

Digital Narratives: The Evolution of Storytelling Techniques in the Age of Social Media

Tinur Rahmawati Harahap¹⁾, Bincar Nasution^{2*)}, Fauziah Nasution³⁾, Adek Nilasari Harahap⁴⁾

^{1,2,3,4)} Graha Nusantara University, Indonesia

^{*)} Correspondence: bin@ipi-limited.com

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Abstract. This article discusses the evolution of storytelling techniques in the era of social media through the approach of digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is a method of conveying narratives that combines elements of images, text, audio, and video to create a more engaging storytelling experience. This research indicates that digital storytelling can enhance the literacy skills of the younger generation in Indonesia, which faces challenges related to low reading interest. With advancements in information technology and widespread internet access, digital platforms such as vlogs and podcasts can be utilized to introduce stories to young audiences. The research methodology employed is a literature review, gathering data from various relevant sources. The findings suggest that digital storytelling is effective in increasing literacy interest among the younger generation and has the potential to serve as an innovative educational tool. This article aims to provide a deeper understanding of the evolution of digital storytelling within the context of contemporary social media.

Keywords: *storytelling, digital, social media*

I. INTRODUCTION

The contemporary generation is defined by its digital upbringing and its unique relationship with the digital world. This is evident in the ways that other digital generations have also been shaped by the pervasive influence of connectivity, interactivity, and access to information and communication technology.

In their 2005 study, Banaszewski in Rosli & Kamarudin (2020) defined digital storytelling as the practice of combining personal narrative with media to produce short autobiographical films. The practice has since seen an expansion in its use in classrooms around the world. (Rosli & Kamarudin, 2020). The term "literacy" is used to describe an individual's capacity to engage with written and verbal communication, comprehend information, and solve problems. It is worthy of note that Indonesia occupies the second-lowest position in the global ranking of literacy, which is a matter of considerable concern. According to UNESCO, only one in 1,000 individuals demonstrates a strong interest in literacy. The advent of technology has the potential to transform literacy into a cultural phenomenon among the younger generation in Indonesia. Conversely, there is a suitable and efficacious methodology for cultivating literacy, particularly among the nation's future generation. One of the forms of literacy that is frequently utilized by younger individuals is digital literacy. In this instance, we endeavor to establish a connection between digital storytelling and the literacy interests of the younger generation, or the millennial generation. A number of studies have indicated that the implementation of digital storytelling serves to bridge the gap between technology and education, while simultaneously motivating students to engage in learning through the creation of personal narratives. (Smeda et al., 2014). The objective of this project is to examine the potential of digital storytelling as a novel approach to fostering literacy interest among the younger generation. A review of the existing literature was conducted to collate the relevant reading materials and previous research that supported the issues discussed. The findings indicated that digital storytelling can be an effective method to enhance literacy engagement amongst the younger generation. This research is

hoped to assist the readers in developing a deeper understanding the evolution of digital storytelling in the age of social media. (Meyerhofer-Parra et al., 2024)

II. METHODS

In this study, researchers employed the literature study method, otherwise known as a literature review, as a means of gathering data and information. This entailed searching for relevant material through various documents, including written texts, images, and electronic records. Additionally, the researchers consulted several reports that were pertinent to the subject matter under investigation. The researchers employed the following steps: (1) topic selection, (2) information search, (3) research focus determination, (4) data source collection, (5) data presentation, and (6) report preparation. (Sugiyono., 2019)

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A. *Storytelling*

It can be posited that storytelling is the oldest and newest literary science. The requisites of storytelling fluctuate annually; nevertheless, storytelling strives to fulfill basic individual and social requirements. Humans coexist with events that transpire within their immediate environment. They convey these events to others in the form of stories, which create a profound impression on their listeners. These stories express the narrator's imagination, beliefs, aspirations, and impressions in an effort to facilitate mutual comprehension. (TYLER & MOORE, 2024)

Furthermore, storytelling constitutes an art form through which narratives of reality or fiction can be conveyed, accompanied by a range of media such as images, text, audio, and video. As defined by Serrat (2023), storytelling can be understood as a personal account of life experiences, ideas, beliefs, and the acquisition of knowledge through narratives. (Serrat, 2023)

Digital storytelling is a technology-based approach to short-form narrative, typically accompanied by text, illustrations, and audio or video elements displayed for a few minutes. Digital storytelling is often used to present personal experiences or factual material. It is also commonly employed as a form of mental therapy, an educational tool, and a means of documenting communities or institutions. (Krause, 2024)

Digital storytelling has been demonstrated to meet the standards of education. (Işikoğlu & Güzen, 2024). Additionally, storytelling has been shown to enhance the composition of writing, making it more visible and enriching students' writing experience. (Chiang, 2020). One method by which humans convey information is through storytelling. Nkanu (2024) discussed the efficacy of storytelling, particularly emphasizing the following point.

