

Web Storytelling Tools

Introduction

Participation depends on creative expression.

Participants in activist communities need different ways to express their concerns, perspectives, and experiences—to tell their stories to those within their own communities and to the broader world.

Forms of expression

Stories, here, are inclusive of many different forms of expression and engagement. A story, of course, may consist of a narrative or description of an experience or event. But more broadly, storytelling includes any kind of sharing and publishing: teaching; creating artworks; collecting, exchanging, and analyzing data; sharing notes; promoting events; or simply making a web presence for a community or cause. And storytelling is a reciprocal activity—it may include responding to, critiquing, amplifying, or transforming other community members' stories in respectful ways.

Barriers

Digital storytelling's opportunities also present new barriers. If an activist is unable to access a means of expression—if the storytelling medium doesn't match their perceptual, cognitive, financial, or technical needs and environment—their valuable perspectives and contributions will be potentially lost to the community. Similarly, if other members of a community are unable to perceive, understand, or engage with the stories shared, it will be difficult to build networks and catalyze movements that are both large and diverse.

Goals

Multimodal

The Social Justice Repair Kit's web storytelling tools will provide different ways to write, record, publish, and share stories on the web. These tools are designed from the beginning to support multiple forms of expression and interpretation. Activists will be able to write their stories or record them as audio and video. Alternative formats and scaffolds that support diverse interpretation and engagement can be layered on top; for example, automatic speech-to-text transcriptions, pictures, dictionaries, note-taking, highlighting, and text-to-speech. These tools will, in particular, support the participation of youth with learning differences within social justice communities.

Low- to no-cost

Publishing and sharing stories is designed to be as simple and as low-cost as possible. Today, it's still expensive and technically-demanding to publish stories on the web—to connect with other like-minded activists, build communities, and to challenge popular assumptions. Typically, groups face a choice of either subscribing to expensive, technically complex publishing platforms (such as Drupal or WordPress) that require frequent maintenance and technical support or using popular but proprietary and restrictive platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, or Instagram when they are looking to get the word out. The SJRK web storytelling tools aim to significantly reduce the technical and financial costs of publishing autonomously on the web and to support the sharing of costs among cooperatives that can pool together the resources of many activist groups and social justice organizations. The SJRK tools, however, will also support integration with popular web publishing tools and social media platforms.

Design and Development

Environmental Scan

- [Storytelling and Story-gathering Resources, Tools and Examples](#)

Roadmap

- Create inclusive storytelling tools. (In progress)
- Create micro-storytelling sites which are specific to their contexts. The first will be a 'Learning Reflections' site.
- Deploy story gathering into the specific context.
- Deploy the story sharing. This might be a static site.
- Have a strategy for maintenance and growth.
- Have different strategies for persistence and publication
 - CouchDB
 - S3 Buckets
 - Well-structured adapter patterns using the DataSource grade

Sketches and Design Ideas

Early Explorations and Prototypes

- [My Story](#) design mock-ups
- [My Story](#) UI implementations
 - [current build](#)
- [Audio Story Recorder](#) technology prototype
- [Liam's Photospotz concept](#) - possible use case and brainstorm about the digital, multimedia collective storytelling potentials of this build.

Design Crit Notes

- [Design Crit - Storytelling Tool \(part I\)](#) (August, 2017)
- [Design Crit - Storytelling Tool \(part II\)](#) (September, 2017)
- [Open Design Questions about Digital Storytelling Tool Design](#) (September, 2017)
- [Design Crit - Storytelling Tool](#) (January, 2018)

Sketches for Learning Reflections micro-storytelling site

- [Learning reflections site mobile](#) (March, 2018)
- [Learning reflections site desktop](#) (March, 2018)
- [Learning reflections site story viewing desktop and mobile](#) (March, 2018)
- [StorytellingTool_UpdatedUI_V6_SS.pdf](#) (January, 2019)

Outreach and Workshops for Learning Reflections micro-storytelling site

- [Storytelling workshop at a youth activist organization - Lessons learned](#) (February, 2019)
- [Storytelling workshop at the Immigration Museum of Canada at Pier 21, Halifax - Lessons learned](#) (February, 2019)
- [Storytelling workshops at High schools - Lessons learned](#) (March, 2019)
- [Outreach Resources](#) (e.g. invitations, guides, presentations, forms, etc.)
- [Storytelling workshops at middle school](#)