

Storydoing as a Strategy for Cultural Heritage Engagement

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Abstract

This paper explores "storydoing" as an engaging approach to involve audiences actively in storytelling, turning them into integral participants. Storydoing integrates activities that align with a company's or organization's values, going beyond traditional storytelling. While storydoing is commonly used in brand marketing, this paper considers its potential in cultural heritage and education. It allows audiences to embody cultural elements, fostering experiential learning and aligning with John Dewey's educational philosophy. Through literature reviews and case studies, this article highlights the effectiveness of storydoing in cultural heritage, offering support to educational, preservation, and promotional projects.

Keywords: *Storydoing, cultural heritage, engagement, experiential learning, education.*

1. Introduction

Cultural heritage serves as a fundamental element in society, embodying the traditions, values, and historical narratives of a community. It plays a crucial role in shaping collective identity and preserving the rich tapestry of human history and traditions of society for future generations. It encompasses the teaching and learning of tangible and intangible cultural heritage, including historical sites, artifacts, customs, rituals, music, and language.

In recent years, there has been a growing recognition of the need to engage audiences in meaningful ways with cultural heritage, moving beyond the passive consumption of information. UNESCO has emphasized the importance of preserving cultural heritage through active engagement and education, acknowledging that it is through active participation and experiential learning that individuals can develop a deeper connection and appreciation for their cultural heritage, fostering sustainable development, promoting social cohesion, and nurturing a sense of identity and belonging [1].

Current issues of cultural heritage education revolve around the methods and approaches used to engage modern audiences and foster a deeper understanding and appreciation for cultural heritage. While effective in conveying information, traditional storytelling methods often fall short of creating a truly immersive, interactive, and experiential learning environment that is essential in bridging the gap and the different contexts between contemporary audiences and cultural heritage.

This is where the concept of "storydoing" comes in. Storydoing, as opposed to storytelling, is a practice that would encourage active participation and engagement with, in this case, cultural heritage, even embodying the cultural elements through sustained and active interactions. It would try to bring the context of the cultural heritage within the context of the audience. This approach would not only foster experiential learning but also mirrors the principles of John Dewey's progressive educational philosophy. Dewey [2] believed in the value of hands-on, real-world experiences as a means to acquire knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. By engaging in hands-on experiences, such as reenactments, workshops, and field trips, learners would be able to develop a deeper understanding and appreciation of cultural heritage. In more recent studies, there are also

suggestions that the focus of educational activity should shift towards the learning experiences of individuals at different times and in different contexts, helping them to build personal learning pathways.

With the participatory, individually-tailored, and hands-on nature of storydoing, it does, however, bring about the issues of authenticity, and preservation of the original story or alignment to the narrative of the cultural heritage intended to be informed. This issue can be analyzed and discussed in future research surveys and comparative analyses between the initial engagement of the storydoing activities and their goals with the generated outputs from the participants. There may be other challenges encountered that need to be addressed that can play a role in the storydoing process, such as resources, environment, and so on, that will be significant as observational reports for future recommendations.

By harnessing the principles of storydoing, cultural heritage initiatives can unlock a multitude of opportunities. Education, preservation, and promotion can be seamlessly woven together into a rich tapestry of audience experiences. By understanding how this strategy has revitalized traditional storytelling, we gain insights into how it can redefine the way we can effectively connect with our cultural heritage today. As cultural workers or curators strive to create meaningful connections with diverse contemporary audiences, storydoing stands as a potential catalyst, guiding us toward a future where the past comes to life through the active participation of the present. Hopefully, it can offer actionable insights for practitioners and researchers in broad fields from education to tourism concerning cultural heritage.

