



ONE

Introduction: Digital storytelling, mediatized stories

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This book aims to understand transformations in the age-old practices of storytelling that have become possible with the new, digital media. The resulting digital stories could be called 'mediatized stories'.

Digital Storytelling is proliferating. Amateur personal stories, focusing on 'me', flourish on social networking sites on the web and in digital storytelling workshops. This book deals with such self-representational stories in new media.

The approach is interdisciplinary. How can the mediation or mediatization processes of Digital Storytelling be grasped? The book offers an encounter between a sociological perspective of media studies and a socio-cultural take of the educational sciences. Aesthetic and literary perspectives on narration as well as a questioning from an informatics perspective are also included in the book.

Small-scale stories

There is a variety of digital storytelling forms, for example, those related to the narrative power of visual effects in film (cf. McClean, 2007) or the creative

opportunities in interactive entertainment (Miller, 2004). This book, in contrast, focuses on small-scale Digital Storytelling, or what Kelly McWilliam in her chapter calls 'specific digital storytelling,' denoted in this introduction with the capital D and capital S. They are small-scale as a media form. The stories focused on here are usually short, just a few minutes long. Second, they are small-scale in the sense that they are made with off-the-shelf equipment and techniques. The productions are not expensive—there may, for example, be zooming of still pictures rather than moving images. Third, the stories are small-scale, centring the narrator's own, personal life and experiences and usually told in his or her own voice.

This is the case with the now classic model of Digital Storytelling developed by the Center for Digital Storytelling in California from the first half of the 1990s. 'There are all kinds of stories in our lives that we can develop into multimedia pieces', founder of the Center, Joe Lambert (2006, p. 27), explains. In his book on Digital Storytelling, subtitled 'Capturing Lives, Creating Community', he points out a range of personal stories that could be made about important relationships to a significant other, honouring and remembering people who have passed, stories on adventures or accomplishments in one's life, on a place that is important to the storyteller, on one's work, on recovery, love or discovery (Lambert, 2006, pp. 27–31).

A new media practice emerged. In 2001, the BBC in Wales took up such Digital Storytelling under the rubric 'Capture Wales' (Meadows, 2003). Later, this small-scale media movement spread to England, Scandinavia, Australia and other—mostly rich and digitally saturated—parts of the world (Lundby, forthcoming).

Some of the contributors to this book offer more detailed accounts and criticisms of these stories of Digital Storytelling. Kelly McWilliam and John Hartley introduce the Center for Digital Storytelling in California and John Wales as background to their own domestic experiences in Australia. The two expand the map in their book *Story Circle. Digital Storytelling Around the World* (Hartley & McWilliam, forthcoming). Nancy Thumim examines critically the Capture Wales initiative. She also examines another case of storytelling using digital means, namely the 'London Voices' project at the Museum of London, an oral history project. This is an example of Digital Storytelling defined more broadly. Both are mediating self-representations, involving the digitisation of ordinary people's stories, displayed on publicly available websites, made through cultural institutions in society (Thumim, 2007, forthcoming).

The stories made in such projects may be counted in tens of thousands. The Center for Digital Storytelling alone has helped produce some 12,000 stories through a fifteen-year-long history.¹ Hundreds of stories are displayed on the

BBC Wales website, and there are many, many other outlets around the globe. Still, this remains a small-scale media practice compared to dominant practices of television production and consumption, or other big media.

One reason why 'classic' Digital Storytelling will stay relatively small is the time-demanding production process that is required. This is not primarily about getting familiar with the technology. Rather, it is the art of making a good story. The Center for Digital Storytelling, as well as the Capture Wales and similar projects, requests their storytellers to attend workshops over several days, even weeklong. Before actually producing their multimedia tales, the participants spend time with supervisors in a 'Story Circle' where the plot and text of their digital stories are developed (Lambert, 2006, pp. 93–101; Hartley & McWilliam, forthcoming).

