# Digital Storytelling 2.0

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*As he spoke my spirit climbed into the sky.*
*I bid it to return*
*to hear your wondrous stories.*

*Yes, November 30, 1981*

The past several years have seen an explosion in the number of schools who are engaged in the process of digital storytelling.  Many schools have initiated programs, and have had much success as indicated by the creative and dramatic stories that students have composed.  However, like many learning technologies, it is logical to assume that the technology will evolve, and that this evolution should provide a new and more effective experience.  With this in mind, can the process of digital storytelling become a more compelling learning experience for students?  What's next for digital storytelling in our schools?  The answer-Digital Storytelling 2.0.

At the heart of a digital story is the composer's message, transmitted through their voice.  As educators, we teach students to tell stories and we teach them how to amplify their story and voice through the inclusion of technology and various multimedia elements.  But in 2007, it's not only about creating interesting and meaningful video, it's about being able to create *and distribute* video.  It's about communication.  It's about taking advantage of the emergence of new media, new tools and new networks to produce and share video and in the process, teach students how to develop a competitive voice. In 2007, the medium is truly the message.

**New Media**
Online photo-sharing networks such as Flickr (http://www.flickr.co) and Bubbleshare (http://www.bubbleshare.com) continue to expand at an astronomical rate.  Flickr is currently expanding at a rate of one million photographs per day (425,356,653 images at the time of this writing) and should surpass ½ billion photographs by the time school recesses for the summer.  Perhaps the most significant aspect of Flickr, beyond the enormous potential for acquiring photographic images, is the Creative Commons licensing feature that photographers can employ.  Creative Commons (http://www.creativecommons.org) licensing enables a photographer to "stamp" their photography with a particular license, thereby providing potential users (students) with clear delineation about how the photography can be used by others.  Savvy educators will use digital storytelling as a vehicle for teaching about online intellectual property rights.  Expect the application of Creative Commons licensing to expand throughout the Web, as evidenced by the new Creative Commons search, which returns a variety of different types of information from a variety of resources which have Creative Commons licenses applied (http://search.creativecommons.org/).

But perhaps the most significant new media contribution to digital storytelling will most likely be done through the ubiquitous cell-phone.  Cell phones can now take pictures and video, and the ability of the cell phone to capture media for digital storytelling projects will be one of the significant arguments *for allowing* cell phone use in schools.  There are already storytelling competitions based on cell phone media (http://www.cellflixfestival.org/) and DST 2.0 programs in schools must recognize the power of this tool to produce media to tell student stories.

**New Tools**
Schools traditionally use iMovie, Photostory 3, or some other commercially available software as their digital storytelling platform.  In 2007, the Web browser is rapidly becoming the software (an alliance that is often referred to as "browserware") and new tools have emerged that provide an online authoring environment for digital storytellers.  These tools, such as Jumpcut (http://www.jumpcut.com), Toufee (http://www.toufee.com), Eyespot (http://www.eyespot.com/) and Digitalstoryteller (http://www.digitalstoryteller.org/) all provide the opportunity to build digital stories online.  Mogopop (http://www.mogopop.com/) even enables users to create digital story content for distribution to iPods, and for PC users, software such as Imtoo (http://www.imtoo.com/) permits the conversion of Windows-based digital stories into formats compatible with the iPod.  Digital stories can now be composed online, and when exported in the proper format, have the capability to become portable on-demand content for handheld devices.

The significance of digital storytelling browserware is that *anyone* can build a digital story from *any* Web-connected computer.  Think of the implications of this statement in light of the $100 laptop initiative.  Think of the stories that can and will be told, and then distributed to literally everyone through the new networks of the Web.

**New Networks**
The emergence of video distribution sites such as YouTube (http://www.youtube.com) and Google Video provide a natural hosting and distribution system for student-created digital stories.  Lee Gomes of the Wall Street Journal estimates that the people of the world have watched 9,305 years of YouTube video since its inception.  Content can now be created by anyone, and distributed to everyone.

The most critical resource that the new video networks supply is an audience, hungry for content.  For example, consider Dylan's Couch, produced by a middle school student.  Episode 8, which explores the mundane topic of his history teacher's project assignment, has been viewed 1,028,783 times.  Over 1 million times!

Schools are taking advantage of this, as they should.  For example, Shanghai American School has their own YouTube channel for the posting and distribution of student-created content (http://www.youtube.com/profile?user=saschool).  Such a capacity makes digital storytelling even more important-students should learn the proper methodology for creating visual messages so that they can enjoy a lifetime of productive contribution.

And what happens to quality when students know they are posting for potentially a world-wide audience?

Two new video hosting sites, Revver (http://one.revver.com/revver) and Spymac (http://www.spymac.com ) not only accept video but also pay for it.  The compensation models are slightly different, but it is now possible to make money by posting video. Revver's emphasizes this by posting a catchy slogan on their Web site: "What if creativity could pay the rent?"

Schools that support digital storytelling programs provide students with a valuable life-long skill that provides a life-time opportunity to contribute.  The importance and growth of video, which is likely to continue at a torrid pace, suggests strongly that schools that properly integrate video/digital storytelling programs will provide students with a competitive advantage.  Those schools that successfully add new media, new tools, and utilize online networks for distribution to a world-wide audience will further extend that advantage.

> *I couldn't quote you no Dickens, Shelley or Keats*
> *cause its all been said before.*
> *Make the best out of the bad just laugh it off*
> *You didn't have to come here anyway.*
> *So remember, every picture tells a story don't it...*
>
> *Rod Stewart, 1971*

Gomes, Lee (2006). Will all of us get our 15 minutes on a YouTube video? *Wall Street Journal*, Retrieved March 15, 2007, from http://tinyurl.com/fljc8