Arts Ancient and Digital: Telling Stories Old and New

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Abstract

This presentation will engage a discussion of the appearance over the last quarter century of digital technologies which permit individuals and groups to create and share documents which combine cultural and original artifacts in a seamless fashion. Specifically, it will focus on emerging computer-based tools for story telling and will use as a centerpiece “What’s my Story?,” a set of activities for children aged four and older and their families. In this CD-ROM-based application, children can listen to a re-telling of eight classic folk tales by a storyteller that are illustrated with professional films of the tales. They can take part in a series of exercises in developing storytelling skills led by the storyteller in which the child, children or family construct tales from scenes taken from the classic tales, record their own original story, and mix music and sound effects to enhance their story. They can, as well, construct stories in free form using any of the characters from the tales and others thrown in to encourage deviation from the the classic texts. The activities are accompanied by a coloring book and screen art that allows children or parents to incorporate artifacts from the stories into electronic or printed transcriptions of their tales. Finally, for schools, there is a collection of dozens of activities using standard classroom technology (face paint, flannel boards, construction paper, chalk boards) to extend the activity away from the computer into the mainstream of classroom activity, as well as a deck of character cards which can be used to construct stories without the aid of a computer.