

A Digital Storytelling Guidebook for Educators

Created by Sonia Chaidez with the generous support of DigLibArts funded by the Andre W. Mellon Foundation

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Preface

"Knowledge emerges only through invention and reinvention, the restless, impatient, continuing, hopeful inquiry beings pursue with the world and with others."

-Paulo Freire, Pedagogy of the Oppressed

People construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experience and reflection on experiences. We share stories to transfer knowledge, make sense of experience, teach values, beliefs, or perhaps to share a moral outcome. It's a process of socialization where we give our stories and receive other's stories to increase understanding of each other. Narratives address the listener, reader, or viewer as a human being rather than as a member of a class or society. Storytelling allows us to relate to each other as another self. It increases understanding of others.

The process of creating a digital story, which is storytelling using technology and computerized tools, is related to a personal form of expression. Students are often required to draw from personal experience or are asked to frame their narratives from a first-person perspective to share their knowledge and understanding with the audience. Adding personalized digital elements like photographs, video, music, and sound are also part of this process and it makes digital storytelling especially engaging for learners.

This Digital Storytelling Guidebook was created to give foundational knowledge for digital storytelling practitioners. It is filled with information and best practices collected after a decade of implementing digital storytelling into 18 different disciplines including courses doing study abroad. Digital Storytelling at Whittier College has been featured at local, regional, and international presentations. Locally, we partner with community-

based groups to do workshops. Our growing <u>archive</u> of digital stories is filled with rich interpretations of how we engage teaching and learning with digital pedagogies at Whittier College.

As a practice in higher education, digital storytelling is found to offer substantial self-reflection, thereby connecting student personal experiences to the subject matter and reinforcing course concepts. For students involved in digital storytelling projects, some of the most significant gains are found through problem-solving skills including synthesizing, analyzing, evaluating, and finally presenting information.

Indeed, the ancient art of storytelling has evolved into a powerful tool of 21st century communication! It has grown from an emotional method of storytelling used in grassroots organizations to higher education where it is used to immerse students in higher-order thinking and to build digital literacy skills. Marketing and advertising firms have adapted the process of digital storytelling to help them build their product and service campaigns. Multimodal storytelling is used to capture and captivate audiences from the sides of screens that include embedded supplemental videos to click on while reading digital editions of newspapers or e-magazines to podcasts and video games. There is also the importance of developing digital literacy as a professional skill. The

American Library Association defines digital literacy as:

"the ability to use information and communication technologies to find, evaluate, create, and communicate information, requiring both cognitive and technical skills."

Digital literacy also involves the creation and sharing of content via digital technologies. They can include blogging and tweeting as scholarship as well as creating podcasts and videos. Issues surrounding privacy, safety, and reputation in online environments are important for students to understand. As part of digital storytelling creation, we require students to learn about intellectual property and to understand Fair Use and Creative Commons to cite photos, video clips or music tracks used in their digital stories. Students are encouraged to think about their roles as digital citizens who borrow various types of media acquired from websites or archives to remix or create their own original work.

They are asked to consider licensing their own creative works with Creative Commons including photos, video, music, websites and digital stories to share as contributors to the global digital information infrastructure. This assignment asks students to think and reflect on their roles beyond consumers of technology--and to think critically about the ways we use digital tools to create, to communicate, to teach, and to contribute to a global society in a productive way.

Acknowledgements

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The librarians and staff of Wardman Library at Whittier College have provided space and technical support, and are exceptional partners in teaching information literacy. The Digital Liberals Arts program has provided funding and support to increase digital literacy on our campus through professional development opportunities and for helping me to create resources like this guidebook to share.



1. Why Digital Storytelling

The student of the future is a maker, a person who needs to be able to critically understand the problem and to seek solutions to solve the problem. It is not enough for learners to simply know how to use a technology. They must be able to apply it imaginatively to perform a task or to produce an object that is productive. In the 21st century, digital literacy is now literacy; all students must be able to use digital tools to express their ideas.

