

Partnership of Places, communities and art forms for an education to beauty.

SPIRITUS LOCI

IO2 – PRESENTATION DIGITAL STORYTELLING & VIDEO DOCUMENTARY

Introductory programme to Storytelling: theoretical framework and guidelines for storytelling

Since the mid-1990s, digital storytelling has been widely used as a participatory approach to enable people from various backgrounds to create and share short audio-visual narratives. For example, it has been promoted as an educational activity for developing skills in digital literacy and creativity (Schleser, 2012a), as a tool for supporting social work practice (Lenette, Cox, & Brough, 2015) and as an opportunity for intergenerational knowledge exchange in indigenous communities (Edmonds, 2014). Digital storytelling can take many forms and ultimately refers to any narrative created and shared using digital tools. However, the term 'digital storytelling' is often used to refer specifically to a participatory method that results in 'a 2- to 5-minute audio-visual clip combining photographs, voice-over narration, and other audio (Lambert, 2009) originally applied for community development, artistic and therapeutic purposes' (de Jager, Fogarty, Tewson, Lenette, & Boydell, 2017, p. 2548). In community research and advocacy settings, digital storytelling has been particularly popular as a facilitated workshop activity to engage members of marginalised communities and encourage them to share their experiences (e.g. Schleser, 2014 a; Gubrium, Fiddian-Green, & Hill, 2016).

There are many different definitions of "Digital Storytelling," but in general, they all revolve around the idea of combining the art of telling stories with a variety of digital multimedia, such as images, audio, and video. Just about all digital stories bring together some mixture of digital graphics, text, recorded audio narration, video and music to present information on a specific topic. As is the case with traditional storytelling, digital stories revolve around a chosen theme and often contain a particular viewpoint. The stories are typically just a few minutes long and have a variety of uses, including the telling of personal tales, the recounting of historical events, or as a means to inform or instruct on a particular topic.

Types of Digital Stories

There are many different types of digital stories, but it is possible to categorize the major types into the following three major groups: 1) personal narratives - stories that contain accounts of significant incidents in one's life; 2) historical documentaries – stories that examine dramatic events that help us understand the past, and 3) stories designed to inform or instruct the viewer on a particular concept or practice.

Today the most important way to produce storytelling are:

1. **Storytelling & Timeline:** The creation of timelines can be regarded as a form of narration of chronologically ordered events. The various resources identified on the web around a theme, an event, an issue, a character, are arranged in the form of cards or slides, within a chronological sequence represented by a bar and arranged according to the appropriate chronology.

The following posts illustrate some of the services available on the web to create timelines¹:

- WhenInTiime
- TikiToki, Xtimeline
- Dipity, Timeglider, Timerime

These are tools that lend themselves to educational use in the disciplines of the humanities area such as history, literature, political science, etc.

¹ Where to find downloads: <file:///C:/Users/user/Downloads/Making%20a%20Timeline%20with%20WhenInTime.pdf>; https://download.cnet.com/Tiki-Toki/3000-2124_4-75666567.html , <https://www.officetimeline.com/office-timeline/download> , <https://sites.google.com/site/learnteachtech/tech-trends/dipityfreedigitaltimeline>

2. **Storymapping:** It can be considered a form of storytelling that uses geographical maps or images to include in them a series of links to web resources related to a certain topic in order to obtain a navigable path. Mass media and newspapers make extensive use of this form of storytelling for their investigations and dossiers.

Here are some web services that allow you to make storymaps²:

- StoryMap JS
- Build a Map
- Google Tourbuilder needs Google Earth plug-in installation

3. **Transmedia Storytelling:** This involves creating a story by organising in an environment, modelled on the News Magazine on the Presentation, resources available on the web in various formats (images, videos, animations, texts, sounds, music, news, etc.), relating to a given wind or theme or problem or character, so as to obtain a multimedia and hypertextual story; this method may also be useful for illustrating a project to be carried out (including an educational one) or the results of a project. This form of storytelling is also particularly used in journalism.

These are some services for generating trans-media stories³:

- Storify
- Capzles

4. **Visual Storytelling:** In this case, the story is told through the use of images. The possibilities for using an image are varied: # images can be arranged in series as in a presentation or slide show and accompanied by links, text, the recorded voice of a narrator.

may be accompanied by links to multimedia resources and/or the recorded voice of a narrator;

you can make the image interactive so that clicking on it opens resources on the web;

one can recount an experience through the collection of images, creating albums or showcases of images accompanied by short captions.

