Chapter 4
Visual Storytelling for Various Interfaces

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ABSTRACT

This chapter is focused on text visualization and storytelling delivered in various literary styles adopted for various delivery systems. Discussion pertains first storytelling by drawing, both with traditional techniques and digital storytelling for various media and technologies. Transition from a sketch to sculpted forms converted to 3D printing, animation, and video is then discussed. Projects offer practical examples of the visual storytelling production and examine the possible usage of visual storytelling for different kinds of interfaces conducive to human communication through mass media, digital interactive, social, and printed media, with the use of mobile apps, web app, or application software.

INTRODUCTION

Storytelling

Generally, storytelling refers both to the archived oral tradition in storytelling in different cultures, times, and places, and to digital storytelling using a variety of media formats, and involves words or written texts, images, gestures, sounds, and animated graphics to let the recipient know about incidents, occurrences, or events, and thus convey education, games, entertainment, (along with edutainment as a form of entertainment aimed at educating as well as entertaining) or cultural and moral traditions. The raw data such as observations, equations, structural formulas, or spectra are useless without the narrative theoretical framework that makes a story out of them. For many multi-media communication complex institutions, communicating by using fiction storytelling techniques can be a more compelling and effective route than using only dry facts. Stories also help us make sense of the world (Hensel, 2010).

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Storytelling in the past often carried spiritual content, such as when Australian Aboriginal storytellers painted symbolic visual stories on sand or rocks, following the path of the spirits controlling their hands. Storytelling before the emergence of writing served for preserving memory of important events, such as in the case of a Greek epic poem Iliad ascribed to Homer, retold by centuries with many improvised embellishments. Some stories were not recorded at all but repeated by storytellers often enough to preserve its presence in a society, played with the use of shadow puppets or masks, as theatrical performances, games, or serial events. Stories often evolved by being told by people with different personalities and perspectives.

With the advent of writing, the writings recorded on rocks, wood, bamboo, clay, pottery, silk, papyrus, or paper complemented visual storytelling. Folklorists discern legends and fairy tales as the main groups of oral tales. Folkloric storytelling includes fairy tales about not necessarily true, often supernatural events, along with legends about true events happening in particular places and times, as well as extraterrestrial and ghost stories. Writers tell stories in their poems, novels, biographies, articles, museum displays, theatrical plays, and films. Many times, the same story about what happened is retold several times by the characters in a play or a movie, with similar props but changed events in each story. Actors, singers, and comedians use legends or folkloric materials along with historical data to engage their audience interest. The audience visualizes the events by creating personal mental images, reacting to the words and gestures of the storyteller, and thus becoming co-creators of the spectacle and motivating the teller to improvise. Children books with traditional stories often contain educational content, sometimes at the expense of a time-honored tale. For example, in some American editions a bottle of wine has been removed from a basket carried by a girl from the Charles Perrault's (2012) 'Little Red Riding Hood' (rewritten later by Brothers Grimm).

One might say that whatever we do is a potential story. Visual storytelling, especially digital storytelling combines visual and verbal communication. There are a growing number of interfaces to introduce our story. With the use of a computer we can do it by creating an image and then transform it into other dimensions: from a two dimensional to a three-dimensional rotational object, a time based visual story, or a virtual reality based scenario. Tools for enhancing visual literacy and thus supporting learning about science may comprise visual storytelling, animations, video clips, simulations, and augmented reality environments, among other solutions. Visual storytelling adds the fourth dimension as it allows wandering across time and space to follow the events that happen to the characters we draw. It makes possible the retrieving, visualizing, representing, and sharing our knowledge through visual and verbal metaphors, and also involving our senses in the process. Music and sound effects also serve as the ways to transfer information. We may send out our stories on the web, and this would allow the user/visitor's interactivity through the web. We may make a transition from a sketch to a 3D printed form, to animate it, and to interact with; while watching an interactive movie the gaze of a viewer can be tracked via an eye-tracking device.

Visual Storytelling as Sequential Art

Storytelling is an art form that can be annotated as sequential art that uses a string of images to produce a graphic storytelling or deliver knowledge. It is an old form of art, as the cave paintings, Egyptian hieroglyphs, pre-Columbian pictorial artifacts wall paintings from different times and places, old friezes, vases, tapestries, embroideries, scrolls, and later, printed series of graphics and numerous paintings – all depict informative stories to document their times. Contemporary examples of sequential works are com-