This thesis is submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Capture Wales:
Digital Storytelling and the BBC

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Summary

In 2002 Cardiff University funded a PhD bursary to support research on *Capture Wales*, the BBC Cymru-Wales Digital Storytelling initiative (www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales). The *Capture Wales* project was launched by Menna Richards, Controller, BBC Wales in April 2001, and on completion of a pilot period, was given three years in order to fulfil goals associated with the Corporation's Nations and Regions policy. This thesis introduces, contextualises and analyses the project, with a view to answering research questions concerning how effectively the project contributes to the Charter Renewal process? How sustainable the project is likely to be in the long-term? And in what ways the project represents public service, if indeed it does at all. In order to answer these questions, the research focuses on the impact of the project on its participants, and on the BBC itself.

Digital Storytelling arose in America in the 1990s as a mode of telling personal, often emotional, stories using multimedia tools, more often than not with therapeutic intentions. This new form has been introduced at the BBC in a bid to, as the corporation itself claims; connect more closely with communities (through a project which depends on those communities), create content, increase digital literacy and build an archive of the 'real' Wales. In 2005, the project has a three year history which this thesis investigates.

The thesis begins with a review of the literature covering the rise of Digital Storytelling, audiences, identity, representation and power. Following the literature review, the history of Digital Storytelling, Public Service Broadcasting, and prior BBC attempts to connect with communities are outlined in full. The chapters comprising part three of this thesis analyse the results of the research concentrating in turn on the set up of the project, the participants' experiences and the sustainability of the project. Methodologically the thesis is based on questionnaire and interview research alongside participant-observation and ethnography. It has also benefitted from access to key BBC personnel, and full and uncensored access to the project's archives.

The research shows that the actuality of being 'captured' as a part of *Capture Wales* is neither standard to all participants, nor easy to evaluate in terms of measures of success. Most participants display a positive attitude to the process that is often explained by the perceived therapeutic nature of the workshop, and as a result of the experience, many participants enjoy a relationship with technology that is vastly advanced from their prior use. But on the whole the project has not changed Wales into a nation of Digital Storytellers. The limited numbers of people involved, coupled with the fairly limited space allowed by the BBC for the stories' display mean that the true public service'ness' of the project must be called into question.

Further research is recommended into the space available within commercial media frameworks for this type of content and interaction with audiences, and it is also hoped that the *Capture Wales* project itself will undergo further research and analysis in its continuing bid for sustainability.

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List of Abbreviations

ADO	Arts Development Officer
ARPA	The Advanced Research Project Agency
BAFTA	British Academy of Film and Television Arts
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBC Wales	British Broadcasting Corporation in Wales (National service)
BESA	British Educational Suppliers Association
CDS	The Center for Digital Storytelling, Berkeley, California
CD-ROM	Computer Disk Read-Only Memory
CNN	Cable News Network
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport, UK
DTI	Department of Trade and Industry, UK
DVR	Digital Video Recorder
ICT	Information and Communication Technologies
ILS	School of Information and Library Sciences, University of North Carolina
ITC	Independent television Commission, UK
ITV	Independent Television
MOO	Multiple User Object Oriented Dimension
MUD	Multiple User Dimension
PVR	Personal Video Recorder
VCR	Video Cassette Recorder
WDA	Welsh Development Agency

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What is the art of the storyteller? We can accept that it fulfilled deep human needs around the original blazing log. What functions does storytelling have now, in our premillennial moment, and how will digital media serve these? I mean in a deeper way – beyond *entertainment* – in a way that speaks to what's left of the soul. (Birkerts, 1997)

Introduction

> Despite the unique cash-based relationship between corporation and viewers and listeners, there is little real perception that the BBC "belongs to us", a sense of alienation that is not enhanced by the tabloid fashion for BBC-bashing. A greater sense of shared interest, of a genuinely community-based institution, would help to foster a healthy distrust for ideological or proprietorial vitriol against the BBC itself or its funding mechanism. We need to find some means, through elected representatives or external representative bodies, of initiating a dialogue between the BBC and its public. It would not just be good PR in the face of an increasingly bureaucratic and monolithic image. It would be good democracy. (Barnett, 1991: 118)

Since the launch of the (then) British Broadcasting Company in the 1920s, the BBC have held themselves up as an example of a truly relevant institution working for and in close relation to the public. Funded by the licence fee, paid for by the people, they have sought to provide those same people with quality programming and a means of expressing their thoughts and feelings for more than 75 years. As a part of their agenda to 'inform, educate and entertain' in a way that provides public service, there have been a number of attempts at community engagement funded or supported by the BBC. Possibly the most famous of these was the *Video Nation* series of the 1990s (supporting amateurs in the production of their own 'shorts' to be aired on BBC2), which captured not only the imagination of those involved in production, but also a not insignificant portion of viewing audiences and press attention. Other projects in this tradition of collaboration include the recordings of Olive Shapley in the late 1930s and throughout the 1940s, *The Radio Ballads* of the 1950s, and more recently, *The Century Speaks* series at the turn of the century. These projects have all succeeded in providing select members of the public with a platform for expressing their views on a range of topics, including the BBC itself.

The above quote from Steven Barnett, the Head of Media Futures at the Henley Centre for Economic Forecasting in the early nineties, states clearly that if there was ever a sense of the BBC being an organisation owned by and representing the public, then this no longer exists. Beyond the payment of the yearly licence fee, the public has little input into the workings of the BBC. There is no 'dialogue'.

The above-mentioned projects (looked at in greater depth in the following chapters), show that there have been attempts by the BBC to enter into an exchange of ideas and narratives with the public, allowing them access to the production side of their own corporation. This is not enough however to allow for a truly democratic broadcasting model, something that has become increasingly upheld by media corporations, the public and academics alike as a vital goal if the people are to be expected to continue their support of public service media provision. Barnett does not see the BBC as a 'community-based institution' that justifies itself as a publicly funded mechanism. It is thus not performing its duty.

In our new millennium, the BBC finds itself within a growing commercial media climate which is both hostile and competitive:

> What is in no doubt is the existence of a highly competitive market, to which neither the BBC nor the mighty international satellite broadcasters, like Rupert Murdoch, are immune. (Wedell & Luckham, 2001: 98)

The only certainty for the BBC is that in this transitory landscape there is change to be made in order to justify ongoing financial support by the public and continued Charter renewal in the years to come. We are experiencing a time of increasing unease about the future of media communication and our place (as a public) within it. Indeed, our world is changing beyond all recognition. In response, the BBC needs to make its individuality and importance as a public service broadcaster felt on a community level. There is no better way to do this than to build on its tradition (briefed in the above projects) of introducing the latest technologies to the people it serves, and

letting them partake in production. Essentially: making them visible. But their efforts need to go far beyond those of prior attempts.

The BBC, aware of the changing media landscape and the need to justify its existence to the public it serves, has launched *Capture Wales*. This, the BBC's latest bid to engage in communication with the public and give them something back, runs alongside the *Community Studios* and *Where I Live* projects (local site based and Internet portals for the public to interact with the BBC). Through the *Capture Wales* Digital Storytelling project, it is hoped, people will enjoy more say than ever in what is produced and distributed by this national media corporation.

The use by the BBC of the medium of Digital Storytelling is an interesting one. This new media form originated in America as essentially a mode of therapy and has risen to new heights as both a personal and corporate tool for recording narrative. Digital Storytelling involves the creation of narratives through the use of multimedia tools, and more often than not, these stories have been published on the World Wide Web (as was initially the case with *Capture Wales*). This may seem to be a puzzling mode of distribution for a broadcaster best known for television and radio productions, and, bearing in mind the source of the funding in the licence fee, some may question whether it is appropriate (especially given discussion in recent years as to the suitability and scope of the BBC's online services).

Other issues arise out of the BBC's use of Digital Storytelling. Essentially, the *Capture Wales* project provides a forum for communities and trained BBC professionals to meet and exchange information. But, in teaching members of the public how to produce and showing them how to distribute media, are the BBC not shooting themselves in the foot? What happens when members of the public are able to make and distribute their own media? Institutions such as the BBC itself could suffer, the balance between producer and consumer (or citizen?) threatened. It will be seen that Digital Storytelling has the potential to radically alter trends described by media theorists, changing the way in which content is produced, delivered and consumed forever.

There are many issues that arise out of any discussion of citizens' media (a term used by Clemencia Rodriguez in her study *Fissures in the Mediascape*, 2001), of which *Capture Wales* is a new and exciting example. Through this piece of research, it is my intention to look at some of these issues in relation to *Capture Wales* and the BBC. There are any number of books, articles and websites discussing digital storytelling, narrative and the BBC, but none that brings all of these areas of interest together in one volume, and certainly none that do so in relation to *Capture Wales*. I intend to do this with a view to fulfilling the following research aims:

1 To trace the background of Digital Storytelling
2 To establish the reasoning behind the BBC's *Capture Wales* project
3 To measure the extent to which *Capture Wales* affects the public, and their reaction to it
4 To assess the sustainability of the project and the future of Digital Storytelling as a whole

Chapter One: Parts One and Two

Chapter one presents a review of previous literature in the various schools of thought that provide a background for this research. Part one introduces readers to issues surrounding technological change and storytelling – how one impacts upon the other, and how Digital Storytelling has arisen out of this scenario. Part two introduces some of the many, often conflicting, discussions surrounding some of the issues dealt with in this thesis; active audiences; identity; representation; high and low art; and power. Chapter one raises questions surrounding the *Capture Wales* project and how it fits into previous theory which I shall attempt to answer over the following chapters, suggesting ways in which these discussions may have to be deconstructed and reappropriated to accommodate such ventures. This chapter is followed by an outline of the methodology appropriated for this research project (chapter two).

Chapter Three

> Storytelling is how we define who we are – as a culture and individually. It is how we define what we care about, where we're going and where we've been. (Atchley, Dana, (a))

Chapter three gives a detailed account of the history of Digital Storytelling. This involves a discussion of the history of narrative from its oral origins, through the print revolution and into the digital age as a means of connection between people on an often intensely personal level.

Storytelling, as viewed by Dana Atchley quoted above, (one of the key figures in the rise of Digital Storytelling in America), is vital to the formation of our notions of self and identity. It is also crucial in the forging of relationships, whether they be in the home or workplace, with individuals, communities or with our nation. First employed to explain the physical world and what were seen as its supernatural forces, storytelling was crucial in making sense of that which was beyond comprehension, often with religious or educational intent. It was also a means of giving shape to experiences and communicating them in a way which gave them both beauty and form, and invested the storyteller with something of great import: immortality and power.

But are these still the uses of storytelling today? And how does this play out in our new digital environment? There can be no doubting that storytelling is still a predominant way of giving meaning and shape to events in our lives, we face a barrage of stories on a daily basis, and are all, in our own right, storytellers. As Donald Hamilton says, storytelling "now encompasses every facet of human endeavor" (Hamilton, 1999). Its latest form is that of digital or multimedia storytelling, defined as:

> ... an integration of all possible media types including photos, video, music, prose, animation and much more. An innovative and creative marriage of these varied media produces a story whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts. (HER and HIStory, 2000).