2. Methods

A mixed-methods approach, combining literature review, case studies, and qualitative analysis, helps understand storydoing's principles and its application to today's audience. A comprehensive literature review collects research, articles, and case studies on storytelling, storydoing, cultural heritage engagement, experiential learning, and audience participation. This establishes a knowledge foundation and identifies gaps. Case studies illustrate storydoing's use in various contexts, like brand marketing, cultural heritage, education, and preservation projects. They provide insights into engaging audiences and addressing challenges in storydoing approaches.

The collected data undergo qualitative analysis, identifying recurring themes, patterns, and challenges from case studies. Investigations aim to show how storydoing transforms engagement, enhances experiential learning, and contributes to cultural heritage preservation and promotion. Using insights from the literature review and case studies, we develop a conceptual framework outlining storydoing's key principles in cultural heritage engagement. This framework guides effective implementation. Future real-world examples can validate and refine it, ensuring its relevance and resonance with diverse audiences in bringing cultural heritage to life.

3. Literature Study

The difference between storytelling and storydoing is still under debate whether storydoing is a new concept or just a version of storytelling. Storytelling is the sharing of stories with others, about experiences and their meanings. The stories or narratives could be real or imagined and be recounted to others, whether through oral, written, or other means [3]. The concept of storydoing was first coined by Ty Montague [4] as a marketing strategy to convey stories (message, value, and principles) of a company not only through traditional advertising, but also across all aspects of the company's business activities in daily actions rather than words, and not only to inform but to engage [5]. Storydoing is also the art of creating, not only telling, stories, that provide real value and can have an impact on society [6] because it also offers the audience the opportunity to participate in it themselves and become part of the act [7].

Engagements of storydoing have been applied in many circumstances in marketing communication which usually are documented and published as part of the campaign. One example is the "Coca-Cola Small World Machines – Bringing India and Pakistan Together" [8], where Coca-Cola with a mission of connecting the

people of India and Pakistan, installed two special vending machines, one in a mall in India and another in a mall in Pakistan. Each vending machine is equipped with interactive screens where essentially people can see each other from both sides. This media in a public setting provides a setup for people to interact with each other from both countries, provided with an activity for engagement between both sides to do at the same time, such as joining hands on the screen, drawing the peace sign together, and so on, and being given a reward at the accomplishments of those tasks, which is the beverage product. The activity creates reflective experiences for the participants and viewers about what it means to connect with our neighboring country, which sometimes goes through tense affairs. However, through human commonalities in a neutral setting and playful conditions, positive interactions between people can occur.

In all cases, for the storytelling or storydoing to be effective, it must engage the participants cognitively and emotionally. However, the main difference between the two is the emphasis on participation and action in storydoing on the part of the audience/user/customer/participant/receptor, and how the feedback communicates to the storyteller/company/producer makes way for further communication with other audience/market with their experiences of being involved in the stories.

As Shin and Kim suggest in their paper, experience is the key to storydoing and thus relies on the understanding of user experience which relates to characteristics of interactivity and continuity [4]. Interactivity occurs when the subject of experience and the environment do not act only on one side, but when the actions of both are combined. When an active element performs a specific action and a result occurs in which the passive element affects the active element again, it is an experience, and that interaction forms a situation. Interactivity in storydoing can be seen as an act of exchanging roles during the process of interaction between the user and the message/story. This is because the receiver understands and feels the transmitter's intention and role by performing the message delivered by the transmitter, and the transmitter observes how the message is delivered and reacts to the result according to the result of the receiver's action. Through storydoing, they understand each other's abstract roles in detail [4].

Continuity of experience means that every experience receives something from the previous experience, and at the same time changes it in some way. Continuity establishes trust and the livelihood of the story. Through continuity, the cycle of dialog or engagement between all sides of the story (producers/transmitters and receivers/receptors) can be established and identified as an ideal interaction. Storydoing thus has five elements which are the message, story, characters, action, and confirmation, and is operated by the interaction and continuity between the producer and receptor [4].

