



The Use of Narrative in Interaction Design

IA04 Information Architecture Summit, February 28-29, 2004, Austin, TX

Marisa Gallagher

Nancy Broden

Jeff DeVries

Jonathan Woytek

sbi.razorfish
part of the sbi group

Presentation Summary

What roles can narrative play in creating enriching experiences on the Web—not just for users, but also for design teams? Moving beyond the conceptual, we'll discuss the practical application of narrative in web design, and describe how many of us within the industry already use narrative theory in our practice. Finally, we'll show how even corporate projects can be approached within a holistic narrative framework and how this can benefit both usability and the design process.

General Discussion Points

Defining Narrative

Common structure across media forms

Narrative as Mental Model

Considering narrative as methodological framework (mental model)

Interactive Narrative

- What makes an interactive narrative different?
- Is interactive narrative still narrative?
- Interactive narrative as art form
- Interactive narrative as an established field of thought/theory (references)

Our Focus

- Our focus on the web and its everyday applications/tools/tasks
- A key distinction: a focus on simplicity and efficiency over the slow and deliberate revealing of plot

Using Narrative in the Design Process

- Making better websites for the builders
- Using narrative through the phases of discovery, design, production, and enhancement
- Understanding users and creating characters
- Positive impacts on deliverables, communication, and the intangibles

Case Studies – First5.org & Visa

Narrative in the User's Experience

- Making better websites for users
- User's have a narrative mental model, too, but it's different from the designer's
- Using segmentation—providing rich targeted content for specific users and their tasks
- Creating immersive environments — offering perceptual engagement (graphics, sounds) with cognitive engagement (narrative)

Case Studies - First5.org & Samsung Spotlight on Industry-wide Best Practices

Conclusion - So What?

- The elements aren't new
- Applying the narrative framework
- Some emerging ideas worth considering:
 - > role of emotion in decision making and web applications
 - > making websites more engaging for builders can lead to making it more engaging for users
- What's next with evolving the role of narrative?

Resources for Further Research

Bibliography

- McLuhan, Marshall & Fiore, Quentin. Essential McLuhan. New York, New York: Basic Books, July 1996.
- Laurel, Brenda. Computers as Theatre. Boston, Massachusetts: Addison-Wesley Pub Co., 1993. (see also - http://www.tauzero.com/Brenda_Laurel)
- Meadows, Mark Stephen. Pause & Effect: the Art of Interactive Narrative. Indianapolis, Indiana: New Riders, 2003. (see also - <http://www.pause-effect.com>)
- Norman, Donald A. The Design of Everyday Things. New York, New York: Basic Books, September 2002.
– Emotional Design: Why We Love (or Hate) Everyday Things. New York, New York: Basic Books, December 2003.
- Shedroff, Nathan. Experience Design 1. Indianapolis, Indiana: New Riders, April 2001. (see also - <http://www.nathan.com>)
- The New Media Reader. Eds. Noah Wardrip-Fruin & Nick Montfort. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003.
- Monovich, Lev, The Language of New Media. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2002.
- Wilson, Stephen, Information Arts: Intersections of Art, Science, and Technology. Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003.
- Grau, Oliver, Virtual Art: From Illusion to Immersion, Cambridge, Massachusetts: MIT Press, 2003.
- New Screen Media: Cinema, Art, Narrative. Eds. Martin Reiser & Andrea Zapp. British Film Institute, April 2002.
- Crawford, Chris, The Art of Interactive Design: A Euphonious and Illuminating Guide to Building Successful Software. San Francisco, California: No Starch Press, December 2002.
- Stein, N.L., and T Trabasso. "What's in a Story: An approach to comprehension and instruction." Advances in Instructional Psychology Volume 2 : 213-267
- Barker, Philip, Paul van Schaik, Spencer Hudson, and Check Meng Tan. "Mental Models and Their Role in the Teaching and Learning of Human-Computer Interaction." SEDA Winter Conference, University of Birmingham, 1-2 December 1997. (see also - <http://www-cm.tees.ac.uk/groups/isrg/papers/sedawc97/index.html>)
- Sasse, Martina Angela. "Eliciting and Describing Users' Models of Computer Systems." Ph.D Thesis, University of Birmingham, April 1997. (see also - http://www.cs.ucl.ac.uk/staff/a.sasse/thesis/LINK_ME.html)

Academic Links

- MIT Media Labs - Interactive Cinema Department - <http://ic.media.mit.edu/>
 - Glorianna Davenport - <http://ic.media.mit.edu/people/gid/>
 - Barbara Barry
 - Aisling Kelliher
 - Hyun-yeul Lee
 - Ali Mazalek
 - Paul Nemirovsky
 - Pengkai Pan
- Story Networks Medialab Europe - <http://storynetworks.mle.ie/>
 - Glorianna Davenport
 - Jennica Falk
 - Michael Lew
 - Valentina Nisi
 - Catherine Vaucelle
 - Alison Wood
- ZKM Center for Art & Media (Karlsruhe, Germany) - <http://on1.zkm.de/zkm/e/>
 - Peter Wiebel
 - Future Cinema: The Cinematic Imaginary After Film - (Nov 2002 - March 2003 curated show) - http://www.zkm.de/futurecinema/index_e.html
- Academy of Converging Media (Germany) - <http://www.academy-of-converging-media.com/>
 - Inga von Staden
 - Andrea Peters
 - Maria Burdick
- Center for Digital Storytelling - <http://www.storycenter.org/>
- Interactive Narratives.org - <http://www.interactivenarratives.org/>
- Miscellaneous Academic Course/Paper links:
 - http://www.lcc.gatech.edu/~murray/IN_01/
 - <http://minyos.its.rmit.edu.au/~rpyjp/RESarea21.html>
 - <http://www.sics.se/humle/seminars/laaksolahti030606.html>
 - <http://cesium.cs.jmu.edu/wardja/articles/thesis/?page=definitionin>
 - <http://steel.lcc.gatech.edu/grandtextauto/archives/000022.html>

Collection of Web Links for Thought:

- http://hub.interaction-ivrea.it/resources/interactive_narrative/
- <http://studiolab.io.tudelft.nl/act02/theory5>
- <http://www.elasticspace.com/interaction/narrative/index.html>
- <http://www.kleene-star.net/sixprinciples/authorship/index.html>
- <http://www.altx.com/ebr/ebro6koskima/kosbody2.htm>
- http://www.tauzero.com/Brenda_Laurel
- <http://www.kanga.nu/archives/VRML-Lit-L/1999/msg00087.php>
- <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/narrative/>
- http://www.sfcamerawork.org/past_exhibits/netnarrative.html
- <http://www.abbedon.com/philo/narrative-paper.html>