

## Digital Storytelling Toolkit for Librarians



*Immigrant Stories* is a project of the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota. This work is made possible through the generous funding of the Digital Public Library of America Digital Hubs Pilot, which is supported by the Digital Public Library of America with funding provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.



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## How to Use This Toolkit

This packet is a comprehensive resource that enables librarians and community educators to teach members of the public how to make their own digital stories in a workshop setting. Digital stories are brief multimedia videos- created with a combination of images, text, music, and audio- that tell a personal story.

This toolkit assumes that the instructor has no prior experience with digital storytelling or using digital video-making tools. However, experienced instructors will also find the streamlined training and explanation of tools helpful and may want to provide copies of many of these pages for their workshop participants.

Digital stories are usually made in a small group workshop of up to 10 people per instructor. Pages 7 and 8 provide schedules for two- and three-day public workshop. Each day of the workshop lasts seven hours, including an hour-long lunch break. The three-day format is recommended for participants who want a slower pace and more time to master the technology. This schedule can be adapted for shorter sessions that meet over a longer period of time, such as a program that meets for a three-hour class once a week over one or two months. Though we recommend that participants write their scripts before the workshop begins, an instructor may choose to lengthen the workshop or add an additional session in which participants can write their script.

Participants work in a computer lab for the entire workshop. Each person should have a computer with Internet access and audio and video editing software. Participants will also need access to a scanner and to a separate, quiet room where they can record their voiceovers. That room should have a microphone and a computer with audio recording software. Participants will transfer their files from this computer to their lab computer via a flash drive. Editing software is discussed on page 6.

This toolkit was developed by the staff of *Immigrant Stories*, a digital storytelling and archiving project operated by the Immigration History Research Center (IHRC) at the University of Minnesota. The IHRC launched the project in 2013 to collect and preserve the experiences of the United States' newest immigrants and refugees. Between 2013 and 2015, the IHRC created toolkits to make digital stories in college classes, adult English as a Second Language programs, and public workshops. The IHRC tested these toolkits at schools and organizations across the Twin Cities. The results form the basis of this toolkit.

To learn more about *Immigrant Stories*, visit [immigrantstories.umn.edu](http://immigrantstories.umn.edu). The IHRC's donation forms are provided at the end of this packet to serve as a model for how instructors may ask participants to formally share their digital stories with their organization.

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August 2015

## What is a Digital Story?

A digital story is a short (generally 3-5 minute) digital video that conveys a personal narrative. Recent advancements in digital technology have made it much simpler and less expensive for individuals to create their own short films. Digital stories may be created from a combination of digital images, text, sound, and video.

The core of the digital story is a script of 300-500 words that participants write about a personal experience. Participants record themselves reciting their script in either an audio voiceover or in a video recording. They edit their recording into a multimedia video and may add scanned or digital photographs, onscreen text, background music, and special effects. Digital stories are powerful, multilayered narratives that have become increasingly popular tools for education, self-expression, and public dialogue.

Digital stories can range from simple videos that are little more than a slide show with a voiceover to complex short films. For examples, view the digital stories created for the IHRC's *Immigrant Stories* project: <http://immigrants.mndigital.org/exhibits/show/immigrantstories-exhibit/page01>

### Additional Digital Storytelling Resources

*Immigrant Stories*: [immigrantstories.umn.edu](http://immigrantstories.umn.edu)

The *Immigrant Stories* website provides more information about the project, access to the digital stories in the project archive, and additional toolkits.

Center for Digital Storytelling: <http://storycenter.org/>

The CDS is the most well-known training center and advocate for digital storytelling.

Lambert, Joe. *Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community*. Berkeley: Digital Diner Press, 2002.

Center for Digital Storytelling co-founder Joe Lambert's guide to digital storytelling

Fields, Anne M. and Karen R. Diaz. *Fostering Community Through Digital Storytelling: A Guide for Academic Libraries*. Westport, CT: Libraries Unlimited, 2008.

