

As storytellers, we spend our days reading and researching times long past, times devoid of listservs, blogs, podcasts, Google and YouTube. While it may appear that the Internet and the art of Oral Tradition have little in common, as we travel further into the 21st century, the connections become clearer, stronger, and, yes, even necessary. Although the array of Internet tools can be daunting, once mastered, they will open new avenues that will help develop your skills, widen the scope of your audience, and connect you with other storytellers and educators. While not an exhaustive list, I offer you a few of these tools below to help you begin to build or expand your own cyber knowledge and presence.

STORYTELLING ON THE INTERNET HIGHWAY

BLOGS - A blog is actually a website where entries are written in chronological order. Some offer news commentary, while others are more personal, much like an online diary. Many artists are now creating their own blogs to share stories of their daily lives and connect with others. Storyteller Jackie Baldwin offers a wide-selection of storytelling blogs on her site at <http://tinyurl.com/6xkjuf>. If you would like to start your own blog one of the most user friendly programs is at <https://www.blogger.com/start> . You will be on your way in no time at all!

FORUMS - A web application for holding discussions and posting user-generated content. They are also referred to as newsgroups, message boards, discussion boards, and bulletin boards. The difference between forums and electronic mailing lists or listservs is that forums require the member to visit the website and check for new posts. Many forums offer an "e-mail notification" feature so subscribers won't miss discussions that might interest them. To access the NSN forum go to <http://nsn.freeforums.org/>

LISTSERVS - One of the oldest and simplest tools to help you connect with storytellers worldwide is a listserv. When you subscribe, you automatically receive emails, known as *posts*, sent by other subscribers on subjects relevant to the listserv's focus. You can opt to receive posts as they are sent, or sign up to receive them in digest format, which will send all the daily postings to you in one email. My favorite is **Storytell**, a free forum initially started at Texas Women's University for discussions about storytelling now hosted by the NSN. You may subscribe at: <http://lists.storynet.org/lists/info/storytell>

PODCASTS - Podcast is a play on the word "broadcast" but podcasters are not restricted by FCC or traditional broadcast formats and regulations. You can automatically download them to your computer, iPod or other portable media players so you can listen at your convenience. Some follow a talk show format; others share music or news; and now storytellers are using this tool to offer interviews and stories directly from their websites. If you would like to start your own podcast but don't know where to begin, visit **How to Podcast – A Free Tutorial** at <http://www.how-to-podcast-tutorial.com/index.htm> and soon you'll be riding the Internet wave with the best of them!

TELECOURSES/TELECONFERENCING – You can connect to a virtual (Internet) classroom via your home or office phone. The presenter will give you a phone number and an access code to join the discussion or class. Usually, if long distance is involved, the person calling is responsible for the charges.

YOUTUBE - YouTube is an online video streaming service that allows anyone to view and share videos. You can upload yourself in performance for friends, family and potential clients to view, a terrific way to promote your storytelling style and skills. Not sure how to get YOUrself on the TUBE? Then visit <http://tinyurl.com/6owc6q> . When you're ready to hit the airways, go to <http://tinyurl.com/6eufer> and open a YouTube account.

WEB MARKETING - If you are ready to dip your toe into the World Wide Web waters, whether it is via an email newsletter or in other arenas, here are two informative articles:
Newsletter Mailing List Programs <http://tinyurl.com/5aphf2>
Marketing via Email Newsletters and Mailing Lists <http://tinyurl.com/yelatpa>

SOCIAL NETWORKS

Definition: "A social network service focuses on building online communities of people who share interests and activities, or who are interested in exploring the interests and activities of others. Most social network services are web based and provide a variety of ways for users to interact, such as e-mail and instant messaging services." http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_network_service

Few studies have compared attitudes and behavior between two sites. However, for an overview of the differences and similarities between FaceBook and MySpace go to <http://tinyurl.com/5me9rd>

FACEBOOK - Users can join networks organized by city, workplace, school, and region to connect and interact with others. People can also add friends, send messages, and update their personal profile. <http://www.facebook.com/>

MYSPACE – The site offers an interactive, user-submitted network of friends, personal profiles, blogs, groups, photos, music and videos for both teenagers and adults. <http://www.myspace.com/>

NING – Ning, which means "peace" in Chinese, is an online platform for users to create their own social websites and social networks on the Internet. To start your own Ning visit <http://www.ning.com/>

Note: In April of 2008 Facebook officially caught up to MySpace in terms of unique monthly worldwide visitors. Both services are attracting around 115 million people to their respective sites each month. <http://tinyurl.com/4y9xqc> For a comparison chart of social networking sites from around the world go to: <http://tinyurl.com/k2jhx>

STORYTELLERS IN STREAMING VIDEO

Enoch Pratt Libraries - Listen to some of our most beloved storytellers share their tales in streaming video. <http://www.prattlibrary.org/home/storyIndex.aspx>

YouTube – You can find many storytellers sharing their tales just by doing a simple Google search. Simply type in the Google search bar YouTube +(insert tellers name here) +storyteller, sit back and get ready to be enchanted!

