Digital storytelling design learning from non-digital narratives:

Two case studies in South Africa

Abstract

User generated content (UGC) in the human computer interaction (HCI) field describes the phenomenon whereby active audiences create and share content ranging from photographs to narratives, using technologies such as the Internet. A Royal Society sponsored workshop held during June 2008 gathered HCI researchers to discuss challenges in providing effective, appropriate technologies to enable community-based UGC. Our paper describes two case studies, presented at this workshop, of how South African communities organise narratives non-digitally, along with how these can guide the design of digital storytelling. The District Six Museum in Cape Town commemorates the former suburb which was demolished during Apartheid. The museum is community-based; since its inception, ex-residents have been central collaborators in the narratives presented. This is supported via such means as ex-resident storytellers in the museum and inscriptive exhibits such as a floor map where ex-residents write where they used to live and 'memory clothes' where messages may be written and are later preserved through hand embroidery. In contrast to the District Six community, formal infrastructures to support accessing and protecting cultural records are only just reaching villagers in rural Transkei. We discuss how local traditional leaders and villagers, both elders and youth, recently collaborated with a National Archives outreach program by co-generating a workshop in a remote, but populous, village which lacks basic facilities such as electricity. The Lwandile workshop linked a range of local contemporary priorities, such as representation to government, land rights and ecotourism, to natural and cultural heritage. Both studies start to reveal opportunities to design technologies that increase participation in recording and sharing personal and cultural stories, for example various accessible media to enable content generation and dissemination without Internet access, or suited to outdoor settings. Simultaneously, both studies uncover design opportunities and requirements that respect values embedded in place-based oral customs. For example, the importance of supporting alternative views on historical events or contested spaces and enabling appropriate transparency. We use such insights to show how technology-design situated in non-digital experience can challenge the hegemony of univocal opinions and stories.

Introduction

User generated content (UGC) the human computer interaction (HCI) field describes the phenomenon where active audiences create and share content using technologies such as the Internet. Millions of people now routinely create and share photographs, narratives, videos and other information via web sites such as YouTube and Facebook. These new technologies are becoming an important form of self-expression and communication, particularly for teenagers and young adults. They are also harnessed by peoples who were previously marginalised in global media. For example, Grassroots videography is promoted to depict the challenges for indigenous peoples globally and record traditional knowledge and transfer skills (e.g. Sacred Land Film Project) (Gregory et. al. 2005). The success of UGC portals in developed countries is a product of both rapid technological advances and that the technologies have been adapted to the ways of doing, saying and being in the Western world. To widen access to such innovative media tools and content to the many billions of people beyond the developed world, HCI designers need to develop ways to adapt technologies for people without personal access to high-end computer resources and whose communication practices that differ from those in the developed world.

A Royal Society sponsored workshop held during July 2008 in Cape Town gathered researchers in HCI and information retrieval to consider ways forward in designing successful UGC systems for the majority of the world's population. The workshop drew experts from the UK and South Africa interested in rising to the challenge of providing effective, appropriate technologies to enable community-based UGC. Some of the ensuing discussions were technological and engineering-based, but many were steered by a need to consider the practices by which people beyond the West share and engage with narrative content.

In this paper we take forward the agenda of the Royal Society workshop, in learning from the living tradition of storytelling and information exchange in South Africa in catalysing change and remembrance. We describe two case studies which organise narratives non-digitally. In the first case-study, we describe how storytellers and different story media commemorate the former suburb of District Six, and its demolition during Apartheid, in the District Six Museum. In the second case-study, we describe how local traditional leaders and villagers recently collaborated with a National Archives outreach program in a remote, but populous, village in Eastern Cape. From these case studies we draw design criteria that can contribute to progressing the ideals put forward at the Royal Society Workshop with regards to technology-based solutions for storytelling.

The District Six Museum

The District Six Museum in Cape Town commemorates the former multi-racial, inner-city suburb of Cape Town which was declared a whites-only neighbourhood under the Apartheid-era Group Areas Act in 1966. Over the following 11 years District Six residents were forced to relinquish their properties to the government and were relocated to the government built, racially segregated townships of the Cape Flats, where many still live today. Additionally, most of the of the buildings in District Six were demolished with the exception of a number of churches, mosques and a handful of houses. While this occurred throughout South Africa during Apartheid, District Six, along with Sophiatown in Gauteng, has become iconic of forced removals through a reputation of the vibrant, cosmopolitan community which was disrupted there and the fact that most developers refused to rebuild on the land which stands largely empty to this day.

