and which forms the conceptual heart of Digital Storytelling. Using a flatbed scanner, these photographs are digitised and prepared to use in your Digital Story.

However, sometimes an image or a set of images you want to include aren't available in print or digital form, such as a prized swimming trophy or Aunt Betty doing an Irish jig in the parlour, and so you need to take new photographs. An easy and efficient way of achieving this is to take new shots on a digital camera.

A digital camera is an electronic device used to capture and store photographs digitally which are recorded on a memory card in the camera. Many digital cameras connect directly to a computer to transfer data. The most widely used method is USB and many people use an external card reader to transfer data from the memory card itself to their computer.

Remember, it's people who take good pictures, not cameras.

No matter how great your digital camera is, it cannot guarantee good pictures. Here are some hints and tips on taking good pictures using your digital camera.

Things to think about when taking digital photographs

Camera settings:
Digital cameras allow you to take pictures at different quality settings - the higher the setting, the better the photo quality. Higher settings use more memory than lower settings. For taking pictures to include in your Digital Story, set the file size to at least 3MB. When you come to editing your pictures, you'll notice that the image size reduces to around 1.5MB each.

Composition:
Anyone can point a digital camera at a subject and get a good quality photograph. The camera - provided it's set to automatic focus - will almost certainly ensure that the photo will be sharp and exposed correctly. However, the one thing the camera can't do for you is compose the shot.

Composition is important because it helps set the mood for the shot. Frame it, so your subject fills most of the picture area. The closer you get to the subject, the better. There's no need for unnecessary background detail. This is especially important if you publish your Digital Story online because frame size of the web version will be small.

Think creatively when composing your picture in the viewfinder. Instead of shooting at eye level, try shooting overhead, waist-level or ground-level. When photographing children or animals, get down to their level for best results.

Focus:
Auto-focus is great, but it isn't perfect. Most digital cameras tend to simply focus on what's in the centre of the picture. If your main subject is not centre, point your camera at the subject, half-press the shutter button to focus and then re-compose before pressing the shutter button fully. This will ensure that the main subject is perfectly sharp.
Be aware of your camera's limitations when taking close-up photos. A better way to get very close is to use the "macro mode" if your camera has this.

Zoom:
The advice here is don't.... unless you really have to, if you can't get close to the subject. But if you can get in close, then do so, to ensure that the quality of your image is the very best it can be. If you have to use the zoom, then use only optical zoom for best results. Zooming in also increases camera shake, so it's very important that the camera is kept really steady. When taking portrait pictures, don't get too close when the lens is wide as this will distort your sitter's face. It's always better to stand away from the sitter a little and use some zoom.

Exposure:
Digital cameras use a light-sensitive chip rather than film to capture an image. The camera is designed to let light through a hole (aperture) on to the chip for a limited amount of time (exposure). Digital cameras use "auto exposure" to take care of exposing the picture for you.
Even with a fully automatic camera, you can modify the exposure. Point the camera at the object you want correctly exposed and half-press the shutter button. Move the camera to compose your shot, and then squeeze the button fully to take the picture.

Flash:
Natural daylight is the best light to take digital photographs as flash can create harsh shadows around the subject you're photographing. This is also known as "burn out". However, you may use fill flash to help lighten up a subject which is in shadow.

A general rule of thumb is to remember that poor lighting conditions result in poor pictures, so use as much natural light - not bright light mind - on the subject you're photographing.

Photographing small objects:
Small objects are best photographed against a plain background. For maximum visibility and impact, photograph light objects against a dark background and vice versa.

Tripod:
Use a tripod if you can, especially in low light level conditions. Short animations such as a sequence or an action of some sort, like a book opening, can benefit from using a tripod too. As the frame is fixed, you can concentrate on directing the action in front of the lens, without having to align each frame individually in an image editing package before including it in your Digital Story.

If you don't have a tripod, try leaning against a wall or resting the camera on something solid such as a table, to help steady your shot.

For more details on taking digital pictures, please seek out your digital camera manual.

