



The Art of Digital Storytelling

Craig Roland

Everyone has stories to tell, and digital media offer rich, new ways to capture and share our stories with others. Digital storytelling is the art of using digital content—still images, video clips, voiceovers, sound effects, and music—to create compelling narrative movies. As an expressive medium in the classroom, digital storytelling can be used to integrate subject matter, knowledge, and skills from many areas of the curriculum. Visit the following websites to learn more about digital storytelling, how to teach it in your classroom, and to see student examples.

Getting Started

A good place to start learning about digital storytelling is Wikipedia, which provides a brief discussion of the term, its history, and a list of links to other digital storytelling sites (en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Digital_storytelling).

Another good source of information is Daniel Meadows' Digital Storytelling Tutorial (www.photobus.co.uk/dstory_01.html), which includes advice on equipment and software, scripting, and step-by-step instructions on the production process.

Teaching Digital Storytelling


Apple has a unit plan on their website titled "Digital Storytelling: Tell Me A Story" (ali.apple.com/als/2ndmult/projects/3024.html) that provides an overview on how to transform a story into a digital story; step-by-step instructions on storyboarding, capturing images, compressing the final stories, and posting them to the web; assessment strategies; and links to other digital storytelling resources. There is also an excellent PDF guide on using Apple's iLife suite of software to create digital stories available on the Apple Learning Interchange site (edcommunity.apple.com/ali/story.php?itemID=9552).

Mechelle De Craene offers practical classroom strategies to enable your students to get the most out of a digital storytelling project in her 2006 article titled "Digital Storytelling: A Practical Classroom Management Strategy" (terry-freedman.org.uk/artman/publish/printer_804.php). To help students understand the importance of planning before they begin filming, I recommend "Acting with a Pencil: Storyboarding your Movie," (www.exposure.co.uk/eejit/storybd) which provides an overview of the storyboarding process and three downloadable storyboard templates.

Lastly, check out Adobe's Digital Kids Club section on digital storytelling (www.adobe.com/education/digkids/storytelling), which includes advice on teaching digital storytelling, tips on constructing a digital storytelling script, classroom strategies, and tutorials on using Adobe products to produce digital stories.

Digital Stories by Students

If you are looking for examples to inspire your students, take a look at the Hawaii Department of Education's annual IslandMovie Contest (islandmovie.k12.hi.us), which features digital stories created by students at all levels. Also, visit the iCan short film festival (www.sfett.com) website, which includes a wide range of digital stories created by students from San Fernando, California over the past seven years. While on this site, check out the Flickschool (flickschool.com), which includes instructional podcasts on a variety of media-related topics by Marco Torres, social studies teacher and media coach at San Fernando High school. Another site worth seeing is Streetside Stories (www.streetside.org/stories/digital-stories.htm), which features digital stories created by middle school students enrolled in an after-school Tech Tales program.

For additional digital storytelling resources on the web, see ArtEd Online in the March 2006 issue of *SchoolArts*. 

Craig Roland is an associate professor of art education in the School of Art and Art History at the University of Florida in Gainesville, Florida. He is the author of The Art Teacher's Guide to the Internet (Davis Publications, 2005). rolandc@ufl.edu