The Assignment

Digital storytelling is an assignment we have adapted to give students an opportunity to showcase their knowledge and ideas using short narratives that are accompanied by digital elements that can include photos, video, graphics, music, and sound. It starts off as an assignment in the economy of writing. Students must distill information they have learned into a 3-minute narrative that usually adds up to one and a half page, double-spaced typed paper. The assignment forces them to be concise but to also think about how the digital elements will fill in unspoken gaps. They must think about how visual elements will add to their story with the goal being to connect to their audience. Students will read aloud and record their stories which

means they must also rehearse and train their voices to deliver their ideas and their message. Are they familiar with their storytelling voices or are they monotone? Usually students are mortified after listening to their recorded voices for the first time but the process helps them think about how they present and deliver their information.

Sometimes faculty assume that our current students, who are seen as <u>digital natives</u> are familiar or even fluent in using technology tools to create digital projects. This is rarely the case. Students are consumers of technology but they don't always use it to create. We started using digital storytelling as an assignment to teach students how to use video production and editing tools but it has grown into much more than a tech lesson. It is now recognized as a sound pedagogy tool as well as a growing field of study with institutions of higher learning offering <u>certificates</u> as part of professional development for educators. There are also courses designed for <u>graduate students</u> who are looking to expand their teaching portfolios.

At Whittier College, we use digital storytelling as a fun and creative assignment that helps to build digital literacies as well as prepare students with skills that they will use in their upcoming professional careers. It is a powerful tool we use to explain points of view, data, evidence, and frame arguments with the ability to disseminate across multiple platforms.



2. What Makes a Good Story

Storytelling is the heart of a digital story. Whether it's demonstrating knowledge of a competency in a course or presenting data gathered in a research project, the narrative is the glue that holds the message together in projects and presentations. Stories are how audiences connect and recall information.

Before we begin working on things digital we talk about forming a narrative. Who is our audience? What are we trying to communicate? What is the message? Often we start by thinking about the traditional story arc formula: INTRODUCTION->DEVELOPMENT->CLIMAX->RESOLUTION.

Forming narratives also involves persuasion and how we appeal to our audience. Thinking about ways we can make a connection we talk a little about Aristotle's modes of persuasion: emotional appeal (Pathos), Ethical appeal (Ethos), and Logical appeal (Logos). Simply giving the audience facts and instruction is not a story. Narratives are best crafted when the audience is invited to connect to a story of shared values or common experience through ethical appeal. Data and evidence can be presented through logical appeal. Emotional appeal stirs audiences to feel and connect making narratives in a digital story compelling.

Creating a narrative for a digital story is an exercise in the economy of writing. Digital stories should be about 3 minutes of recorded audio which equates to one and a half double-spaced typed pages. The details that are chosen to be included or omitted matter. Digital elements like photos, video, graphics, sound, or music can fill in spaces or emphasize points mentioned in the narrative.

Narratives Are Written with the Anticipation to Connect to Others

Stories are our attempt to explain, understand, and account for experience.

Experience does not automatically assume a narrative form. It's constructed through the process of reflection on experience. Narratives are a way to make stories more personal rather than instructional. They invite the listener into the story, to become a part of it rather than telling the listener what to believe or instruct them what to do.

What are stories made of? A beginning, middle, end. And, there is a plot.

Stories don't have to be linear.. They can start in present day and flashback to the past. There is an opening or introduction and a closing or conclusion, a resolve. Stories can work best when they are book-ended meaning the challenge of the story is presented at the beginning and the ending gives the resolve or the conclusion to the challenge introduced at the beginning.

The Hook

What is the hook of your story? How is the audience's attention captured? How will the audience's attention be held throughout the story?

Movie trailers are sometimes good examples to use. They are crafted to hook an audience to the story in a short amount of time so that they can spend their money at the box office to watch the entire film. A compelling narrative is at the heart of a

digital story. Tech tools can help enhance and further personalize a digital story. Students may already feel like they are media producers but there are opportunities to sharpen their awareness of how the core components of audio, video, and images come together into something that creates a more carefully crafted message. The goal is to equip students with the skills, knowledge, and capabilities to encourage cognitive development around digital content creation and communication.

Good Stories, Good Presentations

Good presentations often start with a good story. Whether presenting in person or with a video, the way to connect to the audience is with stories.

The magic ingredient of any presentation is the storytelling! Mastering the art of storytelling is essential for good presentations. It helps to keep the audience captivated and they will remember what the presentation is about. The key is to connect and storytelling makes this happen. Stories are inherently interesting and they can help with presentations formed around presenting data, persuading and communicating knowledge.

