Important Terminologies

ARPANet

(Advanced Research Projects Agency Network) the precursor to the Internet. Developed in the late 60's

and early 70's by the US Department of Defense as an experiment in wide-area-networking to connect

together computers that were each running different system so that people at one location could use

computing resources from another location.

Bandwidth

How much stuff you can send through a connection. Usually measured in bits-per-second (bps.)

Binary

Information consisting entirely of ones and zeros. Also, commonly used to refer to files that are not

simply text files, e.g. images.

Bit -- (Binary DigIT)

A single digit number in base-2, in other words, either a 1 or a zero. The smallest unit of computerized

data. Bandwidths usually measured in bits-per-second.

Blog -- (web LOG)

A blog is basically a journal that is available on the web. The activity of updating a blog is "blogging" and

someone who keeps a blog is a "blogger." Blogs are typically updated daily using software that allows

people with little or no technical background to update and maintain the blog.Postings on a blog are

almost always arranged in chronological order with the most recent additions featured most prominently.

It is common for blogs to be available as £SS feeds.

Blogosphere or Blogsphere

The current state of all information available on blogs and/or the subculture of those who create and use

blogs.

Bps -- (Bits-Per-Second)

A measurement of how fast data is moved from one place to another. Broadband generally refers to

connections to the Internet with much greater bandwidth than you can get with a modem. There is no

specific definition of the speed of a "broadband" connection but in general any Internet connection using

DSL or via Cable-TV may be considered a broadband connection. A Client program (software) that is

used to look at various kinds of Internet resources.

BTW (By The Way)

Shorthand appended to a comment written in an online forum. Byte A set of Bits that represent a single

character. Usually there are 8 Bits in a Byte, sometimes more, depending on how the measurement is

being made.

Client

A software program that is used to contact and obtain data from a Server software program on another

computer, often across a great distance. Each Client program is designed to work with one or more

specific kinds of Server programs, and each Server requires a specific kind of Client. A Web Browser is a

specific kind of Client.

Cyberspace

Term originated by author William Gibson in his novel Neuromancer the word Cyberspace is currently

used to describe the whole range of information resources available through computer networks.

DHTML (Dynamic Hypertext Markup Language

DHTML refers to web pages that use a combination of HTML, JavaScript, and CSS to create features

such as letting the user drag items around on the web page, some simple kinds of animation, and many

more.

DNS -- (Domain Name System)

The Domain Name System is the system that translates Internet domain names into IP numbers. A "DNS

Server" is a server that performs this kind of translation.

Domain Name

The unique name that identifies an Internet site. Domain Names always have 2 or more parts, separated

by dots. The part on the left is the most specific, and the part on the right is the most general. A given

machine may have more than one Domain Name but a given Domain Name points to only one machine.

For example, the domain names:

• matisse.net

• mail.matisse.net

• workshop.matisse.net

Can all refer to the same machine, but each domain name can refer to no more than one machine. Usually,

all of the machines on a given Network will have the same thing as the right-hand portion of their Domain

Names (matisse.net in the examples above). It is also possible for a Domain Name to exist but not be

connected to an actual machine. This is often done so that a group or business can have an Internet e-mail

address without having to establish a real Internet site. In these cases, some real Internet machine must

handle the mail on behalf of the listed Domain Name.

Download

Transferring data (usually a file) from another computer to the computer you are using. The opposite of

upload.

DSL -- (Digital Subscriber Line)

A method for moving data over regular phone lines. A DSL circuit is much faster than a regular phone

connection, and the wires coming into the subscriber's premises are the same (copper) wires used for

regular phone service. A DSL circuit must be configured to connect two specific locations, similar to a

leased line (however a DSL circuit is not a leased line. A common configuration of DSL allows

downloads at speeds of up to 1.544 megabits (not megabytes) per second, and uploads at speeds of 128

kilobits per second. This arrangement is called ADSL: Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line. Another

common configuration is symmetrical: 384 Kilobits per second in both directions. In theory ADSL allows

download speeds of up to 9 megabits per second and upload speeds of up to 640 kilobits per second. DSL

is now a popular alternative to Leased Lines and ISDN, being faster than ISDN and less costly than

traditional Leased Lines.