The results of these multimedia ventures include stories told in hypertext on the Internet, CD-ROM games, virtual reality, MOOs and MUDs. Another

extension of this is the form of digital storytelling known itself as Digital Storytelling (the form associated with *Capture Wales*).

This chapter will also document the rise in America of this specific form of Digital Storytelling now adopted by the BBC – on websites, in performance, in web diaries and as a corporate tool. One of the 'gurus' responsible for this rise was Dana Atchley, the solo performer of Next Exit (www.nextexit.com), and consultant to many companies who have taken up Digital Storytelling whether internally as part of employee practice, or in collaboration with their customers. Atchley's contact with Joe Lambert and Nina Mullen (founders of the Center for Digital Storytelling at the University of California, Berkeley) has given rise to the model of Digital Storytelling adapted by the BBC in the form of *Capture Wales*. This form of storytelling is, according to Atchley, "the art of using computers to create media-rich stories, and the Internet to share them" (quoted in Story, 1999) as a 'modern extension' of the age-old art of telling and immortalising narratives.

This chapter, having traced the origins of Digital Storytelling, goes on to take a look at how this media form is now being used for a variety of purposes within communities and as a corporate tool, and asks questions about its possible future.

Chapter Four

Having traced the origins of Digital Storytelling in narrative history and its importance in the formation of self and identity, it is important that questions are asked and answered about the involvement of the BBC in a Digital Storytelling project. BBC Wales, under the slogan 'Everyone has a story to tell' are intent on recording stories that reflect the "distinctive cultures and beliefs" that make up Wales (www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales, see accompanying CD for examples). As has been briefly and crudely outlined above, the BBC was set up with a specific purpose – to serve the public as a resource for information, education and entertainment. Although this has proved a contentious view, especially given the views of Lord John Reith as to what this meant in actuality, there are, in the history of the BBC, a number of

ventures whereby the public have been involved in the creation of content, including those mentioned above; Olive Shapley's recordings, the *Radio Ballads*, *Video Nation* and *The Century Speaks*. Chapter four summarises and evaluates these projects with a view to understanding how *Capture Wales* fits into this history and why this new digital medium was chosen. Is it a natural progression or an indicator of great change for the BBC?

This will also be the place to ask questions about the BBC's role as a public service broadcaster. How does the BBC function within our competitive commercial media market? What makes it different? And, more specifically, how did BBC Wales arise out of the political economy of the United Kingdom (or Wales) and what role does it perform today? These questions provide answers that are crucial to an understanding of the institutional environment and history within which *Capture Wales* has germinated.

Chapter Five

> To create a project which uses digital, multi-media storytelling as a way of connecting the BBC more closely to communities. (Hargreaves, 2001)

Such was the intention of those behind the creation of *Capture Wales*. To create a project wherein communities could be approached and relations could be built upon through the use of multimedia tools. Chapter five will assess how the project was set up with this idea in mind, discussing how this has been achieved through combining the BBC's tradition and that of storytelling. How does the actuality of *Capture Wales* unite the topics of the previous two chapters?

This chapter will trace the workshop process[1], from first contact between the BBC Wales team and the public, to its culmination in the final screening. Questions here are asked about a variety of issues including the selection

[1] Capture Wales wokshops run over five full days (spread over the course of one month), with 10 members of the public per location making short multimedia stories of no more than 250 words and 3 minutes in length. Participants write their own scripts, capture images, record voiceovers and edit the final piece themselves. The workshop process is outlined in full in Chapter five, and sample stories can be seen on the accompanying CD (see Appendix Four for details).

process and the team of professionals put forward by BBC Wales to lead the workshops.

An analysis of the reasoning behind the project will also be carried out, drawing on interview material with employees of the BBC including Pat Loughrey, Director of Nations and Regions; Menna Richards, Controller, BBC Wales; and those employees involved more intimately with *Capture Wales*. These interviews provide valuable information in order to answer questions about the project and the rhetoric behind its very existence. For example, was it set up in order to change how members of the public view the BBC as an institution? (is *Capture Wales* then merely a public relations stunt?), or was it to change the way that members of the public view the BBC as 'viewers' (in this case the BBC would be carrying out a genuine form of media literacy work).

The barriers faced by the *Capture Wales* team will also be looked at, and the measures of success that are being placed upon the project will be located in order to provide a framework within which to assess its impact in the following chapter.

Chapter Six

Mandy Rose (Head of New Media, BBC Wales and joint producer of *the Video Nation* series) says in her assessment of *Video Nation*:

> Some critics argue that there is something regrettable, demeaning about so-called 'ordinary people' revealing their lives in the media. It's an attitude reflected in some of the press *Video Nation* has received. But this area is unexamined. What draws people on to the television (or on to the Net)? What do they get out of it? How does it affect them? With the media touching more and more people's lives as participants we need a more adequate account of what that interaction involves. (Rose, 2000)

This kind of account was missing from *Video Nation*, but is what I try to achieve in chapter six of this thesis for *Capture Wales*. This kind of analysis is absent in much of the literature surrounding alternative media projects, attempts to democratise media that include Digital Storytelling. Indeed, Joe Lambert (Co-founder of the Center for Digital Storytelling at

www.storycenter.org) says himself that this type of assessment is both necessary, and thus far, negligible:

> ... we are still waiting for a more formal research project ... Intuitively I think it's probably really effective [Digital Storytelling on participants], but we don't have the research to back that up. (Lambert, in interview 2004)

Again this chapter takes as its focus *Capture Wales*, concentrating on the impact of workshops on the participants and communities who are involved, analysing whether the process does indeed connect the BBC with communities through technology and the exchange of knowledge. Questions are asked about the feelings of participants towards the project. How do participants feel about being defined as 'Welsh' or 'of Wales'? What does this mean to them and how does it fit in with their own notions of national identity? Why do they feel the BBC is running the project? How does the process affect their relationships with the BBC (and BBC Wales), their communities, Wales, their families and the technology employed? And does it affect their notions of self and identity?

The longer term effects of *Capture Wales* on the lives of those who take part and the communities they live in are crucial to an understanding of how effective the project is for the BBC, but also, how effective Digital Storytelling could be as a means of transforming the way media is currently made and delivered.

Chapter Seven

Chapter seven deals with discussions surrounding the future of both *Capture Wales*, and Digital Storytelling as a whole in Wales. Questions are asked and answered about how long the BBC in Wales can support a venture like *Capture Wales*, and whether in the long run they should. Would it be appropriate to house stories as an archive somewhere external to the BBC? Will it be feasible for partners or third parties to bear the cost of workshops in the future? And what is the likelihood of individuals taking a long-term interest in making stories?

For any alternative or citizens' media form to have an impact on traditional media flows and structures requires both access and long-term interest by those involved. In view of those conclusions of the preceding chapters, how likely a prospect is this?

Conclusions and Implications

The concluding chapter aims to bring together the chief findings of those preceding it in relation to the aims of the research previously specified. This involves a discussion of whether *Capture Wales* provides us with an example of anything new within the media, and any implications it could have for the future of that media.

Most importantly, this is the place for answering questions about who owns stories and who gets the chance to tell them. For so long people (on the whole) have been dictated to by the media – including the BBC. They have been 'done to' or 'spoon-fed' entertainment. Now, in all aspects of the media; television, the World Wide Web, videogames, books and the like, people can impact upon the outcome of events, or indeed, tell their own stories. As a people, we are becoming used to this. But in the long-term, is this the kind of relationship that people want with the media? And do they want it in Wales? With all of the talk about empowerment that is rife at the present time, the question must be asked; do people want to be empowered? Institutions cannot force empowerment upon people. Some people cannot even muster themselves to turn over a television programme that they are not enjoying or stop reading a book. Will people use this ultimate control that the BBC and other media institutions are offering them? And if they do, what does this mean for the media as we know it. New media enthusiast Nicholas Negroponte points out in his discussion of multimedia or "commingled bits" (Negroponte, 1995: 18), that "if moving these bits around is so effortless, what advantage would the large media companies have over you and me?" (Negroponte, 1995: 19). These long-term questions about the implications of empowerment I try to answer in conclusion to this thesis. Is Digital Storytelling "Wonderfully Democratic" as Joe Lambert, one of the most important figures in the Digital Storytelling movement puts it? (Lambert, (a)). And if it is, is this

also the case when it is put in the hands of the BBC? Answers to all of these questions will enable an analysis of the changing dialogue between the BBC and the public. This could in turn give us confidence that a more participatory relationship is emerging, something that Steven Barnett recognised as being crucial to the future of the BBC more than a decade ago.

Part One:
Background to the Research

Chapter One:

Reviewing the Literature

Part One: Technological change and the rise of Digital Storytelling

> Stories influence how we live and what we put our minds to. The challenges we are facing in terms of how to learn, how to know what is true and what is good, and how to take action under conditions of profound change will be mediated by the stories we tell ourselves about what's going on and what should be going on. In turn, these stories will frame how we deploy technology. As technology is ever more deeply intertwined with our lives, it means a whole lot more than desktops and gigaflops. Technology plays a role in popular culture, personal identity, government, and business. It is already the stuff of stories that shapes our lives. (Laurel, 2000b)

In our prevailing social and technological climate, story is inextricably bound with technology. According to the above quote from Brenda Laurel (writer of the influential book *Computers as Theatre*, 2000) our relationship with technology is experienced through the practice of storying – imposing a narrative form. This is true of both the relationship we currently have with technology, and that which we can expect in the future. As a result, these stories shape the 'deployment' of that technology, and stretch the imagined boundaries of possibility (see Negroponte, 1995; Murray, 1999; Laurel, 2000a). In this respect, our current uses of, and relationship to, technology cannot be looked at in isolation from its history and storytelling cannot be looked at in isolation from the technological changes that have influenced its form and structure.

This section, the first of two reviewing literature around the topic, aims to discuss both how technological change has come about in responsive and innovative ways, and how this has influenced the nature of storytelling. It also

identifies how this piece of research into Digital Storytelling hopes to draw from and inform that debate.

Technological and cultural change

Technological and cultural change are inevitably united. Moving in a cyclical fashion of influence, at any one time, either could be exerting agency over the other. This in turn must alter the content and form of our media. Steven Johnson eloquently voices this scenario in the following substantiation for his 1997 book *Interface Culture*:

> This book is an extended attempt to think about the object-world of technology as though it belonged to the world of culture, or as though those two worlds were united. For the truth is, they have been united all along. (Johnson, 1997a: 1)

'Culture' and technology are, to Johnson, the product of each other, united. This, or rather, our acceptance of this situation, he credits to the emergence of capitalism which transformed our views of technology from being a 'looming, exponential threat' which would inevitably outgrow and subsume us, into what he calls a 'lifestyle decision' or even a 'friend' (Johnson, 1997a). The result of such a change in outlook has been the proliferation of the cultural industries and an inclination to explore the boundaries of technological possibility.