Tips for Storytelling in Presentations

Watch videos of great speakers. <u>TED</u> Talks are great sources. Pay attention to how the presenter is delivering their message. What works, what doesn't? Take notes and practice.

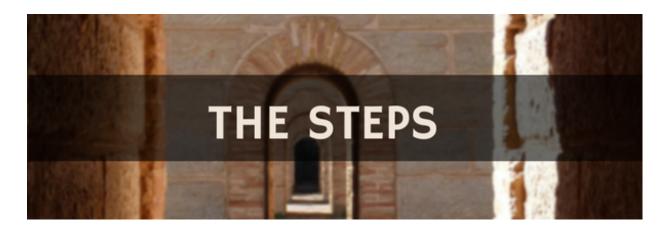
Most public speaking experts agree that you must connect with the audience within the first 30 seconds or they will lose interest and tune out. Practice storytelling techniques with friends and family. Ask for feedback. Another helpful tip is to not bore the audience with introductory remarks. Start with a story. Remember, 30 seconds to connect with them!

People Are Hard-Wired to Listen to Stories

We've all got this going for us! Audiences want to be taken on a journey with a good story.

Sharing a personal story can help to connect. A surprising element of storytelling that makes it irresistible is conflict. You can connect with your audience emotionally if you present conflict. Conflict invites curiosity. The audience will keep listening for a resolution.

If you introduce characters to your story, bring them to life by describing key details that are necessary for the audience to connect with them. In a digital story, show what you can't tell. Sometimes audiences can connect with visuals instead of words. Also, positive messages are inspiring. They allow connection to the audience without lecturing to them. Positive messages leave the audience on an emotional high and thus connection! Using dialogue in storytelling can also add a personal touch and will help connect to the audience. And lastly, end your story with a takeaway message.



3. The Steps

Ready to add a digital storytelling assignment to your course? Here are the key steps in creating a digital story.

Step 1: Writing the Narrative

A digital story first begins with writing. Effective digital stories are grounded on sound writing. Students write, rewrite, and create multiple drafts until a narrative is formed. The narrative should include a central theme that follows the content learned throughout the course. The narrative can also take on a theme that allows the viewer to relate to a personal student experience. The course syllabus can list specific topics to explore within the digital storytelling assignment.

Step 2: The Script

The script is developed after the narrative is complete. The script is a distillation of the essential details or components of the narrative story. For example, if the narrative is 3 to 4 double-spaced typed pages, the script resulting from the narrative should be about one and a half double-spaced typed pages (this is 3 minutes of recorded audio). Producing the digital story from the script ensures that the multimedia elements convey and contribute meaning to the story, rather than being

included to make the story more interesting.

Step 3: Story Circle

An important step in forming the script is holding an open reading session known as "Story Circle." Digital storytelling participants read their narrative drafts aloud during a peer review session to help form a script.

Step 4: The Storyboard

The storyboard allows the student to organize the flow of visuals and script. Students place their ideas for visuals inside boxes that run along the script. This is done before multimedia or other supporting visuals are found. The storyboard is meant to help students draw the type of imagery that will be associated with particular portions of their script. A sample template for a storyboard can be found here or there are others on the Internet.

Step 5: Digital Elements

Multimedia or digital elements including photos, video, graphics, sound, or music tracks that are originally produced by students works best in digital stories. Students can also scan pictures from personal collections to add to digital stories. There are other sites that also provide Creative Commons licensed digital images such as Flickr and Wikimedia Commons. Search.creativecommons.org is a good place to start. Music is an important element that adds feeling and emotion to digital stories but instrumental tracks work best. Lyrics in music can detract from the recorded narrative.

<u>Creative Commons- Legal Music for Videos</u> is a good place to search for sites that offer licensed music tracks to use in digital stories.

IMPORTANT:

Students should give proper attribution when using images (still or moving) and music in digital stories. Citations can be included at the end of the digital story in rolling credits or as slides. A workshop on Creative Commons, Fair Use and citations are helpful in this process.

An example for citing digital images (MLA formatting):

The name of the creator of the digital image

The title of the digital image

The title of the journal and/or container that the image was found on

The names of any other contributors responsible for the digital image

Version of the image (if applicable)

Any numbers associated with the image (if applicable)

The publisher of the image

The date the image was created or published

The name of the database or second container that the image was found on

The location of the image, such as a URL or DOI number

The structure of the citation should look like this:

Creator's Last name, First name. "Title of the digital image." *Title of the website*, First name Last name of any contributors, Version (if applicable), Number (if applicable), Publisher, Publication date, URL.