'Storytelling' implies the shaping of the story as well as the sharing of it with others afterwards. It was the Internet that expanded the space of Digital Storytelling—it offered new options to share the 'classic' small-scale stories created in story circles at various corners of the globe. The World Wide Web also gave rise to new forms: Blogging, in text only or with video, as well as the social networking sites on the web offer new opportunities to share short personal stories. These new media practices are taught and learned from person to person. No workshop is required to put up a self-representational short video on YouTube or your personal profile on Facebook and MySpace. Not all of these 'profiles' are stories in a proper sense, as David Brake discusses in Chapter 16 of this book, but much of the blogging and social networking on the web are 'personal media practices' (Luders, 2007). The appearance of storytelling on mobile phones (Klastrup, 2007) adds to the expansion. Much of this activity should be regarded and studied as Digital Storytelling. The same may apply to digital stories produced in designated workshops for museums or other institutions. All such self-representational forms are here included in the term, and the phenomenon of, Digital Storytelling.

Nick Couldry in Chapter 3 defines the space of Digital Storytelling to encompass 'the whole range of personal stories now being told in potentially public form using digital media resources'. This is a suitable definition for this book. It does not aim at a comprehensive overview of all forms of personal Digital Storytelling; rather, some political and theoretical issues across forms are brought to the fore.

Giving a voice?

Does Digital Storytelling have democratic potential? The problems of scalability concern Hartley in Chapter 11. Can enough stories be made and archived by

enough people to sustain this media practice as compelling; connected and democratic, he asks. Couldry is sceptical, as well: although he acknowledges the 'deficit of recognition' in our society that Digital Storytelling may meet. He fears that Digital Storytelling is, and will remain, a largely isolated phenomenon, cut off from the wider distribution of social and cultural authority and respect. Couldry discusses critically the claim that Digital Storytelling has democratic potential. He listens deeply to the story told by Joe Lambert and other pioneers. Particularly in the US setting, the initiators of Digital Storytelling, for reasons of social justice, wanted to give marginalised groups a voice (Lambert, 2006, pp. 1-4).

This media practice may well remain small-scale. Nevertheless, for those who employ Digital Storytelling in their own lives, this practice may actually give them a voice, or be significant in other ways. The democratic potential in Digital Storytelling may be released within institutional settings, as Ola Erstad and Kenneth Silseth argue in their chapter on agency in Digital Storytelling in schools (Chapter 12). Whether this actually becomes a democratic move depends on how many turn to such practices, as well as on the edge it may have in civil society and political life.

There is potential: Digital Storytelling is a bottom-up activity. It is a 'user-generated' media practice. Digital Storytelling is performed by amateurs and not by media professionals. So-called 'ordinary people develop the necessary competences to tell their own stories with new digital tools. However, one may make a distinction to the user-generated perspective, as Brake does in his chapter. He characterises 'lay' productions on sites like YouTube or MySpace as bottom-up compared to the institutionally led projects that are produced by 'amateurs' but under professional guidance.

The new media that are applied for Digital Storytelling are easily at hand and simple to use. They could turn users into producers: Hartley, in his chapter (Chapter 11), even terms them 'self-made media'. Mostly, Digital Storytelling takes place with standard software on standard laptops or PCs. In addition, a digital camera and a scanner to digitise paper photos are useful and a video camera may add footage. Especially in societies with a widespread digital (prod)user competence, the road is not a long one to a digital story that could be shared with others. While the Digital Storytelling workshops spend some energy on the application of the multimedia software, most of the time is devoted to the development of the story itself. The narratives that come out of the story circles are usually highly personal. They are self-representations. So are many postings on the web, in blogs as well as on social networking sites.

Self-representations

The focus of this book is on *self-representational* digital stories. These are personal stories, told with the storyteller's own voice. They are representations in the first person. The 'self' is social, shaped in relationships, and through the stories we tell about who we are. This applies in 'classic' Digital Storytelling as in new forms of social networking. Although

it indeed appears that for many young people, social networking is 'all about me, me, me', this need not imply a narcissistic self-absorption. Rather, following Mead's (1934) fundamental distinction between the 'I' and the 'me' as twin aspects of the self, social networking is about 'me' in the sense that it reveals the self embedded in the peer group, as known to and represented by others, rather than the private 'I' known best by oneself. (Livingstone, 2008)

Current communication technologies may alter the role of the self in the social world, Waite (2003) claims. The representations of selves in various forms of Digital Storytelling are part of collective patterns of 'Modernity and Self-Identity' (Giddens, 1991), although Giddens' 'armchair introspection' may easily slide into a 'disregard of the more mundane examples of reflexivity involved in digital practices', as Kirsten Drotner writes in her chapter (Chapter 4). They make individual stories on shaping of identity. Digital Storytelling is about 'crafting an agentive self' (Hull & Katz, 2006).

