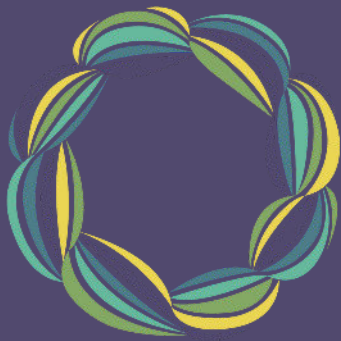# MIDTERM IMPACT REPORT

STORIES FOR ALL

A DIGITAL STORYTELLING PROJECT FOR THE 21ST CENTURY

STORIES FOR ALL

Stories for All, a partnership between the Hall Center for the Humanities and the Institute for Digital Research in the Humanities at the University of Kansas, is supported by a major grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation.

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SPRING 2022

STORIES FOR ALL

Stories for All: A Digital Storytelling Project for the Twenty-First Century brings into conversation digital projects that represent a wide range of traditions, histories, and goals.

We have brought together over forty partner projects dedicated to gathering marginalized and suppressed histories, interconnecting them, and sharing them widely through digital media.

Our stories are local, regional, and global in scope.

Stories for All partners use a variety of storytelling strategies, including oral histories, social media posts, online writing contests, videos, blogs, interactive maps, long-form documentaries, online companions, art installations, and place-based storytelling.

VALUES

Transformative storytelling

We see the stories, the storytellers, the histories, and the humanity in Stories for All projects. Through storytelling, we imagine better futures.

Social justice

The stories we tell serve as a form of resistance, reconciliation, truth seeking, and truth telling. They move our collective understanding of humanity toward justice and integrity.

Community

Our projects address community needs and elevate community capacity to coordinate resources, distribute information, communicate differences, and cultivate trust.

VALUES

Equitable reciprocity

We build reciprocal, equitable relationships and share power and responsibility. The relationship building process is ethically guided and cognizant of vulnerable communities.

Sustainability

We allocate resources to enterprises that bring long-term benefits and self-support. Participation in storytelling creates community resilience and empowerment.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

Starting from 2021, Stories for All partners have received funding, technological support, and training in digital storytelling techniques and ethics.

Promoting social justice through community-based digital storytelling entails many conceptual, logistical, and ethical challenges around representation, identity, access, ownership, culture, and technology. We embrace the complexity of humanity as embodied in the stories we tell.

We are holding a global conference in 2024 to showcase and celebrate all the illuminating stories we have rediscovered. Stories for All partners will continue their storytelling journey beyond the course of individual projects.

PROJECT STRUCTURE

Stories for All partners dedicated resources to building their projects in ways such as:

building community relationships

making oral history records

producing audio and video clips

hosting student interns and recruiting staff

compiling research material

holding events

purchasing equipment

conducting interviews and surveys

creating digital presence for stories

TECHNOLOGY

Stories for All bridges the divide for people who want to create digital storytelling projects but lack funding, training, or access to technology.

We offer workshops on digital tools and consultations on developing digital projects. Topics include:

Creating digital archives and exhibits

Digital protocols, ethical storytelling, and social justice oral history

Data management, preservation, and sustainability plans

Development, design, or hosting of a digital project

Digitization and multimedia production

TECHNOLOGY

Partners use a wide range of tools and platforms to optimize their storytelling projects.
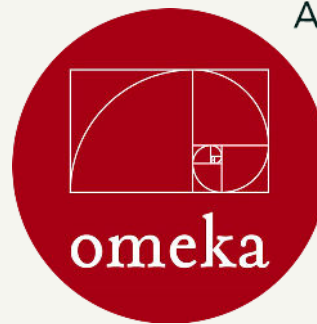
Inshot

Scalar

WORDPRESS

ArcGIS StoryMaps

YouTube

Google Earth

zoom

omeka

Audacity

Drupal™

Spotify

ARCHIVE-IT

polycam

Clio

SQUARESPACE

IMPACT

Recovering untold stories

Stories for All projects gather oral history and other archival material that is otherwise not publicized. The narration and documentation of stories create visibility, and hence empowerment, for marginalized communities.

CASE STUDY
A museum studio documenting family stories among American Indians

"We discovered that no one had ever asked the family in Oklahoma to share their stories of Blackbear Bosin—the creator of the Wichita's iconic statue, Keeper of the Plains. The family were deeply touched that we reached out and recorded their stories before they were lost to time. Our goal is to build on the knowledge people have about American Indians, challenge stereotypes and address the difficulties experienced by many Native people. Indian history is not always pleasant to hear, but the stories need to be told so we can all reach a place of understanding."

IMPACT

Cultivating communal ties

Stories for All projects connect people through stories, and the act of storytelling brings people together. This results in communal ties that can be intergenerational, intersectional, and expansive.

CASE STUDY

A community-action arts project featuring the experiences of older adults

"The in-person exhibition created rich space for intergenerational connection and dialogue and was attended by members of and outside the University of Kansas community. Many of our artists included older adults in the creation of their artwork, which illuminated diverse stories of and perspectives on aging. Building the digital archive has allowed us to share these conversations, in the form of textual description or video stories, along with the artwork to a broader audience."

IMPACT

Shared ownership

Stories for All projects adopt co-ownership of stories, knowledge, and resources. It is important to allow community stakeholders to participate in decisions about the documentation, storage, and distribution of stories.

CASE STUDY
An immersive experience recreating La Yarda, the historical housing unit built for Mexican American railroad workers in Lawrence, Kansas

"We have been working with La Yarda family members and descendants to make sure their voices are included not only in the story collection, but in the execution of what they would like to have materialized in the physical installation. The family members are not merely subjects for material, but rather, key creative stakeholders in this project."

IMPACT

Digital access

Stories for All projects present digitalized publications of gathered stories which are accessible to a broad audience.

CASE STUDY
An oral history collection of LGBTQ people's life stories in Kansas

"It is the first digitalized oral history collection of queer folks in Kansas. It is hosted on the open-access digital platform ScholarWorks so people all over the world can read the collection. Students have used the collection in their research, developing SIMS-like video games and dating apps. The audio recordings were used by a linguistic student for something I did not fully understand, but it sounded cool. Scholars and researchers writing about LGBTQ related topics and people starting their own oral history projects consulted the collection. It was cited in Gilbert Baker's obituary in the New York Times."

IMPACT

Advocating social justice

Stories for All projects incorporate community storytelling into broader goals of diversity, equity, and inclusion. Many feature stories of how structural injustice regarding race, gender, sexuality, and class affects people's daily life and propose pathways of resistance.

CASE STUDY
A rediscovery of the Bottoms neighborhood in Topeka, Kansas, through oral history, documentary making, and art exhibitions

"Our project is about recovering the stories of an almost-forgotten Black and Latinx community. By interviewing the last surviving members of these communities, we are documenting a part of history that has been ignored. The oral history website will let the voices of those affected most by this negligence finally be heard; the documentary will tell their story to a wider audience; and the art installation will play a key part in long deferred recognition and healing."