Technology and the culture industries (including the media) were the subject of much academic enquiry during the technological speed up of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s. This was a period which started with concerns over the impact of television (a relatively new medium to most people) and ended with the birth of the Internet (for widespread use) and digital television. During this time, theorists such as Marshall McLuhan (1964, 1986) and Sven Birkerts (1994) have fought both sides of the argument – that this race or replacement was a positive move signalling progress, or that it signalled the death of real intimacy and even the death of storytelling.

Marshall McLuhan (1964, 1986) was essentially positive about the possible development and deployment of technology. His insights are often summed up in the buzz phrase 'the medium is the message' which has been quoted, rephrased, parodied and mocked across the board, and remains the main signifier of McLuhan'esque' thought. Essentially, McLuhan prized the mere use of a medium above and beyond the use that is made of that medium:

> Our conventional response to all media, namely that it is how they are used that counts, is the numb stance of the technological idiot. For the "content" of a medium is like the juicy piece of meat carried by the burglar to distract the watchdog of the mind. (McLuhan, 1964: 19)

Society was changed by the simple fact that people were watching television and listening to the radio, not necessarily due to the content they were watching or listening to. One change that he envisioned as a result of this development was the rise of a 'Global Village' where people around the world could partake in media simultaneously, and a sense of 'community' would arise. This is something that theorists such as Paul Levinson (1999) and Kevin Kawamoto (1998) have espoused as only becoming an actuality now that the Internet has surfaced as a supposedly democratic, interactive medium which can engage people worldwide, overcoming barriers to access experienced by viewers of television or readers of newspapers:

> The idea of a "public sphere," a "global civic society," an "epistemic community," "cyberspace,' "virtual communities" suggests a kind of human cohesion based on common interests and concerns that transcends geographic and political boundaries and relies on emerging computer-driven interactive linking mechanisms. (Kawamoto, 1998; 175)

It is Kawamoto's view that this kind of interactivity, although still not universal, represents at least a more level playing field than other more traditional mass media do.

Interactivity is of increasing academic concern in the fields of media and communications, and continually makes appearances in documents and agendas within media corporations like the BBC. One method of defining a medium or piece of content's level of interactivity is 'on the basis of the freedom granted to the user and the degree of interactivity of his [or her]

interventions' (Ryan, 2001: 205). An interactive text is 'a machine fueled by the input of the user' (Ryan, 2001. 210), it thus represents possibilities for the democratisation of media:

> Interactivity has become an important issue because it refers to the idea that through the participation of the public, the democratization of the media is possible. (Sarikakis 2004: 79)

The Internet provides an obvious example of a fully interactive medium (if such a thing can ever exist), but, as will be seen in discussion later in this chapter, the mediums of television and radio increasingly allow for involvement of the public. Marie-Laure Ryan's discussion of interactivity (alongside immersion) highlights various attractions to both 'users' and 'authors' including (for users) shifting perspective on a text, exploring the field of the possible, playing games, or partaking in the writing of a text. For authors, the benefits include proposing alternative versions, suggesting relations between segments and providing background information (Ryan, 2001). This is especially easy to envision and construct online, and increasingly also through 'red button' television technology.

However, there is, at this stage in development of interactive technologies, much discussion about the true 'interactiveness' of much media that espouses itself to be so. If interactivity involves the 'input of the user', then this should be without limits. Current interactivity tends to rely on the provision of a number of options for a user, and their choice of one of these. On television, interactivity might involve a prompt for opinions about a topic, or an encouragement to press the 'red button' on those programmes providing extra services. In all of these cases, interactivity relies on the action of a user within a field whose perameters are identified and maintained by an 'author', interaction is thus responsive rather than innovative:

> If the reader or spectator can choose whether Jack will be a hero or a coward, this means that Jack's behaviour, and by extension the fate of the entire fictional world, is determined not by any kind of internal necessity but by the decisions of an omnipotent creator located in the real world. Yet the loss of the sense of the autonomy of the fictional world that occurs at every decision point is not compensated by a gain of creative power, because the choices are all prescribed paths... they [the user] are themselves puppets of the author. (Ryan, 2001: 283)

A recent report for Ofcom carried out at the London School of Economics and Political Science was keen to point out the differing levels of creative opportunity offered by media outlets:

> ...it must be noted that the term *create* is extremely broad and we should note the difference in opportunity and skill development between the member of the public who makes a digital story, writes a web-log, or sends an email to a television programme. (Livingstone et al, 2005: 45)

Digital Storytelling would be seen as being at the most interactive end of the current spectrum. However, media encouraging involvement with content creation, are, according to Livingstone et al, the most under-researched means of communication, especially in terms of media literacy (a finding backed up by Buckingham, 2005).

Some, such as Sven Birkerts have viewed increasing experimentation with interactivity or non-linear narratives as being tantamount to a destruction of that which makes us human. In his book *The Gutenberg Elegies* (1994) Birkerts fights for the restoration of traditional mechanisms for reading and writing, as technology renders story 2-D, unwieldy and unimaginably dull. Our descriptions of the world and people around us, indeed our art, have nothing to gain from the advent of new technology, but everything to lose. Steven Johnson calls Birkerts' publication "an assault on the forking paths of nonlinear narrative" (Johnson, 1997a: 127) which require us to read in new 'nonlinear' ways. Scott Stossel also uses the analogy of an assault or a war

> Birkerts considers himself a foot soldier in an urgent battle, "The Reading Wars," in which technology and the soul are locked in combat, and in which nothing less than the fate of society is at stake. (Stossel, 1995)

Birkerts represents a school of thought often associated with traditionalism. He is what Paul Levinson would call a 'neo-Luddite' who 'eulogizes the death of the slower, more introspective consciousness of print media' (Levinson, 1999: 212).

According to this scenario, our cultural industries should be in crisis. None more so than those which highlight the importance of story and its telling. If we

are becoming unequipped to tell and read story (as Birkerts predicts), then what becomes of our age-old institution of storytelling?

The history of storytelling

> All classes, all human groups, have their narratives, enjoyment of which is very often shared by men [or women] with different, even, opposing, cultural backgrounds. (Barthes, 1977: 79)

The ability to form coherent narrative in order to exert power, organise events or make sense of the world around us is one which stems from oral cultures and forms a basis for developments within all spheres of existence. As Walter Ong identifies in his 1982 study *Orality and Literacy*:

> Narrative is everywhere a major genre of verbal art, occurring all the way from primary oral cultures into high literacy and electronic information processing. In a sense narrative is paramount among all verbal art forms because of the way it underlies so many other art forms, often even the most abstract. (Ong, 1982: 136)

In the optimistically entitled *The Triumph of Narrative* (1999), Robert Fulford, in highlighting the ongoing arguments of contemporary narrative theorists (Lessing, 1998; Dickstein, 1998), comes to the over-riding conclusion that narrative is of seminal importance to anybody wishing to understand both societies of old, and those in our current context:

> Of all the ways we communicate with one another, the story has established itself as the most comfortable, the most versatile – and perhaps also the most dangerous. Stories touch all of us, reaching across cultures and generations, accompanying humanity down the centuries. Assembling facts or incidents into tales is the only form of expression and entertainment that most of us enjoy equally at age three and age seventy-three. (Fulford, 1999: ix)

Story has been the source of both pleasure and pain for centuries (imagine for instance the effect of the stories in the Bible). It has a power to connect us to the living and the dead and could even have provided the impetus for people to find a means of communicating events to others in the long term or over geographical distance (through writing). Stories, more than anything, are critical to our sense of what it is to be human. Theorists make the link between humanity and storytelling with great regularity:

> We rely on works of fiction, in any medium, to help us understand the world and what it means to be human. (Murray, 1999; 26)

> Stories including narratives, myths, and fables, constitute a uniquely powerful currency in human relationships. Stories speak to both parts of the human mind – its reason and emotion. (McLellan, 1999a)

> Without stories, we would not be human. (Sloane, 2000: 189)

> He [Peter Pan] cannot become an adult because he lacks the narrative equipment. (Fulford, 1999: 33).

> But the concept of 'story' or 'narrative... links also, to an increasing stress by some scholars on the profound significance of narrative in the shaping and interpretation of human culture more generally. (Finnegan, 1997: 70)

> Most of us feel the need to describe how we came to be what we are. We want to believe these stories carry value. To discover we have no story is to acknowledge that our existence is meaningless, which we may find unbearable. (Fulford, 1999: 14)

Story helps us to connect our experiences and make sense of them in relation to those other 'things' and people around us. It is crucial (say theorists such as Dan McAdams, 1993 and Ruth Finnegan, 1997) to the creation of a notion of 'self'. According to Finnegan, the self is "formulated and experienced through self-narratives" (Finnegan, 1997: 69).

The communication of ideas and experiences and the education of the young as to the preferred moral code were also crucial uses of story in pre-literate societies. These societies relied on narrative as a means of communicating knowledge, and thus story assumed a primary function:

> Although it is found in all cultures, narrative is in certain ways more widely functional in primary oral cultures than in others. First, in a primary oral culture, as Havelock pointed out (1978a; cf.1963), knowledge cannot be managed in elaborate, more or less scientifically abstract categories. Oral cultures cannot generate such categories, and so they use stories of human action to store, organize, and communicate much of what they know (Ong, 1982:137)

Narrative was the only means of accomplishing these tasks of transferring knowledge, and imbued some with an incredible amount of power – the tellers

– who could become the leaders of those societies solely on the merit of their storytelling abilities.

It can be argued that not a lot has changed in this respect. We still have an awe for those who can tell great stories to whichever end they use them, and the persuasiveness and consequence of the use of narrative in history exemplifies this. We now experience narrative endlessly, in our leisure time, through work, our politicians, our faith and our education (both formal and informal). Narrative is far from dead:

> In the era of mass storytelling, we live under a Niagara of narrative: print, television, movies, radio, and the Internet deliver to us far more stories than our ancestors could have imagined, and the number of stories available to us seems to grow larger every year. (Fulford, 1999: 149)

Indeed, to Fulford:

> The phenomenon, the rise of industrialized narrative – storytelling that's engineered for mass reproduction and distribution – emerged as the most striking cultural fact of the twentieth century and the most far-reaching development in the history of narrative. (Fulford, 1999: 149)

Stories proliferate, and are, according to Fulford, a larger part of our life now than ever before. 'Mass' narratives in the media, literature and politics played a huge part in the development of the twentieth century and the current look and form of our societies, for example 'mediations' surrounding war and royal events.