A digital storytelling guide that addresses the challenges of building a digital storytelling program and the benefits of creating partnerships across a university campus

# Steps for Making a Digital Story

## Step One: Write a Script and Collect Materials

Your script is the most important part of your digital story. You will read it when you record your voiceover. Your script should be between 300 and 500 words, which will produce a story of 3-5 minutes when read slowly. You should also collect any photos, documents, videos, etc. that you wish to use in your story and bring them to the workshop. If they are digital files, bring them on a flash drive. There will also be time to scan images during the workshop.

If you don't know where to start, see the handout **Resources for Writing a Script**.

## Step Two: Record Your Voiceover

During the workshop, you will record your voiceover by reading it in a quiet room and recording it with a microphone and computer. The workshop facilitator will teach you how to edit your voiceover so you can erase any mistakes you make later.

## Step Three: Find Creative Commons-Licensed Images and Sound

If you need additional images, music, or video clips for your video, your workshop facilitator will show you how to search for media with a Creative Commons ("CC") license, a special copyright license. Keep track of all Creative Commons-licensed items that you use with the **Creative Commons Worksheet**. You will need this information to add credits at the end of your video. Learn more about Creative Commons at <http://creativecommons.org/>

## Step Four: Put It All Together

Before putting your video together, edit audio clips and photos that need to be edited or cropped. You can use free, open-source software such as GIMP for images and Audacity for audio.

Your workshop facilitator will teach you how to use video editing software to put your digital story together. Import all your media into the program and arrange them in order. Save your final digital story as a high-quality video file (.mov, .mp4, etc.)- *not* as a project file in your editing program.

# Technology and Tools

## Recording Audio

A voiceover may be recorded by connecting a **USB** microphone to any computer that has audio recording software such as Audacity. **USB** microphones, such as those manufactured by Blue Microphones, are inexpensive and produce good audio. A lavalier microphone is helpful when recording audio with video.

## Obtaining Digital Images

All images must be digital image files so that the files can be imported into the video editing program where participants will create their video. Video editing programs will support a number of image file types, including .jpg and .png.

Digital images can be created by scanning documents, printed photos, and even objects such as fabrics. A simple scanner may be used, but be sure to scan at a high resolution (at least 400 dpi) so that the image will not become pixelated when played on a large screen.

Digital pictures may be taken on a digital camera, smartphone, or iPad and imported directly into a video editing program. Make sure your device takes high quality photos (at least 400 dpi).

## Recording Video

Recording video, both an individual speaking to the camera and **B-roll** footage, can add much interest to the video but it can also be a complicated process. It is not recommended when time is limited and participants do not have previous experience.

Many laptops and mobile devices now includes **HD** cameras, so videos recorded on these devices, while not professional quality, are still very good without requiring much skill to record. The **IHRC** has successfully used a Macbook Air and an iPad (with a tripod). However, built-in microphones in these devices are inadequate. Audio should be recorded separately with a microphone and added to the digital story using video editing software.

## Editing Video

There are many video editing programs and they vary widely in complexity and cost. The **IHRC** recommends the following programs: (1) **Windows Movie Maker**, a free download for Windows computers. It is very simple to use but limited in its capabilities. (2) **iMovie** is an Apple program that is often included on Mac computers and may be purchased as an app for iOS devices. It has many more functions than Movie Maker, but creating a simple video is still straightforward. (3) **WeVideo** is an online video editor which may be used as a free version (which leaves a watermark on the video) or by buying a monthly subscription. It is a good compromise between Movie Maker and iMovie. WeVideo saves work to participants' personal account, so there is no need to back up files on an external drive.