For citing moving images from websites like YouTube or Vimeo:

Last name, First name of the creator. "Title of the film or video." *Title of the website,* role of contributors and their First name Last name, Version, Numbers, Publisher, Publication date, URL.

Example:

RotoBaller. "RotoBaller MLB: Top Fantasy Baseball Catcher Dynasty

League Prospects for 2016." *YouTube*, commentary by Raphael Rabe, 27 Mar.

2016, youtu.be/gK645_7TA6c.

Source for citations:

<u>easybib.com</u> provides helpful ways to cite resources.

For more information on Fair Use and citing digital media see: http://mediacommons.futureofthebook.org/intransition/resources

*It is good practice to keep copies of all media that will be used in a digital story on an external drive as well as a web-based storage drive like Google Drive or Dropbox.

Recommended sites for examples of digital stories:

Whittier DigLibArts YouTube channel

Whittier Public Library "Story Garden" Vimeo Channel

StoryCenter YouTube channel

DH@Guelph Digital Stories

National Geographic Fulbright Digital Storytelling Fellowships

Step 6: Creating the Digital Story: Using WeVideo

Whittier College supports the <u>WeVideo</u> online, web-based video editing platform for digital storytelling project creation. WeVideo has created a set of guides for educators:

WeVideo Education Accounts

WeVideo Tutorial

Resources for Educators

There is also a WeVideo app available for various mobile devices to upload images, video, and sound directly to the WeVideo account. New improvements also allow for some editing features on mobile devices. The WeVideo application works best on Chrome browsers.

Step 7: Share

A highlight of creating digital stories is the sharing. Students typically showcase their digital stories during the final exam period when added as an assignment to the course. Students share what they've learned throughout this course while presenting their digital stories. The digital stories are evaluated based on the rubrics that are made available on the learning management system; the Moodle course site. As part of the sharing process, we also discuss public scholarship. Students are asked to sign a non-mandatory release form to share their digital stories for learning purposes with other classes or on the Whittier DigLibArts website.



4. Digital Storytelling in Education

Digital storytelling in education is used as a tool to inspire students in the process of self-reflection writing and to aid in connecting subject matter and course concepts. Digital storytelling also helps students acquire technology skills and boosts their digital literacies. Aside from presenting in their classrooms, the students we work with use their digital stories as part their resumes to demonstrate to potential employers that they have a valuable set of skills to offer. Students also use the digital story formula to create additional presentations that require them to form arguments supported by data or to communicate their research with compelling evidence. Additionally, students will upload their digital stories to online platforms to share within their learning networks, social media circles, and on their professional websites. Here are some examples of discipline specific student-produced digital stories:

- Social Work
- History
- Sociology
- Kinesiology (<u>video resumes</u>)

- Physics
- English
- Anthropology
- Religious Studies



5. Multimodal Storytelling and Tools

DigLibArts promotes the use of digital and hybrid pedagogies. For ideas on assignments and tools based on learning objectives check out our <u>Teaching</u> <u>Repository</u>.

Below are additional examples of multimodal storytelling projects:

Story Maps (Esri StoryMaps, Google Maps, Zeemaps)

- Forced Migration/Globalization
- First Day Shelter
- Sociology of Health & Medicine

Photovoice Projects with Maps

- Nuestro Arte Photovoice StoryMap
- Cancer and Society

Digital Magazines (Medium)

• Family Resource Magazine

Creating Posters, Banners & Infographics to tell stories

- Piktochart
- Canva

Podcasts (SoundCloud)

• Example: First Day, Stories of Being Homeless

Digital Stories (WeVideo)

