Harnessing the Power of STORYTELLING in the Digital Economy

23rd October	1:30pm - 5:30pm	Aberdeen	DE2012

This **interactive workshop** will explore the role and shape of narrative in communities (which may include not only geographically local, but also digital and interest-based virtual and hybrid communities, e.g. health or research communities), in digital, written and oral storytelling forms. This exploration will be framed within the context of the digital economy, with speakers from the RCUK-funded SerenA project highlighting the ways that storytelling has been harnessed in both methods and research outputs.

Communities, audience engagement, and social interactions are increasingly mediated through digital technology (e.g. Facebook, Twitter and YouTube), but it is important that digital interaction enhances and supports rich interactions, and does not attempt to replace face to face communication. The very act of communication is fundamentally an act of storytelling and so the stories we fashion about ourselves to make sense of our life experiences are intrinsically linked to our identity and sense of self (Bruner, 2002). We therefore argue that narrative and storytelling are critical in today's digital economy – in communicating our work to peers, end-users, and to the wider public as a way of understanding and relating their own experiences and goals to the technology-supported environments of the Digital Economy.

Guest Speaker

Dr Stephann Makri from University College London Interaction Centre is conducting research as part of a £1.87m UK Research Council funded project (SerenA: Chance Encounters in the Space of Ideas) which aims to gain a detailed understanding of the phenomenon of serendipity and to examine how we can use this understanding to design interactive systems that help users to have experiences that they might perceive to be serendipitous. His work involves understanding the nature and process of serendipity and how this understanding can inform the design of interactive systems. This work has resulted in the writing, narration and illustration of several empirically-grounded 'serendipity stories' (i.e. memorable experiences of serendipity as told by interviewees).

Organisers

Ruth Aylett is Professor of Computer Sciences in the School of Maths and Computer Science at Heriot-Watt University. She has more than 200 publications – book chapters, journals, and refereed conferences in intelligent graphical characters, affective agent models, human-robot interaction, and interactive narrative. She researches interactive storytelling in both physical and virtual environments as well as autobographical memory. She leads the EPSRC networks RIDERS (Research in Interactive Drama Environments and Storytelling) and SPIRES (Supporting People Investigating Research Environments and Spaces).

Deborah Maxwell is part of the design team on the SerenA project (based at Duncan of Jordanstone College of Art and Design, University of Dundee) and a research fellow on the AHRC-funded Design in Action Knowledge Exchange Hub, at Edinburgh College of Art, University of Edinburgh. Deborah is interested in the ways people interact with and reshape technology, and is investigating the ways in which interface design and data visualisation can impact users' perceptions of quality, relevance, and sense of engagement with content. Her research background includes work with rural communities and traditional storytellers, where digital technology is applied, but not viewed as a panacea.

Lorena Macnaughtan is a PhD student at Horizon (University of Nottingham) with experience in storytelling and narrative, including research on the narrative theory of identity formation where she used a structure interview developed by Dan McAdams (Northwestern University, US) "Life Story Interview". Lorena explored Advergames in her Master research, arguing that stories in advergames make users project themselves into the game. The emotion lived through the game is transferred to the brand, creating brand adherence. Narrative theory as applied in psychology, advertising, and gaming, is one of Lorena's research strands.

Oliver Case is a PhD student at HighWire DTC, Lancaster. Oliver's work includes building crowdsourced filmmaking and visual storytelling, and he recently put together the Digital Economy Impact film earlier this year (using crowdsourced footage). This led him to begin researching potential cinematic systems and create the beginnings of an online video crowdsourcing tool.