Storydoing according to Shin and Kim [4], based on their examples, is more in corporate marketing, advertising, and image enhancement rather than cultural content, and more executed in the real world for people to experience, be challenged, and solve problems in a conditioned situation. The participant of the story becomes the actor and the character in the story that plays out. The story cannot continue without the actor performing the action that is conditioned to do. Its characteristic is direct experience and stimulates many senses, not just sight, and hearing. The goal is to get diverse natural reactions, interactions, and memorable experiences that can be shared. Because of this nature, the hope of discovering or maintaining the original story is not vital in storydoing. Discussions are commonly about the nature of not maintaining the original story, the characteristics of real-world experience, and the use of storydoing in the context of other than corporate brand marketing, such as for educational or cultural purposes.

Based on the storydoing project examples mentioned in Shin and Kim's article [4], firstly there must be an initial setup in place with adequate preparation with a strategical approach to entice and induce action from the audience and user. There must be a conditioned environment or situation and a predetermined story or setup involving storydoing. This can also be seen in the project case where an appealing character design based on a city legend is created as a focus of art activities in an exhibition about the city [9]. The audience/user/receptor must act first to be persuaded to take part and follow the conditions that are set according to the intended outcome. The initiation must come first and be well prepared, in addition to having a way to attract the first audience to try to participate in the story. Without the participants' engagement there

is no action, thus no feedback nor interaction. Furthermore, without continuous engagements between the story producer and receptor, and no likability and shareability qualities, where they find no value, the story can end abruptly.

4. Results

Cultural content is vital for preserving tangible and intangible cultural heritage. In today's globalized and technologically advanced world, there's a need for quality content to maintain and transmit cultural heritage. While storytelling has been a traditional method for this, the storydoing strategy, successful in marketing, offers real-world, participative activities that can provide impactful engagement and multisensory education, creating a holistic learning experience for people.

Based on the study, the result points that can be determined about "storydoing" are as follows:

1. Storydoing is the art of creating stories that provide real value and can have an impact on society. It goes beyond traditional storytelling by actively engaging the audience and allowing them to participate in the story themselves.
2. The goal of storydoing is to create a deeper connection between consumers and brands, making them feel like they are part of the story. It aims to form trust towards the company or brand and generate user-generated content and word-of-mouth marketing.
3. Storydoing is based on the concept of experiential learning, where individuals learn by actively participating in an experience rather than passively observing it. It allows for direct engagement, understanding the consequences of actions, and developing problem-solving skills and critical thinking abilities.
4. Interactivity and continuity are key elements of storydoing. Interactivity occurs when the actions of both the audience and the storyteller combine, creating a situation of exchange and understanding. Continuity ensures that every experience builds upon the previous one, establishing trust and the livelihood of the story.
5. Storydoing is commonly used in corporate marketing, advertising, and image enhancement. However, its potential for educational and cultural purposes is also being explored.

Overall, storydoing offers a unique approach to cultural content creation for preservation and promotion, allowing for active audience participation and meaningful experiences.

One proposed solution to enhance the effectiveness of storydoing is to incorporate interactive and immersive elements, such as virtual reality, augmented reality, roleplay, or artistic and expressive work into the storytelling experience. This can provide a more engaging experience for audiences, allowing them to actively participate in the narrative and feel a deeper connection to the cultural heritage being portrayed. There is a pursuit of offering such experiences by deepening the digital storytelling experience and providing a way to convey the depiction of objects on flat screens to a more visceral experience with a real-life sense of scale and physicality [10]. Thus, immersion and interactivity is an important and expected part of the story experience. According to Lombard & Snyder-Duch [11], interactivity is also thought to increase the sense of 'presence' which leads to effects of enjoyment and persuasion, which also means engagement. Consequently, storytelling should be storydoing by having the listeners be part of the story, and not one-directional but a dialogue, facilitated through interactive digital media.

Additionally, leveraging social media platforms and online communities can help extend the reach of storydoing initiatives, allowing for greater audience participation and interaction. These solutions have the advantage of leveraging technology and digital platforms to disseminate content to an even wider audience and possibly support awareness campaigns or promotional endeavors.

