Digital Storytelling: The Process and Product

Building Community Through New Media

by

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CHAPTER 1:   Why Digital Storytelling and Marketing?

I have always been intrigued by people and their stories. As an undergraduate student I majored in broadcast journalism at Kent State University. Like any journalism student I learned the basics: how to ask probing questions, how to verify information, how to find sources, tips on interviewing, reporting protocol, doing research on the subject, and how to be an effective listener. All of these lessons were valuable, but two incidents really made me ponder the idea of stories and their power.

In the summer of 2003 I worked as a news intern on the assignment desk at Cleveland's WJW Fox 8 News. One morning I received a phone call from a woman who lived in Warren, Ohio. She wanted the station to send a reporter to cover her experience of alleged police brutality at the hands of Warren police. The woman shared her story through a flurry of tears and intense emotion. When we ended our phone call I remembered thinking, "So, what happens after we send a reporter to Warren, if we even send a reporter to Warren? Is just telling a person's story enough?"

Unfortunately, the station did not cover her story, but the wheels in my mind were turning. For the first time, I seriously reflected on the power of storytelling. The woman from Warren believed that her calling Cleveland's Fox 8 News to share her story with a larger audience might help her to receive justice and to spark change. That experience also motivated me to think about the role of journalists and storytellers in our society. I realized that journalists and storytellers, of all sorts, play an important role in society.

They provide information; and it is through providing information, in the form of stories, that the greater public gains knowledge that it is individuals can choose to use in order to transform themselves and to make informed decisions. Whether these stories take the form of daily news, a great novel, a biography, a movie, a sitcom, talk show topics or even a reality TV series, stories create shared knowledge and the possibility of community. This deep reflection confirmed my decision to become a journalist.

The next experience that moved me to pursue storytelling occurred in the summer of 2004. I was invited to speak before an audience of about 300 people at a Buddhist conference in Westin, Florida. As a new member of the lay Buddhist organization, The Soka Gakkai International-USA, I had had a number of experiences with the transformative power and effects of Buddhism in my life. During the conference I spoke about how practicing Nichiren Buddhism helped me reconnect with several of my siblings whom I had not seen in more than 15 years and how it was helping me to confront the pain of having been sexually abused as a child for eight years. I received a standing ovation for my speech. Various members of the audience later came to me with words of encouragement and appreciation for my having had the courage to share my story, especially since some of the audience members were also survivors of sexual abuse. Once again, I was able to feel and witness the power, and impact, of one person telling her story.

With these combined experiences, I knew for sure that I wanted to be a journalist who helped others to tell powerful stories. I also awakened a desire to use my own life

story as a means of inspiration for others. Upon completion of my bachelor's degree in 2008, I set out to find a way to enhance my skill set as a storyteller, while also learning how to become an entrepreneur and market myself as a storyteller. During my search, I found the new and quickly expanding field of Digital Storytelling. I also found the Kent State University Liberal Studies Masters program that would allow me to study in more than one discipline.

"By bringing people together to share stories and make artifact out of transformative narratives, we are able to stop and take stock, and find ways to insert these snapshots of existence into our daily dialogues. This is why digital storytelling workshops never get old. Like all healthy practices, storytelling renews and changes everyone involved in the process."

Joe Lambert – Director of The Center For Digital Storytelling – Berkeley, California

CHAPTER 2:   What Is Digital Storytelling and How Is It Being Used?

Storytelling is as old and varied as human-kind itself. Stories have been, and continue to be, used in every facet of the human experience. We use them to inform, educate, remember, challenge, inspire, contemplate, entertain, and explore. From myths and parables, historic/cultural preservation, to religious guidebooks, movies, news broadcasts, talk shows, best-selling novels, daytime or nighttime dramas, or reality TV shows, stories shape our daily interactions and experiences.

Although stories and the art form of storytelling have existed since the beginning of time, new techniques for more impactful and effective storytelling continue to be developed. One of the more recent advances in storytelling is *digital storytelling*; and although it is still a relatively young process and art form, digital storytelling is emerging worldwide in a multitude of disciplines.

The Center for Digital Storytelling, now with offices in Berkeley, California, Denver, Colorado, Washington D.C., and Canada, continues to lead the way.

What Is Digital Storytelling?

Digital storytelling (DST) is a process of using combined digital tools, like a computer, video footage, still photographs, music, narration, and editing software to help ordinary people tell thought and emotion-provoking first-person short stories. These short stories are also focused on a particular topic or point of view and can be used for a variety of purposes. According to Daniel Weinshenker, the Rocky Mountain/Midwest Regional

Director at The Center for Digital Storytelling in Denver, Colorado, there is a clear distinction between the process of digital storytelling and the product of digital storytelling, which is a digital story. Digital storytelling is a process in which the person living the story also makes the story, literally.

Digital stories, however, are the short first-person video narratives produced as a result of the digital storytelling process. Weinshenker also explains another distinction between digital stories and other types of videos. "There's nothing slick about digital stories," Weinshenker says. "It is rough feeling that sets digital storytelling apart from polished video with voice-overs and make-up. That's what makes digital storytelling reliable versus a video with a corporate agenda."

Then there are digital storytellers. Digital storytellers, as defined by The Center for Digital Storytelling, are persons who have a desire to document life experience, ideas, or feelings through the use of story and digital media. Digital storytellers are usually people with little to no prior experience in the realm of video production, but, have time to spend a few days attending a workshop and developing a story with creative and technical assistance from compassionate, highly experienced facilitators.

So, where might one go to learn the original, founding methodologies of the digital storytelling process? You could go to Berkeley, California, Denver, Colorado, or Washington D.C. and take a workshop at The Center for Digital Storytelling.

The Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) is an international non-profit organization that provides training, research, and project development to people,

organizations, NGOs, health care providers, corporations, social agencies, and individualswithin the United States and internationally who want to tell meaningful stories. The CDS also provides DST workshops and information on DST related resources. This instruction includes showing workshop participants how to utilize the organizations' founding principles and digital storytelling methodologies, to unearth individual, authentic stories that may later be used or shared in a variety of contexts. But the CDS did not emerge in a vacuum.

History

Digital storytelling actually began as a movement in the 1990s among a group of artists and producers in Berkeley, California. They combined traditional oral storytelling with easy-to- use digital technology. Dana Atchley and his collaborator, Joe Lambert, were the first pioneers of the digital storytelling movement. Atchley first began teaching digital story production workshops in 1993 at The American Film Institute in California. He later went on to work as a consultant for corporations like Apple, Coke, Adobe and others, on how to produce compelling stories that would appeal to various consumer audiences. By 1995, Atchley had also started a Digital Storytelling Film Festival.

Atchley died in 2000. A link to Atchley sharing his own story, *Next Exit,* can be found on The Center for Digital Storytelling's website at: www.storycenter.org.

Joe Lambert, who continued expanding Atchley's method for teaching production of digital stories, founded the first Center for Digital Storytelling located in Berkley, California in the 1990s as well. Lambert, with the help of others, also later went on   to add several additional CDS offices in Denver, Colorado, Washington D.C., and Canada.