Downloading pictures:
The camera should be connected to your computer using the USB
port or the memory card itself can be connected using an external
card reader. Once the camera is powered, either an existing image
capture software loads up or the device appears as an external
hard drive on the computer's desktop or in its list of available
drives.

From here, you should be able to download the images to our
computer, ready to edit with image manipulation software.

Consult your software/computer guide on notes to transfer these
image files onto your machine.

And finally, be warned:
It's very important to think about who you're taking pictures of.
Only shoot photographs of children that either are related or that
you have permission to photograph. No matter how wonderful a
shot of a child in the street eating an ice cream is, you won't be
able to publish your Digital Story if you don't have the permission
of the child and their parent or guardian. If you are going to take
pictures of people, make sure that they are happy for you to do so
and that they understand that their picture may end up in your
film and be published on the web. It's better to ask now than
wanting to use a photograph and not be able to use it.

Be careful:
Don't put yourself in danger. It may sound obvious, but once you
start getting excited about taking pictures, all common sense can
disappear! Don't walk backwards whilst shooting photographs.
Don't try for that unusual shot on the side of the motorway! Think
about your safety and the safety of others at all times!

Audio and Voice Recording for Digital Storytelling

Here's Simon Turner's guide to recording someone's voice for their Digital Story. Although it's geared towards facilitators, we hope that people recording their own voice will also find it useful.

Listening to a story is always better when the narrator is telling it from experience...

This section is still being prepared. Please see www.bbc.co.uk/digitalstorytelling for updates.

How to Edit Your Digital Story

Ready to begin editing? Once you've gathered together all your ingredients you are! Here's a walkthrough by Huw Davies.

First of all, gather together all your rich media assets: voice recording, still images, video footage etc.

Software
You'll need to decide on editing software. There are many packages available and although all are capable of producing a broadcast quality film, some get you there by wading uphill through treacle. As with most things, you get what you pay for up to a point because, as I've just said, they are all capable of creating a top quality end product. Whatever you decide on, the principles of editing are the same.

Getting Started
● On launching the software you will be asked to name a new project and select settings.
● DV Pal standard 48kHz or DV Pal 16:9 widescreen is what you're looking for.
● Click OK and it will probably tell you it cannot find the external AV firewire device. That's a video camera or an audio device but, unless you're ready to capture some video or audio right now, just press Continue.

If you don't need to capture from the camera, you can skip the following and move straight to the next point. If you do have video to capture, now's the time to do it, and here's how. Quit out of the software, connect your video camera via its firewire or USB2 cable and re-launch the software. And now it will recognize the device.

If your camera records directly to a card as opposed to mini DV or digital Hi8 tape then it's a simple matter of drag-and-drop the files into a folder on your desktop.

OK, back to video tape:
● Choose DV Pal standard 48kHz or DV Pal 16:9 widescreen as a
suitable setting for your software.
● Go up to File and down to Capture; or Video Capture; or Import;
depending on which software you're using. Some software will
automatically show you your footage in the monitor; others will
launch a separate capture monitor; either way there will be a
Capture or Record button and a settings editor to allow you to
drop the captured elements somewhere you'll be able to find them
again.

For a more in-depth explanation of video capture you'll have to
refer to the online guide or accompanying handbook of the
software you've chosen to work with. And if it still doesn't work:
quit out of the software, unplug the camera, plug it back in, switch
it on and re-launch. That usually does it.

Right, back to editing. As soon as it's launched you'll be confronted
with three main windows probably surrounded by numerous,
overly colourful and rather bewildering little buttons, symbol
panels and numbers. Forget about all of them for a minute. Take a
deep breath and calm yourself. OK. It's not as bad as it looks. Top
left or top right there'll be a monitor (like a small TV screen) and
under it, controls just like on your CD or DVD player.

Next to it will be the project bin. It will be empty and so may seem
meaningless. This is where you will drop your film assets. If you're
reading this at a machine with editing software on board why not
do this now so you can see what it does to them.

