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Title: Digital storytelling in DH practice to encourage civil participation and reconstruction of the historical narrative

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Since the 1990s digital storytelling, as an extension of traditional narrative theory set against the backdrop of the “digital turn” (Noiret, 2018), has received significant attention in several fields that are concerned with human expression and experience, such as media research, public history, and education. Digital storytelling, understood here as a movement or method for creating, expressing, and sharing information using digital tools and new media forms, has been viewed as a “democratization of culture” (Clarke & Adam, 2011). It draws attention away from the mainstream and gives a voice to the marginalized, the minority, the overlooked and forgotten. Effective storytelling is based on full participation of the both speaker and listener, providing a means of expression that can resonate both cognitively and emotionally (Chaitin, 2003). Despite ongoing discourse and practice in literary, education, and media research, its theory construction and practice in DH projects is still at an exploratory stage.

This presentation examines how digital storytelling has been used as a critical research method in the DH project *A Journey from Wukang Road* at Shanghai Library. Taking the site of Wukang Road and its associated buildings as the framework, this project uses knowledge organization methods and linked data to extract the relevant narrative elements and related details about people, events, activities, and historical changes from the appropriate library collection resources

(including newspapers, old photos, books, maps, videos, etc.). In this way the project reconstructs and restores the historical evolution of Wukang Road over more than 100 years by using the memories of the people connected with it (Xia et al., 2021). By organizing cultural resources based on their narrative elements, the evolutionary history can be reconstructed and decolonized with a more complete and clear story line. It also engages citizens by having them upload photos and personal accounts of their memories and experiences of the road, restoring a rich picture of diverse voices from the community, challenging the established historiography and sociopolitical bias in the sources (Noble, 2018).

Using digital storytelling as a primary research method unlocks the diverse possibilities for reconstructing its history and the expression of existing narrative materials to meet the needs of different aims, contexts, and communities. It also supports inference from the resources to supplement and discover “new” knowledge that was always there but never before included in the story. Through the process of collecting, organizing, storing, linking, and displaying historical and cultural information, including the voices of the people, with the support of digital tools, this project is in essence a process of attaching consciousness and various perspectives on the past, retelling the story by rebuilding the complete picture.

Digital storytelling in this DH project emphasizes "reconstruction", a way to integrate, relate, and restore existing resources with the affordances of digital tools, thereby encouraging diverse expression, sharing, and even stimulating civil creativity. It is also collective behaviour that discusses the perspectives on history and arouses public engagement, particularly in consideration of Shanghai cultural identity in this former home to the colonial powers.

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