Email -- (Electronic Mail)

Messages, usually text, sent from one person to another via computer. E-mail can also be sent

automatically to a large number of addresses.

FAQ -- (Frequently Asked Questions)

FAQs are documents that list and answer the most common questions on a particular subject. There are

hundreds of FAQs on subjects as diverse as Pet Grooming and Cryptography. FAQs are usually written

by people who have tired of answering the same question over and over.

Finger

An Internet software tool for locating people on other Internet sites. Finger is also sometimes used to give

access to non-personal information, but the most common use is to see if a person has an account at a

particular Internet site. Many sites do not allow incoming Finger requests, but many do.

FTP -- (File Transfer Protocol

A very common method of moving files between two Internet sites.FTP is a way to login to another

Internet site for the purposes of retrieving and/or sending files. There are many Internet sites that have

established publicly accessible repositories of material that can be obtained using FTP, by logging in

using the account name "anonymous", thus these sites are called "anonymous ftp servers".FTP was

invented and in wide use long before the advent of the World Wide Web and originally was always used

from a text-only interface.

GIF -- (Graphic Interchange Format)

A common format for image files, especially suitable for images containing large areas of the same color.

GIF format files of simple images are often smaller than the same file would be if stored in JPEG format,

but GIF format does not store photographic images as well as JPEG.

Gigabyte

1000 or 1024 Megabytes, depending on who is measuring. Gopher Invented at the University of

Minnesota in 1993 just before the l/l/feb, gopher was a widely successful method of making menus of

material available over the Internet. Gopher was designed to be much easier to use than FTP, while still

using a text-only interface. Gopher is a Client and Server style program, which requires that the user have

a Gopher Client program. Although Gopher spread rapidly across the globe in only a couple of years, it

has been largely supplanted by Hypertext, also known as WWW (World Wide Web). There are still

thousands of Gopher Servers on the Internet and we can expect they will remain for a while.

HTML -- (Hypertext Markup Language)

The coding language used to create Hypertext documents for use on the World Wide Web. HTML looks a

lot like old-fashioned typesetting code, where you surround a block of text with codes that indicate how it

should appear. The "hyper" in Hypertext comes from the fact that in HTML you can specify that a block

of text, or an image, is linked to another file on the Internet. HTML files are meant to be viewed using a

"Web Browser".HTML is loosely based on a more comprehensive system for markup called SGML, and

is expected to eventually be replaced by XML-based XHTML standards.

HTTP -- (Hypertext Transfer Protocol)

The protocol for moving hypertext files across the Internet. Requires a HTTP client program on one end,

and an HTTP server program (such as Apache) on the other end. HTTP is the most important protocol

used in the World Wide Web (WWW).

Hypertext

Generally, any text that contains links to other documents - words or phrases in the document that can be

chosen by a reader and which cause another document to be retrieved and displayed.

Internet (Lower case I)

Any time you connect 2 or more networks together, you have an internet - as in inter-national or interstate.

Internet (Upper case I)

The vast collection of inter-connected networks that are connected using the TCP/IP protocols and that

evolved from the ARPANET of the late 60's and early 70's.The Internet connects tens of thousands of

independent networks into a vast global internet and is probably the largest Wide Area Network in the

world.

Intranet

A private network inside a company or organization that uses the same kinds of software that you would

find on the public Internet, but that is only for internal use. Compare with extranet.

IP Number -- (Internet Protocol Number)

Sometimes called a dotted quad. A unique number consisting of 4 parts separated by dots,

e.g.165.113.245.2Every machine that is on the Internet has a unique IP number - if a machine does not

have an IP number, it is not really on the Internet. Many machines (especially servers) also have one or

more Domain Names that are easier for people to remember.

IRC -- (Internet Relay Chat)

Basically a huge multi-user live chat facility. There are a number of major IRC servers around the world

which are linked to each other. Anyone can create a channel and anything that anyone types in a given

channel is seen by all others in the channel. Private channels can (and are) created for multi-person

conference calls.

ISP -- (Internet Service Provider)

An institution that provides access to the Internet in some form, usually for money.

IT -- (Information Technology)

A very general term referring to the entire field of Information Technology - anything from computer

hardware to programming to network management. Most medium and large size companies have IT

Departments.