• Examples: <u>StoryCenter</u>, <u>DigLibArts</u>



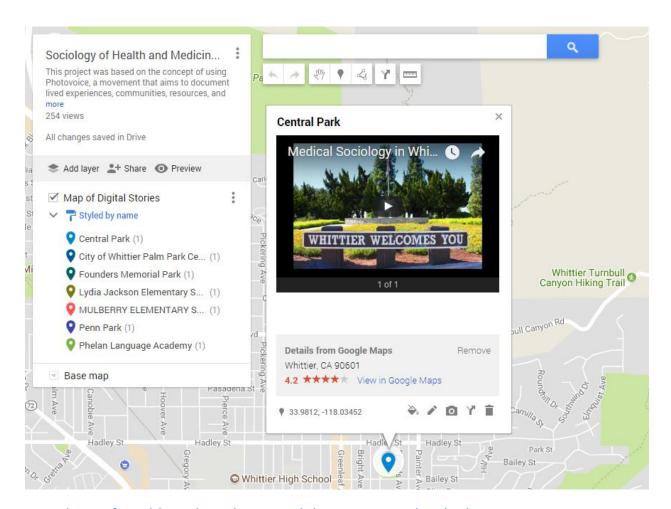
6. Photovoice and Community Engagement Projects

The power of digital storytelling is in the connections that are made. From art form to community activism, our stories enhanced by digital tools can reach global audiences. Photovoice uses elements of a creative movement that involves using participatory photography as an advocacy tool. The PhotoVoice movement began as a way to give communities a set of skills to communicate and be advocates for change. Photography is not only an art form but a tool to record facts and raise awareness. Photovoice is a form of digital storytelling. We use computer-based tools to tell stories about our community as active participants.

In Photovoice projects, we use pictures and video to tell a story of the community we are observing. Past assignments have led students to document the relationship between our environment, our community, and our health. For a Sociology and Biology paired course taught by Professor Julie Collins-Dogrul and Professor Sylvia Vetrone, the assigned PhotoVoice project enabled their students to record and communicate their views on Whittier's food and physical activity and to address strengths and concerns. Professor Collins-Dogrul's learning objectives were to facilitate praxis--a way to connect theory and action, and to promote critical dialogue

and knowledge about obesity through discussions of this project.

For this sociology course, the final digital stories were placed on a map that included work from a previous class. Collectively, all stories become part of a larger theme, creating a new way to advocate for change.



Sociology of Health and Medicine and the Science Behind Obesity Interactive Story

Map

Pocket Documentaries; Using Mobile Devices

Most of us have cameras at the ready in our pocket. Mobile phone photography has

enabled us to expand digital storytelling projects. While mobile phone photography can be considered low-tech, it can be used to capture stunning photos of your subjects. Tools like crops, lighting adjustments and filters are easily done on mobile phones.

In the Fall of 2016, we created a series of digital literacy workshops for community members. In partnership with the <u>Community Education Program Initiative</u>, CEPI for short, we debuted a photography exhibit called "Nuestro Arte" inspired by mothers who wanted to take an active role in their community by learning digital tools. Their story is highlighted here: <u>Finding Community Through Digital Literacy</u>.

Project summary and photos can be viewed at: <u>bit.ly/WCphotovoice</u> and on a

Other examples of digital storytelling as a community advocacy tool:

- Immediate Justice: What If One Woman Told The Truth About Her Life
- StoryCenter Civic Engagement Stories

StoryMap: bit.ly/NAstorymap.



7. Building Digital Literacies

In building digital literacy skills, students are asked to create, critique, analyze, and evaluate various forms of media. This includes solving problems collaboratively and cross-culturally, designing and sharing with global communities, and learning about ethical responsibilities in complex environments. Digital literacy is not only about gaining proficiency with tech tools but learning to <u>navigate and exist in virtual environments</u>. In preparation for college (and to enter the global job market) K-12 educators are infusing their curriculum with tasks that help students build digital literacy skills. The 5Cs: Critical Thinking, Creativity, Communication, Community, and Collaboration guide these efforts. Creating digital stories is an assignment that brings together the 5Cs.

In a <u>strategic brief</u> about digital literacy in higher education shared by the New Media Consortium, digital literacy is defined as; "Digital Literacy transcends the basic operation of using a technology. In this understanding, learners must be able to combine those skills with reflection, imagination, and awareness of their implications in order to perform a task or produce an object that would otherwise not be possible without technology."

Students build digital literacy skills through digital storytelling by learning to use tech tools to explain, communicate and imagine or re-imagine how their ideas can shape scholarship.

Below are three types of digital literacies that can shape potential curriculum for creative educators looking to expand their pedagogies.

Three Models of Digital Literacy

Universal Literacy



A familiarity with using basic digital tools such as office productivity software, image manipulation, cloud-based apps and content, and web content authoring tools.