Today, the digital storytelling movement has grown far beyond the San Francisco Bay area of California across the globe, including to other countries like China.

In 2006, *The International Journal of Cultural Studies* published an article on the commercialization of digital storytelling in China and how it could impact various aspects of Chinese life.

> The opportunities for DST here are now obvious: to contribute to the local communities' well-being through digital arts education, to help Beijing residents engage in the re-identification of a digital Beijing, and to enrich the concept of People's Olympics through citizens' storytelling about the local culture, social practices and their passion for Olympics. (Qiongli 388)

Digital Storytelling: The Process

As the process of digital storytelling continues to expand from its early origins in Berkeley, California, it is important to to expand from its early origins in Berkeley, California, it is important to understand the difference between the process of DST and the product of digital stories especially since some of DST's originators believe that many of the digital stories now present in the world do not uniformly incorporate the original, founding methodologies of the digital storytelling process, but are lots of variations outside of the model used and taught at The Center for Digital Storytelling. To be even more specific, the originating and current CDS methodology of the digital storytelling is taught as a group process and experience. In fact, The Center for Digital Storytelling puts emphasis on digital storytelling as a group process, particularly for the

value that that process imparts to all of the participants.

Lambert explains the value of digital storytelling as a group process, reminiscent of the "living traditions of our Native peoples and their ceremonies," in his book *Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community*. He writes, "Today, what we know is that when you gather people in a room, and listen, deeply listen, to what they are saying, and also, by example, encourage others to listen, magic happens. The magic is simple. And we do not have many safe places to be heard. Sharing personal and reflective storytelling in a group is a privilege," (Lambert 86).

At the CDS, the group process is the most important aspect, for it is through the process that listeners and storytellers are transformed in some way, whether it by telling their own story, perhaps a different and much deeper one than they originally intended, or by listening to someone else tell a story and being able to relate and learn.

The digital storytelling process, as developed by Dana Atchley and Joe Lambert, is comprised of seven essential elements, which DST co-founder Joe Lambert also discusses in detail in his book entitled: *Digital Storytelling Capturing Lives, Creating Community* .

The seven steps of DST are:

1) Own Your Insights

2) Own Your Emotion

3) Find The Moment

4) See Your Story

5) Hear Your Story

6) Assemble Your Story

7) Share Your Story

In his book, Lambert breaks down and succinctly defines each of these seven steps. The seven steps, Lambert says, are a journey. He also discusses the methodology of how he and his team of DST workshop facilitators guide lay persons, non-profit, corporate, education, and health professionals and other members of the global community through the process of creating a digital story over the course of a three-day workshop. The initial entrance into this process of story revelation is what Lambert calls the "Story Circle." At The Center for Digital Storytelling, the "Story Circle" is a safe space in which workshop participants and facilitators introduce themselves and begin sharing their own stories.

Lambert also explains that the "Story Circle' is unique because it allows an opportunity for both the storyteller and the story audience to learn and reflect. Upon completion of the "Story Circle," workshop participants are given some time to brainstorm on their own about the story they would like to tell. Next, facilitators guide workshop participants through the seven steps of DST.

Owning Your Insights

First, the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) team helps workshop participants to indentify and clarify what story each participant wants to tell.

CDS facilitators help with this step by asking questions like: "What's the story you want to tell?," "What do you think your story means?," "Why this story?," "Why now?" and "Who is it for?." Lambert summarizes the essence of this first step when he writes:

> Finding and clarifying what a story is really about isn't easy. It's a journey in which a storyteller's insight or wisdom can evolve, even revealing an unexpected outcome. Helping storytellers find and own their deeper insights is the part of the journey we enjoy the most…finding and clarifying stories helps people to understand the context of their lives. (Lambert 30)

Own Your Emotion

The second step in the process and journey of creating a digital story is for the storyteller to identify the emotions in his or her story. The CDS team leads workshop participants through questions like: "As you shared your story or story idea, what emotions did you experience?," "Can you identify at what points in sharing your story you felt certain emotions?," "Which emotions will best help the audience understand the journey contained within your story?" and "Can you convey your emotions without directly using feeling words or relying on clichés to describe them?"

Lambert summarizes the importance of this step when he writes: "When we reflect on the emotions within our stories, we realize that they can be complex, and with this realization we often times discover deeper layers of a story's meaning," (Lambert 33).

Find The Moment

The third step in the process is identifying a single moment that the storyteller can demonstrate his or her own personal insight. In order to facilitate this understanding, the CDS team continues asking the workshop participants questions like: "What was the moment things changed?," "Were you aware of it at the time?," "If not, what was the moment you became aware that things had changed?" and "Can you describe the moment in detail?" Lambert summarizes the importance of this step when he writes: "Compelling storytellers construct scenes to show how change happened, what they were like before the change, and what they were like after…By building a scene around a moment of change, the storyteller is "showing" rather than "telling" (Lambert 35).

See Your Story

The fourth step in the process of creating a digital story is for the storyteller to choose what visuals he or she will use to tell his or her story. The CDS team guides storytellers in this part of the workshop by asking questions like: "What images come to mind when recalling the moment of change?," "What images come to mind for other parts of the story?," "Why this image?," "What is it conveying to you?," " Is the meaning explicit or implicit?," "Does it have more than one meaning?," "If so, can you describe the multiple meanings?," " Would the audience be able to understand the story's meaning without this image?" and " Is this image conveying another layer of meaning?"

 Lambert underscores the significance of choosing strong visuals when he writes:

> Well-chosen images act as mediators between the narrative and the
> audience…audiences enjoy stories that lead them to a metaphorical river of

meaning and require them to "jump in" in order to make their own connections. Images can grab the hands of the audience and show them the river's immensity. And images have the power to reveal something to the audience that words just can't say. (Lambert 39)

Hear Your Story

The fifth step in the digital storytelling process is to identify how the storyteller will use his or her voice to tell his or her story. This step also involves the storyteller identifying any other sounds he or she may use to add to the message of his or her story. In this step of the process, CDS facilitators help workshop participants understand the importance of using a natural, authentic self-voice to narrate their stories; the emphasis is on encouraging participants to use the same kind of voice that they use to speak to a close friend. CDS workshop facilitators also ask participants to consider whether any other sounds like music or natural sound will add to or distract from their stories. Lambert underscores the significance of using the storyteller's voice and/or other forms of sound when he writes:

> The recorded voice of the storyteller telling their story is what makes what we call a "digital story" a digital story--not a music video or narrated slideshow. By this point in the process, the emotional tone of the story has been identified, and sound is one of the best ways to convey that tone through the way the voice-over is performed, the words that are spoken, and the ambient sound and music that work with the narrative. (Lambert 30-40)

Assemble Your Story

The sixth step in the process is putting everything together. This step is also comprised of several other steps which Lambert discusses individually, in his book as well. The sub-steps of assembling a digital story are: spreading out all the storyteller's notes and images, writing a script, and making a storyboard. CDS workshop facilitators continue asking participants questions to help them formulate a story structure. Some of the questions that CDS workshop facilitators ask are: "How are you structuring the story?," "And, within that structure, how are the layers of visual and audio narratives working together?," "Where do you start?," "At what point in the story will it appear?," "Is it at the beginning, middle, or end, or is it divided up at different points throughout the story?" and "What other details or scenes are necessary to provide context for the moment of change?"