David Gauntlett, in this book as well as in *Creative Explorations* (Gauntlett, 2007), demonstrates how people may represent their identities—not in Digital Storytelling but by building metaphors with Lego bricks and figures. A similar construction process takes place with the digitised raw elements of text, images and sound that are built into a short, personal digital story. If the story is self-representational, it displays aspects of identity.

Self-representational stories may appear authentic. This, however, is an assumed authenticity, as pointed out by Birgit Hertzberg Kaare and Knut Lundby in their chapter (Chapter 6). Because of the close links to the autobiography of the narrator, Digital Storytelling is often regarded as a genuine or authentic activity. The slogan from the Center for Digital Storytelling that 'Everybody has a story to tell' is, in a way, misleading. A person could have many stories to tell. The authenticity of the digital story is not a given. To play with narrative is to play with identity.

The outcome of digital narration takes many forms, dependent on the users' individual resources and the affordances of the software they apply. Lotte Nyboe and Kirsten Drotner maintain in their chapter (Chapter 9) on identity

aspects of Digital Storytelling. Based on a study of young people's production of digital animations, the authors in particular look at identity formation in relation to digital forms of co-production (cf. de Leeuw & Rydin, 2007). Nyboe and Drotner see the aesthetic dimension of cultural identity as a key to the processes of digital narration. They argue that there is a need to reframe existing theories of cultural identity and cultural production in light of the digital mode.

Digital narratives

It does matter that it's digital, as Tone Brattevig states in her chapter (Chapter 15). Technology is an important part of how people express themselves and communicate with others. Characteristics of digital media influence digital stories and storytelling practices. Therefore, she argues, it is important to address technical issues as a part of Digital Storytelling.

Digital media facilitate, for one, the possibilities of narrative co-production and participation. Classic Digital Storytelling may appear as an individual exercise—telling 'my' story—but is actually deeply rooted in the collaborative processes of the story circle of the production workshop, and maybe in template narratives in the overall culture, as Ola Erstad and James V. Wertsch point out in their chapter. Similarly, storytellers on social networking sites mostly act in their own names, usually upon wide and deep processes of collaboration and informal learning from peers.

Such ~~collaboration~~ relates to questions of authorship and authority. Larry Friedlander, in Chapter 10, writes about narrative strategies in a digital age under the ~~changing~~ relationship between authorship and authority. With the appearance of the digital, interactive experience, Friedlander holds, we get stories that may multiply the authors, distribute their energy across a wide field of participants, redefine their powers and limits and rewrite all the rules. This is a more general argument, relevant to various forms of digital narratives, particularly those in interactive computer games. Digital narratives aspire to the variety and plentitude of a "world" rather than to the fixed structure of a text, Friedlander argues. Even with a short, personal digital story ~~the author may be able to share glimpses of a world with the reader/user.~~

If not a 'world' in the immersive sense of digital narration in interactive games, small-scale Digital Storytelling may take shape in 'discursively ordered domains', as McWilliam argues in her account of Australian projects. This comprises a 'constant negotiation over what, precisely, digital storytelling is, how it is best applied, what it is for, and where it should be located', she writes.

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The developments of Digital Storytelling within 'discursively ordered domains' point to the context in which such digital media practices operate and their larger social, cultural and economic significance, McWilliam reminds.

Challenging institutions

Digital stories are personal, small-scale stories. However, the wider meaning or significance of Digital Storytelling has to be sought in the large-scale contexts of its production and uses. Digital Storytelling almost without exception takes place within institutional frameworks.

This book explains how the user-generated bottom-up practices of Digital Storytelling challenge not only big media but also traditional schools. While Digital Storytelling has mostly been applied outside the educational setting, self-representational Digital Storytelling can be used as a tool for the fostering of agency (that is 'the capacity to make a difference') among young people in school, Erstad and Silseth argue in their chapter (see also McWilliam's chapter). Digital Storytelling puts emphasis on important issues that face the educational system, concerning the way students are engaged in their own learning processes by using new technologies. Digital Storytelling challenges the school by affecting the relationship between student and teacher roles, by exploring the understanding of what knowledge is, by engaging the students in a collective way, by the multimodality of its stories or texts, and by making explicit the relationships between formal and informal contexts of learning.