The District Six Museum in housed in a former Methodist church, on the edge of the former suburb, which used to draw its parish from District Six. The museum plays no small role in preserving the story and spirit of District Six and of forced removals throughout South Africa; it is a popular attraction primarily for tourists, but also for local school groups and former District Six residents. The museum is community-based with ex-residents playing a central role in the first exhibition that sparked its beginning and in the subsequent building of the museum in terms of both its funding that the stories that are presented. Today, visitors are able to experience the narratives of ex-residents through the ex-resident storytellers who work in the museum in the museum and inscriptive exhibits where ex-residents have written their names, thoughts and messages. Additionally, a large of majority of the artefacts and photos on display at the museum were donated by ex-residents. According to one of the original curators, Peggy Delport, the museum was not modelled on existing museums or heritage presentations but rather on people's stories. Hence the approach was to provide a space where people could express their stories or donate objects of sentimental value to them and allow the museum to develop organically from ex-residents' contributions.

The observations presented here are drawn from a 3 month ethnographic study conducted at the District Six museum by a PhD student, Ilda Ladeira. The aim of this

study was not to observe the UGC in the museum but to observe the two ex-residents, Noor Ebrahim and Joe Schaffers, who work as guides at the museum. Their tours are not focused on shepherding visitors around the museum space, but rather as a means of conveying narratives on the history of and daily life in District Six. Thus, Noor and Joe are regarded as resident storytellers who contextualize visitors' museum experience by conveying their personal memories of the District Six history. These tours, and audience reactions to them, were observed and recorded from May to July 2007 with three or four field visits a week. The direct goal here was to gain insight into the phenomenon of oral storytelling within the museum to inform the design of a digital storytelling system which may preserve the storytelling of ex-residents when they are no longer available to tell their stories in person. However, over the course the study, Ilda observed that, in addition to the voices of Joe and Noor, many other voices have been allowed to be expressed and are presented within the museum through the use of powerful, non-digital UGC.

Ex-resident Involvement
Fundamental to the District Six Museum's initial shaping was to allow ex-resident's stories and donations to shape to the museum. This has resulted in a museum that is rich in the testimony of those of experienced life in District Six and the forced removals. It has also resulted in a layering of many voices which gives visitors more than one perspective and allows space for personal interpretation as well as the expression of contested spaces or histories.

The most direct way in which visitors to the museum experience the voices of District Six ex-residents is through Joe and Noor. Their narratives encompass both personal stories, stories of family and friends and historical facts. Ex-residents have also contributed their voices as sound recordings which play in various locations in museum and feature stories about such topics as the District Six beauty parlours, childhood, school and everyday life. There are also recordings of writers reading poems about District Six and of 'langarm' music which was typical in District Six. The objects, which include things like sports trophies, barber shop chairs, family photographs, record players and school blazers, also contain ex-residents' stories. Some stories are attached explicitly as text or sound recordings, played near where the objects are displayed, and some are implicitly embedded in the objects themselves or are triggers for certain oral narratives from the guides.

The narratives of ex-residents are invaluable given the narrative authority and authenticity of the tellers who experienced the events first-hand or through acquaintances. The face-to-face oral storytelling of Joe and Noor has the added bonus of interactivity with audiences. Audiences are able to ask questions and banter between teller and audiences are possible. Joe and Noor are also able to make subtle adjustments based on their perceptions of the audience and the audience's reactions to the stories. The overriding benefit of the presence of ex-resident's voices is that the stories visitors hear or read in the museum are real; they are the memories and experiences of real people. For Joe this a significant point which defines the museum:

> *"It's called a museum - I have a problem with that because to me normally a museum is a space where you stare at dead artefacts and they stare back at you. At this stage I'm not a dead artefact yet (some laughter in the audience), so I call, so I call it a space of memory (chuckles). Memory, my memory and memories of people who lived in District six. And this museum also represents what happened throughout the whole of South Africa."*