In this step, Lambert also discusses the impact of pacing and the use of silence when crafting story structure. The significance of this step is summarized when Lambert writes: "The assemblage of your entry and exit time isn't easy. However, our best advice is to keep it simple" (Lambert 45).

Share Your Story

The seventh step in the process is identifying who the appropriate audience is for the storyteller's digital story. Also in this step, workshop participants are asked to consider the following questions: "Who is your audience?," "What was your purpose in creating the story?," "Has the purpose shifted during the process of creating the piece?," "In what presentation will your digital story be viewed?" and "What life will the story

have after it's completed?" Lambert also mentions that this step, though listed last, can influence the context of how a digital story will be structured and what specific elements will be used.

Upon completion of producing digital stories, CDS workshop participants have another opportunity to show and discuss their digital stories in a second Story Circles.

Literature Review and Applications of Digital Storytelling

This is an exciting time for digital storytelling! A review of the expanding body of digital storytelling and related literature shows that DST is being used more frequently in a variety of capacities across various disciplines. What began as an artistic effort to help empower ordinary people to tell their stories in more effective ways through the use of technology has grown into a very personalized way to educate, inform, entertain, market and brand.

As mentioned earlier, the digital storytelling movement began with Dana Atchley of the American Film Institute in California during the late 1980s to early 1990s. Although his techniques of combining traditional oral storytelling with digital technology were initially related to performance art, Atchley also introduced this new art form to executives at corporations like Apple, Adobe, and Coca Cola in an effort to help them create more interesting and interactive content for its customers, and as a means to help the companies brand and market themselves. Atchley even commented back then on the possibilities that DST could bring to the corporate world. "The stories that people are telling on the Web around corporate brands are astounding. Knowledge is best shared and remembered through a good story, and companies are just starting to catch on to all that

this can mean" (Stepanek 5).

This was the beginning of digital storytelling's application to marketing. Today more corporations are using DST. Coca Cola now has an entire digital storytelling center in Atlanta, Georgia, dedicated to showcasing customer stories of their experiences with Coke products. As of the year 2000, companies like McDonald's Corporation and Ford Motor Company began "questioning their customers and digging into their corporate archives for customer stories that could be digitized (Stepanek 1).

Oxygen media is another company that has incorporated digital stories from their customers onto the company's website, and, like Coca-Cola, has hired digital storytellers to assemble the story pieces and to post the finished narratives online.

While finding articles about increased corporate use of digital storytelling was a challenge, those that have been using the new art form appreciate DST's positive impact. "By listening and sharing with your customers you're essentially having them co-write your brand. And their doing it for nothing, or next to nothing, says Kit Laybourne, chief of Oxygen's digital storytelling project and husband of Oxygen founder Gerry Laybourne" (Stepanek 3).

Coca-Cola's chief archivist Phil Mooney also speaks of DST's impact. "You simply can't buy advertising as emotionally potent as this. Digital storytelling has helped us pop the lid on a lot of emotional ties that we just hadn't been able to capture in our marketing before the Net" (Stepanek 4-5).

Management consultants like Eric Almquist of Mercer Management Consulting,

Inc. also chime in on the importance of DST in the corporate web/advertising landscape. "Now you need to establish far deeper, interactive connections with customers if you hope to keep them" (Stepanek 2).

Creative Director Frank Campion of Long Haymes Carr ad agency also discussed the impact of DST on his company. "Seeing customers talk about the product and what it means to their lives helps our brand managers and clients learn things about them and their values that they never would have picked up in a PowerPoint presentation of raw facts and numbers"(Stepanek 6).

The numbers on digital storytelling's impact on the corporate websites that use them don't lie either.

> According to Media Metrix, digital stories… help Oxygen site traffic climb an average of 14% immediately after they've posted. Coke, too, says visitors to its Atlanta Center for Digital Storytelling are inspired to add their own stories when they see those of others too, though Coke says it's too early to measure the impact of these tales on the company's image. (Stepanek 5)

A review of DST and related literature also reveals that the discipline of education embraces digital storytelling as a means to better educate learners of all ages.

In *Digital Storytelling: A New Player on the Narrative Field,* educators Marsha Rossiter and Penny A. Garcia discuss the usage of DST in adult education. "More recently digital storytelling has become an emerging pedagogical tool for educators from many fields working with students of all ages, educational backgrounds, and ethnicities" (Garcia and Rossiter42). They go on to say, "…digital storytelling in the context of adult

education is a *narrative* method of facilitating learning," (Garcia and Rossiter 38). Garcia

and Rossiter also discuss three areas of how DST is applied in teaching and learning.

The three areas of application are:

1. Using stories in the classroom to illustrate content and

   emphasize particular points.

2. Creating curriculum in a way that tells a story, and

3. Using digital stories to help the learner make personal or autobiographical

   connections with the content.

Garcia and Rossiter also say that the most popular use of DST in education focuses on

student produced digital stories (Garcia and Rossiter 38). They go on to say that DST, as

a teaching method, is highly effective in stimulating learning and helping learners to

develop voice, creativity, and self-direction.

> What digital storytelling brings to the narrative learning process is the
>
> involvement of images and symbols from historical and popular culture, as well
>
> as from one's own personal life. Not only are our stories open to reinterpretation
>
> and re-contextualization, but so also are more public cultural symbols…Learners
>
> can incorporate not just their own words but also in the process, they can select
>
> and *lay claim* to the visual and musical symbols of the larger cultural narratives of
>
> their world. In other words, digital story-making offers a medium through which
>
> the individual can call the meanings of those symbols when I put a symbol into
>
> *my* story I have claimed it for the purposes of *my* meaning making. This is a
>
> profoundly empowering act. (Garcia and Rossiter 45-46)

Joe Lambert also writes about DST's use in education,

> The leading proponents of educational technology for project-based learning
> identified digital storytelling as one of the most obvious and effective methods
> within a broad cross-section of curricular areas. Writing and voice, reflections on
> civic processes, oral histories, and essays on major subject areas are just some of
> the ways the work has been integrated into curriculums across grade levels.
> (Lambert 99)

Libraries have also begun to explore DST as a tool for information and education. In
2009, various branches within the New York Public Library system partnered with a non-
profit organization to create a youth media and technology festival in which participants
showcased the stories they had created around issues like genocide and human
trafficking. (Czarnecki 17)

> Kelly Czarnecki explains the use of DST in the New York youth media festival in
> *"How Digital Storytelling Builds 21st Century Skills"*.