In contrast to this view that storytelling still functions as a useful and fundamental tool both personally and in society, there are those who (often in contrast to arguments outlined in the previous section) are pessimistic about the future of storytelling or narrative form. McLuhan for one, was of the opinion that although the development of new replacement media was inevitable and to be encouraged (with a view to creating a global village), the story line would be obliterated by electronic media, and be remembered only as a 'relic' of print media (McLuhan, 1964). Similarly, Steven Johnson (1997),

felt that eventually we would reach a point of information overload which would 'render narrative moot', saying:

> There is no question in my mind that this slower, intensified consciousness is washing away, becoming less and less relevant. That, more than anything, may be the most insidious legacy of TV and film – the sense that a successful story is one that you can consume in a single sitting. (Johnson, 1997b)

The question arises then, in response to these viewpoints, is it possible to further combine 'storying' and our new technologies? Or are narratives doomed to be quashed as our technological climate alters? This debate has now become big business (for example, the huge resources pumped into the development of Virtual Reality in the 1980s and 1990s), instigating a search that has led not only to the rise of computer games, but also to the exploration of such things as 3D movie theatres and themed funfair rides. These new forms have been the subject of enquiry, with both social and financial goals, throughout the closing decades of the twentieth century.

The rise of digital storytelling

The above enquiry has seen the hunt for various means of combining both narrative and the tools of our digital age. The resultant mode of information transfer has become known as digital storytelling (small 'd', small 's'), the latest form of which is the specific mode of storytelling created in America and now employed by the BBC in the form of *Capture Wales*, Digital Storytelling (capital 'D', capital 'S').

Excitement over the possibilities of digital technology is evident in the writings of 'techno-utopians' such as Nicholas Negroponte (1995), Janet Murray (1999) and Brenda Laurel (2000). Often this is due to their background not as academics, but as active researchers in the field. Janet Murray, who spent time working with interactive design at IBM before writing her hugely readable and thought provoking study *Hamlet on the Holodeck,* (1999), says of her own work 'my heart belongs to the hackers' not the 'suits' (Murray, 1999: 9).

Murray's study provides us with current examples of and predictions for the future of our 'fictional universe' that could be fundamentally altered by the use of new technologies. Rather than being purely a mathematical space, computers are capable of providing us with experiences that are vastly enhanced by their capacity for 'immersion', 'agency' and 'transformation' (Murray, 1999).

Murray sums up her positioning in the following statement:

> ... the digital medium has its own affordances, just like oral recitation, print, film, etc., and will like them allow us to tell stories that draw on previous traditions but that represent human experience in ways that have not been possible before. (Murray, 2001)

Murray traces this development to changes in our society, specifically the move toward a more fractured postmodern environment within which the 'self' becomes 'selves', a notion discussed in part two of this chapter:

> The kaleidoscopic power of the computer allows us to tell stories that more truly reflect our turn-of-the-century sensibility. We no longer believe in a single reality, a single integrating view of the world, or even the reliability of a single angle of perception. (Murray, 1999: 161)

Until now, despite this fragmentation, we have retained "the core human desire to fix reality on one canvas, to express all of what we see in an integrated and shapely manner" (Murray, 1999: 161). To suggest that this long-standing trend is to undergo sudden and radical change due to the rise of digital technologies is perhaps to simplify the situation to too great an extent. But we should however be harnessing the possibilities of these technologies to compliment our true multiplicity of selves, and this is perhaps best done through the telling of stories in these new three-dimensional media that allow for a multiplicity of viewpoints and meanings. Murray firmly believes that as long as we view technology as a threat and the book as sacred ("We cling to books as if we believed that coherent human thought is only possible on bound, numbered pages" (Murray, 1999: 2)), we will be missing out on the possibilities of the Internet as a "truly revolutionary invention humankind is just on the verge of putting to use as a spellbinding storyteller" (Murray, 1999: 2). Far from being a threat to our humanity, technology, if used in the right way,

can become an extension of our human powers (in the way Marshall McLuhan envisioned (1964)).

There have been many attempts to incorporate technology into the intensely human desire to tell story and play, such as electronic games and rides, storywebs, non-linear text, virtual reality, chatterbots, MUDs, and even email. Corey Hitchcock (1997) highlights the importance of emails as a means of telling stories digitally:

> Chances are you are already participating in one form of digital storytelling without even realising it.
> How many e-mails do you write a day? E-mail isn't just for corporate missives. Many of us have discovered the delights of instant communication with friends, relatives and colleagues, and we are telling more stories to one another. (Hitchcock, 1997)

The Internet especially is full of new and exciting ways of consuming people's narratives, or indeed, telling one's own. From hypertext links allowing the choice of form and content of a story, to the playing of character games on MUDs or the submission of stories to established websites (such as the BBC), the Internet is arising as a means not for quashing story, but as a forum for such stories to be written and shared with a (possible) global audience.

Digital Storytelling (in the format devised by American practitioners and used by the BBC in *Capture Wales*), is almost anticipated by Janet Murray in the following quote:

> How can we tell what is coming next? Judging from the current landscape, we can expect a continued loosening of the traditional boundaries between games and stories, between films and rides, between broadcast media (like television and radio) and archival media (like books and videotape), between narrative forms (like books) and dramatic forms (like theatre or film), and even between the audience and the author. (Murray, 1999: 64)

In every one of these ways, Digital Storytelling has something to add; it represents a loosening of the boundaries between broadcast media, archive material, narrative forms and dramatic forms, and most certainly, the boundaries between the audience and the author.

Digital Storytelling: An American ideal

Corey Hitchcock in his article on the subject 'Storytellers of the New Millennium' (1997) talks of Digital Storytelling as a means of testing the limits of what is culturally acceptable by the use of new tools to (as is mentioned above) loosen boundaries. According to Hitchcock, Digital Storytelling is a result of these new tools forcing people to think beyond the traditional modes of storytelling and expand upon them (Hitchcock, 1997). The traditional characteristics of narrative remain in place, (structure, plot, character etc) at the same time as other features decrease in importance, such as 'polish' (according to Joe Lambert and Nina Mullen of the Center for Digital Storytelling). This only adds to their value, drawing attention to their organic nature and personal voice. "They are" as a result of this "more genuine and accessible than their slick Hollywood or advertising cousins" (Hitchcock, 1997). This is the beauty of the Digital Story to those who advocate it as a particularly valuable form of media – it is surrounded by an authenticity or aura that is lost by many stories told on the Internet in text, or even those stories 'Hollywooded' beyond recognition. Digital Stories represent the communication of real stories for no other purpose than the pleasure of the telling or the listening. In the eyes of Robert Fulford, they would be perfect:

> I know too much about my personal history and lack the distance necessary for simplicity. Stories, in order to *become* stories, must be simplified, stripped of extraneous detail and vagrant feeling. (Fulford, 1999: 4)

Digital Stories are simple, stripped down and as a result are full of fixed, tangible feeling. They are also intensely personal, (see for example the stories of Gaynor Clifford, Nikisha, and Ian Davies at www.bbc.co.uk/capturewales). The form thus allows for reflection of a very personal nature at the same time as (by their very strict form) being direct and concentrated. This is perhaps what makes Digital Storytelling different to forms of storytelling in other mediums when available to the public.

The growth of Digital Storytelling, discussed in chapter three which deals with its history, was dependent not only on the technological development of the 1990s, the software, available more and more readily to the public, and the

change in people's attitudes toward it, but was also dependent on the actions and foresight of a number of individuals (mostly in the United States), many of whom had prior experience as storytellers and/or therapists. This, according to both Murray and Laurel is common of development practice for new media and narrative:

> New opportunities will come to pass only if control of the technology is taken from the technologist and given to those who understand human beings, human interaction, communication, pleasure, and pain. (Donald A Norman in Laurel, 2000: xi)

> The shape of narrative art and entertainment in the next few decades will be determined by the interplay of these two forces, that is, the more nimble, independent experimenters, who are comfortable with hypertext, procedural thinking, and virtual environment, and the giant conglomerates of the entertainment industry, who have vast resources and an established connection to mass audience. (Murray, 1999: 252)

Individuals such as Dana Atchley and Joe Lambert who were integral to the rise of Digital Storytelling in America are representative of this trend – a development whereby the technology was taken out of the labs at Adobe and put into the hands of storytelling practitioners. In the case of Digital Storytelling at the BBC, indeed throughout the UK, (see chapter five on the origins of *Capture Wales*), the individual responsible was Daniel Meadows.

Digital Storytelling currently has a presence on the Internet growing at a phenomenal rate. Websites such as Next Exit at www.nextexit.com, Daniel Meadows' www.photobus.co.uk and Third World Majority at www.cultureisaweapon.org provide examples of Digital Stories and the reasoning behind their individual applications,. and a comprehensive list of resources can be found at http://tech-head.com/dstory.htm (maintained by Hilary McLellan).

Practical information about the process of making Digital Story can also be found on the web, most notably on the Center for Digital Storytelling website at www.storycenter.org, and on Daniel Meadows' website (see above).

Perhaps due to the digital nature of the medium however, there is little written work in print on the topic of Digital Storytelling. Joe Lambert's 2002 book *Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community* is undoubtedly the most detailed and informative work on the practice, history and ethos of the movement, but it contains little reference to the effects of making stories on workshop participants. This is a gulf in knowledge currently unfulfilled in any work published in print, or online. The history is well documented, as is discussion about the possible impact of this type of communication on the future of media, but little research has been carried out (in public especially) into the uses that people make of their individual stories, the knowledge they gain from the experience and the effect that it has on their notions of self and community:

> Our work has not been thoroughly researched, and the opinions are based on large piles of empiricism, which may mean that they are slightly incorrect, or plain stupid. (Lambert, 2002a: xviii)

This piece of research aims to document and analyse the experiences of participants in Digital Storytelling workshops (specifically those held by the BBC in Wales), and to contextualise those findings within wider debates about media, Digital Storytelling and the BBC.

This research and discussion will also, it is hoped, go some way to providing us with a framework for looking at the effect of projects such as *Capture Wales* on notions of 'self', 'audiences' and 'power'. Previous literature in these areas is discussed in the following section.

Part Two: Audiences, Subjectivity and Power

> The culture industry is corrupt, not as a sink of iniquity but as the cathedral of higher gratification (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1955: 114)

So wrote Max Horkheimer and Theador Adorno in their seminal work *The Culture Industry: Enlightenment as Mass Deception* (1955). The gratification they talk of is that which comes with the pleasure of absence – absence of thought, imagination and pain; "Amusement always means putting things out of mind, forgetting suffering, even when it is on display. At its root is powerlessness" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1955; 116). They claim that the liberation which amusement forges is freedom from the heavy duty of thought and imagination. The entertainment industry, according to Horkheimer and Adorno, has a sole purpose – to stunt people's imaginations and creativity as opposed to challenging them. This state of being is the ultimate pleasure to be gleaned from the culture industries.

This rather depressing view puts the pleasure seeker / thought evader or, if you will, the audience, in a passive and rather uninspiring role as mindless consumer. The only way that they can be kept in this passive role, say Horkheimer and Adorno, is through keeping them more 'stupid' than they are 'intelligent'; "The advance of stupidity must not lag behind the simultaneous advance of intelligence" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1955; 116). Keeping the public in this 'condition' was a task they saw as becoming increasingly difficult. This 'condition' might have seemed harder to maintain had they been writing in our age of increasing interactivity between audiences and providers of cultural content.