Inscriptive media

Another aspect of the museum that is central is the tactile craft aspect of a number of its displays to which ex-residents have and still contribute. There are banners depicting various community organisations, such as churches and sport clubs, which have been hand embroidered by ex-residents and museum staff. There are also a number of inscriptive surfaces which foster ongoing, direct engagement with the space. There are two exhibits which allow for the recording of the specific locations where people used to live. The most notable is the floor map, shown in Figure 1(a), which covers the main floor of the museum. The map is a, hand-drawn, aerial view of the former streets of District Six on which ex-residents have written their names on the on locations where they used to live. This phenomenon is described by the guides as one which happened spontaneously when ex-residents started visiting the museum in its early days:

> *"…when ex District Sixers came to view the museum, they saw the map on the floor. Then they asked for pens, then they started writing their names down, as if psychologically wanting to reclaim that space where they used to live before."* (Joe)

This quote tells us more than just the story of the map, but also highlights its importance beyond being a map. In lieu of being able to visit the real streets of District Six, it acts as a tangible remnant of the former suburb itself. The map is covered in plastic and ex-residents may still contribute their names by writing on the plastic; the names are transferred onto the map itself when the covering is changed. The map also forms part of tours when Noor and other outside guides who used to live in District Six are able to point out where they used to live, as shown in the following except:

> Noor: *"Ok, now my house-"*

> Child: *"Over there? (points to the map)"*

> Noor: *"No. I'm going to show you now, wait (goes down on his haunches and points on the map). My house was on the corner of Caledon Street and Rosberg Lane, you see Rosberg Lane?"*

> Child: *"Yes."*

> Another Child: *"(reads) Rosberg Lane."*

> Noor: *"Ok, (pause) you see in red there? (points to his name written on the map)"*

> Child: *"Hmm"*

> Noor: *"That's my name there. Ok, and this is what people do when they come in, they will write their names where they used to live. That's all the writing on the map."*

Similarly, a placard representing Bloemhof Flats, a large apartment complex in which many people lived including Joe, has ex-resident's names written in the locations for their flats. This placard is shown in Figure 1(b).

Figure 1: (a) The floor map at the District Six Museum depicts an aerial view of the former streets of the suburb. Ex-residents have written on the map in koki to mark the locations where they used to live. **(b)** The placard representing Bloemhof Flats and Canterbury Flats, both apartment complexes in District Six. Ex-residents have written their names in the locations where they used to live.

The final inscriptive surface provided at the museum is one in which ex-residents and visitors may partake. Memory cloths are white sheets one which messages may be written with names, thoughts or poems. Figure 2(a) shows a particular memory cloth message which is often pointed out by the guides in the museum. The messages are written in koki and later hand embroidered over so that they are preserved. The first memory cloth is on permanent display at the museum and there are cloths in progress; one cloth for ex-residents and one for visitors. Figure 2(b) shows an ex-resident writing on one of the 'in progress' cloths. At the time of our study the cloth was constantly being embroidered in the museum, in sight of visitors, by an ex-resident, Menisha Collins with whom visitors could sit and chat and hear stories.
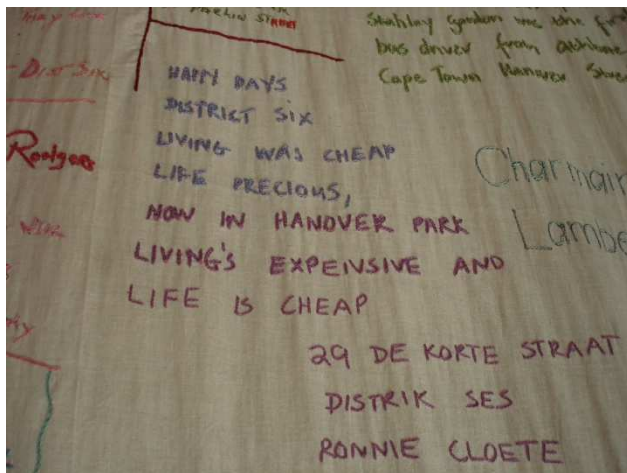

Figure 2: (a) An embroidered quote from the memory cloth on display at the District Six Museum. This 'Happy Days' quote is often pointed out by guides. **(b)** An ex-resident writing a message on a memory cloth in progress

Lwandile Workshop

In contrast to the District Six community, formal infrastructures to support accessing and protecting cultural records are only just reaching rural people in the Wild Coast of the Eastern Cape (former Transkei). The combined energies of local traditional leaders and activists in one village, Lwandile, and Outreach professionals from the National Archives and Records Office have begun to initiate opportunities for cultural history recording initiatives for formerly marginalised people. Here we discuss the context and impact of collaboration between Khonjwayo people and the National Archives Outreach Program in co-generating a workshop in the Wild Coast on 'the importance of preserving our land resources and heritage'. In describing this achievement we first indicate aspects related to the remoteness of the area then we outline how the workshop emerged and unfolded.

