

Digital Storytelling
Chaired by Pierre Bois, Ontario Museum Association;
Reporter, Jenna Rose

Section 1	
Summary	The “Let’s Get Digital” project is a partnership between the Ontario Museum Association (OMA) and the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) that has been ongoing for 5 years.* The project works with museum workers to demonstrate how museums can use digitization to attract and serve their audiences more effectively.
Background	Digital storytelling is relatively recent but well developed. See The Digital Storytelling Cookbook http://www.storycenter.org/cookbook.pdf or A Guide to Digital Storytelling http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/audiovideo/sites/yourvideo/pdf/aguidetodigitalstorytelling-bbc.pdf 80% of people go online intending to watch videos. CHIN & OMA wanted to help local museums, art galleries, archives, historic and heritage sites do their own digital storytelling better.
Challenges	The guide needed to be simple and straightforward but also media savvy. We wanted to help museums create something that would draw the attention of online users who, on average, spend only 20-30 seconds on any given website.
Approach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break down the process of digital storytelling into manageable chunks • Create a useful document for museums • Provide free documents online for museum professionals to use • Take all the skills we already have and apply them to video-making • Through digital storytelling show what your museum has to offer
Intended outcomes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Help museum workers reach the next level of online marketing and promotion by using short digital video. • Contribute to the strong online digital media presence of museums • Develop an audience that returns regularly and directly to your website rather than to or through Facebook or Twitter
Intended outputs	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Videos for the public • Strong museum presence on the Web • Online collection content that is different from that available in-house •
Section 2	
Obstacles and issues	There is a wide gap between those museum workers who are already digitally savvy and connected and those who are not. This project is meant to help narrow that gap. At the same time, if you’re not on Facebook and Twitter it’s difficult to get messages out to those who want these tools online.
Actual outcomes	<i>First Steps to Digital Storytelling in Museums</i> was well received by CHIN and should be available in French and English on the Professional Exchange website this summer. The OMA will present the document to other Provincial Museum

	<p>Associations this June at the CHIN meetings, acknowledging the contributions of the YCW intern who researched and wrote the guide, and the working group participants who ensured that the learning tool is as effective, balanced and user-friendly as possible.</p> <p>Those using the document are be able to produce short, compelling videos that will help them promote and create greater access to their sites, engage current and new audiences and attract new visitors without overwhelming available time and resources.</p>
Actual outputs	Online videos and effective museum websites that incorporate multiple media platforms.
Section 3	
Lessons learned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attention spans are short. Museums should not make long videos – two to three minutes maximum. • Determine who the audience for your video will be before starting
Next steps	The OMA will be offering workshops using First Steps to Digital Storytelling in Museums and is looking into developing resources and workshops on editing short videos for museums using Windows Movie Maker + uploading them to online platforms such as You Tube and Canada's Got Treasures.

Questions and answers are drawn from two sessions, each with 9 participants.

Question: What should we show online?

Pierre – Digital storytelling is perfect for fragile or sensitive artifacts/artworks that cannot ordinarily be on public view.

You don't want to show so much that people feel they don't need to visit in person. It's similar to the trailer for a movie; show snippets with high impact so that people *want* to visit the site. Digital storytelling is about *continuing* rather than telling the whole story. It complements your site interpretation.

Question: (Pierre to group) What are your plans for videos/storytelling at your museums?

Group –

- Artists' stories
- Marketing kids' programs
- Objects/documents online
- Demonstrate community involvement
- Donors' stories

Question: How do you storytell or set up story boards?

Pierre – Templates are available in the guide documents. Essentially, break it down shot by shot. Use multiple voices, scenes, objects, etc.

Question: What equipment do I need to start digitally storytelling?

Pierre – The most cost-effective equipment is a tripod, a video cam (flip cam \$150), and a computer & associated software.

Question: What software do I need?

Pierre – Either iMovie (Mac) or Microsoft Publisher/Windows MovieMaker is good and readily accessible.

Question: How can I improve my website?

Pierre – Find people who can help you do the work. Consider accepting college/university interns or applying for grants for summer students. Look for media students.

Question: How do we find money to hire students or interns to help us complete collections digitization or digital storytelling projects?

Pierre – Consider funding programs like Young Canada Works, especially from the Canadian Heritage Information Network that funds technology project internships. These programs offer funding to hire both summer students and interns who have completed education at the college or university level.

Question: How can we make money with digital storytelling?

Pierre – Effective digital storytelling will help you attract new audiences and encourage foot traffic to your site. You can also approach local companies to sponsor your videos in exchange for advertisement space on your Website, or directly on your video's credits. You can also use short videos to promote your site's revenue generating services and programs, such as facilities rentals, gift shops, reproductions etc.

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Pierre Bois is the Special Projects Manager at the Ontario Museum Association (OMA). Since 2007, Pierre has assisted over 100 heritage institutions with digitization and museum technology projects, and has helped over 60 OMA members upload catalogue records and accompanying images to Artefacts Canada. Prior to joining the OMA, Pierre worked as assistant to the curator and collections manager at the Textile Museum of Canada, and as staff assistant at the Bata Shoe Museum. He has a BA in History from Laurentian University and completed the Museum Management and Curatorship program at Fleming College in 2006.

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- Kathy Fisher, Curator, Ermatinger Clergue National Historic Site
- Laura Garner, Manager / Curator, Lucan Area Heritage and Donnelly Museum
- Brianna Hammer, Museum & Communications Assistant, Museum Strathroy-Caradoc
- Melissa Ruth, Community Relations Coordinator, Grey Roots Museum & Archives
- Doug Smith, Manager / Curator, Muskoka Lakes Museum
- Hailey Yates, Education Assistant, Station Gallery