The environment in which we work, play and consume is evolving. In our changing technological climate audiences are perhaps becoming more aware of their current role as subjects to be acted upon by media agencies, and are increasingly seeking a new mode of finding pleasure – that which comes with exercising power, being an active participant in their own entertainment:

> ... audiences are changing in two significant ways. First, as countless experts have noted, our attention spans are getting

> shorter. We are a culture of channel surfers ... Secondly, as we move toward an interactive communications culture, we have an increased expectation that our communicators will provide the option of interaction. (Lambert, 2002a: 88)

There have always been people or groups of people who have refused to be passive consumers of prescribed media output, for example, those who pioneered the radical press, pirate radio stations and published radical works of literature. But there are a new multitude of decisions to be made by people on an everyday basis that, in theory, provide them with power that they have never before had in relation to media output. These decisions include, for example, how to access an increasing number of television and radio channels (on digital, SKY, cable or the Internet) and how to receive their daily news (on television 24 hours a day, by newspaper or via the Internet). Audiences now have the ability to pause live action (SKY Plus), participate in game shows and interact in a two-stream direction with their televisions (respective examples are Channel Four's *Big Brother* and BBC News). As we see this level of interactivity become an increasing reality, Horkheimer and Adorno's assessment of what makes pleasurable consumption could well become redundant. Many audiences now want and expect to be able to be involved in a participatory relationship with their media providers (for example, those audiences for talk radio, reality television and the Internet).

Capture Wales is an example of the culture industry – specifically the BBC – attempting to provide audiences with the most extreme example of this type of relationship, where they are involved in the production and distribution of their own information and entertainment. It represents a revolutionary use of new technology by an organisation that has been in existence for over 75 years. Questions arise out of a study of Horkheimer and Adorno's words however when we read that, in their opinion:

> Even on those occasions when the public rebels against the pleasure industry it displays the feebleness systematically instilled in it by that industry (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1955; 116).

Is *Capture Wales* merely a 'gift' from the BBC? Does it represent 'feeble resistance' or indeed, an act of 'rebellion'? In order to answer these types of questions and understand the shifting relationship between the public and any

media provider, it is important that we take a look at this new venture through the works of theorists from a variety of disciplines in both the past and the present. This should provide an insight into the environment that has spawned this new 'elevated pleasure' of interactivity between audiences and producers, and an understanding of the possible outcomes of a project such as *Capture Wales*. Not only this however, these readings raise questions about the nature of such ventures which can only be answered through further study. These questions will form the basis of my investigation into Digital Storytelling in the hands of the BBC, and are highlighted at the close of this chapter.

The problem (?) of the audience

> The term audiences (in the plural) forces our sometimes unwilling attention toward actual users of media. It pushes us to consider the real flows of media influence, including those of radical media, and not simply to speculate concerning hoped-for flows. If audiences are redefined as media users rather than as consumers, as active rather than uncritical, and as various (audiences) rather than as homogenous, then the term is able to be freed of much of its purely marketing baggage. (Downing, et al, 2001: 8)

The relationship between audiences and media producers has been the object of much enquiry for cultural and media theorists since studies into the influence of propaganda after the First World War. It is a relationship that has a history cited over and again in academic texts right up to the present day (see for example Lewis, 1991; Abercrombie & Longhurst, 1998; Dickinson et al. 1998; Ruddock, 2001; Ross & Nightingale, 2003).

John Downing (above) outlines a position on audiences that is modern, rare and heavily contested. It will be seen that the term audience is one that needs much unpacking, being a blanket term for a number of approaches. The traditional Marxist approach, embodied in the work of Horkheimer and Adorno and outlined in the previous section obviously contradicts that of Downing.

As we have seen, Horkheimer and Adorno were of the belief that audiences were inactive and that inactivity was precisely the pleasure they were seeking

from the media and the arts. Horkheimer and Adorno were representative of the views of the Frankfurt School of thought – that audiences were more often than not subject to wilful manipulation by the cultural industries. Audiences were thus passive consumers of a prescribed media output in what has since been represented with the hypodermic syringe and magic bullet metaphors where, "In each case, the public is victim" (Watson, 1998: 7). Horkheimer and Adorno viewed audiences as compliant and inert; "the spectator must need no thoughts of his own" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1955: 109). They saw mass media as agents of a process of both stunting our vision and our spontaneity as audiences, leaving no room for our creative imaginations in our relationships with them. To Horkheimer and Adorno, all media were uniform and unadventurous and departures from the norm were merely one off ventures that are subsumed into that norm from that point onwards (1955). This rather discouraging view of media relations leaves the audience in a state of passivity, we are so used to submission, action becomes almost a physical impossibility. This stems mostly from our desire to be uniform. In their view, we are so desperate not to be considered outsiders in our own world that we have created cultural industries which maintain our 'sameness'. According to the view of Horkheimer and Adorno we insist upon the ideologies which enslave us, we are victims of our own inertia.

Actual research into the responses of audiences however, has unearthed a very different scenario. Studies such as that of Lazarsfeld, Berelson and Gaudet into voting behaviour ('The People's Choice: How the Voter makes up his Mind in a Presidential Campaign', 1944) concluded that the traditional stimulus-response model painted a picture that was too simplistic (Brooker & Jermyn, 2003). Media messages reached the vast majority of the public in a much less direct manner than was previously imagined, filtered and reappropriated by a group of people the theorists termed 'opinion leaders' and a two-step-flow model of influence was developed.

This led to more independent analyses of audiences leading to arguments that audience members used their own conflicting desires, histories and personalities to filter media messages and pick out what they wanted from

them. Audiences, it was espoused, were using media for a variety of different reasons; diversion, information, forming relationships, even for para-social interaction. Audiences thus performed an 'active' role in their relationship with the producers of media, often rejecting or even 'boomeranging' media messages (Cooper & Dinerman, 1951; Winick, 1963l; Katz & Liebes, 1993; Jhally & Lewis, 1992; Gillespie, 1995; and Bobo, 1992). These studies all show the complexities inherent in trying to homogenise the viewing experience and presuming audiences to be of one 'type'. They variously highlighted the importance of cultural beliefs, life experience, personality, ethnicity, nationhood, sexuality and age of audience members to their readings of a range of differing media.

Walter Benjamin (writing in the 1930s) had predicted this kind of relationship between audiences and producers of cultural output. Benjamin discussed the changing role of the reader in his study *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction*. Durham and Kellner note how in this study:

> Benjamin argued that film, sports, and other forms of mass entertainment were creating a new kind of spectator, able to critically dissect cultural forms and to render intelligent judgement on them. (Durham & Kellner, 2001: 9)

Benjamin perceived readers or audiences in an active light, capable of reacting to as well as consuming media content:

> For centuries a small number of writers were confronted by many thousands of readers ... And today there is hardly a gainfully employed European who could not, in principle, find an opportunity to publish somewhere or other comments on his work, grievances, documentary reports, or that sort of thing. Thus, the distinction between author and public is about to lose its basic character. (Benjamin, 1955: 225)

What started with 'Letters to the Editor' (a phenomenon which has sparked academic enquiry for a number of years), is seen as escalating into a new media form or forms. These new forms not only alter the basic structure of relationships between authors and publishers, but "affect artistic invention itself' and perhaps even bring about 'an amazing change in our very notion of art" (Paul Valery, in Benjamin, 1955: 211).

Patrick Fuery, writing in 2000, talks also of a need to re-cast the role of the author, no longer to be seen as the traditional God-like figure described below:

> Writing is such an unstable place that we seek some way of controlling it, of stabilising it and freeing it of the burden of uncertainty and ambiguity. One of the traditional ways of doing this is to refer to the author of the text. (Fuery, 2000: 63)

Roland Barthes' influential essay *The Death of the Author* (1977) had proposed a transitory future for story which would see the traditional role of the author redundent:

> ... a text is made up of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue, parody, contestation, but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader, not, as was hitherto said, the author. (Barthes, 1977: 148)

Traditional analyses of literature that concentrated on the author and their intended reading of a text were, to Barthes, a simplification of the process of authoring and narrating. In reality, according to Barthes, a disconnection occurs, 'the voice loses its origin' in the moment of utterance. Thus, the power of the text lies in the uses made by readers, it is opened up in the act of reading to any interpretation (Barthes 1977).

Sven Birkerts, writing later (1994) about changing relationships between producers and consumers of cultural artefacts, also (reluctantly) admits that this process is occurring:

> the overall rescripting of all societal premises is bound to affect reading and writing immensely. The formerly stable system – the axis with writer at one end, editor, publisher, and bookseller in the middle and reader at the other end – is slowly being bent into a pretzel. (Birkerts, 1994: 5)

Both Birkerts and Benjamin see a metamorphosis in what Paterson (2002) calls the value chain. This 'value chain' (created in reference to television, but applicable to any medium whereby content is handed from one source to another through intermediaries), positions contributors and programme makers at the top, and the audience four steps down in the chain, kept at a distance by broadcasters and distributors (Paterson, 2002: 137). This

hierarchy of power shows the audience as acted upon, with no input. But this value chain of traditional producer-consumer relationships is being fundamentally shaken, or 'bent into a pretzel' by developments in technology such as the Internet, and even projects like *Capture Wales*.

We saw in part one that in the opinion of theorists, artistic and media creativity are evolving (Negroponte, 1995; Swann, 2000; Laurel, 2000a; Murray, 2001), both producers and audiences alike finding new ways of expressing themselves. We see this happening with a medium such as Digital Storytelling, especially in the hands of an organisation like the BBC. Here we see a relatively new art form being employed by a media agency in a way that could, in theory, alter not only our notions of art, but also our notions of media hierarchy and ownership in the way Rodriguez (2001) identifies below.

Clemencia Rodriguez, in her study of citizens' media *Fissures in the Mediascape* restates those arguments of Walter Benjamin although with a more radical conclusion:

> Lately, communication scholarship has presented us with a different, more optimistic perspective: audiences are not totally powerless against the mass media ... Reception – says a soothing voice of solace – is a creative and active cultural process. (Rodriguez, 2001: 25)

Rodriguez specifies that citizens' media involve the process of one or more professionals working with a community and its members during all phases of development, in a process of knowledge exchange. The result of this exchange is active audience participation, or even, in the case of many citizen's media projects (including *Capture Wales*), the audience themselves becoming media-makers or producers. Rodriguez differentiates between two different types of projects in her discussion of citizens' video projects. Firstly, those which involve making 'video as project', where a product of a certain quality is the expected outcome (an idea that inevitably leads to a discussion of 'high' and 'low' art later in this chapter). Secondly, Rodriguez talks of a 'video as process' approach where the process becomes more important than the eventual product (a theory that smacks of the 'medium is the message' argument of Marshall McLuhan, 1964). Through this video as process method

of producing media (of which I expect to find *Capture Wales* is an example), community members are involved in a process of deconstruction and reconstruction of the self, resulting in irreversible changes in the make up of the individuals involved, and the communities they represent. The result is a challenge to power relations within the media, where audiences are active, skilled and capable of reproducing media in a democratic and participatory way after the project has reached its natural conclusion (Rodriguez is of the opinion that most citizens' media projects are ephemeral, 2001: 159).