## Two-Day Workshop Schedule

### Day 1

.5 hour	Facilitator explains what digital storytelling is and screens some digital stories to discuss the elements of a story
1 hour	Discuss and finalize scripts
.5 hour	Facilitator explains how to record (not edit) a voiceover with Audacity
1 hour	Production time: finalizing scripts, practicing reading them aloud, recording voiceover, scanning photos and documents that participants have brought to the workshop
1 hour	<b>Lunch Break</b> (Participants are encouraged to discuss their story ideas with one another.)
.5 hour	Facilitator explains how to edit a voiceover with Audacity and how to search for Creative Commons-licensed works
3.5 hours	Production time: recording and editing voiceover, scanning materials, finding Creative Commons-licensed works

### Day 2

.5 hour	Basic video editing tutorial: creating a new project file, adding images and sound, matching images with your voiceover
2.5 hours	Production time: Finish editing voiceovers, begin editing videos
1 hour	<b>Lunch Break</b>
.5 hour	Advanced video editing tutorial: adding titles/text slides, transitions, credits
2 hours	Production time: participants should all be working on their videos now.
.5 hour	Export movies and watch them if there is sufficient time.

## Three-Day Workshop Schedule

### Day 1

1 hour	Facilitator explains what digital storytelling is and screens some digital stories to discuss the elements of a story
1 hour	Group discussion of participants' scripts and story ideas
1 hour	Participants may edit their scripts, practice reading them aloud, and/or scan photos and documents they have brought to the workshop
1 hour	<b>Lunch Break</b>
.5 hour	Facilitator explains how to record (not edit) a voiceover with Audacity and how to search for Creative Commons-licensed works
3.5 hours	Production time: recording voiceover, scanning materials, finding Creative Commons-licensed works

### Day 2

.5 hour	Tutorial in editing voiceover with Audacity
2.5 hours	Production time: Editing voiceovers and looking for additional Creative Commons-licensed works if necessary
1 hour	<b>Lunch Break</b>
.5 hour	Basic video editing tutorial: creating a new project file, adding images and sound, matching images with your voiceover
2.5 hours	Production time: participants should all be working on their videos now.

### Day 3

.5 hour	Advanced video editing tutorial: adding titles/text slides, transitions, credits, other effects
2.5 hours	Production time. Participants should all be working on their videos now.
1 hour	<b>Lunch Break</b>
2.5 hours	Production Time
.5 hour	Export movies and watch them if there is sufficient time.

## Resources for Writing a Script

A digital story starts with a 300-500 word script. You will make an audio recording of yourself reading this script to create your voiceover. Writing a good script is the most important part of your story! If you improvise while recording, your voiceover will be unfocused and much more difficult to edit. A 300-500 word script will produce a story of 3-5 minutes when read slowly.

### What do I write about?

Three to five minutes is not enough time to tell your entire life story, but it is enough time to tell a single story. Though you may choose to keep your digital story private, many people make their story public, showing it at screenings or sharing it online. This is an opportunity to tell your own story in your own words.

Here are some ideas from the *Immigrant Stories* project to inspire you. Your story may talk about:

**An object that represents an experience:** This could be a physical object or something intangible, like a recipe, song, family saying, etc.

Watch Teng Lee talk about each of the immigration documents he received over many years and their significance to him:

<http://immigrants.mndigital.org/exhibits/show/immigrantstories-exhibit/item/513>

Watch Renita Sebastin talk about her mother's wedding saree, how it served as a reminder of her life in India, and how it remains significant to her daughter as a symbol of her two cultures:

<http://immigrants.mndigital.org/exhibits/show/immigrantstories-exhibit/item/506>

### Family story:

Watch Makenna Dawson recount her adoption from South Korea:

<http://immigrants.mndigital.org/exhibits/show/immigrantstories-exhibit/item/496>

Watch Miraly Williams talk about her future husband's first trip to meet her in the Philippines and her journey to the United States to marry him:

<http://immigrants.mndigital.org/exhibits/show/immigrantstories-exhibit/item/550>

### Reflections on identity and place in society:

Watch Mustafa Jumale reflect on his life and identity as a Somali in the United States:

<http://immigrants.mndigital.org/exhibits/show/immigrantstories-exhibit/item/501>

