

# Models of Digital Book Trailers and Applications of Digital Storytelling Approach for Educational Purposes

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**Abstract.** The paper presents models for digital book trailers and possibility for their uses for educational purposes. Models and styles for creation of digital book trailers are discussed. Bulgarian digital book trailers are included as examples of the models. Digital storytelling is presented as a pedagogically valuable approach.

**Keywords:** Digital Book Trailers, Digital Storytelling, Education

## 1 Introduction

Combining digital media with the art of storytelling - using both the skills and preferences of learners in the digital age and their interest in history (narrative) - is potentially powerful pedagogical practice. Digital storytelling can be used to engage, inform learners and turn them into scholar researchers. Digital stories are used in the context of education not only to expand the field of knowledge, writing skills and technical skills, but also to develop reflection, language, higher level thinking, social and artistic skills (Yuksel, Robin & McNeil, 2011).

Digital storytelling, when it is properly designed and implemented, provides a fascinating and impressive description of "history" - informative, artistic or reflexive. When a well-crafted story has to do this, the integrated visual and audible character of digital storytelling is especially powerful for generations that have grown up in the social multimedia world. The nature of this instrument goes beyond ordinary entertainment, although the power of entertainment in an educational context should not be underestimated and the use of digital storytelling in the curriculum can afford real educational advantages (Roby, 2010). The multimedia nature of storytelling also makes the content of the digital story more accessible to technologically oriented students, many of whom are alienated from traditional text forms (Gunter & Kenny, 2008). Many authors consider that the combination of texts integrated with visual images improves students' understanding and encourages active listening. The visual component, especially when it has a personal character, helps to describe the story in a recognizable context. Ac-

According to J. Bruner's theory of situational knowledge, this increases the time the learners can remember and understand information (Kenny, 2007), as well as to enable students to better manage and organize fragmented information.

## **2 Digital Presentations of Books**

Digital book presentations / digital book trailers are basically multimedia video ads of books, similar to movie presentations (trailers), giving the impression of the content of the book. Digital book trailers have emerged as part of the editors' response to the changing printing market, largely driven by the emergence of the internet and the increasing demands of digital and media users. Such book trailers can be found anywhere on the Internet on sites like YouTube and Facebook, as well as book publishing websites. The amount of time and money publishers spend on releasing a digital book trailer testifies to his great marketing power. Not surprisingly, given the technologically-oriented life of young people and the way they are engaged in digital media, digital book presentations are primarily aimed at young people and children.

One "marketing" presentation of books is usually in the form of selected abstracts of the book or its covers, intended to form a sense of the book without revealing key storylines. These resumes are accompanied by supporting photos or videos lasting from 1 to 5/7 minutes.

Digital book trailers are also used in educational environments, such as the Digital Book Talk project, which offers book-based trailers (and accompanying pedagogical materials) for use in schools. The goals of these digital presentations are not necessarily the sale of the book, but rather they are concerned with providing sufficient information to the prospective reader so that s/he can make an informed choice whether to read the book because selecting an appropriate book is a key point for turning young people into active readers. Book trailers bring the future reader into the books through non-aggressive and non-text formatting, using the new digital generation's bias toward multimedia (Gunter & Kenny, 2008).

Although it do not tell stories, book trailer can be seen as a form of a digital story or a narrative in the broadest sense of storytelling.

## **3 Models and Styles of Book Trailers**

### **3.1 Standard Book Trailers**

The standard and easiest to make book trailer is a sequence of ready-made images. These can be pictures, drawings or images found on the web, as well as archival material that is available. A sound may accompany the arranged images. The video usually lasts from one to three minutes. The trend is to minimize the duration to facilitate online sharing via social networks and mobile devices. Each frame in the book trailer lasts for an average of 4 seconds (shorter or longer interval affects rhythm, meaning, and accent). A two-minute clip consists of approximately 30 images. The soundtrack is of

most importance for book trailers. The musical passages accompanying the stream of images enhance the expressiveness of the clip. A remarkable effect can be achieved when image fitting matches the rhythm of the soundtrack, as in music videos. The trailer should end with an image of the cover of the book, showing the author of the book, the title and publishing house.