1. It encourages the development of self-control and orderliness.
2. It evokes emotional responses.
3. It provides inspiration.
4. Facilitates change
5. It provides a source of energy for the mind and body.
6. Healing. (Nkanu, 2024)

The practice of storytelling has been a fundamental aspect of human culture since the earliest times. It is exemplified by the act of a mother attempting to put her child to sleep by narrating a story. Storytelling encompasses not only the act of conveying information from one's own mind but also the transfer or sharing of the contents of one's mind with others. (Aladysheva & Lvov, 2022)

The act of listening to a story engages the senses of both the viewer and the listener. The signals from these senses are captured by the brain, which then affects the listener's emotions. For instance, a story that evokes sadness will elicit a response of sadness from the listener, while a story that is perceived as humorous will elicit a response of laughter. Furthermore, if the story contains a pleasant

experience, it may prompt the listener to either try or imitate that experience. This illustrates the potential role of stories in influencing the emotions of the listener (Sutikno et.al, 2024).

The practice of storytelling has the potential to facilitate the development of knowledge, emotions, and appreciation. Some of the benefits of storytelling include: (Davis et al., 2021)

- a. The act of storytelling can serve as an educational tool for the listener. The listener of the story is indirectly aware of the values or messages that are implied in the narrative. It is not necessary for the storyteller to be condescending in conveying positive messages; however, the listener is capable of interpreting the wisdom of what is heard for themselves. The messages that are embedded in the story encompass both moral and ethical values.
- b. Cultivate cognitive abilities. Subsequent to comprehending the underlying message of a narrative, an individual will endeavor to internalize positive values and eschew negative ones. Emotionally, stories influence an individual's disposition and affect. In terms of psychomotor development, the application of such narratives in daily life is essential. Motivational stories facilitate the growth of intelligence.
- c. Training concentration. When a person hears a story, they will focus their attention on the narrative in order to comprehend its plot.
- d. Cultivate imagination and creativity. While listening to a story, the listener typically engages in imaginative visualization of the narrative. In some instances, this visualization may manifest as written or visual artwork, thereby illustrating the capacity of stories to foster creativity.
- e. Cultivate speaking and listening abilities. For the storyteller, it can facilitate the development of sophisticated speaking and language abilities, as well as enhance listening skills in the listener.
- f. Cultivating Interest in Reading. Stories arouse curiosity, which can be defined as a desire to know more. Therefore, the higher the level of curiosity, the greater the desire to read the book. Consequently, storytelling can be used as a method to foster interest in reading among listeners.

B. Digital Narrative and storytelling as the new evolution in social media

In the study by Tarigan, et al., (2024), three types of digital storytelling emerged. The first type comprises personal narratives, while the second encompasses event documentation. The third and final type of digital storytelling involves the creation of information-based narratives. (Tarigan et al., 2024)

The concept of digital storytelling is distinctive in that it employs media as a means of conveying information to an audience. In general, digital storytelling comprises components or stages that are designed to educate and engage learners in strategies that foster interest in literacy. In the contemporary era of globalization, digital storytelling has emerged as a highly sought-after phenomenon, particularly among the millennial generation. The advent of advanced information technology has facilitated universal access to the internet. (Tze Lin Kuan, 2019). A multitude of social media platforms provide users with the opportunity to express themselves in various forms, including text, images, audio, and video. The author classifies the types of digital storytelling utilized to engage younger audiences, including:

1) Content Provision on the Internet: The Search for Independent Information

A number of digital storytelling resources are currently popular among younger audiences, including: Video blogs (vlogs) are currently a popular form of online content, particularly among teenagers. Content creators are vying to create the most engaging and original vlogs. Some of the most prevalent types of vlogs include:

- a. Daily vlog: This format presents the creator's activities over the course of a day.
- b. Tips and tricks: This category of content provides educational guidance on a range of techniques and methods.
- c. Beauty and Lifestyle Vlogger: This content is typically created by women and covers a range of topics related to beauty, including makeup, skincare, and body care.