Importing your assets into the project:
● Go up to File on the menu bar at the top of the screen and then
down to Import.
● Navigate to the desktop of your machine where you will have
placed all of your assets neatly into a folder labelled Film_Project.
● Inside this folder you will have placed subfolders labelled: Voice,
Video, Stills, etc.
● If you haven't done this yet go and do it now, it'll make life
much easier later on.

It doesn't matter what size your pictures, video clips or audio files are at this stage the software will convert it all for you and place clips on a black background. Just try to ensure your video capture and still photography is the highest quality your device can manage; although I wouldn't bother your head about HD (High Definition) right now.

Ok, you can now import the assets you need to build your film and once the machine has finished crunching all this info and is able to show you what you've imported, you're ready to find out what the bottom half of the screen does.

The Timeline

This is the beautiful bit.

● Grab a voice recording, then drag and drop it into an audio timeline in the timeline window.

● Now grab a still image or piece of video and drop that into the video timeline above the audio.

● Be aware that video clips will bring in their own audio automatically but, if the audio isn't needed, there is one of those many buttons situated to the left of the track which will have an audio symbol - a speaker or such like - and if you click on that it will turn the audio track off.

● Click Play on the monitor controls and a play head will glide from left to right playing what's in the timeline.

● Click and drag the play head and you can scrub back and forth, purely for fun or to accurately position it at a point where your next clip should come in. By hovering your mouse pointer over the end of a clip on the timeline, a bracket will appear that allows you to shorten or lengthen the clip using your mouse.

● Click to highlight, then drag the clip to position it at just the right moment.

● Click on the clip and press the Backspace button on your keyboard to delete it; up to File and down to Undo, to do just that if you get into a muddle. Working on the clips in the timeline doesn't affect their original form either in the project bin or in your folder on the desktop so, as long as you remember to save a copy of your work into that desktop folder at regular intervals, you can work away to your heart's content by trying the "I wonder what this button does" method of learning, and resorting to the Undo control each time you feel you've blown it, but all safe in the knowledge that your original assets remain uncorrupted on the desktop.

The ability to drop in and work on a clip where you like in the timeline is called "non-linear video editing". In its most basic form, there you have it. There's a lot more to learn but there's no need to bore you with it all right now. You've enough here to get you started. Just play around with it and you'll soon pick it up. There's a lot of jargon talked about computers but they're just a tool you have to learn to use. Just like a hammer but not as durable.

Get that Story Out!

To get your finished film out of the software and converted into a compressed useable format:

● Go up to File and down to Export/Share. Now choose from Web or Full Quality Export and the software will crunch out a compressed file ready for sending over the internet or burning to DVD.

● There are lots of numbers involved in the exporting of final projects but the most relevant are the sizes of the export. Generally 320x240 pixels for web use (YouTube size) or 720x576 for broadcast (TV size).

● It's always worth exporting the larger of the two for your own archive so that you have a good quality copy of your film for future reference.

And Finally...

If you hover your mouse over any of the buttons, after three seconds a little tab will pop up telling you what it is. There are also help buttons in your menu bar that actually can be helpful and lots of online forums to answer some of the more persistent problems. But the best way of learning is by making sure all your assets are in the right place and saved and then just exploring, safe in the knowledge that whatever strange mess you make after clicking some odd collection of buttons, you can always go up to File and down to Undo. Usually this function allows you to step back at least 50 steps. But if you can make 50 mistakes in a row without noticing perhaps it's time for a screen break.

And rest.

Sharing Digital Stories

So, the Digital Stories are finished. The next step is to get them out there so people can see them, as Gareth Morlais explains.

Some people decide to make a story about something so personal or sensitive that they'd rather not share it. That's fine of course. For many though, part of the joy of telling their story is in having it heard and seen. Here are just three ways to share...

1. Make sure everyone who makes a story burns a DVD to take home with them. As a souvenir, they could also make a DVD containing all the stories made by everyone who attended that workshop.

2. It's great if every workshop finishes with a screening where every story made at that workshop is projected onto a huge screen in a darkened room full of the storytellers, their friends and families. This is a fantastic finale to the workshop.