Watch Saengmany Ratsabout recount his family's refugee story and reflect on its absence in most narratives of American history:

<http://immigrants.mndigital.org/exhibits/show/immigrantstories-exhibit/item/508>

# How to Record a Voiceover Using Audacity

## Tips for Recording in Audacity

Audacity is a free, cross-platform audio recorder and editor. It is powerful, but working with the program is simple. You can download it from <http://audacityteam.org/>

Your recording environment is crucial to recording good quality audio. For best quality, use an external microphone. A USB microphone is both inexpensive and easy to use. Just plug it into your computer.

## To Record

Press the red record button to start recording your audio. Speak clearly into your microphone and you will see the waves on the display change according to your voice.

## Pause

Use the pause button to take a break from recording. If you press pause, you can come back to the recording and still record on the same track.

## Stop

Use the stop button when you have finished recording and are ready to save or export the file.

## Editing Recordings

It is easiest to read your entire script and then delete the mistakes after you have finished. If you make a mistake while recording: stop, take a breath, and repeat the entire sentence from the beginning. You will erase the mistake later, when you are done recording.

## When you have finished recording

1. Press the play button to listen to the entire recording.
2. Use the bar at the bottom of the window to get to the area where you want to edit.
3. Highlight the part of the audio that you want to remove.
4. Click Delete from the Edit menu. The area you highlighted has been removed from the recording. Do this as many times as necessary.
5. If you delete something by mistake, click the Edit menu and select Undo Delete. Do this as many times as necessary.
6. If you would like to preserve your original recording and save this version to edit later, use the file menu to 'Save Project As.'

## Exporting

1. Open the File menu.
2. Select Export
3. Click the File Formats tab.
4. Select Wav
5. Name your File
6. Open your file library
7. Select Save

# How to Edit a Digital Story with Windows Movie Maker

*Every video editing software has a different interface and terminology, but editing a video is basically the same across programs. You create a project file, import all your media into the program, arrange each piece's position and duration, and export the final project to create a video file.*

## Steps

1. If you want your video to start with a title screen, make that first. Click the **Title** button on the **Home** tab and type the text you want in the preview window. You can change the font style, color, and size too.
2. Import all your audio and picture files into Movie Maker. Click the **Add videos and photos** button and the **Add music** button on the **Home** tab. (You'll need to click **Add Music** to add any audio file, including your voiceover). Your audio file will be a green bar. Pictures and videos will sit on top of it. Each picture will have a preview image, so you can see what each picture is.
3. Arrange your images in order. To move an image, click on the picture and keeping holding the button on your mouse down until you drop the picture into the spot where it needs to go.
  - a. Save as you go! Choose **Save project as** from the main, drop-down menu in the top left corner. Save the project where you can easily access it (i.e. on your desktop, on your flash drive if you are using a public computer.)
4. Adjust the duration of time that each picture is onscreen. You can find the duration on the **Edit** tab, which only pops up below the green **Video Tools** tab once you have added images to Movie Maker. If you do not do this, Movie Maker automatically displays each image for 7 seconds. You'll want to make sure the image that the viewer sees matches what they are hearing, so the images will be on screen for different lengths of time. Use the preview window to watch your video and make adjustments based on what you hear. Movie Maker will cut off your audio file to correspond to the length of your images, so if the total time of all your images is less than the length of your voice over, it will cut off early. Display your images longer to fix this.
  - a. *Tip:* When you adjust the duration of an image, it will affect the position (but not duration) of the subsequent images in the video. You should begin by adjusting the video's first image and then going in order (left to right) until you reach the end.
  - b. *Optional:* You can make your photos move by using tools on the **Animations** menu. You can add transitions and other effects with the **Visual Effects** menu.
  - c. *Optional:* If you want to add captions or subtitles to your video, you can do this by clicking the **Caption** button on the **Home** tab and typing the text you want in the preview window
5. Add a credit slide at the end of the video by clicking the **Credits** button on the **Home** tab. Make sure to cite all images, video, and sound that is not your own. Include the creator, title of the work, and the type of Creative Commons license in your citation.
6. Export your final video file. The project file you have been working on cannot be played outside Movie Maker. To export, click the **Save movie** button from the main, drop-down menu in the top left corner. Choose the **Recommended for this project** setting.

