

Embedding equality, diversity, and inclusion in GLAM structures with digital storytelling

Dr Yaming Fu

School of Cultural Heritage and Information Management, Shanghai University



Prof. Simon Mahony

Department of Information Studies, University College London



UCL

Outline

Background:

- EDI in GLAMs
- The “participatory turn” and digital storytelling (DS)

Case study at Shanghai Library:

- ‘Shanghai Cultural Collection’ project
- Methodological framework

Summary:

- How DS supports EDI in GLAM structures?
 - Our expectations
- 

EDI in GLAMs



EDI (or 'DEI' in US) is included as an institutional strategy by many GLAM institutions, specifically to ensure the **allowing and respecting of differences, diversities, human rights and freedoms**, building upon **shared understanding of fairness, dignity, and respect** (CILIP, 2018; ALA, 2017).

GLAMS and their parent organizations are often perceived as engaging in a **limited** set of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) activities, specifically:

“collection highlights” [e.g., announcements on website or book displays],

“public events or programs” ,

“optional employee training/professional development” (Ho, Schiff, & Deng, 2023).

The “participatory turn” and digital storytelling

Digital storytelling: a movement or method for creating, expressing, interpreting, and sharing stories and personal experiences using digital tools, has been viewed as a **"democratization of culture."** (Clarke & Adam, 2011)

Well-crafted stories can communicate abstract and complex ideas in ways that **encourage understanding;**

Effective stories inspire people by creating **human connection and emotional resonance** (Rockefeller Foundation 2014).

As an approach to construct and express meaning, storytelling can also be seen as a process of **reconstructing memory, the past as well as the culture** of individuals, groups, and communities (Fu, Mahony & Liu, 2023).



Figure source:
<http://www.thehealthcarepeople.com/storytelling-powerful-leadership-tool/>

The “participatory turn” and digital storytelling

The research on digital storytelling has evolved from the early exploration of diverse narrative formats, through the uncertainty of technological development, to scholars' attempting to break away from traditional narrative theories and construct new theoretical frameworks to interpret this new narrative paradigm (Cunsolo et al., 2013).

The virtual space that is formed with the practice of digital storytelling is defined as a “shared infrastructure” by Couldry (2008) where individuals and communities can express and reflect upon stories that ultimately work towards “invigorating the community thereby encouraging participation” (Conrad 2013, p.262).

The application of digital storytelling in promoting EDI has proven effective in areas such as the **exploration of collective religious group identity** (Clark & Dierberg, 2012), and **providing services for disabled groups** (Bliss & Fisher, 2013).



Shanghai Cultural Collection



Shanghai city 1825-1949

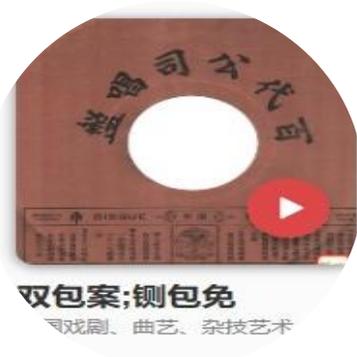
- Knowledge extracted: people, organization, geographical name, architecture, event
- Diverse memory forms organized and linked by knowledge
- Help users to discover stories through memory materials