The Khonjwayo of Lwandile

The workshop aimed to serve the people of Lwandile, the coastal zone of Mankosi, Mamolweni, Hluleka and neighbouring communities. The population here exceeds 50,000 people scattered across over 100km2. Lwandile, in centre of three administrative areas, is the home of the Headman of Lower Ndungunyeni (Hlathinkhulu Sithelo) who is the senior of 12 Headman across the area, according to customary law. These administrative areas were settled at least eight generations ago by the Khonjwayo, one of six Chiefdoms descending from the monarchy of a distinct Xhosa tribal cluster of Bantu-speaking origin. The Kingdom of Western Pondoland has 51 clans of royal descent but Chiefdoms are territorial, not pure kinship. So the Khonjwayo in Ndungunyeni and neighbouring administrative areas share many kin but their ancestry includes indigenous Khoi-Khoi and San, shipwrecked Europeans and exiles of the Apartheid era.

Due to earlier resistance to colonists, famine and invasion and subsequent neglect by successive regimes, areas like Ndungunyeni remain distinct and preserve traditions in habitation and communal land-use. Villages in the area are isolated. For example, it takes over two hours on barely graded roads to Mthatha, 50km away. Except at Christmas and Easter, when temporary migrants return home, half of Lwandile's population is under 15 years and women or pensioners head households de facto. Families live in umzi, or patrilineal kinship groups, consisting of 4-5 adults and 2-7 children informally distributed across hilly terrain. Umzi are rough semi-circles of thatched, mud-brick rondavels fronted by a fenced kraal for life-stock and a garden, and interconnect by paths across scrub and common grazing land to water sources. Substantial labour out-migration from Lwandile, mostly for mining, has occurred for a century and these days with few permanent local jobs half of households rely on remittances from a spouse or child beyond the community. For instance, 40% of the Sithelo clan reside in cities far away for work purposes. Even with remittances and pensions monthly income in most umzi is less than $100. This is acute poverty when the national, median monthly income for a working white man is over $900. Villagers lack running water, sanitation and grid electricity. Solar power serves the clinic and, until the battery was stolen, the school as well. The meagre built infrastructure reflects the Headsman's influence. Ten years ago he built a large church just behind his umzi and, after some canvassing, the municipality cleared a very rocky, ungraded road, to his home along which the clinic was built. Few people now own cattle, but most own goat, sheep, pigs, donkeys or chickens and subsistence farm arable land for a meagre range of crops (e.g. maize).

Developing the Workshop
The trigger for the workshop emerged from the collaboration of Thulani, Hlathinkhulu Sithelo's eldest son, and an academic researcher (Nic Bidwell) who resided in Lwandile from the beginning of 2008. The aim of Nic's research was to develop, with the community, opportunities for local people to interact with ICT in ways that were compatible with their life-style and that might contribute to social improvement. As an Australian and an 'outsider' to village life, Nic adopted a research approach which drew on ethnography, to discover cultural realities as she gathered data on events that arose in interacting with the setting, and phenomenology as she attempted to live according to local norms. Residing in H. Sithelo's umzi was pragmatic as much as valid, epistemologically. It exposed Nic to constraints bearing on encounters with technology, such as the limits of solar generated electricity to charge a deep cycle battery, and geographic isolation, by using only local transport. It also afforded social access to and significant security due to the affectionate respect H. Sithelo commands locally. As the only white person in the area, Nic would have been vulnerable to local psychopathologies, related to HIV and alcohol, and bands of, allegedly non-local, criminals. Unlike classic ethnography, which accesses multiple situated perspectives, qualitatively, without targeted intervention, Nic was actively committed to 'doing something' to achieve collaborators' priorities. So, our approach is similar to participatory action research, rather than being oriented by an external agenda, but differs in that the 'something' done is situated within customary power relations and consensus based practice.