3. Upload your stories onto the web: your own project website, video sharing sites like You Tube and don't forget to send a copy to BBC Wales too. Before publication, have another look at Lisa Jones' good practice section of this set of guides and check that the author and everyone identifiable in their story are happy for it to be on the web. Ask parents or guardians of children and young people too.

However many people you help to make a Digital Story, good luck, have fun and remember, it's fun to share.

Introduction to Digital Storytelling forms

This next section looks at various forms of Digital Storytelling - in the form of a set of 'Recipe Cards' - to give you ideas of ways of helping people to tell different kinds of Digital Stories by Lisa Heledd.

As Vaneigen said: "There are more truths in 24 hours of a person's life than in all the Philosophies" (* see below). Digital stories are a way of uncovering and sharing moments of our lives with one another. These moments may be the life-changing, the absurd, the beautiful, the sad or the silly. Digital stories have a scrapbook aesthetic. They are narrated by the storyteller and illustrated using the ingredients from their own archive; photographs, video on mobile phone, family albums, sacred stuff from shoeboxes.

Over a number of years Capture Wales developed and honed a strict form of Digital Storytelling. In a 4-5 day workshop ten participants come together to learn the skills to put together a short film of around two minutes with around twenty pictures accompanying a 250 word script. Daniel Meadows (see ** below) describes these Digital Stories as multimedia sonnets. And he's right. There is an incredible power in stories that are this considered and this concise.

There is also an immense power in the workshop process. The days are intense and long, but the investment of time and energy is hugely rewarded by the skills learned, the friends made and the pride felt by the time you get to the screening on the final day of the workshop. And that's just the staff!

Over the last couple of years we've been working on developing different ways of gathering Digital Stories. Once we really understood what it was that worked in the standard form, we set about trying to create different models that could be adapted depending on the specific demands of a project or a group of participants.

At the heart of Digital Storytelling are some key principles that we try and continue to work to as we keep developing new models.

A Strong Story
This may seem obvious. But it's the one thing that can easily be left unchecked when other factors demand more attention. No matter what the content of the story, our job as facilitators is to help that person tell that story in the best way possible for them.

That may be through a script or a spontaneous narrative but it's the sparks that we offer people that are important. A longer workshop has the wonderful opening story circle day, which is more of a fire than a spark to help people find and shape their script. But if a story circle is not an option, it's the choice of spark that needs to be carefully thought about. It may be a question, it may be a photograph, it may be a treasured object, but invariably there needs to be a seed planted from which the story can grow.

Transferral of Skills
To pass over the skills for people be able to make their own films is a wonderfully empowering thing. For many it may be the first opportunity to come into contact with such technology. For others it may be second nature to touch type but they'd never dreamt of making films about their lives using a computer.

In a time when there is still such a great number of people digitally excluded, there needs to be models that can encourage people to benefit from the social media tools that are available. It may be through tutorials that lead to a real understanding of the technology or it may be but a taste of what is possible, but Digital Storytelling is a perfect tool to prompt a desire to get out of the 'digital divide'.

Ownership
This is so important. The person telling the story must feel they have complete control over what they have shared. Even if the person themself isn't editing the piece, it should be a collaboration and the storyteller should always have the final sign off. Without this then it's a slippery slope to old fashioned smash and grab journalism.

With these principles in mind we have worked on creating different forms of Digital Storytelling. Some of the models were thought up to try and find more effective ways to gather contemporary stories about today's matters rather than anecdotal or reflective stories. Some are designed to fit shorter time scales so to be accessible to more people with different needs and commitments. Some were inspired by a person we met or an event we attended. Whatever the inspiration each has, at its core, a desire to help people share their stories in an effective and elegant way.

References:

"There are more truths in 24 hours of a person's life than in all the Philosophies" is a quote from Vaneigen, R The Revolution of Everyday Life, trans Donald Nicholson-Smith Rebel press 1967, 1994

** *Daniel Meadows was Creative Director with Capture Wales from its inception in 2001 until 2006. His website has a host of wonderful stories, musings and tutorials: http://www.photobus.com*

In The Frame
by Lisa Heledd

Concept
Photography is a wonderfully creative tool for drawing out the big
and the little things that make up a person's life. By responding to
a set of themes, participants are asked to think creatively and
abstractly about what is around them in their every day.

