Chapter 14

Digital Storytelling as a Part of Participatory Culture in Communication and Public Relation Practices

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ABSTRACT

The digital content that constitutes the main material of the participatory culture put the digital storytelling concept with the creation of digital stories to the agenda. Users exhibit digital narratives as part of participatory culture by combining their imagination skills, editing skills, problem solving skills, creators, ideas they want to tell or share, with the possibilities provided by digital media. In the scope of the study, the elements of digital storytelling, communication, and public relations which are used by different disciplines are emphasized. In the context of these elements, examples of communication and public relations in the world and in Turkey are being interpreted. As a result, the digital storytelling activities that are important in the participatory culture are evaluated in terms of their reflection on communication and public relations practices, contribution to the field, and the aspects that need to be considered.

INTRODUCTION

In digital environments, the content produced by users for different purposes have a productive, creative and collaborative structure. Within this structure, multimedia platforms and the interactive structure of these platforms direct users to content production in areas such as education, business, entertainment and information sharing. With this content production, storytelling is moving from traditional to digital structure thanks to technological developments. Users, who are the producers of digital storytelling, are also members of a participatory culture. An interactive environment brings the users into the applications and makes it possible for them to participate. Transmission of the message to be communicated, the participant sharing his / her own knowledge and incorporating his / her own creativity into this process

transforms the practices of communication and public relations into a part of the participatory culture with digital storytelling.

Digital storytelling is emerging as one of the communication methods used by organizations to reach their target audience. Digital storytelling aims to attract attention, convince and inform the target audience with the help of components such as image, audio and animation. Depending on the format of the digital story prepared, it includes the users to the narrative and transforms them into participants. Individual users also create their own digital stories. In a short period of time, an interactive event framework is set to provide a more interesting message transmission. This setting is enriched with the help of multiple media platforms.

In this study, the idea was that each user is a member of the participatory culture. The relation between participatory culture and digital storytelling is evaluated with the implementations of communication and public relations. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the digital storytelling examples in the communicative process as a part of multimedia applications and participatory culture. Starting from the interest of individual or corporate users on the stories of others or creation of their own stories; reaching the target group and the communication strategy carried out in communication are emphasized. This will be evaluated on the basis of examples from the standpoint of digital storytelling. The relationship of digital storytelling with the culture of participation is interpreted in terms of communication and public relations.

RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN DIGITAL MEDIA AND COMMUNICATION

The structure of digital medium for establishing a network makes the information possible to disseminate to many users at the same time. This is effective in rapid change of capabilities of media technologies. In other words, digitalization creates an environment for transfer of information to different platforms. Mass media such as traditional media (television, radio, print) can bring similar qualities to digital platforms beyond preserving their different identities. For example, the text in a website having a printed media content, the relationship between radio and video images in digital media and television and similar content links (Hartley, 2002, p. 165). Therefore, in the new world order, traditional media technologies are adapted to digital media technologies and interactive communication is driven by digital medium users. Digital media emphasizes the importance of communication on the basis of social development.

Communication is promoted as a goal of development. It empowers people, allows for dialogue and expression, and provides outward reflection while increasing awareness of social and structural problems. New communication technologies and local content productions offer many opportunities and possibilities. The 2006 World Congress on Communication for Development (WCCD) states to policy makers that communication is an important basis for development and social change. (Tacchi, Watkins and Keerthirathne, 2009, pp. 14-15). At this point, one of the most important ways of communication that will be established in the target groups is the stories which is formed by experience. The stories to have a place on minds is important in terms of conveying the message. More importantly, addressing the target audience with emotional storytelling makes communication more effective.

Storytelling allows people to approach events in a common perspective. Thus, people are increasing their capacity to share their experiences and empathize with others (Clark, 2009, p. 51). The important thing here is that they trust the stories they hear about sharing people's knowledge and emotions. Digital storytelling is the most appropriate way of communicating what we do, who we are, what we

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