JPEG -- (Joint Photographic Experts Group)

JPEG is most commonly mentioned as a format for image files. JPEG format is preferred to the GIF

format for photographic images as opposed to line art or simple logo art. It is an image format that allows

for compression of the image when it is stored.

Kilobyte

A thousand bytes. LAN -- (Local Area Network).A computer network limited to the immediate area,

usually the same building or floor of a building.

Login

Noun or a verb.

Noun: The account name used to gain access to a computer system. Not a secret (contrast with

Password). Verb: the act of connecting to a computer system by giving your credentials (usually your

"username" and "password")

Mail list (or Mailing List)

A (usually automated) system that allows people to send e-mail to one address, whereupon their message

is copied and sent to all of the other subscribers to the mail list. In this way, people who have many

different kinds of e-mail access can participate in discussions together.

Mashup

A web page or site made by automatically combining content from other sources, usually by using

material available via £SS feeds.

Modem -- (Modulator, Demodulator)

A device that connects a computer to a phone line. A telephone for a computer. A modem allows a

computer to talk to other computers through the phone system. Basically, modems do for computers what

a telephone does for humans. The maximum practical bandwidth using a modem over regular telephone

lines is currently around 57,000 bps.

Mosaic

The first WWW browser that was available for the Macintosh, Windows, and UNIX all with the same

interface. Mosaic really started the popularity of the Web. The source-code to Mosaic was licensed by

several companies and used to create many other web browsers. Mosaic was developed at the National

Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA), at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, in

Illinois, USA. The first version was released in late 1993.

Netscape

A WWW Browser and the name of a company. The Netscape (tm) browser was originally based on the

Mosaic program developed at the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA).

Network

Any time you connect 2 or more computers together so that they can share resources, you have a

computer network. Connect 2 or more networks together and you have an internet.

NIC -- (Network Information Center)

Generally, any office that handles information for a network. The most famous of these on the Internet

was the Inter NIC, which was where most new domain names were registered until that process was

decentralized to a number of private companies. Also means "Network Interface card", which is the card

in a computer that you plug a network cable into.

Node

Any single computer connected to a network.

Open Content

Copyrighted information (such as this Glossary) that is made available by the copyright owner to the

general public under license terms that allow reuse of the material, often with the requirement (as with

this Glossary) that the re-user grant the public the same rights to the modified version that the re-user

received from the copyright owner. Information that is in the Public Domain might also be considered a

form of Open Content.

Packet Switching

The method used to move data around on the Internet. In packet switching, all the data coming out of a

machine is broken up into chunks, each chunk has the address of where it came from and where it is

going. This enables chunks of data from many different sources to co-mingle on the same lines, and be

sorted and directed along different routes by special machines along the way. This way many people can

use the same lines at the same time. You might think of several caravans of trucks all using the same road

system to carry materials.

Password

A code used to gain access (login) to a locked system. Good passwords contain letters and non-letters and

are not simple combinations such as virtue7.

PDF -- (Portable Document Format)

A file format designed to enable printing and viewing of documents with all their formatting (typefaces,

images, layout, etc.) appearing the same regardless of what operating system is used, so a PDF document

should look the same on Windows, Macintosh, linux, OS/2, etc.

Portal

Usually used as a marketing term to describe a Web site that is or is intended to be the first place people

see when using the Web. Typically a "Portal site" has a catalog of web sites, a search engine, or both. A

Portal site may also offer email and other service to entice people to use that site as their main "point of

entry" (hence "portal") to the Web.

Posting

A single message entered into a network communications system.

PPP -- (Point to Point Protocol

The most common protocol used to connect home computers to the Internet over regular phone lines.

Most well known as a protocol that allows a computer to use a regular telephone line and a modem to

make TCP/IP connections and thus be really and truly on the Internet.

Protocol

On the Internet "protocol" usually refers to a set of rules that define an exact format for communication

between systems.

PSTN -- (Public Switched Telephone Network)

The regular old-fashioned telephone system.

