



**Communities
In Motion**



Digital Storytelling Toolkit Module 3 – Gathering Content



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Gathering Content

Create a digital story folder somewhere where you can keep all of your content. Organization is very important for video editing. We usually have participants in our workshops create a folder on the desktop of their laptop labeled with their name. Inside that folder, we have them create six more folders for the content of their story: *images* (for photos, drawing, video clips, etc.), *voice* (for their voice recording files), *script* (for their script), *sounds* (for any sound that is not their voice like music or ambient noise, etc.) and *projects* (this is where they will save their video-editing work once they start editing their movie).

Recording

Once you've written your script and have edited to the point that you're happy, it's time to record your voice. You can use a field recorder (at Community Story Strategies, we use the [Zoom H2N](#), but there are lots of other options that are just as good), or you can even use your phone or computer's built-in microphone. Just remember, your voice is the most important sound in your story so you want the quality to be pretty decent. In the movies, the only person on a film set who can call "Cut!" besides the director is the sound recordist – that's how important sound is. Your recording should be as clean as possible – that is, there shouldn't be any unwanted sounds. Try to record in a small, echoless room. Sometimes in a pinch, a car can make a good recording studio, as long as it's not parked on a busy street.

Your voice carries a lot of valuable information. The tone of your voice conveys emotion, urgency, impact. Your voice reveals a lot about where you're from, even your age and gender. It's an important part of your story. When you record your voice, try to remember to speak slower than feels normal. Because a digital story is essentially an oral story, the slower you talk, the better for your listener to take in what you are saying. Also, it will help your mouth to catch up with your eyes as you are reading your script so you will be less likely to make mistakes.

Images

When you gather images, you want to think about two different types of images for your story: literal and metaphorical. Literal images are representation of what you've just said in your story. These types of images can help add more information about what you're describing. For example, if I'm describing my grandma's house, I could show you this picture:



It gives you some information about my grandma, her house, etc. It also gives you a bit of emotional information – she’s smiling, looks pleasant, etc.

Metaphorical images are non-literal images that can help to deepen our emotional understanding of what you’re saying. So imagine if I’m talking about my grandmother’s house, but I show you this image instead:



How do you think I think I feel about my grandmother?

How about this image:



How do you think I feel about my grandmother?

No house, no grandmother in either image, but they both add emotional information to what I’m saying, and help me make my point.

Your story should have a mix of both literal and metaphorical images.

Other Stuff

Your digital story doesn't have to have any photos in it. You can draw the whole thing, or you can use video clips. Just remember that you are probably not going to use the sound from the video clips – or if you do, it's going to be background sound.

Sound

You can use music or ambient sound to help you tell your story as well. If you use music, remember to use instrumental music, as a singer's voice could compete with your voice in the story.

A Note On Copyright

We encourage everyone who takes our workshops to use material that they created themselves. The reason for this is not really a moral or legal issue for us – although YouTube will strip the sound of videos that use unlicensed music (this means that your voice going with it). The reason it's important to us that everyone produce all of the content of their digital stories is that is what makes the stories look and feel their best. If someone suddenly uses a random Shutterstock image, it looks too slick, out of place, and therefore distracting. By creating all of the content for your story, the aesthetic will be consistent. And it will be all yours!

Tips for Profs: It would be well worth your while to touch base with the staff at Learning Technology Services, also known as LTS (<http://lts.info.yorku.ca/>), to see what equipment and services are available to you and your students to help them in the creation of their stories. This may include access to hardware (such things as cameras, audio recorders, video cameras, etc.) or software (e.g., TechSmith Relay). The Faculty of Health enjoys prioritized help from LTS staff (<http://lts.info.yorku.ca/health/>). Furthermore, the School of Kinesiology and Health Science has a "Studio in A Bag" (which includes a camcorder, microphones, and audio booth) for faculty members interested in integrating podcasts and/or vodcasts (video podcasts), including digital stories, into their courses.