Rodriguez's study of citizens' media is representative of a more populist agentic approach to media audiences that sees them as the wielders of a certain amount of power when it comes to relations with media organisations. This approach has been termed an 'active audience' approach:

> ... an audience that is conceived as working on and molding media products not just passively soaking up their messages. (Downing et al, 2001: 7)

Active audiences and alternative media

As we have seen, a multitude of audience studies have been carried out with a view to understanding what are complex and transitory relationships between media 'providers' and 'users'. These studies (also Morley, 1980 and Ang, 1995) highlight a general area for interest. Of crucial importance to this study however, are those discussions surrounding alternative media and the possibilities for an 'active audience' outlined in this section.

John Downing (1988), in his revisitation of Jurgen Habermas' public sphere theory ('The Alternative Public Realm'), concludes that audiences are capable of more than just rejecting media messages, they not only work on and mould media, but often go as far as creating alternative media very much in opposition to that of the mainstream (as in Rodriguez's study above). Jurgen Habermas' paper *The Emergence of the Public Sphere* (1994) had outlined his bifurcation of the public and the private realms, and espoused the public sphere as an ephemoral space for critical rational debate that existed for all people outside of the home (a questionable somewhat utopian notion). Downing talks of an 'alternative public sphere' that arose out of the anti-

nuclear dialogue following the volatile political situation of the 1960s and 1970s. At this time alternative media was enabled by the increased availability of small-scale media technologies and resulted in wider public knowledge of the discussions surrounding political activism. Downing concentrates his argument on the events in West Germany and Britain showing how in both cases 'implicitly and often explicitly' there was a move to "create models of media operation transcending the typical behaviour both of capitalist media conglomerates and of Soviet-style 'transmission-belt' media" (Downing, 1988: 163). Due to the restrictions on traditional media and a shrinkage in the information exchanged and discussed in the public sphere (as predicted by Habermas in his essay) political activists were forced to look to alternative media routes in order to deliver their messages. Current methods of public opinion formation were too restrictive, the power structure encroaching on the realm of public critical and rational debate. There had been a 'colonization of the life-world' resulting in a dilution of true public opinion (Downing, 1988: 165).

In his study, Downing gives a critical discussion of Oskar Negt and Alexander Kluge's 1972 work *Public Realm and Experience* which foresaw a situation where an autonomous proletarian public realm would be created, eventually replacing the 'processes and structures of the bourgeois public realm' (Downing, 1988: 166). They felt that the bourgeois public realm (that identified by Habermas), was hindering the expression of the working classes. The proletariat were held down by their very nature and denied the means of expression, as if they were the contents of a bottle under pressure. This would imply that all people need are the means of production and expression to produce a 'counter' public realm. Downing feels that in actuality the process is a lot more complicated and drawn out than this. He suggests a reformulation of the views of Negt and Kluge to include the actual lived experience of those trying to organise such feeling and produce media, as is attempted in this thesis.

Downing further develops his theories about what he terms 'Radical Media' in his co-authored 2001 book *Radical Media: Rebellious Communication and*

Social Movements. By radical media, Downing refers to "media, generally small-sale and in many different forms, that express an alternative vision to hegemonic policies, priorities and perspectives" (Downing et al, 2001: v). They 'break somebody's rules' (Downing et al, 2001: xi). These media operate not necessarily in opposition to mainstream media, but often *use* those very media. They serve two purposes; expressing opposition from below toward the power structure and/or building support against policies or the survival of the power structure laterally. At any one time, radical media can operate vertically and/or laterally. They are often organised more democratically than other organisations and make attempts to voice excluded people's stories and opinions.

Chris Atton's 2002 study of the changing face of these radical or alternative media forms builds upon the work of Downing. His 'alternative media' is defined as that which offers "the means for democratic communication to people who are normally excluded from media production" (Atton, 2002: 4) in a process that blurs the polarised positions of "alternative and mainstream ... powerful and powerless, dominance and resistance" (Atton, 2002: 6). Atton's study of 'zines' leads him to present his own model of alternative media which highlights three products: the radical content, a visual form and the ability to reproduce that product, and three processes: distribution (through alternative sites) transformed social relations/roles (for example the relationship between reader and writer) and transformed communication processes (for example, through horizontal means) (Atton, 2002: 27). We see that by this typology, Digital Storytelling is indeed an example of alternative media. Atton, like Downing, is optimistic about the future of alternative media. In his view words associated with the publishing industry which limit possible input (such as 'print run' and 'distribution') will become obsolete with the increasing capacity of computers and the like to circulate media (Atton, 2002: 134), and the increasing ability of people to participate in the creation of this media.

Interestingly, alternative media, often considered worthy by their very existence, have received little or no academic attention in terms of actual 'users':

> It is a paradox, however, that so little attention has been dedicated to the user dimension, given that alternative-media activists represent in a sense the most active segment of the so-called 'active audience'. (Downing et al, 2001: 625)

Thus, this research focuses on the various 'users' of *Capture Wales.*

For the most part, radical or alternative media provide facts to the public that might otherwise be denied and "explore fresh ways of developing a questioning perspective on the hegemonic process and increasing the public's sense of confidence in its power to engineer constructive change" (Downing et al, 2001: 16). In the case of the media, this involves questioning the methods through which we consent to be 'given' media, and increasing the belief amongst 'audiences' that they could create more relevant and challenging content themselves. This is most certainly attempted with Digital Storytelling as it has been practiced in America, and now, although complicated by the involvement of the BBC, with *Capture Wales.* That involvement can perhaps be explained if we look at the work of another theorist, John Fiske (1989).

Fiske, influenced heavily by Michel de Certeau's work on media audiences (1980), outlines an actual lived experience of the development of autonomous 'counter' public realm activity. Fiske's study takes a look at the way jeans have been used as 'cultural resources'. He sees the wearing of jeans as lived capitalism; ideology made material, but the tearing of jeans as a kind of resistance to the traditional balance of consumptive power; "It is a refusal of commodification and an assertion of one's right to make one's own culture out of the resources provided by the commodity system" (Fiske, 1989: 15).

By a process of excorporation, consumers produce their own culture using the resources made available by the groups that dominate them. In the same way, Digital Storytelling provides us with an example of a non-literal tearing, a tearing of the traditional media view that renders subordinate groups passive and vulnerable to messages ("Such "tearing" or disfigurement of a commodity in order to assert one's right and ability to remake it into one's own culture

need not be literal" (Fiske, 1989: 15)). Using the resources made available by software manufacturers as cultural resources, 'counter' public realm activity can take place; people who might previously have formed part of these subordinate groups producing their own media in the form of Digital Stories.

Fiske argues that once oppositional meaning has been invested in a new cultural artefact (such as ripped jeans) a process of incorporation or containment takes place. Realising the possible imbalance between dominant and subordinate that could arise when people are using commodities only as resources, these very symbols must be subsumed into the ideology of the system and made 'normal'. So, manufacturers will tear jeans in factories prior to selling them, "adopting the signs of resistance" (Fiske, 1989: 15). The balance of power is thus reasserted. Again, if one looks at Digital Storytelling, this can be seen in evidence. A new way of producing media has been created, one that could, in theory, (if the public are given inexpensive access to materials, and the knowledge to create content), work toward an overthrowing of the hierarchy of traditional media relations. Before this 'revolution' has been possible however, this new way of creating media content has become a tool used by the BBC. The BBC is able to provide access and knowledge necessary to create Digital Stories, but in doing so, can select people whose stories they deem worthy of being told. In this sense, people's possible resistance and the extent of their knowledge gained is scripted by those working as part of the *Capture Wales* team. Has this occurred as a process of incorporation? Or the far more cynical sounding process of containment? (a gesture that asserts the dominance of the current social order by demonstrating an ability to cope with and control dissent (Fiske, 1989: 18)). Either way, it is a response to an alternative public realm activity, one that seeks to both understand and utilise the knowledge and skill that has arisen 'counter' to traditional media activity.

The works of both Fiske (1989) and Downing (1988, 2001) therefore provide a useful theoretical structure for looking at *Capture Wales*. Downing gives us the alternative public realm in which we can locate the process of Digital Storytelling as an activity that has arisen due to the increased availability and

lowered costs of small-scale multimedia technologies. This, in turn enables 'the audience' to express themselves and invest media with their own meanings, be these in keeping with, or perhaps even counter to, those meanings represented through mainstream media and the traditional public realm. Fiske's study gives us an example of how this kind of activity works in practice, and the ways in which dominant groups respond to it. This provides us with a useful framework for *Capture Wales*, a lived example of alternative public realm activity that has been subsumed into the workings of the BBC.

The above scenario provides an interesting base for discussion that will underpin much of my thesis. This discussion will be in keeping with Fiske's new approach or 'third way' of approaching popular culture whereby the power of dominant forces (for the purpose of this thesis, in the media) is neither ignored nor overemphasised. Rather, the dominant forces are looked at alongside the resistance to them. This third way:

> ... sees popular culture as a site of struggle, but, while accepting the power of the forces of dominance, it focuses rather upon the popular tactics by which these forces are coped with, are evaded or are restricted. (Fiske, 1989: 20)

It also goes a way towards understanding why incorporation is both constant and necessary in order to maintain the dominant ideology. This is the approach I wish to take in this study of *Capture Wales* – an appreciation of the power structure, with a look at the progressions that can take place within it.

I expect these progressions to take many forms; but anticipate none to be so overt as the progression of self for all participants who take part in the workshops. I expect participants to be vocal on this topic both during workshops, and reflecting upon them at a later date. The 'tearing' associated with *Capture Wales* will not be purely of traditional media hierarchies, but of notions of self for all involved. The 'new loci of speech' (Poster, 1995: 614) enabled by new technologies creates not only an active, democratic, reappropriated 'audience', but new selves.