Time
- Research and preparation - 1 day.
- Workshop & Post Production - 1 day.

Resources
- Disposable cameras.
- Image scanner
- Voice recorder.
- Computer with software for audio recording, video editing, etc.

Output
- One minute Digital Stories.
- Website with photo and transcript.
- Slide shows.
- Photography Exhibition.

Process

1. Recruit participants, could be an established group such as a youth club or a group of individuals.

2. Choose around eight themes appropriate to participants. If you are working with a group of asylum seekers then you may give themes such as 'home' 'friendship' 'conflict' 'Wales' as these may be good sparks to understand how they feel about their new environment and experience without putting them on the spot in an interview.

3. Arrange an hour meeting to go through the project, hand out the themes. Show examples (see links below) and give out the cameras.

4. Ask the participants to take three pictures on each theme and invite them to write a note to remind them of why they took that picture should they want to.

5. Collect the cameras after a week or so.

6. Develop and print the photographs and invite each participant to spend 30 minutes with you to go through their pictures.

7. Record their responses to seeing their pictures. Encourage them to discuss the bigger themes that come out from the pictures to gain an understanding of that person.

8. Edit the audio into a two minute piece.

9. Invite the participants back together to edit their photographs to their audio.

10. Publish online on your own website, video sharing site, etc.

Adaptations:

This form is now tried and tested and can easily be adapted to fit the needs of a project. 'If I Were an AM' is a great example of how to make the project into something political and yet still personal and effective . The flexibility of the themes is the key.

You can use digital cameras, however - having piloted both methods - there is a real benefit to using disposable cameras as there's an excitement around seeing the photographs when they've been developed which is lost when working with digital cameras. And that excitement is there no matter what the age of the participant you're working with. Having worked with a group of young people who rarely engage with education at any level who then turned up early to collect their photographs and be recorded, it became clear that the disposable camera is by far the best choice.

The editing can be done by the facilitator if workshop facility or time commitments mean the photographer can't. This has been the case with previous In The Frames when working with people who are homeless and people from the travelling community. As long as it's in collaboration, the results can still be very effective.

Benefits
● Excellent project if participants are not able to commit to a time frame easily.
● Incorporates creative thinking and an understanding of new media.
● Helps uncover hidden stories and spark debate.
● Can be used with any age group.

Links:
If I Were an AM:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southeast/sites/ifiwereanam/

More examples of In The Frame:
http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southeast/sites/intheframe_index/
http://www.photomarathon.co.uk/
http://www.lomography.com/blog/?id=1276
http://www.learningtoloveyoumore.com/
http://www.simonhoegsberg.com/thethoughtproject.html

In A Flash

by Lisa Heledd

Concept

There is always a picture that we look at a little longer than the others in the album; the hugely important moment that's gone in a flash but recorded for posterity in a photograph. It may be a blurry, faded photograph of a wedding day, a Polaroid picture of a first car or a sharp new digital print of the new grandchild. A perfect way into our stories is through these captured moments.

Time
- Research and preparation - one day.
- Workshop & post production - one day .

Resources
- Digital camera.
- Voice recorder.
- Computer with software for audio recording, video editing, etc.
- Blank DVDs.

Output
- One minute Digital Stories.
- Web pages with photo and transcript.

Process

1. Recruit participants for a one day workshop.
2. Ask them to bring along their favourite photograph.
3. Sit together with a cup of tea and play a couple of ice-breaker games. (See links below).
4. Once everyone's had a laugh and relaxed, the facilitator should start by showing their favourite photograph and what it means to them to set up the kind of descriptions and detail that are most effective and to put everyone at ease. Then in turn ask each of the participants to show their photograph to the group and explain the significance of the picture to them.
5. Each participant is given time to write a short script of around 100 words to reflect the story behind the picture with feedback from the facilitator.