RSS -- (Rich Site Summary or RDF Site Summary or Real Simple Syndication)

A commonly used protocol for syndication and sharing of content originally developed to facilitate the

syndication of news articles, now widely used to share the contents of blogs. Mashups are often made

using RSS feeds.RSS is an XML-based summary of a web site, usually used for syndication and other

kinds of content-sharing. There are RSS "feeds" which are sources of RSS information about web sites,

and RSS "readers" which read RSS feeds and display their content to users.

RTSP -- (Real Time Streaming Protocol)

RTSP is an official Internet standard (RFC 2326) for delivering and receiving streams of data such as

audio and video. The standard allows for both real-time ("live") streams of data and streams from stored

data. SDSL -- (Symmetric Digital Subscriber Line)

A version of DSL where the upload speeds and download speeds are the same.

Search Engine

A (usually web-based) system for searching the information available on the Web. Some search engines

work by automatically searching the contents of other systems and creating a database of the results.

Other search engine contains only material manually approved for inclusion in a database, and some

combine the two approaches.

SEO -- (Search Engine Optimization)

The practice of designing web pages so that they rank as high as possible in search results from search

engines. There is "good" SEO and "bad" SEO. Good SEO involves making the web page clearly describe

its subject, making sure it contains truly useful information, including accurate information in Meta tags,

and arranging for other web sites to make links to the page. Bad SEO involves attempting to deceive

people into believing the page is more relevant than it truly is by doing things like adding inaccurate Meta

tags to the page.

Spam (or Spamming)

An inappropriate attempt to use a mailing list, or USENET or other networked communications facility as

if it was a broadcast medium (which it is not) by sending the same message to a large number of people

who didn’t ask for it.

Spyware

A somewhat vague term generally referring to software that is secretly installed on a users computer and

that monitors use of the computer in some way without the users' knowledge or consent. Most spyware

tries to get the user to view advertising and/or particular web pages. Some spyware also sends information

about the user to another machine over the Internet.Spyware is usually installed without a users'

knowledge as part of the installation of other software, especially software such as music sharing software

obtained via download.

Tag

The term "tag" can be used as a noun or verb. As a noun, a tag is a basic element of the languages used to

create web pages (HTML) and similar languages such as XML. Another, more recent meaning of tag is

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related to blogs where blogs and the postings they contain may be "tagged" which means to assign a

keyword, such as "politics" or "gardening", this enables searches for "all the blog postings in the past

week that are tagged 'prenatal care'"

TCP/IP -- (Transmission Control Protocol/Internet Protocol)

This is the suite of protocols that defines the Internet. Originally designed for the UNIX operating system,

TCP/IP software is now included with every major kind of computer operating system. To be truly on the

Internet, your computer must have TCP/IP software.

TLD -- (Top Level Domain)

The last (right-hand) part of a complete Domain Name. For example in the domain name

www.matisse.net ".net" is the Top Level Domain. There are a large number of TLD's, for example .biz,

.com, .edu, .gov, .info, .int, .mil, .net, .org, and a collection of two-letter TLD's corresponding to the

standard two-letter country codes, for example, .us, .ca, .jp, etc.

Upload

Transferring data (usually a file) from a computer you are using to another computer. The opposite of

download. URI -- (Uniform Resource Identifier) an address for s resource available on the Internet. The

first part of a URI is called the "scheme". The most well known scheme is http, but there are many others.

Each URI scheme has its own format for how a URI should appear. Here are examples of URIs using the

http, telnet, and news schemes:

http://www.matisse.net/files/glossary.html telnet://well.sf.ca.us news:new.newusers.questions

URL -- (Uniform Resource Locator)

The term URL is basically synonymous with URI. URI has replaced URL in technical specifications.

Virus

A chunk of computer programming code that makes copies of itself without any conscious human

intervention. Some viruses do more than simply replicate themselves, they might display messages, install

other software or files, delete software of files, etc.

VOIP -- (Voice over IP)

A specification and various technologies used to allow making telephone calls over IP networks,

especially the Internet. Just as modems allow computers to connect to the Internet over regular telephone

lines, VOIP technology allows humans to talk over Internet connections. Costs for VOIP calls can be a lot

lower than for traditional telephone calls. Because the IP networks are packet-switched this allows for

vastly different ways of handling connections and more efficient use of network resources.