Creative Literacy



Includes all aspects of universal literacy and adds more challenging technical skills that lead to the production of richer content, including video editing, audio creation and editing, animation, an understanding of computational device hardware, and programming — along with digital citizenship and copyright knowledge.

Literacy Across Disciplines



Diffused throughout different classes in appropriate ways that are unique to each learning context, e.g. sociology courses can teach interpersonal actions online, such as the ethics and politics of social network interaction, while psychology and business classes can focus on computer-mediated human interaction.

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An NMC Horizon Project Strategic Brief

Page 1

Source: NMC Project Strategic Brief



8. Fair Use & Creative Commons

Copyright knowledge is a part of digital literacy. As part of the digital storytelling creation process we require students to learn about intellectual property and to understand Fair Use and Creative Commons. All photos, video clips or music tracks used in their digital stories must be cited if they are not using their own. Learning about digital literacy and digital citizenship means students must understand how creative works are licensed to give credit when they borrow various types of media acquired from websites or archives to remix or create their own original work.

A good way to search for Creative Commons licensed work is to use the portal:

<u>search.creativecommons.org.</u> Creative Commons is also developing a site to find images
that you can use and remix across several open archives:

https://ccsearch.creativecommons.org/

Other useful resources:

The Creative Commons Solution

Can I use it?

Fair Use Worksheet



9. Rubrics and Grading

Rubrics

We have rubrics that we use as examples for grading digital stories and multimodal projects. Some examples:

Digital Storytelling Rubric

Podcast Rubric

Multimodal Storytelling Sample Rubrics

Most faculty use it as a model to follow and design their own based on the learning objectives of their course and the content they are teaching. We have other examples that can be shared by permission from faculty members.

Grading

For digital storytelling assignments, it's important to note that while rubrics are used as a guide for students and for faculty, much of the work can be subjective. In speaking to educators and to digital storytelling practitioners, we agree that the reflective piece of the this assignment should be graded with less emphasis on the finished project. Learning to communicate using digital tools is a process.

Syllabus Example for Teaching a Course on Digital Storytelling

Week 1	Introduction to Digital Storytelling; From Community Activism to
Artform	
Week 2	The Photovoice Movement & Digital Storytelling in Education
Week 3	Web 2.0 Storytelling, Cyberculture, Social Media Storytelling
Week 4	Writing the Narrative; The Economy of Writing
Week 5	Story Circle and Script Creation
Week 6	Storyboarding & Organization
Week 7	Understanding Copyright & Creative Commons
Week 8-9	Gathering Pictures, Video, Graphic Creation, and Music
Week 10-12	Using WeVideo & Editing Lab
Week 13	Final Presentations

10. Digital Storytelling in the Digital Humanities

Digital storytelling shares the ethos of the digital humanities: the willingness to collaborate, to experiment, to share, to fail, to be transparent, to iterate, and to make public. Digital storytelling like DH is modular in its ability to remix and alter the format to fit different disciplines. Digital storytelling is less about expertise and making expert knowledge public or leveraging open data for research and more about centering teaching and learning experiences. As a field of study, the humanities focus on the cultural record of human experience and the preservation of this knowledge -- in many ways recorded through stories. In this fashion, digital storytelling provides new opportunities for humanities scholarship and teaching.

There is also much potential in expanding digital humanities perspectives, research, and scholarship. In his article, <u>Digital storytelling: New opportunities for humanities scholarship and pedagogy</u>, John Barber states:

"If we grant that humanities scholarship and pedagogy may be grounded in stories of human cultural and creative endeavors, then the use of digital media to help create and share such stories may help engage academic research with creative practice to promote critical thinking, communication, digital literacy, and civic engagement."

Perhaps an affordance that digital storytelling has over other digital humanities practice is that it is relatively low-tech and anyone can do it because everyone has a story to tell. Check out some of the digital stories we created at the DH@Guelph 2018 Summer Workshop: "Digital Storytelling for Humanists."

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This Digital Storytellers Guidebook is provided by Techquity Advisors, LLC as part of an initiative designed to provide K12 students with the resources to become young journalists. Our mission is to empower students with the tools and skills to tell their stories and engage with the world through journalism and media. For more information visit: https://techquity.us/digital-storytellers