TimelineJS Part One - Digital Storytelling and Sustainability
One hour

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Topic or Theme of Class</th>
<th>How do we plan to build effective and sustainable content on the platform?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Enduring Understandings</td>
<td>Digital narratives require adept use of different types of media to effectively tell a story</td>
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<td>A sustainable digital project requires understanding data documentation, preservation, and project planning</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcomes</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Ability to articulate effective and ineffective digital storytelling techniques shown through discussion and critique of an existing digital timeline project</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Ability to begin crafting an effective digital narrative as shown during a storyboarding activity</td>
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<tr>
<td>3. Understand and incorporate sustainability concepts into project planning, including a discussion of accessibility</td>
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<tr>
<td>4. See a high-level view of workflow for creating a timeline (covered in detail next time)</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Teaching Alternatives for Universal Learners</th>
<th>Recording of session</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other documentation</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Instruction Event</th>
<th>Steps</th>
<th>Time</th>
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| Introduction       | Introduction  
Overview of what we’re covering     | 0-3 min |
| Part A (digital storytelling LO 1 and 2) |  |
| Activity (Individually) | Give them an example timeline with a question / topic to explore  
https://www.leventhalmap.org/projects/mapping-a-w | 3-8 min |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions:</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Click through (and just skim) the first few slides of the timeline. What is done well to aid your understanding? What makes it more difficult?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• How does the timeline incorporate non-dominant perspectives? Is it effective? How would you do that in your project?</td>
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<tr>
<td>• There are a few cities that appear in the timeline multiple times. Choose a popular city, and describe how you went about finding a throughline/narrative for that city.</td>
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**Worksheet link:**
[https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_52D_Wr1q97uHq4h8EcQq3u4J-UrX2dzoaJlgByGxQY/copy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1_52D_Wr1q97uHq4h8EcQq3u4J-UrX2dzoaJlgByGxQY/copy)

*Purpose: To understand the perspective of their end audience and to see how crafting the digital narrative will affect their understanding of the topic. Really they should critique it rather than trying to answer a topic or question.*

**Discussion**

Reporting out what you saw and what the experience was like

Intro does a good job of bringing the social justice perspective (most of these maps were made by men and are of Europe / Americas - how does this assertion play out in the timeline? Can see it play out when filtering by region

St. Augustine provides a good example of the social justice perspective (native cities missing)

Paris 1789 has a good write-up
#DLFteach Volume 3: Lesson Plans for Literacy and Competency Driven Digital Scholarship Instruction

Creating Digital Stories with TimelineJS
Kayla Abner, Paige Morgan, Amanda McCollom, and Lois Stoehr

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lecture</th>
<th>11-16 min</th>
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| ● Considerations for digital storytelling  
  ○ Different tools to get and hold attention (media instead of tone of voice, less room for text, etc.)  
  ○ Learning to use a new kind of tool  
  ○ Preserving content beyond the finished neat display (covered more later)  
  ○ Accessibility (covered more later)  
|  |
| ● Who is the audience?  
  ○ What is the best way to engage that audience? What “question” can you ask to get and keep them interested?  
  ○ Questions (clues suspense) and answers (explanation resolution)  
|  |
| ● How can we incorporate non-dominant voices or a social justice perspective?  |

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<tr>
<th>Activity (Individually)</th>
<th>16-22 min</th>
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| Storyboarding is most common in video/audio production. The purpose is to have an outline of what you’re going to make before you make it before you take all the time to make it.  
Storyboarding - choose your own topic  
Ask who brought something with them so I can bring up the other slide in case people need to find stuff  
Google storyboard Worksheet - [https://docs.google.com/document/d/1d5NSeUcZikZIPliQBvNLjtm-wL6CJwn2Kil1AwpRMYE/copy](https://docs.google.com/document/d/1d5NSeUcZikZIPliQBvNLjtm-wL6CJwn2Kil1AwpRMYE/copy)  |

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<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>22-24 min</th>
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| Can use your storyboard to sketch out your topic and gather content until we learn how to create the data for the timeline  
Was this activity helpful?  |

**Part B (sustainability and accessibility LO 3)**
### Lecture

**Sustainability and accessibility intersect in some ways (like access / minimal computing).**

**What is accessibility?**
- Used in multiple ways. Both in terms of “can people access this?” and “can people with disabilities access this?” We are going to talk about it in the latter sense.