Hartley, in Chapter 11, notes that Digital Storytelling challenges the media industries by providing a myriad of stories. Broadcasting, cinema and publishing houses have for decades been busy scaling up audiences, focusing on distribution rather than production. *Story-telling* has been taken care of by highly trained professionals. User-generated Digital Storytelling to some extent may change this.

Differences in media structure between Britain and the US underline the importance of institutional aspects: despite all the big broadcasting networks, it may be more difficult to get a marginalised voice heard in the US media market than with the public service-based media system in Britain.² The Center for Digital Storytelling in California was set up as an alternative to the main media system; in contrast, Capture Wales was established within the main public service broadcasting company. In a public service institution a broad range of interests and voices could expect to be represented, although this may not in fact happen, but in Capture Wales, participants from Story Circle workshops were invited to shape and share their digital story within the institution.

Among the institutional activities transformed by digital media use is family life. Elisabeth Saksrud writes about how parents are being challenged by their children's online life. Her chapter (Chapter 13) explores, with material from Norway, contextual factors that influence children's self-representations online.

The questions on 'mediatized stories' are about various transformations that might take place with digital storytelling, as discussed in several chapters in this book (e.g., Erstad & Wertsch, Coudry, Dromer, Friedlander).

Multimodality—semiotic transformations

The new media capacity of prime significance in the production of Digital Storytelling is the multimodality offered by digitalisation. Composition across modes is nothing new. Even oral storytelling may apply a range of modes in a complex whole, as a composition of tale, ballad, melody and text (Ortutay, 1964, p. 186). Multimodality need not be digital at all, but through digital technologies multimodality is made 'easy, usual, "natural"' (Kress, 2003, p. 5). A single binary code could be used for representations in a variety of multimodal compositions to appear in combinations of speech, music, text, graphics, still or moving images. The binary representation is an abstraction from the fact that current is continuous, as Tone Bratteteig reminds in her chapter in this book.

What 'ordinary' people do with the multimodal variety of semiotic resources becomes interesting. With digitalisation 'the different modes have technically become the same at some level of representation, and they can be operated by one multi-skilled person, using one interface, one mode of physical manipulation, so that he or she can ask, at every point: "Shall I express this with sound or music?" "Shall I say it visually or verbally?" and so on' (Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001, p. 2).

In Digital Storytelling, amateurs could make such semiotic decisions with standard software on regular PCs or laptops. Glynda Hull and Mark Evan Nelson (2005) set out to locate 'the semiotic power of multimodality' during which they analyse a digital story, 'Lyfe-N-Rhyme', created by a young man in West Oakland, California. Multimodal capacity is a key to understanding Digital Storytelling, as compared to oral or written storytelling, and Hull and Nelson's empirical studies strongly confirm that multimodal composing depends on computer technologies. They locate the semiotic power of multimodality in Digital Storytelling in the blending of new and old textual forms. In this book Nelson and Hull expand their research into studies of multimodal selves, applying perspectives from Bakhtin (Chapter 7).

Multimodality or digital remix (Lankshear & Knobel, 2006, p. 107) is the key to understanding the types of narrative that are created in Digital Storytelling (Meadows, 2003; Hull & Nelson, 2005). Multimodal composing is not an additive art; a multimodal text can create a different system of signification, one that transcends the collective contribution of its constitutive parts' (Hull & Nelson, 2005, p. 225). Digital Storytelling should not be understood as a phenomenon equivalent to either oral storytelling or to written narratives (Scheidt, 2006). Digital Storytelling creates a new composition.

Gunther Kress draws attention to such semiotic transformations that take place in multimodal practices. The multimodal resources made available with digital media 'provide users of the resource with the ability to reshape the (form of the) resources at all times in relation to the needs of the interests of the sign-maker'. These transformations operate on the forms and structures within a mode and have to be complemented by the concept of transduction; that accounts for the shift of semiotic material across modes (Kress, 2003, p. 36). For matters of convenience, transduction is here included in the concept of semiotic transformations.