During the course of our work in exploring the possibilities for technology to support villagers Thulani, the Headsman's eldest son, revealed two aspects that were important in the subsequent emergence of the workshop. Firstly, to advance social development projects Thulani sought to mobilize activists associated with the Community Trust attached to the three administrative areas overseen by his father. Secondly, Thulani felt that a reason for apathy in the established Community Trust was that the Headsmen and villagers in these administrative areas felt disempowered and were "crying for dignity" in relation to his family's right to the Chieftainship. Thulani explained that 5 generations ago ancestors of the incumbent Chief had gained Chieftainship by foul-play when the British deposed his Great-Great-Great-Grandfather as Chief, and he sought to recover dignity by lodging the Sithelo's claim for Khonjwayo Chieftainship with the monarchy.

As a consequence of Thulani describing his intention to re-claim his family's right to the Khonjwayo Chieftainship we commenced exploring resources to provide evidence for his claim and discussed how the Internet might help him research ancestry. We emailed a contact at the National Archives and Records Office, Matome Mohlalowa, who Nic had met at an international conference in Cape Town in February 2008. Matome replied with suggestions on finding records, guidance on information on how to trace family history and alerted us to his department's new Outreach Program, 'Taking Archives to the People', an awareness programme to assist especially in rural areas where people do not have ready access to the archives. He explained opportunities for assistance in tracing records electronically using the National Archives Information Retrieval System, and details about provincial archives at Queenstown and Mthatha. Thulani and Nic followed up Matome's advice on tracing records, for example by attending the Mthatha municipal Archives and also combined this with research at Western Pondoland's Palace Archives.

Simultaneously with our enquiries regarding family history records, Thulani mobilised four local activists, associated with the Community Trust, to marshal plans and form an independent non-profit organization to co-ordinate sustainable social upliftment projects. The Federation of Rural Coastal Communities (FRCC) was chaired by Thulani,

and comprised Xolile as secretary, Bongile as Treasurer and Mfundiso. This provided representation across the coastal communities. Xolile, from Mankosi, is the Chairperson of another grass-roots development organization and had considerable experience in community activism, for example in HIV awareness campaigns. Bongile is a teacher from Hluleka and Mfundiso, also a teacher, is the elder son of the Headsman of Mamolweni. The group met several times in Lwandile's Great Place to establish a shared agenda for change and some initial foci for activities, before Thulani and Nic raised the possibility of a collaboration with the National Archives and Records Office's Outreach Program.

The newly formed FRCC were very enthusiastic about hosting an Outreach Team from National Archives and Records Office in Lwandile. They saw it as important way to link cultural and natural heritage, development, oral traditions and as a rare occasion to provide the community access to important information. To the FRCC such collaboration was a unique means to benefit the community, both young and old, by providing cohesion and a way to launch their non-profit initiatives. Thus, they formally requested the program from the National Archives Outreach and started to plan a way to embed it in a workshop on preserving cultural and natural heritage, via archives, conservation and development. This involved meetings, communicating with municipal authorities and fund-raising. Matome and Xolile worked closely via email while the rest of the FRCC arranged a venue and raised funds to pay for fuel for the generator and transport for the people distributed across the hillside. While invited to influence the program Nic withheld comments, other than in support, so that it authentically articulated the FRCC's aspirations.

The Workshop
The Lwandile workshop took place over 3.5 days in early July. It had the theme: "Land Restitution, Our History, Our Heritage". It linked a range of local contemporary priorities, such as representation to government, land rights and ecotourism, to natural and cultural heritage. The workshop was structured around seven presentations by:

- The National Archives & Records Services, on the:
    - The role of archiving records
    - The role and process of preservation
- The Provincial Department of Land Affairs on land legislation
- The Provincial Department of Environment on cultural heritage
- The Provincial House of Traditional Leaders on the role of Traditional leaders in cultural history preservation
- An emissary of Chief Gwadiso on the local history of the Khonjwayo
- The ward councillor, on the importance of workshop initiatives in building community

Some presentations were delivered in Xhosa, some in English with simultaneous Xhosa translation. Presentations were interleaved with prolonged debate on archiving, local history, natural resource management, sustainable development and legislation on collectively owned land. Sessions included an exercise in groups, critique when the community also suggested future events, and a film: Sarafina. All presenters were very rousing and speakers were able to enthuse and engage the audience. For example, Francis, part of the Outreach Team from the National Archives and Records office reminded the audience that "*the beautiful history that we have*" needs to be carefully preserved, as " *no-one is going to take your culture away, except yourself. No-one will know your history if you are not protecting, if you are not keeping recording*". The audience came to understand the importance of records as land legislation changes and how this relates to traditions, for example "*This is your land …. here is your title and here is your land and heritage*" and how keeping and preserving records can protect their

interests. For example, the speaker from Environmental Affairs said "*you are very rich, the problem is you don't know where are those documents that proves and says you are rich*".

