Draw My Life: Creative Reflection through Stick Figure Storytelling

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Abstract
The purpose of this session is to introduce participants to the engaging and adaptable "Draw My Life" video as a form of digital storytelling and professional reflection. Garnering millions of Youtube views, Draw My Life videos and their related conversations exemplify the participatory content creation and sharing enabled by today's content creation tools and social media spaces. Draw My Life videos employ fast-motion video apps, typically on mobile devices, to capture narration and stick figure sketching of important life moments. With seemingly simple drawings, individuals use this forum to explore meaningful events, turning points, and lessons learned, in compelling, insightful, and sometimes very personal digital stories. Participants will view and discuss sample videos, learn about and practice tools for building Draw My Life stories, and construct a Draw My Life story. During the session, participants will also identify and discuss the literacies that these digital, reflective stories foster, including digital media and storytelling skills, participatory culture in the Youtube sharing context, and dispositions of self-reflection and metacognition.
Keywords: digital storytelling, participatory, reflection, Youtube, storytelling, drawing

1   Introduction

1.1   Title

Draw My Life: Creative Reflection through Stick Figure Storytelling

1.2   Organizer

Rebecca Morris

1.3   Key Participants

Rebecca Morris

1.4   Description

Today's digital storytelling formats cover a wide range of media and participatory platforms, including wikis, blogs, tweets, games, social media, and narrated multimedia videos (Alexander, 2011). Perhaps the most familiar digital storytelling format is a narrated multimedia sequence of photos, video, and special effects.

In library and education contexts, this wide range of digital storytelling formats affords users a space to create and share stories that convey subject area knowledge, personal narratives, and original stories. Digital storytelling is an effective outlet for creativity and communication in part because it incorporates knowledge and skills cultivated through informal learning and play with technology, including viewing and sharing Youtube videos. Librarians and educators can harness digital storytelling to connect students' and patrons' informal learning experiences with new layers of literacy development.

In this session, we will explore that connection between informal technology play and professional/educational pursuits with the "Draw My Life" approach to digital storytelling. Garnering millions of Youtube views, Draw My Life videos and their related conversations exemplify the participatory content creation and sharing enabled by today's content creation tools and social media spaces. Draw My Life videos employ fast-motion video apps, typically on mobile devices, to capture narration and stick figure sketching of important life moments. With seemingly simple drawings, individuals use this forum to explore meaningful events, turning points, and lessons learned, in compelling, insightful, and sometimes very personal digital stories. This session will utilize the Draw My Life construct for developing professional reflections, in the manner of "Draw My Researcher Life" or "Draw My Faculty Life."

1.4.1   Purpose and Intended Audience

The purpose of this session is to introduce participants to the engaging and adaptable "Draw My Life" video as a form of digital storytelling and professional reflection. Participants will view and discuss sample videos, learn about and practice tools for building Draw My Life stories, and construct a Draw My Life story. Story development will include building a concept, storyboarding, drawing, and creating the video compilation, with voice-over narration. Participants are encouraged to bring a tablet or mobile device to use in the session.

During the session, participants will also identify and discuss the literacies that these digital, reflective stories foster, including digital media and storytelling skills, participatory culture in the Youtube sharing context, and dispositions of self-reflection and metacognition. We will examine and propose applications of Draw My Life for professional reflection and use in education and information settings. Participants will be encouraged to share their sample videos in an online space, and continue the conversation about how they have used Draw My Life stories after the iConference.

The intended audience of this session is faculty members, educators, researchers, and information professionals across contexts. This topic has a broad applicability across interests and professional disciplines.

1.4.2   Proposed Activities

This is the timeline for the session:
(15 minutes) Introduction and community building

(15 minutes) Show and discuss sample videos. Modeling of steps for creating Draw My Life video.

(30 minutes) CREATE: Individual story concept development, drawing, video compilation. Note: the amount of time to create a full "draw my life" story likely exceeds our allotted time. Participants will be encouraged to create a segment to practice the story development and video production steps.

(15 minutes) COLLABORATE: Formative feedback and editing in small groups

(15 minutes) CELEBRATE: Concluding Reflections and Whole Group Sharing

1.4.3   Ramp-Up

The ramp-up portion of this event includes a community building activity, sample videos and discussion, and modeling of steps for creating Draw My Life videos.

1.4.4   Follow-Through

Participants will be encouraged to share their sample videos in an online space, and continue the conversation about how they have used Draw My Life stories after the iConference.

1.5   Relevance to the Conference and Significance to the Field

This proposed session complements the 2015 iConference theme, *Create, Collaborate, Celebrate*, in both concept and session design. This creative approach to professional and self-reflection incorporates digital media, social contexts for learning (both virtual and face-to-face), and participatory storytelling, all of which represent and embrace the iSchool and iConference focus on information, people, and technology.

In terms of significance to the field, this session grants time and opportunity for participants to engage in intentional self-reflection, in what will likely be a new form of expression. The integration of "create,"

"collaborate," and "celebrate" as steps in the story development process address both internal voices and external voices for reflection, as described by Costa and Kallick (2007). The internal voice, which participants will use for the first stage of their story construction, allows for the building of self-knowledge, that is, "what and how you are thinking" (n.p.). The external voice, exercised in the collaborate and celebrate portions of the session, is an experience in sharing, which "validates, expands, and enriches our internal conversations" (Costa and Kallick, n.p.)

This process of being reflective in a creative, artful activity incorporates numerous significant mental processes identified by Costa and Garmston (1994, in Costa and Kallick 2007). Among the processes introduced through Draw My Life stories are "drawing forth cognitive and emotional information from visual, auditory, kinesthetic, and tactile sources;" "searching for effects and finding connections among causal factors;" and "thinking about thinking: conducting an internal dialogue (metacognition) about the completeness of, satisfaction with, and interest in the reflective process" (n.p.).

The varied backgrounds, disciplines, and experiences of the participants enriches the potential application of Draw My Life storytelling. Some of this project's significance may even unfold in the session itself and in the conversations that follow, as participants share how they will use Draw My Life with students, colleagues or departments, or for personal reflections. This will be an engaging, hands-on session that adopts a sandbox philosophy of media development and sharing, i.e., step in to this open and encouraging space, try out some new tools and ideas, and learn from new colleagues.

1.6   **Length of the Event**

90 minutes

3. References

Alexander, Brian. (2011). The new digital storytelling: Creating narratives with new media. Santa Barbara: Praeger.

Costa, A. L. and B. Kallick (2000). Getting into the habit of reflection. *Educational Leadership*, 57 (7), 60-62. http://www.ascd.org/publications/educational-leadership/apr00/vol57/num07/Getting-into-the-Habit-of-Reflection.aspx.