

# IS THIS THE FUTURE OF STORYTELLING?

**L**ibraries have the potential to reach a wider audience and an online community if children's librarians use video-based or digital storytelling as an educational tool to capture nursery rhymes, songs, fingerplays and stories, says Nicole McGrath.

Young children learn from repetition. Having video-based storytelling available for children to watch as many times as they like, and to share with young friends at home, would be another opportunity for libraries to reach their communities online.

This does not suggest that face to face storytelling programs should be replaced, rather it offers another educational tool for parents to use at home, and can reinforce what is learned in the library space.

Libraries are increasingly investing in resources, elearning modules, and streaming music and films to their library members. Many libraries also have YouTube channels they use to share library collections, provide instructional videos or to promote events and programs offered by the library.

Digital storytelling resources for children could be created and distributed via YouTube channels, or embedded in the library's website, where they would serve to feed into, and develop, a library's social media and online marketing strategies.

Video-based storytelling offers a number of creative opportunities for children's librarians. The children themselves can be digital storytelling performers, modeling the program alongside the chief storyteller. Animals could be featured in video content, for example inserting footage of farm animals in a video sequence to broaden urban children's understanding of the world.

The technical requirements include inexpensive video equipment and editing software, and resources such as images, music, props, captions for hearing-impaired children, or captions to help parents sing along to lyrics of songs, fingerplays and nursery rhymes. Editing resources enable us



*Library-created storytelling resources can be a new way to capture the attention and imagination of children.*

to perfect a performance by refilming a sequence, and adding narration to the story where necessary.

Many libraries have a planned program of events and promotional themes, and this offers the children's librarian the option to create video content relevant to these activities, or to produce special videos related to a specific event in addition to existing face to face programs, as a bonus to the online community. For example, a series of videos for each letter of the alphabet could support literacy skill development in the library and at home.

Relevant guest presentations in the library program can also be captured for posterity and repeated viewing. With each video keyword tagged, the library's video catalogue would become a valuable resource for families.

There are many exciting applications for this approach and additional creative, educational, and recreational benefits to be found in video-based storytelling when used in addition to face to face programming for children. But these are early days, and the question remains: will the future direction of children's programming include digital storytelling, or will public libraries continue to concentrate their resources in face to face programming?

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