The workshop was initially set up in a large marquee in the school grounds and then, relocated to school classrooms when the weather worsened. Most of the 70 participants were females (41%) or males (17%) who were under 30 years (Table 1). There were almost even numbers of men and women over 30 years but the majority of these women prepared the dinner rather than attend sessions. All participants participated in different ways, for example the men and boys tended to ask more questions and make short speeches while the women and girls tended to take notes in their notebooks.

From Nic's observations the workshop was enjoyed by presenters and attendees, unanimously and in the concluding session there were many positive remarks suggesting the many ways it empowered the community. For example one speaker said "*I am very happy to be able to have work with people who want to know more, people who are very, very eager to learn more, very eager to do it with whatever they have*". The impact of the Workshop went far further than simple information dissemination, it inspired pride, as captured in one remark "*It's nice to see talking about what it means to be African – that what we have, it's our identity*". Importantly, it helped this remote community feel it had the power to address their challenges, to access important information and use this information effectively; as one speaker said "*Knock at our door*'". Comments made by the Outreach Team from the National Archives and Records, such as "*Let me tell you, if you have no history, you are not proud of your culture you are nothing*" resonated deeply with the community, both young and old. For example, in the many votes of thanks at the end of the workshop one community member said "*We thank you about the Workshop we are learning a lot. We see the good will. We say thank you to the speechmakers. …. So we have to pull up our socks now*".

Table 1: Audience Attendance Summary at Lwandile Workshop

Day	Session/Time	Older men	Younger men/boys	Older women	Younger women/girls	Total
Tuesday	Archives (Matome)					**50**
	Department of the Environment	10	12	3	29	**54**
Wednesday	Department of Land Affairs	6	3	0	26	**35**
	House of Traditional Leaders					**40**
	Workshop Commissions					**47**
Thursday	National Archives (Francis)	9	6	9	26	**44**
	Conclusion by Councillor & Feedback session					**50**

What Does this Tell UGC Designers

The idea behind UGC is to make the media through which content is created conversational rather than packaged and to engage with an active, participatory, creative audience. Our case studies show that UGC is not something that is tied to technology or the Internet but is something that emerges in non-digital storytelling and knowledge sharing settings. As technology practitioners, we can draw from the insights gained from the two case-studies discussed to show how technology-design situated in non-digital experience can challenge the hegemony of univocal opinions and stories.

The use of accessible 'technologies'

We described earlier that a key aspect of the District Six museum is the involvement of a community of ex-residents. This is facilitated by providing easy and accessible means through which the community can contribute the museum's content. People are able to donate objects and photographs and simply tell their stories out loud, either for recording or to audiences in the museum itself. Contributions can also be made by writing on the inscriptive surfaces provided such as the floor map and memory cloths. This highlights the usefulness of providing people with natural modes of conveying material i.e. talking and, for the literate, writing, rather than unfamiliar digital solutions. The memory cloths also provide us with a metaphor for the preservation of content: ex-residents and visitors can write their messages on the cloth in koki while the more lengthy process of permanently preserving those messages through embroidery does not rest on them or limit the amount they may write. This is something that a technological system can learn from – allow the contribution to content to be as simple and natural as possible while performing any complex processes required post-hoc.

To respond to issues of preservation raised in the Lwandile Workshop we need to find ways to allow people to interact with materials in the same way as they would ordinary documents (from newspaper clippings to photographs) so the original document can be preserved safely.