> The partnership worked to develop participants' knowledge about serious
> contemporary issues like human trafficking and genocide –this was the "story"
> that these students created. Participants then took the information they learned and
> converted it into a digital format that could be presented at the festival. Students
> used media like movies, digital comic books, and audio to engage an audience
> and show what they learned… Taking information in traditional formats
> (newspaper articles, books etc.) and converting it to an interactive media format
> requires both knowledge of the subject at hand and the ability to think about it in a

creative fashion. When students are able to look at their research and translate it

to a story, it becomes more personal and meaningful to them because they've

engaged with it and learned to think about it in a new way. (Czarnecki 17)

In the same article, Czarnecki also discusses the relevance and value that DST provides

in helping DST creators build "21st Century skills for the workforce."

Digital storytelling, no matter how technical it gets, helps to build the basic skills

of reading, writing, and computation. Technical skills are also a fairly obvious

component of digital storytelling… By working in groups, or building stories

through interactive games and social networks, participants in digital storytelling

build organizational skills. Digital storytelling, like traditional storytelling, is an

exercise in communication and a creative process that requires participants to

visualize and use their imaginations. (Czarnecki 18)

Czarnecki, like many others who have been writing about DST, also emphasizes the

value of the variety of ways in which DST can be used. "We've also seen how digital

storytelling can be adapted to different scenarios- museums, academic libraries, schools,

and other environments. With this high degree of adaptability, it's not hard to imagine a

creative thinker finding company specific uses for digital storytelling," (Czarnecki 18).

Social agencies, non-profit organizations, and community based programs are

also using DST; and many of them seek their training in DST at the Center for Digital

Storytelling in Berkley, California.

As mentioned earlier, Dana Atchley, Joe Lambert and several others founded

CDS in 1998. Today it remains the hub for training and consultation in DST principles,

techniques and execution.

The CDS and its workshops are mentioned frequently in DST literature. The CDS has worked with thousands of individuals, institutions, organizations and businesses across the globe and boasts an extensive list of clients, funders, and case studies on its website: www.storycenter.org.

The CDS has also collaborated and been involved with numerous noteworthy DST projects that are also mentioned throughout the body of DST literature. A few of these include: *Silence Speaks*, a project in which survivors of domestic violence share their stories, and *Capture Wales 2001-2006*, produced by the BBC, which was an effort to tell the stories of the people and country of Wales.

As the body of DST literature expands exponentially around this new media/art form, scholars and professionals from many disciplines are exploring and writing about the power, possibilities and applications of DST. However, in the midst of this almost overwhelming discussion, there seems to be very little published on exactly how DST is being used as a niche marketing tool. The literature well establishes DST's validity as a branding/marketing, educational, and entertainment tool; yet little of the literature that I encountered, especially in the scholarly arena, discusses exactly how DST is being used in niche marketing and what specific impacts it is having on the businesses and organizations that use it.

An article in the May 2000 issue of Business Week, entitled *"Tell Me A Digital Story,"* does discuss corporate use of DST and some of DST's early effects on those companies, but that information is almost eleven years old. Given how rapidly DST is

growing,

I honestly expected to see more in the literature about DST being used as a marketing tool, especially since the literature discusses the creation of new digital storyteller jobs in a growing number of companies. Gaining insight into the specific ways in which DST marketing affects companies and consumers can be of tremendous value to a multitude of disciplines and industries. Conducting research on DST and its impact as a marketing tool can help us not only better understand how to sell products to specific groups of people or how to better brand a business, but it can open new levels of understanding on how to provide more impactful information that affects behavior and how the intimacy of storytelling can influence our ever changing world.

Digital Stories: The Product and How They Are Being Used

There is a clear difference between the process of digital storytelling, which founders at the Center for Digital Storytelling define and emphasize as a group process, and digital stories that are the product of the digital storytelling process. While The Center for Digital Storytelling is internationally recognized as being the home of and the authority on digital storytelling, and trains many of the organizations, companies, and individuals that use digital storytelling, it is not clear whether the entities that use digital stories place the same value on the process of producing the stories as the founders and facilitators at The Center for Digital Storytelling do. Daniel Weinshenker, Director at The Center for Digital Storytelling in Denver, Colorado, emphasized this point during a phone interview. Whether the process of digital storytelling is equally valued or not, there

is recognition of the authenticity and power that digital stories deliver. Digital stories overall are having a wide impact on many disciplines and are being used for a multiplicity of purposes. Whether intentional or not, just the process of DST being used in multiple disciplines is creating a sense of community, groups of people who share similar ideas, stories, and a growing commonality and appreciation for digital stories.

As mentioned in the review of ever-expanding digital storytelling literature, digital stories are being used in education, social agencies, social movements, business and advertising, healthcare, and for personal reflection.

Observation of where digital stories are being used is also helpful in showing how they are being used. The following digital stories and their variety of uses serve as a few examples.

Corporate Use

As mentioned earlier, digital storytelling pioneer Dana Atchley was a leader in introducing the process, techniques and efficacy of digital storytelling to large corporations. Although Coke and Apple were among the first corporations to begin experimenting with digital storytelling in the marketing and branding of their companies, many other companies and organizations continue to adopt the philosophy of storytelling and the techniques of digital storytelling into their own marketing models. There are many jewels to be unearthed via digital stories, also referred to as "transmedia," and the corporate world, along with other realms of society, are mining away. Marketing professionals, bloggers, and other members of the internet community are talking about the new developments in "transmedia" and storytelling too.

In an August 3, 2010 online blog post, the president of the award-winning Digital Marketing and Communications agency, Twist Image, Mitch Joel wrote the following:

> Marketing needs to up its game. The brands that win are the brands that tell a great story. When it comes to transmedia storytelling, the brands that win are the brands that tell many great stories and are able to connect them all together. One way to get better at telling great stories, comes from understanding the structure, form, and ingredients of a great story.
>
> (www.twistimage.com/blog/archives/digital-storyteller/)

Joel then goes on to list 15 books that he believes should be read in order to begin understanding how to tell great stories. But Mitch Joel is not the first to say that winning brands tell great stories. Business professionals were endorsing this concept as early as 1998. In December of 1998, Fast Company magazine featured an article about digital storytelling entitled: *"What's Your Story?"* In the article, journalist Daniel Pink interviewed Bill Dauphinais, from PricewaterhouseCoopers LLP. Pink wrote,

> Digital storytelling is more than a technique. In fact, it's become something of a movement among both artists and business people. One convert is Bill Dauphinais… He's been using it to teach members of the accounting and consulting giant about the PwC brand. Dauphinais has collected stories about PwC's founders, partners, and clients, and he's captured those stories on digital video and housed them on a PC. Now he travels the world, regaling employees with video tales of the firm's core values.
>
> (www.fastcompany.com/magazine/21/rftf.html)

In the same article Dauphinais said, "Brands are built around stories. And stories of identity-- who we are, where we we've come from--are the most effective stories of all. This is a powerful way to bring them to life" (www.fastcompany.com/magazine/21/rftf.html) (Pink).