WAN -- (Wide Area Network)

Any internet or network that covers an area larger than a single building or campus.

Web

Short for "World Wide Web."

Web page

A document designed for viewing in a web browser. Typically written in HTML. A web site is made of

one or more web pages.

Website

The entire collection of web pages and other information (such as images, sound, and video files, etc.)

that are made available through what appears to users as a single web server. Typically all the of pages in

a web site share the same basic URL, for example the following URLs are all for pages within the same

web site:

http://www.baytherapy.com/

<http://www.baytherapy.com/whatis/> The term has a somewhat informal nature since a large organization might have separate "web sites" for

each division, but someone might talk informally about the organizations' "web site" when speaking of all

of them.

Wi-Fi -- (Wireless Fidelity)

A popular term for a form of wireless data communication.

Worm

A worm is a virus that does not infect other programs. It makes copies of itself, and infects additional

computers (typically by making use of network connections) but does not attach itself to additional

programs; however a worm might alter, install, or destroy files and programs.

WAP

This stands for wireless application protocol. WAP is a secure specification that's allows users to access

information instantly via handheld devices such as mobile phones, smart phones and some two-way

radios to name a few. WML (wireless markup language) supports HTML and XML but has special

elements that have been designed for the use on small screens and on-hand navigation devices with no

keyboard. Wap enabled devices run what are called Micro-Browsers, they are designed to be able to deal

with the low bandwidth restrictions that are found on wireless handheld devices.

Website

A Web site is a presence on the World Wide Web. All web sites contain a home page which is the first

page that you would see when you arrive at the site. A web site will almost certainly contain more pages

other than the home page, these are usually accessible by clicking on an area on the screen, called a link,

that will then take you to another page.

JavaScript

JavaScript is a scripting language developed by Netscape to allow the design of interactive sites.

JavaScript can interact directly with HTML code so it can add dynamic content to a web site. There are

not many design issues with the use of JavaScript, the two main browsers Internet Explorer and Netscape

Navigator do show some differences when the same script is run in both browsers, both are working to

change these problems.

Web Browser

A web browser is a software application that is used to display web pages. The two most common web

browsers are Netscape Navigator and Microsoft Internet Explorer. Both of these are capable of displaying

text, graphics and multimedia information such as sound and video.

CSS

CSS which is short for Cascading Style Sheets, this is a feature added to HTML that allows web

developers to have greater control over how web pages are displayed. The one set back when using

cascading style sheets is when a page is displayed in Internet Explorer it can have a different look in

Netscape Navigator, these two web browsers are the most common ones in use so both are creating a

standard in which all pages will look the same.

WYSIWYG

WYSIWYG stands for what you see is what you get. This is a type of application used for designing a

web page it will let you see on the monitor exactly what you would see when the document is finished.

With some web design software you can place graphics and text on the screen and see what they would

look like once the document was finished, so what you see is actually what you would get once

completed.

The Difference between the Internet and the World Wide Web

Many people use the terms Internet and World Wide Web (a.k.a. the Web) interchangeably, but in fact the

two terms are not synonymous. The Internet and the Web are two separate but related things. The Internet

is a massive network of networks, a networking infrastructure. It connects millions of computers together

globally, forming a network in which any computer can communicate with any other computer as long as

they are both connected to the Internet. Information that travels over the Internet does so via a variety of

languages known as protocols. The World Wide Web, or simply Web, is a way of accessing information

over the medium of the Internet. It is an information-sharing model that is built on top of the Internet. The

Web uses the HTTP protocol, only one of the languages spoken over the Internet, to transmit data. Web

services, which use HTTP to allow applications to communicate in order to exchange business logic, use

the Web to share information. The Web also utilizes browsers, such as Internet Explorer or Netscape, to

access Web documents called Web pages that are linked to each other via hyperlinks. Web documents

also contain graphics, sounds, text and video. The Web is just one of the ways that information can be

disseminated over the Internet. The Internet, not the Web, is also used for e-mail, which relies on SMTP,

Usenet news groups, instant messaging and FTP. So the Web is just a portion of the Internet, though a

large portion, but the two terms is not synonymous and should not be confused.