5. **Video Storytelling:** In this case we are dealing with Web or Browser Based Services in which the story is realised through the possibility of manipulating videos by inserting text, links, annotations, images, questions, etc. The result is interactive videos that can contain multimedia elements:

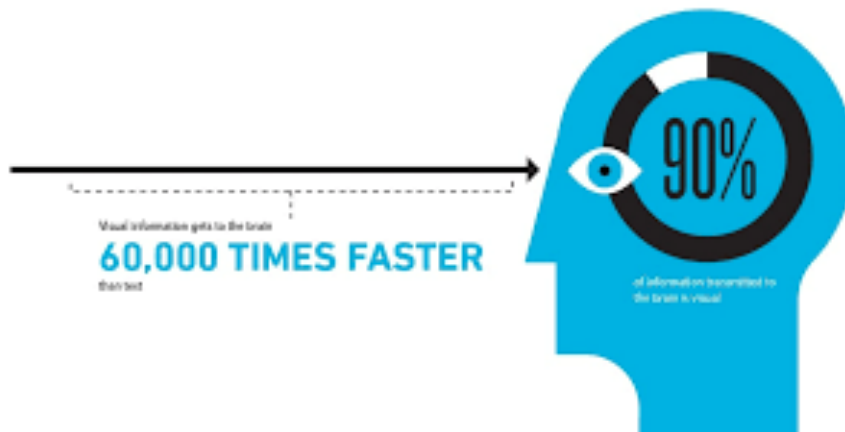
- Metta
- ShortHand
- Zentrick
- Popcorn Maker
- Storygami

² Where to find downloads: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rSw3ZO8gDgc> , https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WTtOZ_BCUXs

³ Where to find downloads: <https://www.storifyagency.com/> , <https://docplayer.net/21502237-Capzles-tutorial-introduction.html>

In our case, of fundamental importance, in order to reproduce the idea of a good and valid narration of the Spiritus Loci experience in the various countries of the partnership, it is necessary to focus on Visual and Video Storytelling.

When we talk about these types of techniques, we are referring to storytelling through images and video, which, in most cases, is a winning choice as the communication comes across in an immediate way. In the book 'The Power of Visual Storytelling: How to Use Visuals, Videos, and Social Media to Market Your Brand', authors Ekaterina Walter and Jessica Gioglio report that **the human brain is able to process images 60,000 times faster than text**. Visual content works precisely because it is immediate, emotional, evocative, engaging and able to move the deepest part of the human being.



At the heart of visual storytelling is **the immersive experience**: the combination of images and text is able to arouse attention, reinforce the message and prolong the memory; this is the key to the success of this type of approach, since man has always been accustomed to learning through images even before he starts talking or reading.

The following is a list of the advantages of this technique:

- It creates **a high degree of engagement**, strengthening learners' motivation and commitment.

By their nature, visual content is able to touch people's most intimate chords, engaging them and keeping their attention and desire to learn more.

- It encourages **the collaborative exchange of knowledge**, critical comparison and the search for new interpretations.

Being exposed to visual narratives naturally stimulates curiosity to explore concepts in depth and the creation of new stories from them.

- It offers simplified **access to abstract concepts** and particularly meaningful messages.

Thanks to the support of images and videos, the assimilation and memorisation of concepts that are difficult to express in words alone become more immediate.

- It **uses an approach that is more familiar** and meets with less resistance from the audience.

Especially in the presence of Millennials, the storytelling approach is in line with their strong digital propensity and need for engagement.

So, successful factors for an efficient Visual Story are:

- #Engage and entice: its ability to get attention, often through an arresting or memorable image,
- #Communicate a convincing argument

#Summarising complex concepts in a way that the intended audience will respond to, Draw the viewer in giving them a way to connect directly to the content or explore the issue further.

But during the work there are some things that can be wrong, for example the visual information aimed at people who are not ready to receive it or don't share our understanding of the problem an image that people cannot bear to look at because it is too strong, such as explicit documentation of a tragedy, will not enlist support and, worse, may be perceived as manipulation. a campaign that makes use of the wrong technology platform for its particular audience will not reach it.