Zinger Tales - You can also hear and see the beloved Jackie Torrence and other wonderful tellers share their stories. <http://tinyurl.com/6pzw63>

DIGITAL STORYTELLING

DigiTales - Information and resources to help students craft a digital story. <http://www.digitales.us/>

Educational Uses of Digital Storytelling - Examples, tools, evaluations and more. <http://tinyurl.com/4oaytc>

Lesson Plans for Digital Storytelling - A step by step guide, rubrics and additional resources. <http://tinyurl.com/3rv6uf>

Robert Clow Elementary School - Storyteller Sue Black and librarian Bev Frett offer resources and digital stories created by their students. <http://tinyurl.com/6bjk6z>

Shout Out! A Kid's Guide to Recording Stories - Teach children how to record and collect stories in their communities; offers a downloadable PDF guide. <http://tinyurl.com/5dps8r>

RADIO

Now you can hear radio broadcasts in streaming video through your computer, whether you live near the radio station or not. Just rev up your speakers and let the stories transport you. Here are a few sites to begin your journey on the airways.

Story Lovers World – The creation of California storyteller Jackie Baldwin. It broadcasts on Sundays from 5-6 pm (PST) on KSVY Sonoma, 91.3 FM. You can reach the program via <http://thmm.com/ksvy/>. Click under *Stream It!* in the upper right-hand corner and choose either High or Low speed, depending on your Internet connection. For more information, contact Jackie at jackie@storyloversworld.com. Jackie has also categorized a number of other radio programs from under the world for you to explore on her website at <http://tinyurl.com/5oeft3>

Storytelling Under the Baobab Tree – Since 1999, a weekly, one-hour internet radio program. It airs on Sundays, at <http://spokenworld.com/>

Wisdom of the Elders - A cultural and educational public radio series from Native America. Their second series includes indigenous elders, historians, storytellers, and song carriers. Program segments feature oral history and cultural arts of: Shawnee, Otoe, Omaha, Yankton, Sioux, Arikara, Mandan, Hidatsa, Crow, Northern Cheyenne, Gros Ventre, Assiniboine, Blackfeet and Shoshone tribes. <http://tinyurl.com/5femjf>

WEB SITES OFFERING STORIES BY THEMES AND/OR CATEGORIES

Absolutely Whootie: Stories to Grow By - Multicultural folktales searchable by continent and country; culture, age, type of story and theme. <http://storiestogrowby.com/>

Folktales of Cooperation for Kindergarten to Grade 3 - A curriculum guide that includes stories, activities, and additional resources. <http://tinyurl.com/47m4t6>

Learning to Give - Lesson plans, complementary folktales, and parent resources to involve students in philanthropy and serving their communities. <http://www.learningtogive.org/>

Storybug.net – I admit it, this is my site. I have been writing the Story Telling column for the NSN Magazine since 2002 and have added all of the researched sites from 2002 -2006 to my Storytelling Links page. They are all categorized, with short synopses to make your search easier. I will be adding more sites this summer so please check back. <http://www.storybug.net/links.html>

Story-Lovers – The #1 website to find an extensive array of stories, books, and web links, all lovingly organized and categorized by storyteller Jackie Baldwin. There is also Google search bar to find the theme you are seeking. <http://www.story-lovers.com>

World Folklore and Folklife – In order to access this amazing resource you must be a subscriber after a 30 day trial period. However, if you are a member of the NSN, it is free! As stated in the August/September 2008 issue of Storytelling Magazine, “This is not merely a collection of tales: WFF offers in-depth cultural, historical, geographic, social, religious and folkloristic information, searchable by keyword.” The user-friendly interface makes searching or browsing quick and effective. Go to www.storynet.org, click on Memberclicks then go to "Member Library" and the instructions are there.

BOOKS AND ARTICLES ONLINE RELATED TO STORYTELLING

GOOGLE BOOKS - Google has added a new feature, <http://books.google.com/>. They have digitalized thousands of books you can access for free. If the book is not in the public domain but the publisher has given permission, you may preview it, and in some cases read the entire text. However, if it is in the public domain, you are free to download a PDF copy for your files.

GOOGLE SCHOLAR - Type key word(s) in the search box and scholarly articles are at your fingertips; a helpful tool to locate research materials to support your work.
<http://tinyurl.com/6bthe3>

There are those who say modern technology and storytelling have no connection and that merely moving a computer mouse is far removed from the deep listening experience found at the feet of a storyteller. While that is true, I ask you to consider using the Internet not as a replacement for a personal storytelling experience but as a tool to educate more people about the impact of our art. There are many roads on the Internet highway, so why not leave a trail of breadcrumbs so folks can find their way to your door!

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