Identity

Mark Poster's 1995 study of postmodern virtualities goes beyond the questions raised by Downing and Fiske about alternative media and their affects on the public sphere, active groups of people and power structures, investigating how oppositional activity fundamentally affects our notions of reality and self. Reality, in the new media age is problematised and multiplied, altering the conditions under which we form our self-identities. Texts are polysemic, meaning is plural, there is no one truth, power and resistance are everywhere. The way we perceive ourselves is changing as a result:

> For what is at stake in these technical innovations, I contend, is not simply an increased 'efficiency' of interchange, enabling new avenues of investment, increased productivity at work and new domains of leisure and consumption, but a broad and extensive change in the culture, in the way identities are constructed. (Poster, 1995: 611)

The concept of 'Identity' has been deconstructed and reconstructed infinitely under the banner of a variety of disciplines. It appears we all have a vested interest in finding ways of understanding and talking about identity. Not surprisingly then, it has been a cause for vociferous debate in academia, but also in literature, film, popular psychology and politics. At times presented as insular, individual and ordinary, at other times (and more so in our postmodern discourses as exemplified by Poster above), fragmented and distorted (the result of society, ideology, and our history) 'identity' is increasingly complex to define:

> It has become a truism of the humanities that the human individual was once (wrongly) thought of as a whole, single, and naturally occurring, but that recent theories present it as split, multiple, and implicated in the complex processes of culture and politics. (Fuery, 2000: 158)

Stuart Hall (2000) points out in his essay 'Who needs Identity', that the only thing that the multitude of academic disciplines concerned with 'identity' now agree on is that we must be critical of any definition that casts identity in the role of "integral, ordinary and unified" (Hall, 2000: 15). We must now look at identity in its "new, displaced or decentred position within the paradigm" (Hall, 2000: 16). He goes on to highlight his position on identity in more detail:

> Identities are never unified and, in late modern times, increasingly fragmented and fractured; never singular but multiply constructed across different, often intersecting and antagonistic, discourses, practices and positions. They are subject to a radical historicization, and are constantly in the process of change and transformation. (Hall, 2000: 17)

In opposition to the enlightenment view of the self, Hall does not see identity as the unification of the self or as a combined persona shared by a group of people. Far from it, to Hall identity has and always will mean the marking of difference as opposed to the marking of unifying characteristics; "Above all, and directly contrary to the form in which they are constantly invoked, identities are constructed through, not outside, difference" (Hall, 2000: 17). Defining ourselves as of a certain identity thus means separating ourselves from other forms of being in a process Patrick Fuery calls 'othering' (Fuery, 2000: 145), for example, to be woman is other to man, to be black is other to white.

These identities of difference we take up within a society that offers us a limited and changing number of subject positions – we make a choice from those positionings. Identity is thus not internal, but a 'temporary attachment' that we make to a mode of being which, in our fragmented age, could alter dramatically, or even cease to be:

> Identity is perhaps best understood as a limited and temporary fixing for the individual of a particular mode of subjectivity as apparently what one *is*. (Weedon, 2004: 19)

Digital Storytelling, as we have seen, is a new medium that uses the age-old art of telling narrative. In this respect, it is a new way of talking about selves and identity:

> The idea of digital storytelling has also resonated with many people because it speaks to an undeniable need to constantly explain our identities to each other. Identity is changing ... the only real way to know about someone is through story, and not one consistent story, but a number of little stories that can adjust to countless different contexts. As we improve our ways through our multiple identities, any tool that extends our ability to communicate information about ourselves to others becomes invaluable. The digital stories that will inhabit our Memory Boxes will undoubtedly assist in this larger project of allowing us to coexist in a world of fluid identity. (Lambert, 2002a; 17)

Joe Lambert sees Digital Storytelling as a vital means of self-expression in an age where there are as many 'selves' as there are stories to be told.

Narratives of the self

As outlined above, we have moved on from a definition of 'self' as "somehow sheltered from cultural forces" (Underwood, (b)). This cartesan, humanist unitary self (or enlightenment self) was inadequate when viewed in its social context. In contrast to this, the more popular view of the postmodern self sees it as "the product of social structures and patterns of signification" (Underwood, (b)). In our changing social climate, the self is thus relegated to a fragmented, dislocated, unstable positioning, the *subject* of external forces. As Patrick Fuery points out, the postmodern world is one of "complex, rapid and startling images that shape our consciousness, culture, and ways of making sense of the world" (Fuery, 2000: 88). This view is especially popular with Marxists who see the theories of Marx as removing 'man' from the centre of life and highlighting the economic and social relations within which we operate (Underwood, (b)). In this view we are now capable of inhabiting a multitude of selves, making sense of our lives through the construction of 'narratives of the self'.

One such way in which this is achieved is through theories such as George Mead's *The Looking Glass Self* which has the self split into the active and feeling 'I' and the recollective external 'me' which views actions from the viewpoint of others with whom we build relationships – namely significant others, generalised others and primary groups (Crossley, 2003). Similarly, William James highlights the existence of a split in the world of the self between the objective part which is the "sum total of whatsoever at any given time we may be thinking of", and the subjective "inner 'state'" in which we do our thinking (Underwood).

James and Mead both stress the importance of reaching an idea of 'self' more often than not in relation to others around us. Madan Sarup (1996) agrees:

> At one time it was taken for granted that a person had a 'given' identity. The debates around it today assume that identity is not an

> inherent quality of a person but that it arises in interaction with others and the focus is on the processes by which identity is constructed (Sarup, 1996: 14).

Charles Taylor (in Underwood, (b)) also, in his theorising on the self, highlights the importance of the relationship of that self with external factors, namely morality and 'goodness' (traditionally ideas from sources such as religion). In our changed society, where the influence of religion is in decline, there is (according to Taylor) some difficulty in establishing how we feel about that relationship with 'goodness'. Far from becoming an internal conflict of the self however, increased capitalism and the proliferation of the media mean that these moral dilemmas are played out, in all their conflictual glory, before our very eyes.

The above theorists then, agree on one point – that the postmodern self is nothing like the traditional unitary, ordinary self. Far from it, the self or 'subject' is split both within itself and with society; 'I', 'me', 'mind', 'body', 'inner', 'outer'. The self cannot be looked at in isolation or by the same criteria as we might have looked at it even fifty years ago. It must be looked at in relation to the powers surrounding it and through the one coherent strand that makes sense of it all and allows us to externalise that self to those others around us whose opinion counts so much – narrative:

> The postmodernist vision of the individual is one which defies any sense of development, order or progression. It is in this sense that the 'subject' is pronounced dead. I am no longer viewed as the 'centre' or 'essence' of my personality, a unique individual with the ability to 'authentically' or independently reflect on how to act or how to understand my life and its meaning. Instead the locus of meaning shifts to the plot of linguistic signs, narratives and power. (Crossley, 2003: 26)

> If you ask someone about their identity; a story soon appears. (Sarap, 1996: 15)

Madan Sarap is of the belief that we form views about ourselves and others through the narratives we tell, enabling us to construct versions of our self (or selves). Never more so has this been true than in our new postmodern world where people search for their roots and their cultures in a bid to glean an

understanding of themselves. This postmodern society, according to Arthur Frank (1995), encourages a new set of stories to be heard as a result:

> Some authors, such as Frank (1995: 71) have argued that this need to 'find one's own voice' ... is a feature characteristic of postmodern contemporary culture in which subordinated peoples (such as women, the working class, ethnic minorities, disabled people) have been 'written on from outside' and have therefore 'lost their voices'. (Frank quoted in Crossley, 2003: 109)

Those whose voices have previously been muted in debate within the public sphere, and under or misrepresented through our cultural industries find the impetus in our fragmented society, or indeed the space, to tell their personal stories; 'self stories proliferate' (Frank, 1995 quoted in Crossley, 2003: 109). Indeed, we see a plethora of books (both academic and more 'popular' self-help publications), websites and television programmes dedicated to helping people find those stories and formulate them in a way that enables coherence to be found.

We are becoming self-conscious of the fact that our stories form a big part of who we are – we are constantly told that this is so:

> Everyone has a story to tell. (*Capture Wales* slogan)

> If you want to know me, then you must know my story, for my story defines who I am. And if I want to know *myself*, to gain insight into the meaning of my own life, then I, too, must come to know my own story (McAdams, 1993: 11)

Dan P. McAdams (1993, 2001) describes one possible way in which this is achieved, through the making of a 'personal myth'. This mythmaking starts in early childhood and continues through adolescence and into our late adult years. In our formative years, we build attachments (in the most part with the parents, especially the mother as primary caregiver) which will influence the course our life story takes and the overall tone of that story. Even in the playground, before we are conscious of what we are doing, we are collecting a stock of images and backdrops that will form the basis of the story we will compose – this we do even in fantasy play with our friends. In adolescence, we start organising this into a more coherent pattern, more often than not, around the themes of love and power. It is during this time also that we work

on the ideological framework within which we will seek to operate and write our story. These can normally be isolated to two types of ideology – agentic (typically male), in which autonomy and individuality are valued above all else, or communal (typically female), which emphasises the value of group and interpersonal relationships. In adulthood, this is refined, and the main characters or 'imagoes ' (McAdams, 1993) begin to take precedence, and various elements start to draw together forming (if we are lucky) a "vitalizing and harmonious whole" (McAdams, 1993: 13). Our final years of life involve reflecting on the myth that we have constructed and deciding, essentially, whether it is a 'good' or 'bad' story. McAdams concludes that he "suspect[s] that most of us will look back on the creation of our personal myths with a mixture of acceptance and rejection" (McAdams, 1993: 14).

This storied quality we confer upon our lives is essential to the idea of self (in the eyes of McAdams and other narrative psychologists such as Crossley). Not only enabling us to 'organize our thoughts' in a way that is easily remembered and translated to others, these narratives also help to "mend us when we are broken, heal us when we are sick, and even move us toward psychological fulfilment and maturity" (McAdams, 1993: 31). This healing process is something that McAdams has explored in depth in his other publications (particularly in his study of *The Person: An Integrated Introduction to Personality Psychology)*, but is also something that Crossley recognises. In so-called 'restitution' narratives (Crossley, 2003), a person can begin to organise their experiences of trauma or illness in a way that enables them to find a solution.

It is interesting in this discussion to introduce the notion that certain forms of Digital Storytelling, in its origins in America, have been taken up initially as modes of therapy, something individuals often chose (and paid) to do in order to fulfil some type of catharsis. It is also interesting to note that in response to my questions about Digital Storytelling workshops in Wales, the words 'cathartic' and 'therapeutic' are common, one respondent even states that the process of the Digital Storytelling workshop had helped her to organise the events of her life into some coherent order. This discussion will be taken up in

greater detail in chapter six of this thesis, but it is worthy to note that there appears to be an inherent need for human beings to order their experiences, and that this is best achieved through the use of narrative. This is, according to McAdams, not a narcissistic project, but an "ongoing act of psychosocial and social *responsibility*" (McAdams, 1993: 35). In our fragmented, postmodern world, it is important that this is achieved for we do not have the established order of religion within which to frame ourselves; "Because our world can no longer tell us who we are and how we should live, we must figure it out on our own." (McAdams, 1993: 35). This, McAdams is quick to point out, is not done in isolation from that disenfranchised society within which we operate, far from it; our stories are made in a "social context" (McAdams, 1993: 268)

Narrative Psychology – the effect of the 'telling'

One current trend in storytelling of great significance to this study is the increasing interest in, and opportunities to tell, personal 'ordinary' life stories. This Ruth Finnegan credits to the increasing influence of oral history (detailed in chapter four), an increased family history movement which encourages the unearthing and telling of stories and also, to the rising general interest in "documenting the experience of hitherto 'invisible' and 'unsung' groups and individuals" (Finnegan, 1997: 75). The result of this is a cross-disciplinary 'collaboration' of studies of these narratives, especially interested in those told in the voice of the teller (much like this study):

> If we want to know about people's experience and how they interpret it, there is something to be said for looking not to broader generalizations but to the stories of the participants themselves, and, better still, to stories told not in others' words but as the tellers themselves expressing them. (Finnegan, 1997: 73)

This current trend shows no sign of slowing with the rise of forums for personal story expression (for example on the Internet), therapy, and interest in tracing and documenting familial histories.