Narrative transformations

Larry Friedlander illuminates, in his chapter, what I will term the narrative transformations of Digital Storytelling. Friedlander refers to another key characteristic of digital media alongside multimodality, namely, the interactive capacity. He considers 'the havoc being wrought by contemporary digital narratives' part of the 'cultural transformations' of our time.

Protean transformations, that is the ever-changing and versatile, characterise the digital options, Friedlander reminds us:

Great modern artists, such as Joyce or Beckett, have tried to convey their vision of this fragmented world by subverting the formal order of earlier novels. . . . This is an art of *protean transformations*, disrupted and unresolved plots, and characters who have a weak and wavering sense of a self. Such highly unstable fiction mirrors the shifting, phantasmagoric quality of modern experience. And, yes, all this formal instability can sound quite like a foreshadowing of the digital world. (My emphasis)

Although Friedlander treats digital narrative, in a more general sense the 'laws of transformation' apply to small-scale personal digital stories as well:

Each of its elements—space, time, objects, beings, and actions—can be selected, arranged, and transformed for the needs of an aesthetic experience. Thoughts can be-

come visible, objects can metamorphose according to emotional and aesthetic rules, and background elements (such as floors or skies) can suddenly communicate symbolic meanings. Within the world, all obeys the *law of transformation*, all is choice and interaction. (My emphasis)

Narrative transformations relate to semiotic transformations, on different levels of analysis of Digital Storytelling. If semiotic transformations are micro processes, narrative transformations appear on a meso level. However, Digital Storytelling takes place within macro contexts.

Institutional transformations

Challenging institutions, Digital Storytelling may imply transformations of or within the context in which it operates. Social institutions may be conceptualised as concrete: schools, for example. Institutions may also be understood in a generalised sense, in this case, as education or even wider as socialisation.

Stig Hjarvard (2004, 2007, forthcoming 2008), on such a general level, has worked out a theory of institutional transformations related to the work of media. By 'media' he understands a 'technology that allows transfer of or interaction with a symbolic content across time or space' (2004, p. 48). The transformations that Hjarvard observes are termed 'mediatization'. They may cut across different social institutions but could influence institutions in various ways and degrees. The media are integrated into other institutions at the same time as the media become an institution in its own right. 'Thus, social interaction within institutions (e.g., the family), between institutions (e.g., science and politics) and in society as a whole is performed by and through the media' (Hjarvard, 2007, p. 3).

Mediatization is defined as a 'process through which core elements of a social or cultural activity (like work, leisure, play, etc.) assume media form' (Hjarvard, 2004, p. 48; 2007). Mediatization could take place in a strong form, where the institution (the social or cultural activity) itself assumes media form so that the activity has to be performed through interaction with a medium. Mediatization could also take in a weaker form, where the symbolic content and the institutional activity are 'influenced by media environments that they gradually become more dependent upon and interconnected with'. Combinations of weak and strong forms may, of course, also occur (Hjarvard, 2004, p. 49).

Digital Storytelling may be a limited media phenomenon in the major processes of mediatization but the transforming logic is the same. The old art of storytelling is one of those social and cultural activities that, given the digital

opportunities, may assume media form. Such transformations pave their way into storytelling institutions such as schools and even media organisations.

Mediatization or mediation?

The concepts of mediation and mediatization were introduced in media studies well before digital media became applied in storytelling. However, the processes are intensified by digital media with their capacity for semiotic, narrative and institutional transformations. In his chapter, mapping out conceptual choices to grasp the emerging space of Digital Storytelling, Couldry counters Hjarvard's proposal on 'mediatization'. Couldry prefers the concept of mediation to grasp the social and cultural transformations due to the role of media.

The discussion between Couldry and Hjarvard highlights the clear positions of theoretical work of British (e.g., Schlesinger, 1993; Silverstone, 1999) and Scandinavian (e.g., Hernes, 1977; Asp, 1986) media scholars, respectively.³ There is a common reference to the concept of 'media logic' as coined by the American scholars David Altheide and Robert Snow (1979). This reference is either used affirmatively, as by Hjarvard in the mediatization camp, or critically as is usual among the mediation theorists (like Couldry in this book).