Storytelling

Storytelling is a concept used for various methods of constructing and performing or distributing stories.

The methods can be used in numerous ways and for numerous causes as entertainment, education,

advertising, etc. Digital and interactive media have eased the production process for making multimedia

stories and increased the opportunities for people telling their stories. The Internet has given possibilities

for individuals as well as enterprises to distribute their stories to a global community. Also, individuals as

well as organizations that did not reach an audience before because of for example a narrow or wide

spread target group, may now be able to find them on the web. One of the greatest opportunities of

multimedia journalism is the ability to make different design choices. Although most online organizations

present digital derivatives of their "parent" products – newspaper sites present columns of text, radio sites

feature audio files, and TV sites provide video – we are seeing an increase in the number of sites

embracing all design options. Radio sites are complementing their audio with photos and/or text,

newspaper sites are presenting video and audio slide shows along with their text, and TV stations are

supplementing their video pieces with text stories. Increasingly, news organizations are challenging

themselves and their staffs with stepping outside of their format expertise and trying to produce news

packages that take full advantage of the array of media formats available. Online news sites are trying to

integrate different media types into the story package – creating rich multimedia experiences for their

audience. Exploration in the use of Flash helps designers create a common interface those transitions

easily from graphics, to video to photos to audio without interrupting the user. Creating these rich media

experiences is a commitment of time and specialized talent that news organizations cannot afford for

every story. This is the biggest challenge for news designers.

The workflow of online storytelling

The models for distribution of stories look different for each user (messenger) or purpose. Here’s how the

production process of a online story may look and also what kind of functions are involved in the

production process.

1- Objective

The first stage is to define purpose and objectives of the story to be produced. Questions to answer here

is: Who is the messenger? Who is the target group?

2- Message

The second stage is to define the message of the story, from out of that one also defines the plot of the

story, the roles, context etc.

3- Choice of media

The third step is to define what Medias and techniques to use to produce and distribute the story (print,

TV, Internet, but also pictures, movie etc.).

4- Story structure

In the fourth step the script is written and storyboards produced to define what visuals, sounds and

graphics should be used in the story.

5- Creative production

Visual material, sound, graphics are produced.

6- Editing

The material is being edited until the story is well produced and ready to be published or distributed in

selected media.

7- Publishing/ distribution

When published and distributed the story on the Internet or via e-mail it reaches its final receiver or user.

Here's a look at how to tell stories online and the range of forms being used by major online news

organizations. This list was the first comprehensive effort to document online storytelling forms (Has

since been updated). It makes infinitely easier for media instructors to explain the convergence - and the

divergence - among the various media platforms. Online web writing was more informative multimedia

writing moves towards entertainment more like the difference between news writing and feature writing

in print. Through multimedia you "add" the eye and the ear. Telling news stories online is exciting and

challenging because of all the tools at our disposal. Online journalists must think on multiple levels at

once: words, ideas, story structure, design, interactive, audio, video, photos, and news judgment.

TV is about showing the news. Print is more about telling and explaining. Online is about showing,

telling, demonstrating and interacting. It’s easy for online journalists, most of who have been trained in

traditional media, to stick to broadcast and print storytelling forms. But that would be a waste. In online

journalism you have many more elements to choose from — so use them. Combine the best of each

world:

• Use print to explain

• Use multimedia to show

• Use interactive to demonstrate and engage

Layer information.

Aim to present news in small, digestible bits of information, rather than everything at once. Then use

some combination of text, art, audio, video, links and interactive to provide deeper layers of information

the readers can dig into as they desire.

Give choices, but limit them.

Too few choices and you’re not taking advantage of the strengths of the Web. Too many choices and

readers may not select any because they might get confused or not want to spend the time deciding. Plus,

the more choices you give, the less control you have over how the news is conveyed. Remember, readers

are coming to your site in part because they trust your news judgment, so don’t be afraid to use it.

The Basic Forms

Here’s an overview of some of the most common storytelling forms being used by major news Web sites.

Print Plus

This is the basic form of online journalism, used by every major news site. The form is built around a

text article, often one that was not specifically written for the online medium, such as a wire or newspaper

story. Other elements — such as photos, links and video — are then added to the page containing the

story. The form is efficient for resource-strapped news organizations, making it easy to slap together an

already-written article with a clip from TV. But the form doesn't take full advantage of the medium. It is

primarily a way to repackage news produced by traditional media.