In order to foresee a good job and a successful project, it is essential that the photos and videos produced are optimal, and to enable this to happen, we include a short guide on how to produce good quality photos/videos to make the job easier:

First of all, it must be specified that there are various genres of photography. Among the main ones are:

- 1 Reportage or documentary photography
- 2 Portrait
- 3 Street photography
- 4 Fashion photography
- 5 Nature photography
- 6 Landscape photography
- 7 Macro-photographers
- 8 Sports photography
- 9 Still Life Photography

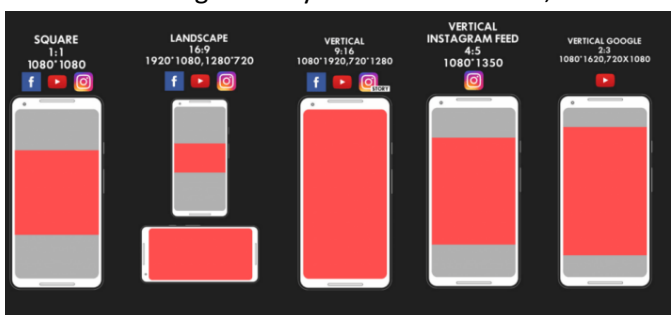
In this document we will look at how to create high-quality photos and content in relation to the Spiritus

Loci project, using only your smartphone, in order to acquire a basic knowledge of light and equipment. The intention is to create a template to follow when editing and post-producing the content to be created.

It is very important to first prepare our smartphone's camera: setting it to 1080 pixels / 60fps and cleaning it well before you start shooting will make a big difference, ensuring the best possible result.

Other important considerations concern the orientation of the camera, horizontal or vertical, depending on what you want to convey:

- The horizontal image amplifies the sense of movement, conveys dynamism and a sense of openness and is best suited to portraying landscapes;
- The vertical image conveys a sense of closure, but is useful to focus attention on a vertical subject



Equally important is the format, as you will need to choose the most suitable for the subject to be portrayed:

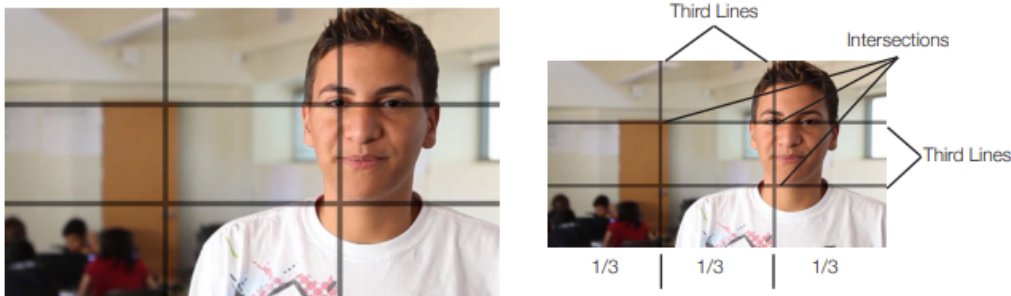
- Square (1:1);
- Landscape (16:9), the most suitable for shooting a video;
- Vertical (9:16);
- Vertical (4:5), that best fits the content to be shared in the Instagram feed;
- Vertical (2:3)

It must be remembered that care must be taken to maintain the same orientation of the camera, vertical or horizontal, throughout the shooting of a video (usually horizontal is more appropriate in this case). It is also necessary to set the camera lens to suit our needs:

- Wide angle: enhances edges, distances and differences in the size of subjects, producing dramatic effects;
- Telephoto: 'flattens' the perspective, giving a powerful sense of scale
- Macro: offers optimal optical performance at shorter focusing distances and generally has a sharper rendition for close-ups. It also lends itself well, however, to applications beyond macro photography;
- Fisheye: offers the greatest angle of view but distorts straight lines by making them curved (the effect created is similar to, for example, filming with a GoPro digital camera).