To Hjarvard, mediatization generally, 'denotes the process through which society increasingly is becoming dependent on the logic of the media' (Hjarvard, 2007, p. 2; Schulz, 2004). Couldry finds this to be linear thinking, based on a tendency to claim broad social and cultural transformations from one single type of media-based logic.

Couldry's claim may itself be a bit one-eyed. Hjarvard has a multifaceted understanding of 'media logic' as the 'organizational, technological, and aesthetic functioning, including the ways in which media allocate material and symbolic resources and work through formal and informal rules' (Hjarvard, 2007, p. 3, italics in original). Digital technologies in Digital Storytelling definitely do not obey just a single logic. The multimodality of digital media operates according to mixed logics (Kress, 2003, pp. 1-6).

Hjarvard minimises the meaning of mediation. 'Mediation' for him refers to communication and interaction through a medium in a particular setting, where the message and the relation between sender and receiver may be affected. Analyses of mediation focus on how the media influence both message and relation between sender and receiver, he holds (Hjarvard, 2007, pp. 3-4). This comes close to regarding 'mediation' as representation. I will term this a *narrow* or focused conceptualisation of 'mediation'.

When Couldry performs his friendly attack on the Scandinavian under-

standing, Hjarvard's conceptualisation of 'mediatization' is characterised in a similarly narrow way. Couldry links Hjarvard's understanding of 'mediatization' to media *form*. This is to focus on 'a particular transformative logic or mechanism that is understood to do something distinctive to (that is, to 'mediate') particular processes, objects and fields', he writes in his chapter. Mediatization in the narrow or focused sense points to the transformation of processes into forms or formats suitable for media re-presentation. So, for Hjarvard as well as for Couldry, the narrow definition of the other's main concept is focused on representations.

The British colleagues apply the concept of mediation to the larger transformative processes. Actually, the British do not have the word 'mediatization' in their vocabulary. Roger Silverstone (2005, p. 189) influenced by Jesús Martín-Barbero (1993) did make a *broad*, all-encompassing definition of 'mediation': The whole range of transformative processes, institutionally and technologically driven, end up embedded, where the social works in turn as a mediator, institutions, and technologies as well as the meanings that are delivered by them are mediated in the social processes of reception and consumption. Against this, Hjarvard's concept, especially in the strong but maybe also in the weak form, can be termed *broad* 'mediatization': a long-term process through which core elements of a social or cultural activity assume media. Roughly, one could say that 'broad mediation' covers about the same transformation processes as 'broad mediatization'.

Tension and mediation

Whether one accepts that transformations due to digital technologies and competences make digital stories into 'mediatized stories' or not, one has to admit that the shaping of digital stories is subject to mediation.

Thunim (2007), following the media studies path, points out tensions shaping self-representations in Digital Storytelling projects. She suggests that the mediation process is constituted through these tensions. She explores the notion of the 'ordinary person' as a construct, the notion of community as a construction, and how there are tensions about how to define and achieve quality. In her chapter in this book (Chapter 5) she explores how processes of cultural mediation are constituted through tensions in these areas.

Within the broader definition of Digital Storytelling as personal stories being told in public form with digital tools, Thunim looks at one project following the California model and another project that has nothing to do with

that model. She distinguishes textual, institutional and cultural aspects of mediation. This is not to deny other aspects of the mediation processes.

With textual mediation, Thunim (forthcoming) explores tensions that arise in self-representational texts. The tensions of institutional mediation relate to the context for the production of self-representational stories. With the notion of 'cultural mediation', Thunim, in this book, points to the symbolic resources or the points of view that the storytellers or participants bring from outside and into the institutions where the production of the digital stories takes place. These are the cultural elements and expectations they bring to the creation of their own self-representations. She underlines that wider cultural formations affect and shape the institutions and the texts that the storytellers have to adapt to.

Although individuals working on their own self-related texts without the guidance or encouragement of an institution may, thereby, escape some of the mediating influences of Digital Storytelling organisations, Brake suggests in his chapter on MySpace users that their work is nonetheless mediated by the variety of tacit rules, social relations and the subtle framing of the software used to publish it.