The impact of storydoing lies in its ability to create immersive experiences that resonate with audiences on a deeper level, fostering a sense of connection and emotional investment. By actively involving individuals in the narrative, storydoing has the potential to break down barriers or gaps and foster understanding among

diverse groups. This can lead to increased empathy, and social cohesion, and ultimately contribute to positive societal change. The significance of this research lies in its potential to inform and inspire storytellers, marketers, and organizations to adopt storydoing as a powerful means of cultural heritage education.

5. Discussions

Action, Interaction, & Continuation

Based on the storydoing project examples reviewed in the literature above, firstly, a well-structured initial setup with strategic planning is essential to spark audience action. This setup involves creating a conditioned environment, a predetermined story, and conditions for storydoing. To initiate participation effectively, careful preparation and incentives to attract the initial audience are crucial. Without active engagement, there's a lack of action, feedback, and interaction, leading to a potential abrupt end to the story. To maintain momentum, fostering likability, shareability, and ongoing engagement between the story producer and audience is vital. Gamification, which incorporates game design elements into non-game contexts, offers a valuable strategy for sustaining engagement in such scenarios.

Dynamic Story that Engages People

In cultural heritage narratives, an ongoing debate revolves around the tension between narrative freedom and historical accuracy [12]. However, storydoing demands flexibility from story producers. They should anticipate and embrace new variations and diverse outcomes as inherent to the method. Rather than rigidly adhering to an exact original story, the emphasis should be on keeping the story alive. Oral traditions have a history of improvisation and branching from the originals, allowing for creativity. The context in which the story unfolds often takes precedence over preserving a fixed, possibly viewed as outdated and may be ignored altogether. As Palombini [12] suggests, the storyteller should avoid conflicting with historical documentation but have the liberty to shape the narrative structure. This dynamic, unpredictable nature arises from the participatory aspect of storydoing, often involving the general public. Discussions can also be encouraged to enhance awareness of the narrative's origins if necessary.

Interactivity, Presence/Immersion that Provides Experiences of Doing

Engaging in storydoing goes beyond mere observation and listening; it demands sustained interaction. Digital media should not limit itself to visuals and sounds but should strive to encompass multiple sensory experiences. This holistic approach aligns with the immersive nature of real-life storydoing. However, achieving this requires considerations like accessibility, the availability of specialized equipment, location constraints, and physical space limitations. For instance, in Hammady's augmented reality (AR) project in heritage museums, AR combined with gamification techniques has proven highly valuable [13]. This dynamic blend benefits both on-site visitors and attracts external ones. The evolving field of gamification has gained prominence in creative industries. This evolution has given rise to innovative approaches in education and heritage applications. Recent research emphasizes the advantages of integrating mixed reality with gamification principles in these applications, underscoring their potential to enhance the overall experience [14].

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, cultural heritage can be preserved and passed on through innovative and immersive storytelling methods that involve the audience as part of the story. The proposition is that “storydoing” can potentially be the terminology and one of the best practices or strategies used for promoting cultural heritage in today’s society. In a cultural heritage storydoing project, we should find something unique from the cultural subject matter, that has great untapped potential for revitalization, as a medium for promoting and educating about the bigger picture of the related subject. With storydoing in a special setting, there are opportunities to enhance visitor engagement, satisfaction, and repeat visits.

However, points of consideration must be made, which are the dynamic and sometimes unpredictable nature of the story or narrative structure, the need for immersive or real-time and real-life conditions and rounded multisensory experience, and a strategy for enticing the initial engagement and for continuous interaction between the producer and receptor. With these factors to understand, consider, plan, and implement, hopefully, future initiatives of cultural heritage engagements can find a strategy that can provide meaningful, tangible experiences to people, and give impact sustaining valuable cultural heritage.

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