- d. Food vlog: This content provides recommendations regarding culinary practices for the audience.
- e. Children's vlog: This genre of vlog features children engaging in activities typical of their age group.
- f. Entertainment blog: The content of this type of blog is primarily focused on providing entertainment, such as music, hobbies, and other forms of recreation.

The majority of video blogs are accompanied by narratives from the creators. A considerable number of creators also provide positive motivation for the audience. The use of digital storytelling on YouTube channels has been found to have an impact of 46.6% on increasing audience interest in learning (Hikmad Drajat, 2020)

When content is perceived as interesting, the audience will direct their attention to it. They will watch from beginning to end, even though the duration may be up to tens of minutes or even hours. This indirect exposure to a storyline will influence their subsequent reading habits. Similarly, the habit of reading text that is sometimes inserted by the creator in the video will also contribute to this process. This is the first step in becoming accustomed to reading.

Video blog content is presented in a novel and ingenious manner, recounting narratives about a myriad of subjects that capture the public's attention and influence behavior with compelling evidence and eloquence. Nevertheless, the information obtained from digital content may not always satisfy their informational needs, prompting a desire to delve deeper by engaging in reading, whether digital or traditional.

Secondly, Podcasts represent a novel audio-based medium that emerged in 2014. They have since gained considerable traction across various social spheres. Dhamayanti (2023) define podcasts as audio or video content accessible via the internet, available in both paid and free applications. (Dhamayanti, 2023)

The concept of this podcast originated in the art of narration in radio broadcasts and subsequently migrated to social media-based platforms. The millennial generation readily accepts this podcast format, which is presented in an engaging and entertaining manner. This finding is supported by the results of research conducted by Kelly & Klein (2016), who provided podcasts to several students at a college in the United States. Subsequently, the podcast achieved a significant level of popularity, becoming widely disseminated internationally. Subsequently, the popularity of podcasts in the United States led to their dissemination in Indonesia. (Kelly & Klein, 2016). Initially, podcasts were made available on Spotify in 2018 and subsequently experienced a rapid increase in popularity. In a survey conducted by Namira (2020) on DailySocial, 2032 respondents were polled. The results indicated that 68% of respondents were newly familiar with podcasts, while the remaining 80% had listened to podcasts for a period of six months or longer. (Dalila, 2020). Additionally, in 2020, Indonesia was ranked the top podcast listener in Southeast Asia by Kumparan.com, 2020.

Podcasts can be classified into three main categories: MP3 format, audiovisual (such as those on YouTube), and MP4 format, which contain movies. (Krúpová, 2024)

Podcast creators present their content in a variety of styles. In the current era, podcasts represent a novel form of digital storytelling. Podcasts encompass a diverse array of topics, accessible from any location and at any time. Podcast distribution is facilitated by platforms such as Spotify, Anchor, YouTube, SoundCloud, Club House, Joox, and other music applications.

In a recent interview, Lisa Siregar, the producer of an Indonesian podcast company, observed that podcasts have the potential to engage listeners in a way that is both convenient and accessible, allowing them to consume content from within a book at their own pace and in the comfort of their own environment. Podcasting has become a popular medium for accessing science and news content, with the ability to repeat episodes for those who may have missed them. Margaret Hurley has highlighted the potential of podcasts and radio in enhancing learning outcomes for students, particularly in terms of practicality and engagement. The integration of podcasts in literacy development has been shown to facilitate students' comprehension of reading texts.

C. Social Media

Social media is defined as an online medium through which users can engage with others to create, share, and consume content. This may include various forms of digital communication, such as blogs, social networks, wikis, forums, and virtual worlds. Among these, blogs, social networks, and wikis are the most commonly used forms of social media by individuals worldwide.

An alternative view of social media posits that it is a type of online media that facilitates social interaction. It employs web-based technology to transform communication into an interactive dialogue, thus enabling users to connect and engage with one another in a more personalized and dynamic manner.