Activating the so-called grid will allow the subject to be better placed in space, so that the observer's eye will not run randomly between the various points in the image, but will dwell on a reading with a logical sense:

- Rule of Thirds: The human eye has its "visual center" and this is the place that it is naturally drawn to. Imagine the viewfinder is divided into thirds, both horizontally and vertically. This grid creates four points where the lines cross. For the greatest impact, place the subject where the lines intersect, instead of in the center of the frame



- Lines: our eyes are led to see well on the lines and observe the subject



It is advisable not to neglect the background while working on the composition, trying to favour a clean and uncluttered one, one with solid colours: a wall, for example, but a wall without any particular obscurities,

because these are usually the first thing to attract the eye of the observer. Whereas photography is something static, video is in motion. It is a movement that is able to guide the viewer's gaze. There are different types of movement:

- Pan/tilt: from right to left and vice versa, from top to bottom and vice versa, describes the scene nicely;



- Zoom in/Zoom out: moving closer and further away from the subject on the same line gives intensity to the scene



It goes without saying that, in order to get a good result, whether you are shooting a video or taking a photo, it is important to remain still, hold the smartphone with both hands, keep your arms close to your body, lower your centre of gravity and bend your knees.

The use of a tripod or gimbal stabiliser for smartphones could prove useful in this regard.

Lights have the task of showing and enhancing the subject within the scene. Light is a means of communication. Different lights communicate differently according to:

1. Position:

- frontal: has a descriptive function
- from behind: stimulates the imagination
- side: gives an aura of mystery to the subject

2. Direction:

- from below: unnatural, awe-inspiring
- from the top: natural, positive

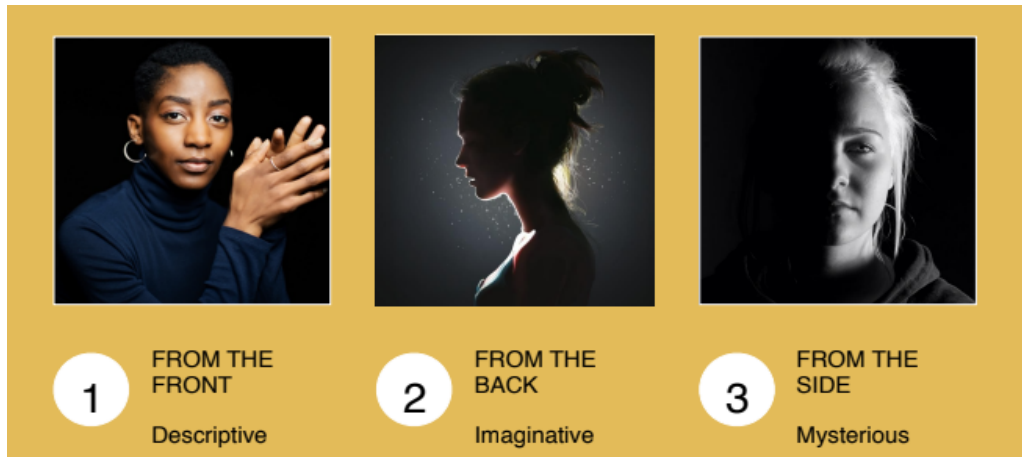
3. Quality:

- tough: conveys strength, awe-inspiring

- soft: natural, conveys calm

Some practical suggestions may be useful:

- Try to take advantage of natural lighting as much as possible, shooting/shooting outdoors or, if shooting/shooting indoors, that of a window, perhaps turning off all artificial lights. Always check where the natural light is coming from and place the subject as close to it as possible;



- Preference/ Favour is given to colour photos, as they are more 'vital' and adherent to reality, while black and white tends to make the scene look suspended and poetic, but at the same time enhances the textures and slightly improves the quality in shots where it is not optimal;
- Favour soft light and not direct light, such as sunlight. Cloudy days are best, as they have a softer light;



- Photos taken in low light are grainier;
- Before shooting, tap the smartphone screen on the subject to adjust.

This document show how it is important storytelling, like a practice that lies deep in the social behaviour of human groups - ancient and modern. They dramatize social relations and problems of living, convey ideas or act out of fantasies. Thus, the telling of a story requires skill. Storytelling preserved knowledge by passing it from one generation to another and this mission has continued into modern times. The early storytellers used crude images supported with gestures and vocal sounds which later evolved into language. And over the centuries as technology provided paper, printing machines & electronic transmitters till entering the digital age, these developments directly affected the narrative arts. (Eisner, 2008)

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