Clickable Interactives

In the most common forms, these are simply interactive versions of traditional newspaper and TV

graphics, used to provide information to supplement a story. But the same tools and techniques also can

be used to tell stories. Generally, they combine linear and non-linear storytelling, giving the user choices

but guiding him or her along a path. Animation, audio and video can be incorporated. This form has

produced some of the most innovative online journalism. It tends to be very popular among users, but is

very time-consuming to produce.

Slideshows

Slideshows are more than just an easy way to present multiple images about an event. The form can be

used to tell stories all by itself, by combining descriptive photos and using the caption field to convey

additional information. Rather than just throwing together a bunch of interesting photos, select photos that

will, when placed in a certain order, tell a cohesive story — creating a type of photo essay. When done

right, this is one of the more effective ways of using the Web to tell stories.

Audio Stories

Audio can be an incredibly powerful way to tell a story. There’s a reason radio didn’t disappear after TV

came along. Use audio when there are sounds that can’t be described in words; where the way a person

says something adds meaning that the words alone can’t convey. Don't just hotlink text to a sound clip of

a quote. Use photos of the speakers to draw users in. And use audio in creative ways.

Narrated Slideshows

This form combines slideshows, audio and the video format to create powerful stories. The producer

selects a series of photos and audio sound bites that complement one another. As the photos advance

automatically, the corresponding audio plays. The entire package is played as streaming video or a Flash

movie. The result often resembles the documentary style of Ken Burns. This is a useful form for stories

with strong images and sound.

Live Chats

Chats may not seem like storytelling, but they can be. When moderated properly, live chats are an

interactive version of the Q&A story format, where the readers are asking the questions. This can be a

very powerful way to convey information because the readers help create and shape the story. Of course,

many online chats are either not moderated at all or are poorly moderated, and as a result are nearly

worthless.

Quizzes And Surveys

These too may not seem like storytelling, but the forms can be used to do so. Rather than just make a quiz

as a fun aside to a story, an entire story can be told through the quiz format by breaking the information

into questions and answers. This can be very effective because it engages the reader.

Animated Stories

Stories can be told entirely through animation. This is a great way to tell stories visually when there are

no photos or video. A lot of animation being used online doesn't tell a story. Heck, it doesn't tell the

reader anything. And along with all the annoying ads, that's just helped train online readers to ignore

animation. So don't overuse it. That said, it can be a great tool. It's OK to use it to grab the reader’s

attention, but do so sparingly because it can distract the user from the real story. Use animation to bring

newspaper infographics to life, when you want to recreate an event that has motion or action, to show

how something happened or works. Or use it for humorous stories, such as editorial cartoons.

Interactive Webcasts

The term "Webcasting" is used to describe the ability to use the Web to deliver live or delayed versions of

sound or video broadcasts. It is a broadcast that is delivered over the Internet. Participants can view and

hear streaming media, and they can participate in real-time online chats. Webcasting streaming video has

been around for a while, but news sites are just beginning to combine various interactive tools with the

Webcasts into packages. Adding links to related stories, chats, polls that are referred to in the Webcasts

create a very different experience than just watching TV. More advanced versions use technologies such

as Flash and SMIL to embed instructions within the video so that text, links, etc., can be called up at

certain points in the video. During the 2000 presidential debates, for example, MSNBC.com users could

watch the debate on their computer and on the same screen see a “Debate Monitor” panel that was

continuously updated with facts related to the statements each candidate made, as they made them.

Multimedia Interactives

Many online journalism elements and stories combine multiple forms, creating, in effect, new, hybrid

forms. The most complicated of these use Flash's animation technology to integrate text, clickable

graphics, audio, photos, video -- and sometimes even polls or quizzes -- to create comprehensive

interactive packages that tell stories in ways no other medium can.

Other Forms

Here are some other interesting examples of online storytelling:

• Stories without words:

• Surround photos and video:

• Weblogs:

• Databases:

• Using community:

• Interactive memorial:

• Text chunking (Semi-linear storytelling with words) and games.