**What is sustainability?**
- Encompasses multiple things, but generally includes thinking about labor, preservation, and maintenance, as well as the “footprint” of the project

### Lecture

#### Accessibility
- General guiding principle: providing multiple ways of understanding meaning
- **WCAG principles** - Web Content Accessibility Guidelines
- Machine-readable text and screen readers
  - **Alt-text** (for Timeline, we’ll use the Media Caption field)
- **Hyperlinks** - always embed! Clickable and DESCRIPTIVE and cannot exist more than once on any given page.
- **Headings** - don’t use for visual reasons. The structure they make up is really important for screen readers to access.
  - If you’re using the HTML editor, shows up as `<h1>`, `<h2>`, etc.
- **Video and audio** - transcripts/captions
- For **sustainability** - if we make screenshots or try to preserve the display, how will they be machine-accessible? For screen readers and for museum staff to easily find things
  - [https://wave.webaim.org/](https://wave.webaim.org/)
  - How will this work in TimelineJS?
There are always limitations depending on what platform you’re using. In our case, TimelineJS doesn’t have a field for alt-text (we can instead use the caption field). There’s also not a good way to provide transcripts/captions for audio or video.

### Lecture

**Sustainability**

- Extra important in digital projects. You can’t publish a website and have it just continue on in its perfect format forever (like you can with books) or whatever the half-life of paper is. Happens often enough that there’s a name for when links stop working (link rot).
- Minimal computing in DH is a best practice that enables people from all communities to access the project. One way folks do this is through the use of static (rather than dynamic websites). Talk about difference. Depending on the project, it might be especially important that work is accessible to those who are the target community (like if they live in an area with lower bandwidth speed). What is the least amount of computing power we can use to make this work?
- Asking questions about sustainability at the beginning of your project will ensure that you’re ready to sustain it when you “complete” it – instead of scrambling
- From STS: What is your project about and who is it for?
- How long do you want to work on it and how long do you want it to last?
  - Incl. planning for the end of projects
- What kinds of issues in ethics, privacy, security, or sustainability could come up?
- Footprint: minimal computing. Something “in the cloud” still lives on a server somewhere. More important if you’re hosting your own DS project.

| Lecture | Sustainability | 28-32 min |
Sustainability and preserving our timelines

**For yourself**
- What can you put in a portfolio / CV?
  - Your project is a lot more than the finished beautiful slidey timeline. The data you created, any documentation you took on its collection, and the content you saved are significant parts of your project that should also be preserved.

**Questions to ask the school you’re working with**
- Where will it be used?
- Who will maintain the timeline? (i.e., keep track of the Google Sheet, fix display errors)

### Activity (Breakout groups of 3)

In small groups, discuss these questions. Choose someone to be a reporter to report one or two highlights from your discussion.

**YOU DON’T NEED ALL THE ANSWERS TO THESE QUESTIONS RIGHT NOW**

- What can you put in a portfolio / CV?
  - Your project is a lot more than the finished, beautiful slidey timeline. The data you created, any documentation you took on its collection, and the content you saved are significant parts of your project that should also be preserved.
- Questions from STS:
  - What is your project about and who is it for?
  - How long do you want to work on it and how long do you want it to last?
  - What kinds of issues in ethics, privacy, security, or sustainability could come up?
- Where does it live? (What’s the footprint?)
- How will you hand it off to the school?
# Part C (TimelineJS workflow LO 4)

## Lecture

If we're short on time, go to questions first instead

TimelineJS specific workflow/set up for next session
- Put content into spreadsheet (show spreadsheet)
- Generate timeline from spreadsheet
  - Set basic customization options like font and where the timeline starts
- Share timeline with URL or embed code

Before the next session, use your storyboard template to gather content and decide where you’re going to put things

## Open Question Time

What questions do you have?

## Closing