Standard book trailer can be enriched with additional features: text, voice, sound effects, transitions, movement of the camera, using existing videos. The text (captions, comments, excerpts from the book, etc.) should be short and legible on the screen. Captions may alternate or overlap with images, fix, or move (depending on the functionality of the software used and the artistic purposes). The voiceover is a common decision in the cinema to tell or explain in words what the pictures cannot convey. The narrator who reads excerpts from the book can be particularly effective in book trailer: to illustrate the style and intonation of the text itself, to summarize all or part of the story, to reinforce the message on the screen, just like with regular movie trailers. An example of standard book trailer with text and voiceover is "Knees" by Rosen Karamfilov (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=guTGLDPWDxA>).

Various types of noises and sounds, such as ringing a phone, sound of thunder, etc., can highlight certain moments and situations in the video. When making a video, changing one image to another can be done in different ways: direct transition, fading, overflow, and other specific effects offered in the software being used. It is also possible to improve the video by moving the camera within the single frame. Such moves can be horizontal (the camera moves parallel to the image, revealing it little by little) or vertically (the camera moves away from the image, moving away from the detail to show the whole or vice versa, from the whole to the detail). An example of standard book trailer with text, transitions and camera movement is "The Book as Media" by Milena Tsvetkova (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wff5nU9FONc>).

Book trailers can take advantage of existing video clips: a clip from the movie adaptation of the book, archival material, online videos, etc. These clips can alternate with still images or replace them completely. An example of standard book trailer with videos is "The Curve of Happiness" by Ivo Ivanov (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4NejR8PX4lo>).

### **3.2 Advanced Book Trailers**

A book trailers, which use original footage and are mounted as a true short film, look more professional. Professionally made book trailers require resources and technical skills; they are more expensive in terms of time, budget, and organization, as they may need special equipment, screenwriters, actors, costumes, and more.

The narrative and expressive style of book trailer may come in the form of a short film, a movie trailer, a news release, an ad, even a TV series, - any genre and language popular in television and cinema.

- Example of book trailer - short film: "Dreams and Nightmares" by Chef Ivan Manchev (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XZhoDQY5W14>);
- Example of book trailer - advertisement: "Defeat" by Stan (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R3rPFBf3ZGE>)

- Example of book trailer - animation: "The Island" by Alexander Sekulov (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-UixOGjJoRM>).

Before making a book trailer, it must be decided which type is appropriate for the time, skills and resources available, and the style of the narrative must be chosen.

#### **4 Digital Storytelling - Specifics and Peculiarities**

Digital storytelling is defined as the use of digital technology for telling of short stories (Robin, 2008). Like traditional stories, digital stories focus on an object and have a specific point of view. What distinguishes digital story stories is the inclusion of digital images, text, audio narrative, moving image (video) and music. These multimedia stories are relatively short (2-10 minutes) personalized thoughts that use photos or videos of personal material to create emotionally impacting stories. It may be a story about an event or a personal reflection from the point of view of the author. Such digital narratives are a continuation of the traditional narrative stories that present stories interesting and exciting so they can be shared within social or other communities. The approach has appropriate applications for presenting subjects or sections of the disciplines in the field of humanities, and in particular for presenting cultural heritage and history.

Digital story telling is used in a number of contexts and for various purposes: brainstorming or identifying ideas, managing knowledge in business, facilitating group understanding, engaging marginalized strata of society (Benmayor, 2008; Roby, 2010). The digital genre is most often related to the narrative of personal stories, often of cultural or historical importance to the author himself (Lambert, 2007). Such stories often focus on interesting experiences, memories of a past event or person, or personal experience to overcome challenges or achieve goals (Benmayor, 2008). B. Robin identifies two other types of digital stories - ones that inform or instruct, and those who look at historical events (Robin, 2008). Digital story telling can also be used to explore the social environment or political issues. Thinking more generally about digital stories, it may be helpful to categorize stories as "personal stories", "informative stories" and "research/analysis stories", and, of course, each particular story could contain elements and of the three categories. In recent years, the approach has often been included in a learning application, mainly used to personalize and enhance the learner's personal experience.