Photos



Movies



Audio recording



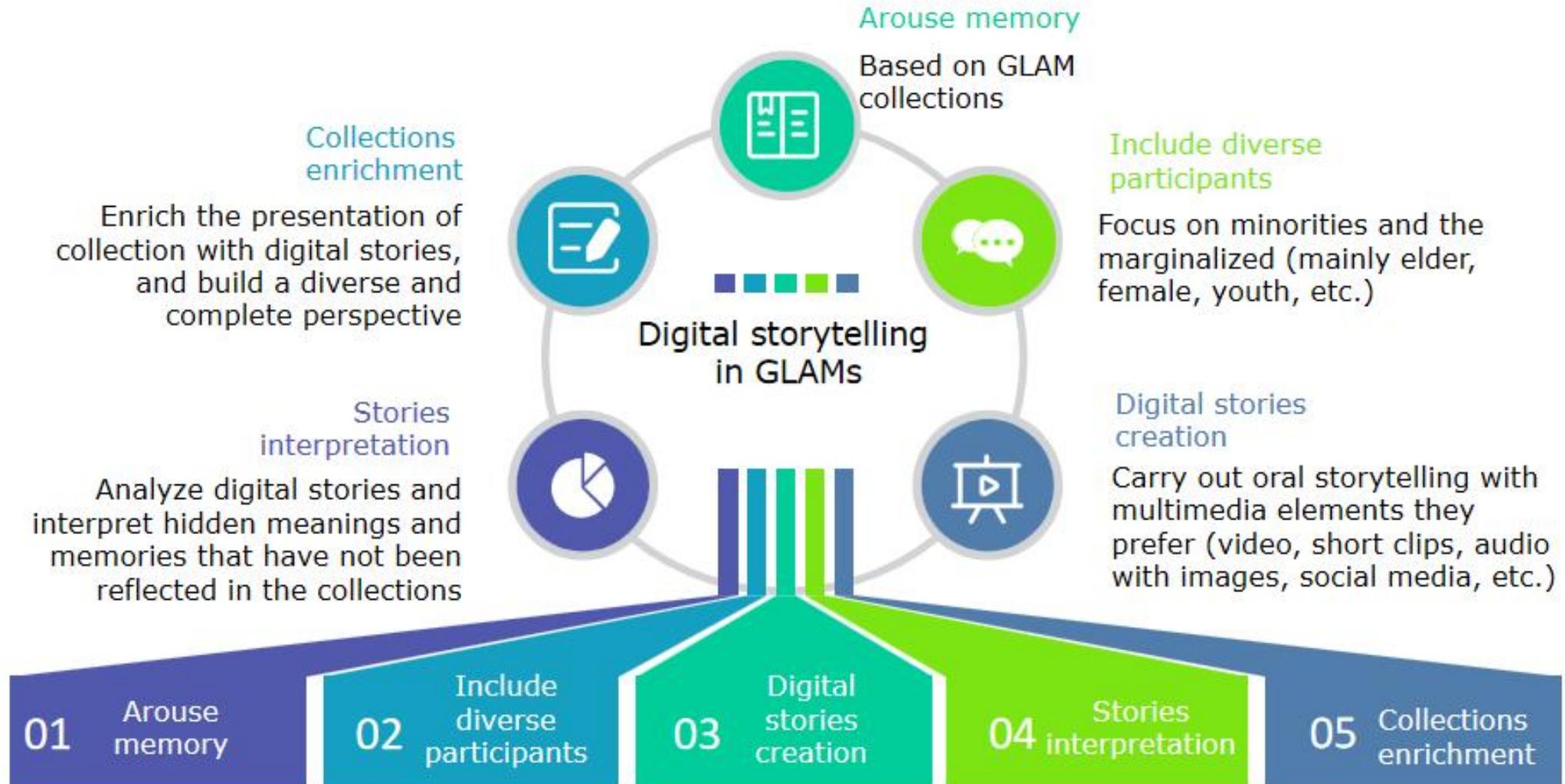
Shanghai Cultural Collection



- Knowledge extracted: buildings, people, architecture, event
- UGC function for users to add another layer to the collection

Shanghai typical area: example-Wukang Road

Methodological framework



How DS supports EDI in GLAM structures?



Equality

- Accessibility:
easily shared and accessed;
reach underrepresented communities;
- Personal Engagement:
democratizes the archival process;
a sense of belonging and ownership.

Diversity

- Inclusion of Diverse Voices:
a wide range of perspectives are represented;
broadens the understanding of history and culture;
- Use of Multiple Media Formats:
resonate with different cultural backgrounds;
diverse ways of expression are respected and included.

Inclusion

- Community Participation:
empowers individuals and communities;
- Reflecting Marginalized Narratives:
marginalized narratives are brought to the forefront;
rectify historical imbalances;
build inclusive historical record.