In their seminal work, Andreas Kaplan and Michael Haenlein define social media as "a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideology and technology of Web 2.0, and that enable the creation and exchange of user-generated content."

Social networks are websites that allow users to create a personal page and connect with friends to share information and communicate. The largest social networks include Facebook, Myspace, and Twitter. In contrast to traditional media, which relies on print and broadcast, social media utilizes the internet as its primary platform. Social media encourages participation from anyone interested in contributing and providing feedback openly, commenting, and sharing information in a fast and unlimited manner.

In contrast to the situation in 2002, when Friendster was the dominant social media platform, the current landscape is characterised by a multitude of social media platforms, each with their own distinctive features and characteristics.

The history of social media can be traced back to the 1970s, when a bulletin board system was invented, enabling users to connect with one another through electronic mail or by uploading and downloading software. This was achieved by utilising a telephone line connected to a modem.

In 1995, the GeoCities website was launched, marking the advent of web hosting services that allow users to access their websites from any location. GeoCities can be considered a seminal development in the evolution of websites.

From 1997 to 1999, the inaugural social media sites, Sixdegree.com and Classmates.com, were launched. Additionally, in that same year, a platform for personal blogging, Blogger, was introduced. This site enables users to create their own web pages, allowing them to upload content on a wide range of topics.

In 2002, Friendster experienced a surge in popularity, becoming a highly successful social media platform. Following this, numerous other social media platforms emerged, each with distinct characteristics and benefits. These include LinkedIn, MySpace, Facebook, Twitter, Wiser, Google+, and others.

Social media has also become a key component of digital marketing, with activities such as social media maintenance, social media endorsement, and social media activation becoming increasingly prevalent. Consequently, social media has emerged as a core service offered by digital agencies.

The term "social media" encompasses a multitude of formats, including, but not limited to, magazines, internet forums, weblogs, social blogs, microblogging, wikis, podcasts, images, videos, rankings, and social bookmarking. In their 2010 Business Horizons article, Kaplan and Haenlein proposed a classification scheme for different types of social media, based on a synthesis of theories from the fields of Media studies (social presence, media richness) and social processes (self-presentation, self-disclosure). They identified six distinct types of social media:

- a. Collaboration Projects. The website permits users to modify, insert, or delete content on the site. One example is Wikipedia.
- b. Blogs and microblogs. The blog format allows users greater freedom to express themselves, including the option to vent or criticize government policies. Twitter is an illustrative example.

- c. Content. The users of this website disseminate a variety of media content, including videos, e-books, images, and other forms of digital media. One prominent example is YouTube.
- d. Social networking sites. Applications that enable users to establish connections by creating personal profiles, allowing them to interact with other individuals. Personal profiles may include information such as photographs. An illustrative example is Facebook.
- e. Virtual game world. A virtual world is a digital environment that emulates a three-dimensional space where users can assume the form of avatars and engage with other individuals in a manner analogous to their interactions in the physical world. Online gaming is a prominent example of this phenomenon.
- f. Virtual social world. A virtual world in which users perceive themselves to be residing in a virtual environment, akin to a virtual game world, engaging with other individuals. However, a virtual social world is more liberating and more closely aligned with reality, as exemplified by Second Life.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

In the rapidly evolving landscape of social media, digital storytelling has emerged as a significant method for engaging the younger generation in narrative practices. This research highlights the effectiveness of digital storytelling in enhancing literacy skills, particularly among youth in Indonesia, where traditional literacy rates remain a concern. The integration of multimedia elements—such as text, images, audio, and video—provides a dynamic platform for storytelling, making it more relatable and appealing to younger audiences. As digital platforms continue to expand, the potential for digital storytelling to serve educational purposes grows, offering innovative methods for fostering literacy interest and engagement. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of leveraging modern information technology to bridge the gap between education and technology. By incorporating digital storytelling into learning environments, educators can motivate students to express themselves creatively while developing critical thinking and communication skills. In conclusion, digital storytelling represents a transformative approach to narrative construction in the digital age, capable of enriching the educational experience and promoting a culture of literacy among the younger generation. Future research should explore the long-term impacts of digital storytelling on literacy development and its applications across various educational contexts.

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