Exxon Mobil is an example of a company that is currently and seriously incorporating digital storytelling into its marketing and branding strategies. Exxon Mobil, which has a channel on YouTube, has posted a series of more than 20 short digital stories related to topics like new oil sands technology and Exxon Mobil's sponsorship of the National Math and Science Initiative. Each of the short digital stories uses techniques or related techniques that Joe Lambert and his colleagues say define a digital story. For example, each of the Exxon Mobil digital stories average about 30 seconds in length, are first- person narratives that use some video, some still photographs, video editing techniques like pans, zooms, and transitions, and music to convey a message, and the overall feel and tone of each video is personal and intimate.

In each digital story related to the benefits of oil sanding, Exxon uses an engineer to narrate the benefits of Exxon's new technology and then a geologist in a separate digital story to convey a similar message. In each digital story related to Exxon Mobil's sponsorship of the National Math and Science Initiative, either a teacher or student is featured who tells his or her personal story connected to education and how advanced placement classes have helped him or her. Each of these separate digital stories appears to be a unit of much larger campaigns aimed at positioning and branding Exxon Mobil as a safe, innovative, responsible company that appreciates diversity and invests in

education and young people for the sake of the future. The presentation of this message is personal, which to me implies a desire on Exxon's part to elicit some type of emotional connection to each story's content that may affect the way in which the viewer perceives Exxon-Mobil overall. Examples of these digital stories can be seen at: http://www.youtube.com/exxonmobil?x=us_showcase_59

When observing the context in which Exxon Mobil is using digital stories, those stories can be categorized as corporate-use digital stories for marketing and branding purposes.

The growing trend of businesses, especially advertising, incorporating digital storytelling into their marketing and branding efforts is also being noted in publications like *The Wall Street Journal.* In an October 4, 2011, article entitled: "Data And Storytelling Come Together At Advertising Week," executives from companies like LinkedIn, Facebook, Huffington Post, Groupon, and AT&T discuss the benefits of combining data and storytelling in relation to marketing and advertising. LinkedIn's senior vice president of global sales said: "It's the combination of the targeting with the storytelling that creates effective advertising" (http://blogs.wsj.com/venturecapital/2011/10/04/data-and-storytelling-come-together-at-advertising-week/).

The vice president of marketing and social media strategy at Huffington Post, Taylor Gray, who also participated in Advertising Week said, "All the big brands are engaged in this. They understand that they need to get in the storytelling business"

(http://blogs.wsj.com/venturecapital/2011/10/04/data-and-storytelling-come-together-at-advertising-week/).

While the above-mentioned article and previous Exxon Mobil digital stories listed above highlight the corporate world's increasing use of digital storytelling, there are a few websites which also serve as evidence of a merger between business and digital storytelling. One such example is: www.corpstory.com. This website, created by corporate storyteller Evelyn Clark, promotes the benefits of creating corporate stories as well as promoting Clark's ability to help a prospective organization learn and understand how to tell its story. Corpstory.com links to a number of different resources related to storytelling as well.

Another example of a website/company dedicated to helping organizations develop digital stories is: www.fusionspark.com. Fusionspark Media, the company that hosts the website, specializes in "handcrafted visual storytelling, content development, and technology solutions for marketing &PR since 1999," for a variety of different kinds of organizations ranging from companies to non-profit organizations and government agencies. This website features the services that Fusionspark Media provides its clients, samples from the company's portfolio, and other Fusionspark Media related resources. Fusionspark Media's following comment best summarizes a developing attitude toward organizations and storytelling: "We continue in our work because we believe in the power of the individual company, non-profit or government agency to make a difference or to attain their goals through compelling storytelling and quality content that is resourceful, educational and entertaining" (http://www.fusionspark.com/about/aboutus/).

Further research will reveal many other examples of digital storytelling being applied in a

business context, but other disciplines are embracing digital storytelling as a powerful

tool as well.

These few examples demonstrate that corporate entities certainly embrace the art

form of digital storytelling to deliver a corporate message. However, it is debatable

whether using a digital story with a specific marketing objective diminishes the power of

an individual to tell an authentic story. Some people, like a CEO or marketing manager,

might argue that crafting digital stories around a product or service through the lens of a

first-person narrative makes the story more authentic than a commercial, which employs

actors.

Digital storytelling pioneers like Daniel Weinshenker, on the other hand, may

argue that corporate use of DST does diminish the art form's authenticity, but this is

where the lines of messaging, ethics, accuracy, audience, and the creative production

process intersect. Perhaps it must be the story audience who decides what is authentic

versus the storyteller.

Educational Use

Education professionals are also rapidly embracing digital storytelling. A few

examples of how digital storytelling is being used in the context of education were

discussed in the literature review section of this paper, but there are a few others worth

mentioning.

Several universities within and outside of the United States now offer digital

storytelling programs. Some of those universities are The University of Oslo in Norway,

Williams College in Massachusetts, The University of Maryland in Baltimore, County,

The University of Wisconsin, The University of Colorado at Boulder, and Ohio State

University.

Ohio State University's digital storytelling program, as summarized on its website

at http://digitalstory.osu.edu/about/our-program/, has four primary goals:

To provide the campus community with workshops and other learning

opportunities that introduce new technologies and multimodal literacy concepts in

order to develop the knowledge, skills, and dispositions necessary for producing

digital stories in an academic environment.

To reach new audiences and foster new collaborations by providing showcases,

conference presentations, and scholarly publications that describe and evaluate the

effect of the digital storytelling program on teaching and outreach at OSU.

To preserve and provide free access through the World Wide Web to digital

stories created at OSU.

To act as a clearinghouse for information about digital storytelling at OSU.

Digital storytelling programs at other colleges and universities share goals similar

to their OSU counterparts. However, OSU's statement on why they have a program in

digital storytelling really captures the spirit of why educators are using digital storytelling

more often. Ohio State University says,

Stories are the bedrock of every culture. They help define a nation, a tribe, a

community, a profession. They tell its history, they convey its wisdom and

perspective. Stories allow us to understand someone else's experiences in a

deeply personal way, creating empathy. Stories can help us care about something we might not otherwise care about. In academics, stories provide affective learning that can lead the learner to a desire for more cognitive learning. It takes deep understanding to tell your own story about an event, place, person or thing. Hearing someone else's story can cause the listener to care more about what is being told than if facts alone were conveyed. Stories can provide unique ways of building community in your own discipline, or in reaching out to other disciplines. (http://digitalstory.osu.edu/about/digital-storytelling/)

Samples of digital stories produced by faculty and students at Ohio State University can be seen on their website at: http://digitalstory.osu.edu/stories/. The stories on this website are categorized into three sections: Academic, Community, and Personal. The stories also cover a wide range of different topics.

Social Use

"Lost Generation," a poem originally written by Jonathan Reed, a student in his 20s at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia, illustrates the power and impact that digital stories can have. "*Lost Generation*" is subtly powerful because it conveys one message, one that is negative and sometimes accepted as true of today's young people when read from top to bottom; yet the meaning and message of the poem are completely different, positive and hopeful, when read from the bottom of the poem to the top.