## **5 Application of Digital Storytelling Approach for Educational Purposes. Models for Book Content Analyses in the Process of the Book Trailers Making**

### **5.1 Application of Digital Storytelling Approach for Educational Purposes**

The digital storytelling approach has greater educational benefits when learners become co-authors of digital stories. Creating their own digital stories, whether personal, informative or artistic, requires students to be engaged in the storytelling structure. When developing history, students should understand the basic narrative structure as well as grammar. For example, students will have to consider dramatic tension, pace and narrative flow. In addition, in the case of digital book trailer, students will have to understand what makes a story engaging and what to include in a trailer. The creation of digital stories provides a powerful opportunity for students to develop critical media skills (Ohler, 2006). If at the end of the school year pupils will show their documentaries to an audience of family members, peers, or other acquaintances, it will motivate them to be demanding in their approach. They will critically analyse their own texts and stories to explore how different media elements encourage viewers to believe, feel, or think in a certain way. Similarly, the development of digital book trailers help students think critically about its purpose and group discussion can contribute to understanding the impact of different media and communication channels.

Both personal and non-personal stories can be used to study theoretical concepts. Digital story telling provides a place to meet creative and analytical processes (Benmayor, 2008). This in turn allows students to develop a deeper understanding of theoretical concepts, develop their debating, critical thinking skills, and transform and master themselves.

The educational use of non-personal digital stories, such as book trailers, focuses primarily on the commitment and development of subject comprehension as well as on digital skills. The analysis, that students have to take and to decide what to include and how to design their trailer, also provides real opportunities for personal and educational development. For example, students can study preferences and beliefs of themselves and of their peers to understand what makes the book worth reading and how to present it in the best way. The implementation of the digital storytelling approach for educational purposes has for enhancing student engagement with their studies (Ivala, Gachago, Condy, & Chigona, 2013), (Niemi, Harju, Vivitsou, Viitanen, Multisilta, & Kuokkanen, 2014), (Grant, & Bolin, 2016).

### **5.2 Models for book content analyses in the process of the book trailers making**

The process of the book trailer making can accompany or be a part of educational process, concerning the reading and analysing of books. The analysis of the book will be the basis for making the book trailer. There are many models for analysing books for

book trailer making, but three of them could be very well implemented in the educational process:

- Model for book trailer making based on the thematic content analysis
- Model for book trailer making based on the narrative structure analysis
- Model for book trailer making based on the specific content analysis.

**Model for book trailer making based on the thematic content analysis.** If the focus of this model is the analysis of the abstract content of the book - the feelings, the atmosphere, the tone, the impression, etc., and the goal of the book trailer is to transfer this abstract idea. For example, a book may refer to abstract themes such as freedom, darkness, etc., and the book trailer can express this in two ways. Following the first one, the abstract themes will be expressed directly, in such way that the paintings, the music, etc. express extremely abstract content. For example, if this is a story of separation, the music will be sad. This is an impressionistic form with purpose to create sensation or impression in the viewer, which is essential to the book. Following the second one the abstract themes can be expressed in a specific form. It could be shown through the actions of a character to illustrate the specificity of theme.

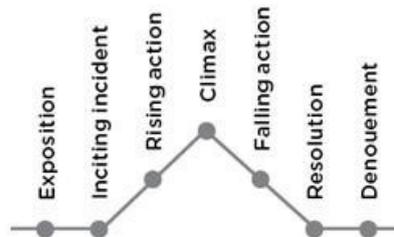
One of the possible realisation of this model is based on the thematic content analysis through analysis of pairs of opposites (dichotomy). The first step in the analysis is to mark a central theme in the book; the second step is to highlight the opposition of the topic in the book. It is important to identify the opposition because it will work to reveal the central theme. The third step in the analysis is to indicate other pairs of oppositions that correspond to the chosen opposition.

Example of applying analysis through dichotomy is historical novel "The War of the Letters" by Ludmila Filipova ([https://www.youtube.com/watch?time\\_continue=53&v=pwb5RO1tHFw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?time_continue=53&v=pwb5RO1tHFw)). The central themes in the book are the Bulgarian alphabet and a story of love. There is a confrontation between love and duty, weakness of rulers and selflessness nation. The following dichotomies can be identified in "The War of the Letters":

Positive	Negative
Selflessness nation	Cowardly rulers
National pride	Humiliation
Love	Duties
Life	Death

An audio-visual presentation in the book trailer can simultaneously select abstract realization of the subject through opposition, or can be used the specific representation (more or less analogous to the abstract). The theme of "power of the letters" can be represented abstractly with music or directly in written words.

