



The Producer

When I produced my story on my own personal change, and by extension the change in my family, I began to see the elements of what defines community change. The digital story captured that process, and as producer I became a vehicle for communicating that change.

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MANAGING THE POSSIBILITIES

Creating the conditions for successful digital stories

The producer is the hub for the creative and advocacy dimensions of a digital story. The producer identifies the story with the greatest impact and sets up workspaces for creating a digital story before a script is written or filming occurs. (See [Appendix II](#) for how to set up a technology infrastructure for digital storytelling.) To maximize the influence of a digital story, the producer disseminates it as a way to celebrate the production and create community awareness.

Exploring your message

It is important to find the message you will craft. It can be helpful to ask yourself: What are you trying to do with your digital story?

- Inform the public about the different sides of an issue?
- Learn more about yourself or others?
- Have others consider an issue differently?
- Celebrate the impact and success of your organization?
- Create discourse on a subject nobody has the courage to talk about?

While we all carry a gem of a story, we must work to polish it. Stories that are wide in scope, like those about community conditions, need to be developed in a meaningful way. To find the stories that will have an impact on you and the people around you, it is important to select a perspective that nurtures your story. The previous chapter provided [a cross-section of story types and styles](#) to help you decide upon the best way to tell your story.

Identifying the audience(s)

The audience is an important element to consider in a digital storytelling production. In searching for an audience, important questions emerge: How can I capture an audience's attention and who am I looking to impact?

"How can I capture an audience's attention?"

Captura: To Grab an Audience

Delivering your message to an audience

The reason digital storytelling is so transformative in nature is that transformation happens internally for the one making the film and externally where the audience is presented a meaningful message. Producers need to examine the scope of the change they want to enact with a specific audience.

Yourself

We are afforded few deliberate instances to reflect on life's critical moments, important lessons, and interesting people. Yet doing so is an important part of digital storytelling and seems to jumpstart most personal narratives. As the first critical audience of any production, you have the privilege of learning deeply about your place in the world and how you got there.

Family

"Most family traditions are seldom captured."

Captura: To Collect Important Stories

The majority of family folklore and history is handed down by oral tradition and inevitably gets lost or changed in the transfer across generations. Moreover, most of that tradition is seldom captured

or fully understood. Within each elder and family member is an encyclopedia of great moments, customs, and perseverance that can be captured through interviews.

Organization

In doing community work, one finds themselves crafting messages about the strategies and stakeholders that make your organization unique. Relaying this message to your clients, stakeholders, and grantors helps celebrate successes and communicates exactly what the organization is all about.

Community

Any member of any community—whether it is comprised of your friends, neighbors, local youth, parents, schools or government bodies—can benefit from a meaningful message to start dialogue or create awareness about what affects them. Digital stories can either take a stand on one side of the issue, or expose what the issue is through the presentation of unbiased information. Vocalizing concerns or needs to a decision makers bridges those who enact policies and those most affected by them.

GIVING YOUR STORY SOME LEGS

An elder activist observed that getting the word out about an issue or event today is much easier than in the 60s. Yet, while we have access to fast printers, DVD burners, video blogs, and email, we do not always utilize this technology to promote our powerful messages. As a producer, planning how to use this technology can set your digital story on the fast track to creating change. This is a crucial step in inspiring dialogue or action.

Disseminating your digital story

Some of the media you may want to consider using for disseminating your project include:

DVD media— Nothing brings closure to a digital storytelling production like a DVD hot off the burner. Share it with your family, friends, or people who would find interest in your message. This massively reproducible media is perfect for giving away at meetings or mailing to a target audience. Either way, DVD players are ubiquitous and this media can likely be your ticket to a large audience.

Video blogs— This outlet has undergone some revolutionary changes in the past two years and as it matures, the winner is the small production company (you) with free uploads and dependable streaming. If you have a website or a blog that your audience frequents, then a video blog is a logical next step in your online media literacy. Sites like youtube.com and myspace.com offer such services. One caveat, besides this being a very public forum, is that some video hosting sites give themselves the right to use (and reproduce) your video. Read these agreements carefully and [consider publishing under creative common licenses](#).

Your media contacts— Whether in the press or on public television, local media outlets are usually waiting for your stories to drop into their laps. A quick press release about an event and public access airtime for your story can create instant awareness in your community. Perhaps taking a few choice sound bites from your digital story will entice radio listeners to go to a public viewing of your production.

Because you will be public with your digital story, you must be sure to collect consent forms from anyone featured in the story. This will guarantee that you have permission to use their image and voice and will protect you legally. In [Appendix IV](#), you will find sample consent forms that you can edit for your own needs. These forms contain standard language on retaining rights for yourself or organization in any production.

A good plan of action before, during, and after creating a digital story will save you the grief of not seeing your story go silent.

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