6. Work with the contributors to refine and record their script.
7. Take three photographs of each contributor. Title photograph – close up of contributor's name and title written by contributor on White A4. Full shot of contributor with picture. Close up of picture in the hand of the contributor.
8. Import audio and photos into each computer and into the editing software.
9. Briefly explain and show how you have imported the ingredients of the film and how to put the three photos to the voice before showing each contributor.
10. Get each contributor to sit at their computer and listen to their voice and follow a tutorial whereby they fit their three photographs to their voice in an appropriate and elegant way using basic editing software. Burn a DVD and upload to the web.

Adaptations:
Could record the story circle element and then edit the stories from that recording if there are any literacy issues.

Can be contemporary photographs if archive isn't appropriate (for example with homeless people or young people who may not have pictures they treasure). Invite people to borrow digital cameras over the course of a few days and ask them to choose their favourite and explain why.

Once the story has been made by the original storyteller, their families/friends could then be invited to share their stories from that photograph online. For example if the picture is a family Christmas meal and the story is from the mother talking about it being the year the turkey was burnt to bits and they had to eat frozen pies. The children in the picture could add their story about how they thought it was the best Christmas lunch because they laughed so much or they'd recall the robot that was in the background that was their favourite present ever. Could engage with family from all over the world in this way. A great way to gather a layered story and to encourage the storyteller to continue their online experience.

Benefits
● Can all be done in one day or can easily be broken up into different sessions.
● Storytelling and digital skills.
● The editing is so simple with only three photographs that it's a good introduction to the technology. It would be a short part of the day but very satisfying as they see their story turn into a film in an undaunting way.
● Not tied down to location which means that even people who don't think they have a connection to a location still feel they have something to offer as individuals.
● Can be used with any age group.

Links:
Ice breaker games:
http://www.funandgames.org/Games_icebreakers.html
http://www.group-games.com/
http://www.icebreakers.ws/

This Is Where
by Lisa Heledd

Concept
Using photographs as a spark it's possible to create an alternative map of a place through the stories of the people who live there.

"This is where I had my first kiss"
"My father taught me to fish in that river"
"I've walked the park every day for 60 years"

Insights like these may seem insignificant to the people who harbour them, but these stories are fascinating glimpses into a community. They bring a location to life.

Time
● Less than an hour of the storytellers' time and two to five days of facilitators' time, including set-up and wrapping.
● This is a drop-in event at a community centre / library / school.

Resources
● Set of local photographs.
● Digital camera.
● Voice recorder.
● Computer with software for audio recording, video editing, etc.

Output
● Produce website / blog.
● An alternative map of the area with links to the stories from that area.
● A picture of each location and a brief description of the location heads the page. Underneath that is a photograph of the contributor, the audio piece and a link to a transcript of the voice. People could then post responses to the entries including their own 'this is where' stories.

Process
1. Take around ten photographs of an area's landmarks (church, school, park, playground, shops) and between five and ten more detailed shots of these areas (altar, school gates, park benches, merry-go-round, shop-counter)
2. Display these photographs on a visual loop on a computer screen / have printouts / postcards.
3. As people come in, draw attention to the photographs and ask if any of these places mean anything to them.
4. Record the contributor talking about a specific location for about five minutes.
5. Take a photograph of the contributor.
6. Edit the audio down to an appropriate length.
7. Invite storyteller to see and approve the final piece and possibly learn how to put it online themselves.

Benefits
● Excellent way of being involved in a community event, such as a village fete or festival.
● Can involve a large number of people in a short amount of time.
● Good tool for research and recruitment for other / future projects.
● Effective taster of the digital world.
● Stories about a locality are of interest to others from that same area and therefore people want to share and be a part of it.
● Instils a sense of pride into a community through positive stories and reflections particularly in areas where it may be easy to be negative about current problems.
● The website could continue to be managed by the community or become a time capsule to be proud of.

Story Walks
by Lisa Heledd

Concept
From the corner shop to the school gate, the local street, village or town is home to so many of our stories. But we're normally in too much of a rush to catch a bus or meet a friend to hear them. By walking and photographing familiar places those stories flood back and breathe life into the buildings and park benches others may have never noticed before. By telling these stories to those we don't know so well we may come to understand a little better the lives of the people who share our streets.