# Tips on Sound, Images, and Video

## Tips on Recording Audio

- **Start with a script.** Practicing reading the script out loud to find awkward phrases and to make sure you stay within your time limits.
- **Record in a quiet space.** Try to avoid interruptions and background noise from fans, buzzing lights, and keeping your microphone too close to your computer or camera.
- **Avoid pops and hisses.** The letters P and S can make distracting sounds, so point your microphone slightly away from your mouth. For best results, use a pop filter.
- **Speak slowly and pause between sentences.** The pauses will make it easier to cut out flubbed lines and edit good lines together.
- **Record at the proper level.** If you record at a level that is too low, you will hear background noises when you turn up the volume to hear your narration. If your level is too high (in the red zone), it will sound bad when played back.
- **Do your best to speak well, but edit your final audio file.** We recommend the program Audacity.

## Gathering Images and Music

- **Images:** Use your own photographs and documents when possible and make sure to scan them at a high resolution so that your digital story will look good when played on larger screens. At least 400 DPI (dots per inch) is best. You can adjust this setting in your scanning software.
- **Music:** Music files should support the mood of your story and not drown out your narration.
- When you need additional media to tell your story, make sure they are Creative Commons-licensed works.

## Recording Video

- Do not position individuals in front of windows because of the glare and because things may move outside the window and distract the viewer
- Always use a microphone to record audio because a camera's built-in microphones produces low-quality audio

## Using Creative Commons

Many people need additional images, video, or sound to complete their digital stories. Creative Commons licenses grant copyright permissions for the public to use images, video, and sound owned by another person under the specific conditions outlined in the license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/>).

### Searching Creative Commons

The Creative Commons website allows you to find works with Creative Commons licenses on a number of popular websites, including Google Images, Flickr, and YouTube. The website is a portal that allows you to search a particular website's collections. You could search the websites individually and limit the search, but using the Creative Commons interface is simpler.

- To search, visit [search.creativecommons.org](http://search.creativecommons.org)
  - Select "modify, adapt, or build upon"
  - Do NOT select "use for commercial purposes"
  - Type keywords into the search bar
  - Click on the website you want to search. (You can only search one at a time.)
- When you find something you want to use, record the following information for your credits: (1) creator's name (2) name of the work (3) type of Creative Commons license
  - *Ex.* Paul Welmer, "Minneapolis Skyline," CC BY-NC-SA 2.0

### Finding Authorship and Licensing Information

When you want to use a work, click on it and go to the webpage that hosts it in order to download it. The author, title, and license for the work is displayed differently on each website.

**Flickr:** The name of the image and the author's username are usually displayed just below the image on the left-hand side of the screen. Click on the blue "Some rights reserved" link or the "More Details" button on the right-hand side to find the license (if it is not already displayed). **YouTube:** The name, username, and license are displayed under the video.

**Google Images:** Any webpage may be discovered through Google Images, so the citation information will vary widely and require some detective work. Google Images often brings up results from Flickr, YouTube, and Wikimedia (where all items are in the public domain).

N.B. While the images initially displayed on the Google Images webpage will have the appropriate Creative Commons licenses, the "related images" you may view by clicking on an individual image usually do not.

## Creative Commons Worksheet

When you put Creative Commons-licensed images, music, or videos in your digital story, you must provide appropriate attribution in the video's credits. Use this worksheet to keep track of each's work's author, title, and license.

Author	Title	Type of License
<i>Example: Steve Lyon</i>	<i>"Minneapolis Skyline"</i>	<i>CC BY-NC-SA 2.0</i>
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		
6.		