Supporting alternative views on historical events or contested spaces

The intention of the inscriptive surfaces at the District Six Museum is, according to Peggy Delport, to provide a framework for interpretation – reading various interpretations on the history of District Six and allowing for the recording of one's own interpretation. This layering of different, sometimes conflicting, voices allows for the expression of disagreement and contradictory points of view. For technologically based systems that allow UGC creation, this shows how hegemonic standpoints can be avoided by allowing many voices to be recorded and the user to choose which content they consume. Thus content consumers may have access to many standpoints, which are more likely to render accurate representations of contested histories and places and allow the consumer to establish their own interpretations. However, one must bear in mind that some filtering and selection of material must take place. In the District Six Museum, curators and experts have selected the material that is on display at the museum while other items and narratives are in storage. In addition to paying attention to the selection of material in a representative way, the issue of space to store, ongoing and, potentially, many contributions must also be managed carefully so that all contributions can be sustained.

Our time in Lwandile showed us that Headmen enact decisions about collectively owned resources through consensus and use prolonged, transparent debate across multiple perspectives to unify the community aiming for decisions to emerge 'spontaneously' not

through coercion. Leaders pursue unanimity but not democracy, which the community blames for social dysfunction. Traditionally leaders deferred to the general opinion of a court of councillors and today this dictum means mobilizing the experience and expertise of others. Such a communication protocol was a deeply striking feature of the Lwandile workshop. All of the speakers had different perspectives and some of the views expressed were not those held by the FRCC. However, the FRCC ensured complete transparency in the proceedings, and many villagers afterwards noted how important this was. A very clear example was that the story of the Chieftainship differs between Chief Gwadiso and Thulani, the Headsman's elder son. However, the FRCC ensured that the emissary of Chief Gwadiso had over 2 hours without interruption to recount his version of events. The villagers listened carefully and politely asked questions. Similarly, different political views were respected, given space and treated with equal hospitality.

The workshop had a more holistic integration than might be expected in most Western oriented workshops. It served various interests: Thulani's, Xolile's, teachers, creating a sense of community and linking culture to natural heritage in a way that was relevant to the location. Western categorisations tend to focus on only certain aspects, for example 'environmental protection', but in doing so they also tend to perpetuate certain interpretations. That is they inadvertently gag the potential for alternative interpretations, that is taxonomies and 'information management' are a form of control. Thus, we learn that traditional communication forms and prolonged discussions around themes that might seem diverse to an outsider is a means to empower people.

In dealing with both the Lwandile and District Six communities we realised that it is important not to romanticise the view of community and remember that they have been impacted by Western systems. It is important to bear in mind such contextualising factors about South African communities such the African Renaissance, the house of traditional leaders, cultural revisionism, adjustment to post-Apartheid and the drive to tell stories that were previously silenced. In our work in Lwandile we have come to learn how the community leverages the voices of its Traditional leaders, and the opportunities for Traditional and democratic systems to work together to challenge the hegemony of univocal opinions and stories.

Acknowledgements

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Sacred Land Film Project www.sacredland.org/index.html

Authors:

Dr Nicola Bidwell's research focuses on designing information and communication technologies (ICT) suited to people's personal and cultural memories and dynamic interactions in contexts beyond the urban-developed world. Nic is currently Head (Cairns) of James Cook University's School of Maths, Physics & IT in tropical Australia where she established a research group which designs interaction with mobile devices and simulated-3D environments for rural cultural contexts and a teaching program in computer games. She has applied her in situ methods to design to support the activities of various rural and often geographically remote, peoples including Australian indigenous, South African Xhosa and Mwani and expatriate peoples in Mozambique. Nic maintains close research links with the University of Cape Town. She is approaching 40 peer-reviewed publications and holds a PhD (University of London), Masters in IT (University of Queensland), BSc Hons (University of Stirling) and has post-doc'ed or lectured at Sussex, Cambridge, Australian National, Queensland and Charles Darwin Universities.

Ilda Ladeira is a PhD student at the University of Cape Town's Computer Science department. Despite her science background, her research in the field of virtual storytelling draws from many disciplines, major ones including psychology and anthropology and, to a lesser extent, media studies and archeology. Her Hons. and MSc. research both evaluated the effectiveness with which indigenous San folktales can be preserved using simulated 3D environments in terms of creating optimal story experiences. To date she has presented 4 publications at international peer-reviewed conferences.

Xolile Sigaji is secretary of the recently established Not For Profit Organisation: The Federation of Rural Coastal Communities which created the Lwandile Workshop. He has a keen interest in oral history research and its relevance to the livelihoods of some of Transkei's poorest communities. Xolile has extensive experience in community initiatives, such as HIV awareness and is Managing Director of Nompesigaji Community Developers.