Time
● Two two-hour sessions for each storyteller.
● Around one or two weeks for the facilitators to plan and complete.

Resources
● Digital cameras.
● Portable audio recorder.
● Audio editing and image manipulation software.
● Storage disc.
● Internet domain and server space.

Output
● Digital stories using a series of photographs and the edited narrative.
● Website / blog.
● Each participant could have a page with all of their pictures and stories. People could post responses to those stories / add their own stories to those pictures.
Or
● Could be a map of the area, and when you click on a certain area all the possible stories for that places comes up.

Process
1. Bring a group together.
2. Give a tutorial about how to use a digital camera for those who are not confident.
3. Invite the group to walk around their town with their cameras.
4. As the facilitator you should encourage conversation about the area.
5. When they see places that have a significance to them they should take a photograph. (The church where they married, the school their children attend, the corner shop where they get their paper).
6. The pictures are downloaded and put into a folder for each of the participants.
7. Each person is asked to review their photographs and is recorded sharing the stories related to them.
8. Edit the audio down and transcribe for each shot.
9. Invite storytellers to learn to edit their pieces and sign off the stories.

Other variations
This could work as an intergenerational project. With the walks being done in pairs of older and younger people. Each sharing stories with one another about that place. Or when the pictures are being reviewed the young person is the one interviewing the older person about the photographs and what those places mean to them.

This could work equally as well with other groups such as asylum seekers and those from the host community and help forge an understanding for their different lives and experiences.

Hi/story project – get a group of people to work together to gather the stories of the area – both old and new. Historical myths, legends, heroes that could easily be mixed in with the true stories of the current myths, legends and heroes of that area.

For example, you could have a legend about King Arthur alongside a story from Mr Evans who is now living in the house he is supposedly have stayed in. Or a hero of the past who saved people from a burning house to Mrs Harries, the primary school teacher who organises the village carnival and never stops smiling.

Could be a wonderful community project that could involve people from different ages and backgrounds. It could live online, instil a collective pride and introduce many people to new technology.

Benefits
● Effective way of getting disparate groups to share stories / understand one another.
● Involves a physical activity.
● Can involve a large number of people in a short amount of time.
● Effective taster of the digital world.
● Stories about a locality are of interest to others from that same area and therefore people want to share and be a part of it.
● Instils a sense of pride into a community through positive stories and reflections, particularly in areas where it may be easy to be negative about current problems.
● The website could continue to be managed by the community or become a time capsule to be proud of.

Inspirations:
http://murmurtoronto.ca/
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Psychogeography
http://www.storyquest.org.uk/families/

Lisa's preparing further Recipe Cards such as:
Digital Storytelling Workshop (four days) and Shoebox Stories (two days). Please check www.bbc.co.uk/digitalstorytelling for updates

Links

We've designed the guidance here to be fairly generic, so it'll be more applicable to a wider section of the Digital Storytelling community. The downside of that is that specific software-related info needs to be looked for elsewhere. The same goes for inspiration, stories to watch, history or Digital Storytelling and more contextual research.

Adobe Kids' Club tutorials
http://www.adobe.com/education/digkids

Center for Digital Storytelling
http://www.storycenter.org/index1.html

Current TV video-making tutorials
http://current.com/make

Dana Atchley's Next Exit
http://www.nextexit.com/nextexit/nextframeset.html

Daniel Meadows's Photobus site has some excellent and much more detailed guides to making Digital Stories using different kinds of software and equipment. There are tutorials here about writing your script,
How to make Digital Stories using iMovie HD in Apple's iLife '06 and an Adobe Premiere Pro v.1.0 for Windows XP tutorial.
http://www.photobus.co.uk/index.php?id=9&gallery=wish_you_were_here.flv

Digital Storytelling: A Tutorial in 10 Easy Steps by J.D. Lasica
http://ourmedia.org/learning-center/multimedia/digital-storytelling-tutorial

Highland Lives tutorials
http://www.bbc.co.uk/scotland/highlandlives/flash/video_tutorials.shtml

Story Corps
http://www.storycorps.net