Though reading the poem silently to oneself is effective, the adaptation of the poem to a digital story format, which uses text, narration, and simple editing to reverse the poem, enhances its effectiveness. The digital story version can be seen on YouTube at

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=42E2fAWM6rA . The one minute and forty-five

second digital story has had 15,544, 227 views on YouTube with 33, 280 likes and 981

dislikes.

Reed's digital story was entered into a video contest in 2007 sponsored by AARP.

The purpose of creating the U@50 AARP video contest was to enable a dialogue

between generations that allows young people to speak honestly and would also allow

AARP an opportunity to gain insight into the minds and attitudes of its 18 to 30 year-old

contest entrants. This was why AARP challenged this young demographic to enter videos

up to 2 minutes long to discuss how they thought their own lives might be when they

were 50 years old.

When viewing the purpose for which the AARP video contest and Reed's digital

story were created, it is clear that AARP's video contest was a strategic way of

conducting a creative and innovative form of market research about a demographic that

could become clients of AARP in the future. Reed's video, which won second place in

the contest, could also be used as a marketing and social tool to contrast and express

current attitudes about today's generation of young people and how they are perceived by

both others and themselves. Taking these ideas into consideration, "*Lost Generation"* as

a digital story could be categorized as both a corporate and social use of digital

storytelling.

"Lost Generation" on YouTube, the number of views, I believe illustrates how

strong content, presented in a digital story format, can attract wide-ranging audiences.

Another powerful example of digital storytelling being used in the context of

social empowerment and education is a project called *Silence Speaks.* Joe Lambert

interviews the creator of *Silence Speaks,* Amy Hill, at length in his book *Digital*

Storytelling Capturing Lives, Creating Community. Silence Speaks, which has now been

produced as a DVD, began as a digital storytelling project that Hill took on as a research

and consultation effort to help domestic violence agencies find new and interesting ways

to use technology. What began as a research opportunity to understand how better to

incorporate technology into teaching violence prevention has now become an

international digital storytelling initiative with some very amazing survivor stories. Three

of the 12 stories featured on the compilation DVD are also featured on the initiative's

website. Those stories can be seen at: www.silencespeaks.org. According to Hill,

although she, with the help of The Center for Digital Storytelling, launched the *Silence*

Speaks initiative in 1999, they have coordinated more than 40 projects in the United

States, Australia, Brazil, Canada, Congo-Brazzaville, Guatemala, South Africa and

Uganda.

      Digital storytelling is also finding social expression in the field of journalism.

Although media convergence, the coming together of multimedia outlets like the internet,

radio, print and broadcast for the sharing of news, makes digital storytelling a more

personalized way of sharing information, the format still proves to be highly effective

when used in a "news" context. News organizations like *The New York Times*, *The*

Washington Post, CNN, and the BBC have also been steadily welcoming the digital

storytelling format. In 2009 *The New York Times* produced a series of personal profile

digital stories about interesting New Yorkers entitled: "One in 8 Million." The series can

be viewed at: www.nytimes.com/packages/html/nyregion/1-in-8-

million/index.html?scp=1-spot&sq=one%20in%208%20million&st=cse.

In 2001 the BBC launched its award-winning series of personalized digital stories

about life in Wales entitled "Capture Wales." The BBC, whose staff were trained by the

Center for Digital Storytelling team, has continued working on a number of other digital

storytelling projects too. The BBC's digital story projects can be viewed at:

www.bbc.co.uk/wales/audiovideo/sites/galleries/pages/capturewales.shtml.

Media Storm, an award-winning multimedia production company also produces

top-flight digital stories, or what they call "cinematic narratives," often related to

compelling issues or topics related to news. Media Storm works closely with news

organizations like *The Washington Post* to train journalists in digital storytelling too.

Examples of Media Storm digital stories can be viewed at: www.mediastorm.com.

Each of the projects listed above illustrates the power that digital stories convey in

journalism as well. Digital storytelling, I believe, will continue to grow as an efficient

method of sharing news because of its visual appeal and quick delivery of compelling

information.

Personal/ Community Use

Digital stories are also being used as a means for the story's creators to share with

an ever-growing community of others who appreciate digital stories. There are also

websites specifically crafted for the sharing of digital stories. An example of such a

website is: www.storiesforchange.net. The purposes of Stories for Change are to connect

people and organizations that have participated in digital storytelling workshops, to

provide a place for participants to share their stories, and to provide a place where people can engage in discourse about the stories that have been posted on the site, as well as advocating for certain issues that may have been raised in one of the digital stories. There is a gallery of digital stories which are segmented by topic. The stories range from narratives on eating healthy to gay marriage. The Center for Digital Storytelling's website, http://www.storycenter.org, also features digital stories from some of the participants from its storytelling workshops.

Areas For Further Research

While there are countless opportunities and growing knowledge emerging in relation to harnessing the power of digital storytelling, there are still many avenues to be explored. Some of areas that could be further explored are the effects of digital storytelling on niche marketing, how digital storytelling in advertising affects consumer behavior/ purchasing habits, and what specific effect digital storytelling in education has on students.

CHAPTER 3:   My Experience in Studying Digital Storytelling and Marketing

A Pioneer's Path

Choosing to study Digital Storytelling and Marketing in the Kent State University

Liberal Studies Masters program has truly been a pioneer's journey. To my excitement

and nervous surprise, there had not been any other Liberal Studies Masters student(s)

who studied Digital Storytelling and Marketing. Thus I was setting sail, so to speak, in

truly uncharted waters. There were no templates from other graduate students to guide

me or to expand upon. Armed with a passion to be a great storyteller and a bachelor's

degree in Broadcast Journalism, I was on my own to find an academic adviser who

understood Digital Storytelling, and to create a curriculum that would help me develop

the technical prowess and knowledge needed to work in DST and/or Marketing. For the

first time in my academic career, I was truly creating my own path, with the faith that this

path would be personally and financially fulfilling.

In 2009, I met and chose Dr. Joe Murray of the KSU Journalism and Mass

Communications department to be my academic adviser. Dr. Murray's background in

directing for PBS and other media, along with his training and experience in educational

technology, made him the perfect person to help me navigate the road of exploration and

scholarship in DST. Dr. Joe Murray and I worked together to design a Liberal Studies

curriculum that would enable me to develop my story production skills further, while also

introducing myself to the idea of being an entrepreneur and understanding how to market

myself as a journalist and storyteller.

The curriculum that Dr. Murray and I crafted has included course work in marketing, web design, visual storytelling, non-linear editing, graphic and motion graphic design, multimedia techniques, playwriting, grant writing, history, sociology, literature, and entrepreneurship. As part of my curriculum, I was fortunate to be able to take three different courses taught by Dr. Murray that proved to be highly relevant and beneficial to my studies in DST. Those courses, offered in the KSU Journalism and Mass Communications Department, were Multimedia Techniques, Non-Linear Editing, and Cybermedia Design. I also took courses with other professors, like Visual Storytelling and Playwriting, which enhanced my overall curriculum.