Our expectations

We encourage local people:

- to *construct their own history*, to *choose their own digital presence* regarding the stories and present that as part of the collections to *build a more diverse and complete perspective* of the holdings;
- to *express their experiences and memories* about the city, important events, historical buildings, and their colonial occupiers;
- to enable them to *reevaluate their understanding of and engagement with the collections*, and how they might envisage and understand a framework to facilitate this;
- to raise awareness of the need for inclusivity and engagement with the wider community.

The framework brings the simple extension, enhancement, and enrichment of formats for expression, and also **facilitates structural changes** and an **evolution of the production, processing, and disseminating** of the historical narrative.

The framework aims to **raise awareness of the need for inclusivity and engagement, remove barriers to inclusion, and will go some way to remove the bias and implicit inequality** often found in GLAMs collections, particularly in areas with a significant post-colonial legacy.

References

- ALA (2017) Equity, diversity, inclusion: an interpretation of the library bill of rights. American Library Association. Available at: <http://www.ala.org/advocacy/intfreedom/librarybill/interpretations/EDI>
- Avdikos, V., Dragouni, M., Michailidou, M., & Pettas, D. (2023). Rethinking GLAMs as commons: a conceptual framework. *Open Research Europe*, 3(157).
- Brennan, S. (2019). Digital history. *The Inclusive Historian's Handbook*. Available at: <https://inclusivehistorian.com/digital-history>
- Bliss, E., & Fisher, J. (2013). The journey to a good life: Exploring personal and organisational transformation through digital storytelling. In Rinehart, Barbour & Pope (Eds.), *Ethnographic worldviews: Transformations and social justice* (pp. 93-107).
- Springer. Clark, L. S., & Dierberg, J. (2012). Digital storytelling and collective religious identity in a moderate to progressive youth group. In Campbell (Ed.), *Digital religion* (pp. 147- 154). Routledge.
- Conrad, S.K. (2013), Documenting local history: a case study in digitalstorytelling, *Library Review*, 62(Nos 8-9), 459-471.
- Couldry, N. (2008), Mediatization or mediation? Alternative understandings of the emergent space of digital storytelling, *New Media and Society*, 10(3), 373-391.

References

- Cunsolo Willox, Ashlee, et al. (2013). Storytelling in a digital age: digitalstorytelling as an emerging narrative method for preserving and promoting indigenous oral wisdom. *Qualitative Research*, 13(2), 127-147.
- De Jager, A., Fogarty, A., Tewson, A., Lenette, C., & Boydell, K. M. (2017). Digital storytelling in research: A systematic review. *The Qualitative Report*, 22(10), 2548-2582.
- Fu, Y., & Mahony, S. (2023). Toward implementing equality, diversity, and inclusion for virtual conferences within the LIS professions. *Journal of Librarianship and Information Science*, 0(0).
<https://doi.org/10.1177/09610006231164145>
- Guilliano, J. (2022). *A Primer for Teaching Digital History: Ten Design Principles*. Duke University Press.
- Klaebe, Helen, Foth, Marcus, Burgess, Jean, & Bilandzic, Mark (2007). Digital Storytelling and History Lines: Community Engagement in a Master-Planned Development. In Docherty, M (Ed.) *Proceedings of the 13th International Conference on Virtual Systems and Multimedia*. United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), France, pp. 108-120.
- State, L., (2012) 'If It's Neutral, It's Not Technology', *Educational Technology*, 52(1), 6-9.
- Ho, J., Schiff, L., & Deng, S. (2023). *DEI Efforts Across GLAM Organizations: A Report by the GLAM Diversity Subgroup of the DLF Committee for Equity and Inclusion*. Zenodo. <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.8433043>

Thank you!

Shanghai Memory--Shanghai Cultural Collection Project: <https://scc.library.sh.cn/#/>

Contact:

Yaming Fu, yamingfu@126.com

Simon Mahony, s.mahony@ucl.ac.uk