

Title: Storytelling and Qualitative Information Research
Interactive Event,
iConference 2022

Type: Interactive workshop, hands-on exploration of information storytelling and qualitative research design using new theories and methods for analyzing storytelling based on the article “Storytelling Wisdom: Story, Information, and DIKW” and the S-DIKW framework, *JASIST* **Volume72, Issue10, Special Issue: Paradigm Shift in the Field of Information** October 2021.

Organizer: Dr. Kate McDowell, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

Abstract:

Storytelling circulates and propagates story as an important form of information. However, storytelling has been overlooked as both content and method in our field despite a 130+ year history of storytelling in library services to youth. Our field has rich practices that can inform definitions of storytelling and story. Currently, most definitions of information center the individual, ignoring storytelling collective audiences and shared retelling of information. What can we better understand about information when we engage the basic storytelling tendencies of the human mind? This workshop will provide a collaborative springboard based on the newly published S-DIKW framework for qualitative researchers to engage any application of information storytelling, from belief and belonging to misinformation. Ultimately, we will generate contexts and concrete next steps for storytelling analysis related to participants’ projects. New and seasoned qualitative researchers are welcome.

Description:

This workshop is designed for an **audience** of researchers who are interested in fresh approaches to storytelling and qualitative research across the information sciences. The **purpose** is to collaboratively explore dynamics of storytelling as they related to theorizing information sharing and the new S-DIKW framework as a method for analyzing storytelling in information contexts. The framework situates

S-DIKW framework

- **S-Data:** Ability to identify and interpret data from which information emerges that can be communicated in story.
- **S-Information:** Ability to inform audiences by communicating data with context as story, in both form and narrative experience.
- **S-Knowledge:** Ability to convey knowledge as complex actionable information through the construction and telling of a story, incorporating cultural and contextual cues. S-knowledge is shared frequently in innovative or experimental contexts.

- **S-Wisdom:** Ability to know which story to tell—including when, how, and to whom—in order to convey wisdom.

In the S-DIKW framework, each level is associated with a subset of storytelling abilities. Transitions between and across stages are based on storytelling and understanding how, when, whether, and why to communicate via storytelling. S-Information builds on the ability to interpret S-Data, and thus is updated to be an ability to communicate data with context, to inform through a story. S-Knowledge is information in action, constructed and shared as a story so that others can also know. S-Wisdom is defined as emerging from the storytelling triangle and predicated on the complex ability to select a story to tell. (McDowell, 2021) A brief overview of storytelling-related research will orient participants to ongoing scholarly conversations. (Agosto, 2016; Brian W. Sturm & Sarah Beth Nelson, 2016; Chatman, 1996; Cooke, 2016; Patin, Sebastian, Yeon, Bertolini, & Grimm, 2021) Storytelling is an inherently collective experience, whether in live audiences or as stories are passed from person to person over time, and so we will also touch upon moving beyond individualism in qualitative research. (Ma, 2021) The emphasis in the introduction will be on invitation, encouraging seasoned and newer researchers to consider what storytelling dynamics could mean for or add to their ongoing research.

The event **format** will be structured around the collaborative exploration and analysis of storytelling information cases relevant to participants' own research, concluding with a brainstorming session to discuss how storytelling can address pressing issues in our field and the option to co-author a report. The session will begin with a brief **introduction** (~20 min) and overview of storytelling as a research method, the S-DIKW framework, and possible future applications ranging from information to misinformation. Emphasis will be on the hermeneutic process of qualitative research with a grounded theory epistemology, such that research questions may develop through the course of a research project and exploration of a particular context.

Though **large group brainstorming**, the audience will be asked to provide cases, based on their research or everyday experiences of storytelling (as tellers, audience, story authors, etc.) Several cases will be provided as examples to help start the discussion. In order to facilitate engagement as active participation, we will structure the discussion using Padlet and Google Jamboards. Padlet will allow for initial anonymous contribution of possible research topics and questions, with “up vote” functions to collectively prioritize topics. In this section (~10 minutes) we will anonymously and synchronously describe or brainstorm research applications or contexts relevant to storytelling. The large group discussion will be concurrent, as we prioritize storytelling contexts (research applications, scenarios, cases) for rapid-fire analysis in small groups. After we identify 2-7 research contexts then **small group break-outs** will each take one of these contexts and explore the S-DIKW framework and its applicability (~25 minutes). This collaborative work will focus on both using and critiquing the S-DIKW framework as a way of understanding storytelling abilities in information contexts. Google Jamboards will be pre-populated with a chart for easy brainstorming about how each context would need to interpret and operationalize the S-DIKW framework. Each group's Google Jamboard page will contain a form something like this:

Context: _____

S-DIKW in Context	Application: interpretation or operationalization	Questions, queries, or gaps
S-Data		
S-Information		
S-Knowledge		
S-Wisdom		

While participants will be encouraged to adapt the format to their chosen research context, and so there may be notes made outside of this format, having a shared structure for brainstorming the applicability or gaps in this framework should engage deep thinking relatively quickly.

Finally, **large group discussion** will conclude the session, as we explore ideas generated by trying out the S-DIKW framework, including both applications and gaps discovered (~35 minutes). Most importantly, this set of activities and discussions should generate a new slate of contexts and research questions for applying storytelling methods in the information sciences.

The central **goal** of this interactive workshop is to support ongoing qualitative research in the information sciences and spark interest in research methods and questions related to storytelling. If participants are willing, then we will collaboratively author a report for *Information Matters* or a similar publication after the workshop describing these new storytelling research contexts and their significance in understanding urgent issues related to information.

Storytelling is vital to the **conference theme**, “Information for a Better World: Shaping the Global Future,” because we are currently missing opportunities to make the world better by overlooking the collective experiences of storytelling as information circulation. Fundamentally, we can’t make the world better without understanding how the world of misinformation has been spinning out of control. Storytelling dynamics are key to this pressing issue, but they also related to formalizing research in contexts of innovation where the world needs new approaches that can be supported by more active and conscious applications of storytelling methodology, in research and practice.

At two previous iConferences, I co-led a **series** of successful workshops with Dr. Michael Twidale and Dr. Matt Turk on Data Storytelling. This follows that sequence with newer ideas about storytelling and qualitative research, based on my own recent publications. In terms of audience **appeal**, qualitative researchers and those newly curious about qualitative approaches will find a welcome space to brainstorm around the topic of storytelling, which has both deep intellectual history and everyday relevance in our field. This workshop design is informed by my work as a storytelling speaker and consultant for numerous nonprofit and library organizations as well as my record of teaching online since 1998 and campus-level award at the University of Illinois for excellence in online instruction.

Duration: 1.5 hours

Schedule:

- Introduction of information storytelling through the S-DIKW framework and overview of prior storytelling-related research (20 min)
- Large groups brainstorming to generating possible storytelling research contexts via Padlet (10 min)
- Small group break-outs for S-DIKW exploration via Google Jamboards (25 min)
- Large group debrief and discussion of new slate of contexts and research questions for applying storytelling methods in the information sciences. (35 min)

References

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