Each course, in its own unique fashion, helped me enhance a technical skill that I needed to be able to produce digital stories. In Multimedia Techniques, Dr. Murray introduced me to the process of DST as he had learned it from various workshops that he had attended at The Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley, California. In this course I also learned how better to combine music, narration, and still photographs and video into a concise short digital story. Dr. Murray's collective and individualized teaching methods were based upon the seven steps of DST that Joe Lambert outlines in *Digital Storytelling Capturing Lives, Creating Community.*

In Non-Linear Editing, Dr. Murray helped me expand my hands-on experience and training with editing software called Final Cut Pro. Final Cut Pro is often used to assemble digital stories, news packages, and other forms of multimedia content digitally.

In Cybermedia Design, I learned how to use Dreamweaver, an Adobe web design

program, to create my own website. This knowledge was useful because it showed me how to develop my own distribution platform for any digital stories that I produce.

Visual Storytelling was another key course that helped in the development of my digital storytelling skill set. In this course, I was able to focus strictly on telling stories with still photographs and words. The greatest lesson I took away from Visual Storytelling in relation to the work I'd like to continue doing in DST was learning how to "see" stories through the still camera. This course truly changed my understanding of how to take more visually articulate and compelling photographs.

Playwriting, which I took in the KSU theater department, was a great interdisciplinary course for my studies. Although it seemed to be initially unrelated to DST, playwriting taught me keys elements of storytelling like how to develop characters, how to develop a world in which the characters live, how to develop motivation and action for each character, how to develop scenes and ways to get an audience engaged in story. As I continued to research Digital Storytelling and its early beginnings, I soon discovered that DST's birth was intimately connected to the theater when its founder, Dana Atchley, incorporated DST into his stage show Next Exit. A course that I once thought was indirectly related to my areas of concentration was, in fact, an integral part of DST's roots.

I took a set of very different courses within the KSU Graduate School of Management's Business College. Those courses were: Introduction to Entrepreneurship, Marketing Management, Service Marketing, and Strategic Planning and Marketing.

Again I was fortunate to have Dr. Bridges, the reader on my Liberal Studies Masters

committee, as a professor for Marketing Management and Service Marketing.

In Introduction to Entrepreneurship I learned how to generate ideas for innovative business, how to research industries for potential businesses, target markets, competitive landscapes, and government regulations affecting entry into potential business industries. I also learned the importance of writing a business plan and the different segments that must be included in a business plan. One of the most memorable lessons from this course was the idea that entrepreneurs are problems solvers and that new business ideas can always be generated by observing the world in which we live and the people in it; being able to identify a problem that people have and creating a solution is the foundation for starting a new business or even a new industry. This principle can also be seen when examining the history of how DST started. Dana Atchley's introduction of DST to corporate giants like Apple, Inc. and Coke was the solution to a corporate problem. Apple and Coke were looking for better ways to connect to their customers and a more authentic way to market their customers; Dana Atchely offered DST as the solution.

In Marketing Management, I was introduced to the basic principles of marketing and the concept that marketing is about much more than just selling stuff. Via analyzing case studies, and creating a marketing plan, this course demonstrated to me that marketing is really about creating and managing a results-oriented relationship with a company's consumer/consumer groups.

In Service Marketing, my understanding of the seven principles of marketing was deepened. I also learned how to map out a company's service operations, how to conduct consumer and employee interviews to enhance service quality, and how to make real-

world service marketing decisions thanks to a simulation game known as LINKS. In LINKS, student teams are provided mock companies, with mock budgets, and are challenged to make service marketing, operations, and production decisions that can have both positive and negative impact on the mock company's performance.

In Strategic Planning and Marketing I learned about big picture theory on marketing and strategic processes for increasing a company's value for both customers and shareholders. I also had another opportunity to analyze cases, learn the importance of market research in order to create marketing strategies, justify a strategy, and work with the LINKS simulation again.

All of these marketing courses, along with my on-going research into DST, helped me to understand how to approach starting a business for myself and gain a deeper perspective on some of the principles that may have guided corporations to begin using digital storytelling as a marketing tool.

Although Grant Writing was not offered as a business course, that course taught me the process of how to write and apply for grants should I decide to start a non-profit business.

The Liberal Arts courses I took included work in history, sociology, and literature. These courses were helpful in my journey in that they taught me the value and richness of interdisciplinary study. My Liberal Arts coursework also underscored the power of stories in our society. No matter what the discipline, all great lessons were illustrated through some form of story; whether they were called biographies, novels, or case studies, they were stories that served a specific purpose.

When reviewing the curriculum that Dr. Murray and I designed upon the initiation of my graduate work, I am satisfied that all of my coursework taught me skills and principles that will be put to excellent use throughout my career and that have relevant ties to digital storytelling and marketing. I feel prepared to begin the next chapter of my adventures with these two disciplines.

CHAPTER 4: Reflection and Synthesis

As I reflect upon all that I have learned about digital storytelling and marketing, I realize an interesting parallel. Digital storytelling, as a new field, and in its application in marketing, is a new and steadily growing area of study, just as my understanding of and experience with digital storytelling and marketing are also new. Although I have been studying digital storytelling and marketing for the past two years, I truly feel that I have just begun to scratch the surface of all that there is to learn about these two disciplines and their overlap. While the use of digital storytelling is rapidly expanding, there are many, many more questions to be explored. For example: how digital stories are being further incorporated into brand development. Are digital stories being used in niche marketing and if they are, why are they not more widely accessible? Is the corporate use of digital stories authentic if the message is over-edited, and what impact do digital stories have on a company's bottom line? These are questions that, given more time and resources, I'd like to continue exploring.

When reflecting upon what I may have done differently during the course of my studies, I definitely would have attended one or more workshops at The Center for Digital Storytelling before graduating. I think that would have further enhanced my technical understanding of the process of digital storytelling and further deepened my appreciation for the history of how digital storytelling began.

Another aspect of my studies that I would have improved or expanded upon would

 be interviewing more business executives on their knowledge of and experiences with digital storytelling.

While there were some scholarly and news articles available for me to read about the connections between digital storytelling and marketing, finding more information, both primary and secondary, to connect the two was difficult. There were numerous secondary articles and blogs written about digital stories and their use in marketing, but it was challenging to find actual digital stories created by consumers for companies like Coke, Apple or Oxygen, and many of the articles I first encountered were up to 10 years old. The great news, however, is that more and more people are beginning to research and write about digital storytelling, so there is much more to learn. I will be able to contribute to that growing body of knowledge.

The final improvement I would have implemented in my studies would have been to dedicate more time, perhaps an entire semester, to perfecting my ability to produce digital stories. Given all of the information that I needed to learn and the expenses associated with my graduate studies, I did not spend more time on producing stories, but I am much more confident in my knowledge and technical ability to produce digital stories now than I was two years ago.