This connects to the understanding of 'mediation' with 'cultural tools' that Erstad and Wertsch bring into this book. In their 'Tales of mediation', in Chapter 2, they apply a socio-cultural theory to Digital Storytelling. In constructive tension to the concepts of mediation and mediatization from media studies presented so far, they draw upon theories of mediation from the school of Lev Vygotsky and other Russian social psychologists prominent in the educational sciences.

This book invites this encounter between media scholars and educational researchers, between a media sociological view and socio-cultural psychological perspective. Couldry represents the media studies conceptualisations. Drotner in her chapter builds bridges between the learning studies and media studies camps. On her way to reconstruction she challenges Couldry's concept of mediation as well as Hjarvard's understanding of mediatization. In order to create dialogue between the discourses on media and on learning, Drotner advocates that the semiotic as well as the social aspects of the meaning-making practices in digital storytelling are taken into account. Media, then, are considered selected cultural resources.

'Cultural tools' are prominent in a socio-cultural theory of mediation. Erstad and Wertsch discuss narrative as well as digital media as cultural tools and how they merge in Digital Storytelling. Their main question is how new digital media might transform the role narratives play in our lives. Hence, they pose the question of how 'mediatized' stories are being shaped.

The Mediatized Stories project

This book is born out of the international research project 'Mediatized Stories: Mediation perspectives on digital storytelling among youth' www.intermedia.uio.no/mediatized/. Most of the authors are part of this research project, of which the editor is project manager. Scholars in six countries cover cases from California through Europe to Georgia, Iran and Japan.

Colleagues studying Digital Storytelling in Australia add importantly to this book John Hartley and Kelly McWilliam, from their base at the Australian Research Council Centre of Excellence for Creative Industries and Innovation, at Queensland University of Technology, also edit the forthcoming volume, *Story Circle. Digital Storytelling Around the World*.

The two groups of researchers met to discuss 'Digital Storytelling: Critical Accounts of a Californian Export' at UC Berkeley, California, in a pre-conference to the annual meeting of the International Communication Association, May 2007. Some of the contributions in this book build on presentations there.

Book outline

The following fifteen contributions are arranged in five sections. First, the section on *Concepts and Approaches* raises the theoretical discussion on 'mediation' versus 'mediatization' as seen from media studies versus educational studies.

The second section, on *Representing Oneself*, maps out some key dimensions of self-representations in Digital Storytelling, namely, their multivocality and multimodality, tensions that arise in the cultural mediation of the stories, and the assumed authenticity of these autobiographical narratives.

Third, different *Strategies of Digital Narration* are discussed, related to institutions, participants and texts, with special emphasis on the importance of the aesthetic dimension and the consequences of digital narration for authorship and authority.

Fourth, consequences for key institutions of the new forms of agency with the 'self-made media' of Digital Storytelling are explored. This is discussed in the section on *Challenging Authorities*—of parents, schools and the media industry.

The section *On the Edge* raises new questions. They are about a social scientist's methodology of using metaphors in storytelling—with Lego bricks, countered by a computer scientist who somewhat provocatively asks 'Does it

matter that it is digital? Finally, a media scholar explores the opportunities in shaping the 'me' in MySpace.

Notes

The construction of this book would not have been possible without the scholarly co-operation within the Mediatized Stories' project initially inspired by the DUSTY project in Oakland, California (Hull & James, 2007). The project was brought to its base in Norway through contact with Eli Lea and her colleagues at Fimber-Film in Bergen. The Mediatized Stories project was later happily extended to link with colleagues researching Digital Storytelling at Queensland University of Technology in Australia. Further, there would have been no book without the invitation and encouragement from Steve Jones, the editor of the *Digital Formations* series; as well as the enthusiastic support from Mary Saizgar and her team at Peter Lang. Heather Owen helped in a gentle way those of us who are not native users of English. Thanks to all who supported this book project, including the Research Council of Norway and the institutions of the participating researchers who funded these explorations into *Digital Storytelling. Mediatized Stories*.

1. According to the director, Joe Lambert, in an e-mail 12 December 2007 upon request.
2. I owe this observation to Tone Brattevig.
3. Of course, the pattern is not always this clear-cut. For example, the Swedish media and cultural theorist Johan Fornäs had been applying both concepts in his writings (Fornäs, 1995, pp. 1, 210; 2000).

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