**Model for book trailer making based on the narrative structure analysis.** The focus of the model is on the presentation of the narrative structure of a book, but the model can also be used to structure, for example, a poetic narrative. Usually, the Freytag's Pyramid, which is similar to the Narrative Arc, is used for presenting the narrative structure:



**Fig. 1.** The Freytag's Pyramid

Examples of the model for book trailer making based on the narrative structure analysis using Freytag's pyramid are: "The Bell" by Nedyalko Slavov and "The Deepness of Antiquity" by Rumyana Halacheva (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCmp7veJip0>).

The book trailer "The Bell" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2ywqNTtHcBY>) is based on the abstract levels of the book. There are not specified the main topic, places or actions. The soundtrack creates a sense of narrative with Exposition, Rising action, Climax and Resolution.

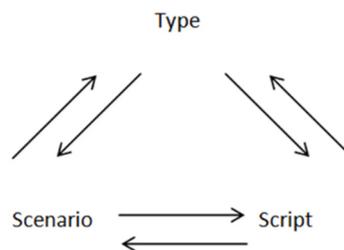
In the book trailer "The Deepness of Antiquity" (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hCmp7veJip0>), the author tells us about her book. How the main character decides to change her life and begins to travel – the Exposition of narrative structure. This is the background for telling about key moments and persons from Bulgarian history. The author calls for national pride and faith and that is Climax of narrative structure of the book trailer. The book trailer uses the personality of the author to affect viewers.

**Model for book trailer making based on the specific content analysis.** When students read a book, usually they imagine pictures: imagine what people look like, where they are, etc. This is the main part of the reading process - visualising images, so these mental pictures can be used as a starting point for analysing and building the book trailer by students.

From a cognitive point of view (reader-oriented), students as readers are driven by the details in the text to create a complete picture or to fill the gaps in the text with their own concept. They always use their own cultural concepts in this area to do it. When a man is "met" in a book, reader create a picture of the person, using his/hers idea of people and categorize this person into a familiar (known) type. When a place is described in the book - student use his/hers knowledge of places and scenes to create a scenario, and when describing actions, s/he understands them as a sequence of expected

actions for the situation. In addition, student use (and developed) their basic knowledge in general to connect scenarios, people, and places in the book.

The different elements - people or types, places or scenes, and scenarios - work as cognitive models because they determine the understanding of reading. This cognitive model is used to analyse the text and create book trailers. The book can be describe from the point of view of types, scenarios and scripts and show how they are related. A type can be shown directly, but can also be pictured through a scenario or a script and vice versa:



**Fig. 2.** Type, scenario and script

This analysis of the specific text level can be related to the narrative structure and to the abstract level, but the book trailer can focus mainly on the specific content. Using the specific level of a book as the basis for a book trailer makes a direct presentation of the fictional world in the book.

Example of analysis of specific content in a book trailer is “Synaesthesia” by Diana Petrova (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ohctea2w4RQ>). The book trailer of “Synaesthesia” focuses on the main events in the psychologist’s office. Six patients were shown one by one. Everyone is classified with one word and tell us one thought. They are different. The Types are revealed, but nothing from script or scenario. The soundtrack is monotonous and adds tension. No more actions or any other clue of what will happen. This book trailer provokes the viewer’s expectations and search for meaning.

## 6 Conclusion

The educational use of non-personal digital stories, such as book trailers, focuses primarily on the commitment and development of subject comprehension as well as on digital skills. Different models and styles of book trailers give the possibility to the students to express themselves in many ways and make the learning content more attractive and acceptable for them. The analysis that students have to take to decide what to include and how to design their trailer also provides real opportunities for personal and educational development. The models for book content analyses in the process of the book trailers making also can be an important part of educational process. Digital storytelling and book trailer are undoubtedly most pedagogically valuable when they are part of a project-based learning approach where active learning strategies are used

in the middle of the learning community. Listening to the digital stories of others and providing feedback to improve stories, helps to develop critical listening and communication skills of the students.

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