Using Digital Storytelling to Connect in New Ways with Each Other and to Effect Change in Our Communities

Applied Storytelling

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Storytelling is the intentional sharing of a narrative in words and actions for the benefit of both the listener and the teller.

Stories are a fundamental way people structure information... Stories talk to the gut while information talks to the mind.

Stories endure and assist sense-making.

People retain and use information presented through story longer than through traditional education methods.
Why Stories and Climate Change?

- Everyone has many stories to tell.
- Listening is hard.
- People see, hear, and perceive the world in different ways.
- Climate change is a big issue that lacks sociological data that people can relate to.
- Story development gives us an opportunity to engage emotional connection to content and to test out our ideas and feelings about socio-economic related climate change issues and to learn more about them.
- Stories show us patterns and help us make connections.
- Sharing stories can lead to empowerment, keeping us from hopelessness, transforming our insights into engagement.
What is Digital Storytelling?

Digital Storytelling combines narrative with digital content, including images, sound and video. Technology has the potential for being a powerful instrument of creativity.

“We, as information consumers, are becoming increasingly sophisticated at discerning the authenticity of information. In general, we prefer the frank admission of responsibility that the first-person voice provides to the authoritative, seemingly neutral, but nevertheless obscure stance of the third person.” – Joe Lambert

It is not digital spectacle. It is far more intimate and participatory, yet with deep and lasting power.
The Pacific nation of Kiribati is negotiating to buy land in Fiji so it can move islanders under threat from rising sea levels, in what could be the first climate-induced relocation of a country.
WE CAN GET MORE SAND FROM THE DROUGHT REGIONS!

CLIMATE CHANGE EVIDENCE

AND MORE EMPTY BAGS FROM CONSERVATIVE THINK TANKS.
Cartoons from http://sei-ciel.org/
Sample Stories

“Why is it so difficult to live in accordance with one’s values when it comes to pro-environmental behavior?” by Michelle McCauley

“Beautiful Struggle” by Nehanda Imara as part of Ditching Dirty Diesel Campaign
http://vimeo.com/20346139

“First Person Singular” by three high school students from Kwigillingok, Alaska
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T4qPa2xIU4o
Owning your insights
Sharing your story
Assembling your story
Hearing your story
Seeing your story
Finding the moment
Owning your emotions
Warning Labels for Coal Power Plants

http://plantedcity.tumblr.com
Ashtabula coal docks along Lake Erie
drc.library.bgsu.edu
Essential Questions

- What is my relationship with the natural world?
- Can I tell a story related to sustainability or lack of sustainability (economic, environmental or social)?
- How is climate change related to me?
- How has climate change changed my life?
- How has climate change affected people I care about?
- How can I frame it in order to connect with others?
- How is it personal?

- Why this story?
- Why now?
We do have stories to tell about Climate Change even if you don't believe it is caused by human influences because we all have to adapt to change in our lives, whether related to loss of jobs, relocations, seeing weather patterns change, health concerns, disease, quality of life issues, etc.

- You could tell the story of a mentor or hero in your life
- Tell of a time of struggle when something just didn’t work
- Describe a time when you felt really scared
- Describe a time you felt like a child in nature
- Tell a story of loss
- Or tell a story of a birth of someone or something
- And maybe we can discover some other stories...
Who would be the Audience for this kind of workshop?

- Climate change advocates and scientists
- Students and faculty of science and technology studies
- Supporting environmental and sociological organizations
- Museums and non-biased public information disseminators on climate change issues

Format would follow Center for Digital Storytelling outline

- 3-5 day concentrated workshop
- Supportive story circle and individual coaching
- Technical support and resources
Needed Resources

- Digital Storytelling Facilitation Training
- Funding support

- Develop specific implementation strategy from University and commissioned projects - Unit Plan and Rubric samples?

- Building a team for facilitation: in story coaching, an entire range of issues, both technical and emotional must be considered.

- Building a team and framework for sharing beyond the story circle.
Engagement in the digital storytelling process re-engages ourselves as avid learners and inquirers and supports validation of our experiences.

The story circle environment can be a trigger for moving conversations to places of openness and exchange… a more empathic connectedness with others de-polarizing a sensitive topic, building community as well as personal growth.

Telling stories is an effective way to teach, persuade, and even understand ourselves.
Sharing stories can lead to positive change.

Personal narratives can touch viewers deeply, moving them to reflect on their own experiences, modify their behavior, treat others with greater compassion, speak out about injustice, and become involved in civic and political life.

Whether online, in social media or local communities, or at the institutional/policy level, the sharing of stories has the power to make a real difference. We need to tell better stories.