Chapter 9
Taking Perspectives in Digital Storytelling on Business Planning

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ABSTRACT

Digital storytelling for business planning has the narrative mode and the logical scientific mode. This chapter explores how the structure of the digital storytelling work affects its effectiveness and how the storyteller's reflection influences the improvement of the work. It is critical to consider the structure, consistency, and balance between the narrative and the analytical part, especially the link from a contrast between the initial situation and obstruction to key success factors. In addition, three types of perspective taking make digital storytelling effective: 1) an audience perceives a storyteller's perspective, 2) a storyteller refines his/her perspective, and 3) a storyteller perceives an audience's perspective. When the storyteller deepens his/her own perspective and is aware of others' different perspectives, the audience could find some essential commonality between the episodes of the story and the audience's experience.

INTRODUCTION

Digital Storytelling

Digital storytelling means a short digital work that combines narration and visual-auditory material, such as photographs, music, and movies, produced by an individual as his or her own story[1]. The origin of digital storytelling was a kind of democratization movement of visual art on the West Coast of the United States in the 1970s–1980s. In the 1990s, the movement developed through the appearance of low-cost and easy-to-use equipment, such as personal computers, digital cameras, and the Internet. In 1994, the San Francisco Center for Digital Media was founded and developed into the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS) in 1998 (Lambert, 2013). Although a virtual reality game in which players develop their own stories with a character is also called digital storytelling (Murray, 1998), this chapter addresses digital storytelling following the CDS's movement.

Lambert, one of the founders of the CDS, pointed out that digital storytelling has seven components: self-revelatory, personal or first person voice, scenes of a lived experiences of the storyteller, photos, soundtracks, short-length (under five minutes) and simple designs, and the storyteller's ownership of the entire process and distribution (Lambert, 2013). As Lambert (2013) noted, the storyteller's private life need not always be revealed, but telling a storyteller's non-fiction expressed in the first person is recommended because it is the easiest way to deeply reflect himself or herself.

Regardless of whether or not a story is the storyteller's nonfiction, digital storytelling is oriented to be subjective, personal experience-based, emotional, sensory, and self-reflective in general. Through these aspects, digital storytelling contrasts with the ideal of logical scientific presentation in academic society.

Hartley and McWilliam (2009) added the definition of an element: that digital storytelling is a workshop-based practice called a story circle, although the workshop basis is an implicit premise from the beginning of the digital storytelling movement. In a story circle, participants not only learn how to create works but also communicate with each other during the process of developing stories. A story must be told to someone; thus, members of a story circle function as both author of their stories and audiences of other members' stories. In addition, if the workshop has a specific social theme, such as an environmental problem, digital storytelling can assist the social movement by sharing members' consciousness.

Digital storytelling has been applied to a variety of fields, not only visual arts but also a new style of media, education, therapy, and various social movements in public health care, social services, and others. Digital storytelling has spread not only in the United States but also in countries in Europe, Oceania, North America, Asia, Africa, and South America (Hartley & McWilliam, 2009). In Japan, where the workshop for this research was held, workshop-based practices by educational institutes and non-profit organizations have been observed since the 2000 (Nishioka, 2014).

Digital Storytelling as a Narrative

Clearly, digital storytelling is a form of a narrative. A narrative is an organized interpretation of a sequence of events. The function of a narrative is to bring order to disorder and to reflexively provide structure to our very sense of selfhood. The character of the story told depends on to whom the story is being told, the relationship between the storyteller and the audience, and the broader social and cultural context (Murray, 2015). The narrative has the power to arouse the imagination, understand circumstances, facilitate communication with other entities, and rebuild the storyteller's own reality.

As compared to a simple narration or text, digital storytelling supposedly strengthens and expands the traits of a narrative. To summarize, the difference between "digital" storytelling and other types of "analog" narratives, such as a simple narration or text, is assumed as follows:

- Digital storytelling strengthens the sensuous and emotional effect of a narrative in terms of visual images and auditory effects when compared to an analog narrative. The power of making sense of a confused real world might be enhanced using multi-sensory expressions
- A digital format allows the storyteller to exhibit his/her reflection to other participants in the workshop. In the editorial process, the storytellers also tend to become reflective by hearing their own voices
- Digital storytelling helps broaden social communication in digital form. The storyteller can reach out to a global audience and new narrative possibilities, which go beyond the constraints of time and location, may appear.

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