In an effort to pull everything I've learned together and apply it, I did design a website, with samples of my own digital storytelling work, to help me market myself as a freelance journalist and motivational speaker. I have also purchased a domain name www.imanicapri.com, where I will host my website. I also have a Facebook page, Twitter account, YouTube channel and WordPress blog, in development that will be dedicated

to promoting and featuring my work in both journalism and digital storytelling.

There are still other steps that I need to take to develop a more thorough business plan for myself, but I am satisfied and quite excited that I have given myself, as a result of my studies, a solid foundation to build upon.

Digital Stories That I Have Produced

As part of my graduate studies in digital storytelling and marketing, I have begun developing my own personal website, www.imanicapri.com, to market myself and my professional communications skill set. My website also features several digital stories that I have produced. The first two are also initial ideas for promotional trailers for a documentary I am producing about my and my family's experience in overcoming the sexual abuse that I experienced as a child. My documentary will be entitled *Walk of Courage.*

Walk of Courage –Trailer One

In trailer one, a narrator, someone other than I, relays a basic summary of my story on top of a music track and is interspersed with sound-bites from some of the participants in my documentary. A combination of still photographs and video are also used in trailer one. The emotional tone of trailer is a bit heavier than trailer two but accurately conveys a message of hard choices to be made and the self-transformation that occurred once those choices were made. This trailer was produced in 2007.

Walk of Courage –Trailer Two

In trailer two, I narrate the summary of my story on top of a music track by R&B singer

Jill Scott. There is also a combination of still images and video used together. The tone

of trailer two is more upbeat and, in my opinion, more accurately captures the triumph of

my story. This trailer was produced in 2008. The purpose of both trailers is to summarize

what my documentary will be about and to promote it. However, given all that I've

learned, I will probably produce one more version that is more polished.

Too Young To Vote

   The third digital story featured on my website is "Too Young To Vote." I

produced this story in 2008 about a 13 year-old boy named Ifeolu Claytor, Ife for short.

Ife was not old enough to vote but had an extraordinary passion for working to get

Barack Obama elected as President of the United States. Ife narrates his own story.

   I used a combination of music, natural sound, and still photographs in editing his

story. This story was produced as an assignment for one of my classes; but it could be

posted on a digital storytelling website or YouTube to share about young people who

tirelessly worked for change in 2008, whether they could vote or not.

CONCLUSION

Storytelling, with all of its lessons, embellishments, and technology, is a uniquely human experience, through which we are able to see ourselves and others, and make sense of our world. Although the tools at our disposal for creating and telling stories are far more advanced than the tools of our Paleolithic ancestors, the principles are the same. We tell stories to understand ourselves, and what we value, and to describe the world in which we live and the symbiotic ways in which we, human beings and our environment, impact and influence one another. Storytelling is a tool for healing, a tool for exchange, and a tool in building communities of understanding. Digital storytelling, based on this understanding, now gives us even more ways to connect, understand, and affect change in our daily lives. The far-reaching effects of digital storytelling are still in development, but the future seems to hold exciting possibilities for this new field and art form.

Studying digital storytelling and marketing the past two years has been an amazing experience. My courses have pushed me beyond my initial technical limitations and challenged me to explore, learn about, and begin adding to the ever changing and rapidly growing field of digital storytelling.

 In the beginning of my program I was nervous. I was nervous about being, perhaps, the first student in the Liberal Studies Masters program to take on studying these two distinct fields. I was unsure of how my path would unfold and what I would be able to do with a degree in digital storytelling and marketing.

Today, I am confident that I pursued a course of study that has made me a better storyteller and has helped me develop the skills I need to begin working in digital storytelling-whether I work in business/marketing, education or a journalistic capacity.

Although this is the end of my Liberal Studies Master's program at Kent State University, this is truly just the beginning of my journey into further understanding digital storytelling and marketing.

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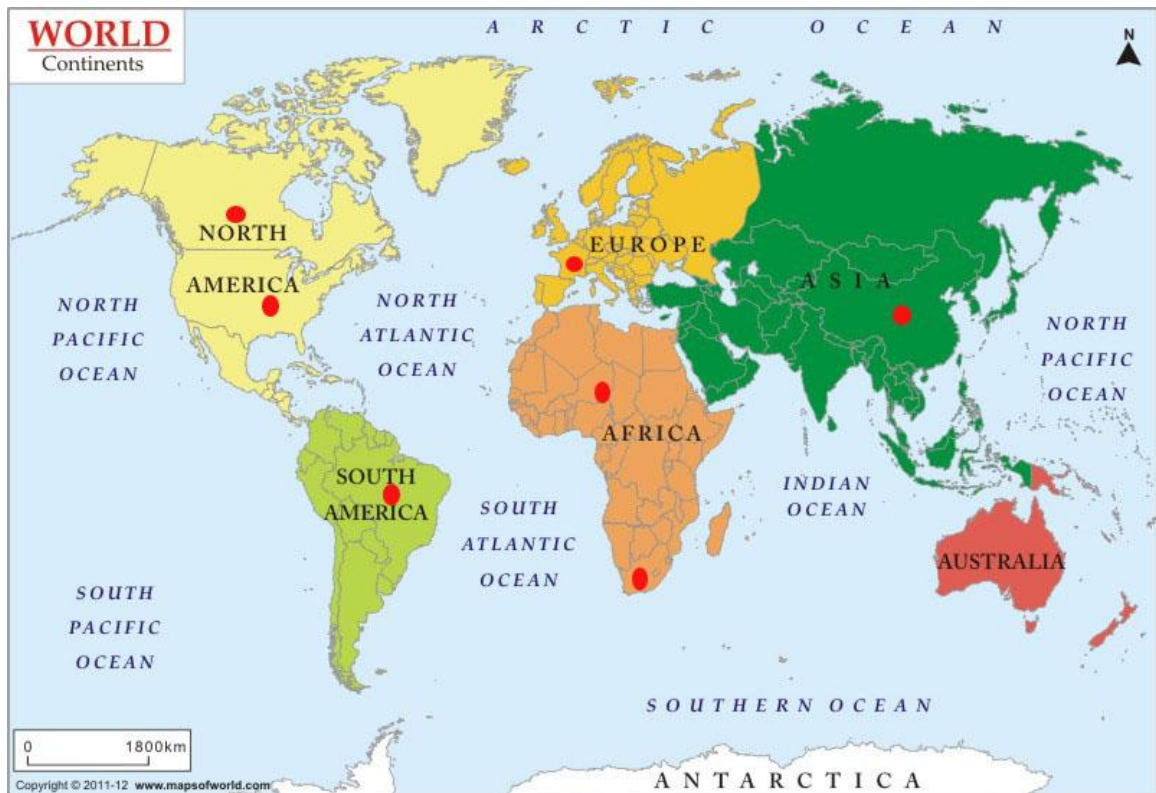The Wall Street Journal. 2011 йил 4-October. <http://blogs.wsj.com/venturecapital/2011/10/04/data-and-storytelling-come-together-at-advertising-week/>.

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FIGURE 1:   Map of Continents to where Digital Storytelling Has Spread

Source:www.mapsofworld.com/world-political-map.htm