



## Teaching digital storytelling: Inspiring voices through online narratives

Edited by Sheila Marie Aird and Thomas P. Mackey, Rowman & Littlefield, 2024, xxii+228 pp., \$65.00 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-5381-7292-6

**Melissa Anderson**

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## PROFESSIONAL READING

Kirstin Duffin, Column Editor

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**Teaching digital storytelling: Inspiring voices through online narratives.** Edited by Sheila Marie Aird and Thomas P. Mackey, Rowman & Littlefield, 2024, xxii+228 pp., \$65.00 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-5381-7292-6

In the scholarship of information literacy instruction, authors are increasingly reframing information literacy as a *metaliteracy*, with the focus on not just the analytical and evaluative skills of learners, but also on the metacognitive, collaborative, and participatory aspects of learners' engagement with information. Thomas P. Mackey, along with various coauthors and coeditors, has been at the forefront of the work being done on metaliteracy, and *Teaching Digital Storytelling: Inspiring Voices Through Online Narratives*, which Mackey co-edited with Empire State University colleague Sheila Marie Aird, is the newest offering to address metaliteracy in the classroom. Focusing specifically on digital storytelling as a pedagogical tool for engaging learners, promoting metaliterate learning, and helping learners develop their own voices and agency, the book offers both theory and practical suggestions to instructors wishing to incorporate this approach in their teaching. According to Mackey and Aird, the volume is intended to inspire new curriculum and revisions to existing curriculum and to garner support for digital storytelling initiatives broadly. Presenting case studies primarily from the United States and South Africa, the nine essays included in the volume argue that digital storytelling is perhaps uniquely able to encourage metaliterate learning when it is taught effectively. Each essay is grounded in theories of information literacy, metaliteracy, and a review of relevant literature but also presents real-world examples of how digital storytelling is being utilized in a variety of settings.

The themes of participation and collaboration in digital storytelling endeavors are strongly present throughout the collection, but some essays, such as Muchativugwa Liberty Hove's piece on autoethnography, also examine digital storytelling artifacts as objects of study themselves. In this way, the book is able to provide suggestions to instructors wishing to incorporate digital storytelling projects in their syllabi, but it also suggests ways to frame digital storytelling and analyze the products of these efforts. As the title suggests, the narratives created in digital storytelling projects are necessarily online, and some of the essays, such as the one by Aird and Mackey, do indeed discuss projects created for online learning environments, but others, such as Kimmika L. H. Williams-Witherspoon's chapter on poetic ethnography, illustrate how students conducting in-person field research can use digital storytelling to create and disseminate affecting, innovative works that amplify diverse voices and engage wider audiences within the community.

While *Teaching Digital Storytelling* argues convincingly for the use of digital storytelling to engage students and promote metaliterate learning, the collection also includes cases in which digital storytelling efforts have not yet realized their full potential. Brenda van Wyk

explains in her essay on digital storytelling and social cognitive justice efforts in South Africa that misconceptions about what constitutes digital storytelling and what its pedagogical aims are still persist. Van Wyk's essay helpfully illustrates how digital storytelling could address barriers faced by undergraduates and encourage deeper learning with additional support from stakeholders in library and information services.

Although geared primarily toward higher education, the focus on community, on diverse voices, and on broadly transferable concepts makes the book appropriate for librarians and instructors in a wide range of settings and educational contexts.

## Disclosure statement

No potential conflict of interest was reported by the author(s).

Melissa Anderson  
*Campus Engagement and Research Services Librarian*  
*Hannon Library, Southern Oregon University,*  
*Ashland, Oregon, USA*

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**Library 2035: Imagining the next generation of libraries.** Edited by Sandra Hirsh. Rowman & Littlefield, 2024, x+223pp., \$35.00 (paperback), ISBN-13: 978-1-5381-8040-2

This book, edited by Sandra Hirsh, Associate Dean for Academics at the College of Information, Data & Society at San José State University, brings together the contributions of thirty authors in twenty-five different essays that explore what libraries (academic, public, and school) may look like in 2035. The book is organized into six sections: Landscape, Community, Equity and Inclusion, Organizations, Library Workers, and Vision. The editor provides a helpful introduction to each of these, highlighting the main points of each section. An added feature is that Hirsh has interviewed the authors on their chapters, providing these as supplementary webcasts that are available at <https://sites.google.com/sjsu.edu/library2035/home>.

From the Introduction: “While [this book] is a forecast, it offers the reader a reflection of where libraries are today and insight into how technology, society, and even the environment (e.g., climate change, politics, economics) will influence the priorities and sustainability of libraries of the future” (p. 1). A lot of the material does reflect on the libraries of today, extrapolating that many current practices will be of benefit in the future. A sampling of one-sentence forecasts that reference work being done in the present that will evolve and remain in 2035:

- The library of 2035 will use storytelling to advocate and promote the library as an essential community entity. (Chris Brown, p. 35)
- The library of 2035 will uphold a diversity lens so that all members of society relate, connect with, and see themselves as part of the library. (Nicole A. Cooke, p. 71)
- The library of 2035 will uphold a strong commitment to adopting policies, practices and environments that support wellness for library workers as well as the community. (Loida Garcia-Febo, p. 147)