These narratives, when told by the 'teller' not only help reflect and make sense of life, but also help with its construction, and indeed the construction of the self (Crossley, 2003; McLoed, 1997).

Narrative psychology has become an increasingly popular form of therapy as a way of making sense of the 'self' in our postmodern age, especially for those who have problems coming to terms with traumatic events and mental illness. White and Epston's 1990 study *Narrative Ends to Therapeutic Means*, has become a seminal text for those involved in the business of 'externalising problems':

> ... we make the general assumption that persons experience problems, for which they frequently seek therapy, when the narratives in which they are "storying" their experience, and/or in which they are having their experience "storied" by others, do not sufficiently represent their lived experience, and that, in these circumstances, these will be significant aspects of their lived experience that contradict these dominant narratives. (White & Epston, 1990: 14)

Through externalising problems, it is possible to free the self from these oppressive dominant stories. In our current climate, most people in Western societies have some knowledge of 'therapy', how it works and what it can achieve, and thus, according to McLeod, we increasingly think of our life stories in a language that we learn from therapy (McLeod, 1997). This, he credits to our growing up within a context that encourages a revival of oral traditions, and more public disclosure of our problems through such means as the Oprah Winfrey show (McLeod, 1997). Narrative psychology can use story to represent experience and for 'resolving dilemmas and tensions' (McLeod, 1997: 36). As a result, 'clients' can re-establish a sense of control and order over their experiences, re-cast chaotic experiences into causal sequences, and re-tell stories for problem solving (McLeod, 1997: 36).

Narrative Psychology has come under fierce criticism, especially from those of a Marxist view of the world, for encouraging people to think in terms of the 'self' as opposed to their position within a society or community. This 'culture of narcissism' (Crossley, 2003: 160) or survivalism sees the concentration on personal narratives as indulgent and limiting to the development of a society where people think and act with the thoughts and actions of others in mind; it favours the private over the public realm. Nevertheless, its increased

popularity attests perhaps to a changing culture where this is actually more acceptable.

Susan E. Chase (1995), in her article 'Taking Narrative Seriously: Consequence for Method and Theory in Interview Studies' investigates the different approaches to interviews that can be employed when asking people to tell their stories. Chase argues that differing approaches can result in widely varying answers – those that inspire the telling of stories, and those that inspire the telling of reports. In her view, people can only make sense of their experiences and fully articulate them when they are encouraged to speak in the language of 'story' as opposed to 'report' (Chase, 1995). It has become ever easier for us to think in terms of skeletal reports, and it requires a certain level of encouragement in order for people to come out and tell their stories. We are increasingly encouraged to think in terms of others and community, so it does not follow that the telling of personal narratives would come easily to the teller. However, the experience is often seen as intensely positive, as was the case with the tellers on *Sex, Lies and Videotape,* an example McAdams uses to stress the importance of the telling of narrative:

> To be listened to with such intensity, to be accepted unconditionally as the centre of another person's consciousness, even but for a few moments of time – this is what is so appealing to the women on tape. This seems to be what motivates them to tell their stories, to share that which is so private with a man who is a virtual stranger. (McAdams, 1993: 251-2).

McAdams found the overwhelming response to be that even when the telling of the story to the camera led the teller to tears, the experience was a positive one:

> At the end of the interview, most people report that the experience of telling their stories was profoundly satisfying and enjoyable, even if they shed tears in the telling. (McAdams, 1993: 252)

The fact that the interviewer is so captivated by their stories encourages the telling, and produces a feeling in the participant that in fact their story is of interest to others. The impetus to tell the story in the case of *Sex Lies and Videotape* turns out not necessarily to be the chance to contribute to a piece of work of import, but rather, the opportunity to organise events in a way that

gives coherence – a life story. This is something we are seldom given the time to think about. Perhaps, in our increasingly fragmented and dispersed society (as envisioned by Hall (2000), Poster (1995), Lambert (2002) and others), doubt is being cast over the ability to tell a story for or on behalf of a group or nation, and we are increasingly encouraged to think in terms of individual stories of the self, even at such time as we envision the growth of a 'global village'.

Does this amount to an exciting, life-affirming, fluid and unpredictable stage in the development of humanity? Or is it a cause for concern? These kinds of questions, a definite symptom of our 'postmodern' age, will arise during my discussion of *Capture Wales*, a project very much about representation of the individual, re-imaging the self and the deliciousness of difference. By its very nature, Digital Storytelling defies massness and celebrates difference, (that by which we define ourselves according to Hall (2000) and Fuery (2000)). But to complicate this somewhat, *Capture Wales*, whilst attempting to tell individual stories, does so whilst uniting them under the banner of 'Wales' in a project led by the BBC. This brings us to a discussion of representation:

> Narratives are, of course, sites of cultural contest and when they become public we should ask: who is orchestrating them? This leads us to the problems of representation and power. (Sarap, 1996: 18)

Representation

> A good deal of culture is centred on questions of representation, that is, on how the world is socially constructed and represented to and by us. (Barker, 2000: 8)

Alongside the afore mentioned shift in viewing audiences from passivity to activity, run changes in what is being represented to them from the spectacle to the ordinary. In terms of *Capture Wales*, we perhaps see this change in evidence. Guy Debord states that the idea of the spectacle as entertainment demands that the audience is compliant (*The Commodity as Spectacle;* 1977). But we have seen that it is no longer necessary or appropriate for art or media to demand acceptance by "appearing without reply, by its monopoly

of appearance" (Debord, 1977: 141). The spectacle is no longer necessary for we learn to appreciate the fascination to be found in the ordinary. This is a trend Richard Hoggart studied in his 1957 work *The Uses of Literacy*. Hoggart was the first leader of the (now disbanded) Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies which took as one of its prominent focal points for research the study of representation. It was the view of the group that there are no 'innocent texts' (Durham & Kellner, 2001: 5). All texts in our media cultures, and those cultures that have gone before, are inseparable from bias:

> all artefacts of the established culture and society are laden with meaning, value, biases, and messages. There is no pure entertainment that does not contain representations. (Durham & Kellner, 2001: 5)

The group acknowledged that these constructed representations often contained prejudice, be it of class, gender, race, sexual, ethnic or national origin. New theoretical approaches sprang up from particular positions, including feminism, race and gender studies.

One area of study within these new disciplines was that of 'common life'. Culture, theorists of the Birmingham School argued, should not have to represent 'art' or spectacle, but popular culture, displaying the people to the people. Human life was seen to be fascinating in itself, the staple fare being (according to Hoggart "not something which suggests an escape from ordinary life, but rather it assumes that ordinary life is intrinsically interesting" (Hoggart, 1957: 120), an idea he went on to explore in *The Uses of Literacy*. Here, Hoggart stresses the importance of studying non-elitist popular culture which provides a presentation of recognisable human life. He sees the media as having an intrinsic responsibility to provide not merely escapism for the people, but to represent normality. This is something that we see in projects such as *Capture Wales*, the study of elements that make up a whole way of life, a view of culture championed by Raymond Williams in his 1958 study *Culture and Society.*

This discussion about representation is crucial to the study of *Capture Wales* as it would be to any project that, by its very title purports to encapsulate a nation and/or its people. Representations of Wales and the Welsh typical to mainstream media and art help to produce and circulate meaning - What it is to be Welsh – to the rest of the world, and perhaps even to those living within its boundaries; "It is through our systems of representation, rather than 'in the world' that meaning is fixed" (Hall, 1997: 7).

Peter Hamilton's study *Representing the Social: France and Frenchness in Post-War Humanist Photography* (1997) takes a body of work and analyses it in terms of how it represents France and the French, but also how that same body of work "contribute[d] to a reconstruction of Frenchness" (Hamilton, 1997: 77). He looked at photos taken and published in post-war France when what it meant to be French had been called into question. Having had a war, been occupied, humiliated and eventually liberated, the French were in need of unification, and this was achieved through the humanist movement (of which the photography in question was a part) and its portrayal of the everyday life of the French people. What unified them in actuality (according to Hamilton) was the use of universal themes that could be understood by all. Themes such as "family, community, comradeship, love, childhood, popular pleasures" (Hamilton, 1997: 94) contributed to a more sentimental and unifying image of France and Frenchness both within and outside its boarders. (Whether these themes are universal enough to be duplicated by the BBC Wales *Capture Wales* project will be subject to discussion in chapter six).

Hamilton touches on a very significant point regarding representation when he states that even through the photography of the everyday, the 'ordinary', decisions were being made that meant they were constructions with evident biases:

> they could not photograph everything: they had to select subjects, and they had to decide how to go about photographing them. Their personal motives thus entered into the choice of subject and into the way in which certain meaning and values were encoded in the content of the image. (Hamilton, 1997: 77).

Is this then true of all projects of this nature, including *Capture Wales*? And if so, does this represent a problem in terms of any truth-claim that *Capture Wales* does indeed 'capture' Wales (if in fact that is its aim or claim). An analysis of *Capture Wales* will be carried out to see whether it does represent a wider or different view of Wales, or even help construct Welshness itself (perhaps participants feel more 'Welsh' for taking part).

Representation has been an area of debate for many years within the media. Institutions such as the BBC have faced criticism for not representing whole sections of the public which it purports to serve. John Keane (1991), for example, says of representation, "public service media – here they are no different from their commercial competitors – distribute entitlements to speak and to be heard and seen unevenly" (Keane, 1991: 123). Articles such as 'Growing old invisibly: Older Viewers Talk Television' (Healey & Ross, 2002) discuss at length the gaps in representation felt by the public. Television especially, often seen as a 'window to the world' has inspired such studies. As a window to the world, one would imagine it to provide a fair representation of that world's inhabitants. There have been many studies to find out whether this is, or could ever be, the case in actuality. The Broadcasting Standards Council report of 1994/5 states that in the main, people were not satisfied that they were being represented (Healey & Ross, 2002). In our increasingly Internet savvy and digitally adept age, where audiences are used to having the ability to be interactive and made visible, it could be argued that it is more frustrating than ever that as audiences we are not represented. We are perhaps more aware of the stereotypes and assumptions that are thrust upon us through universal narratives by the culture industry.

In response to this, *Capture Wales* makes it its remit to represent the "real' Wales, not that which is stereotyped by postcards or folk songs, and a significant portion of my study will be devoted to investigating to what extent it succeeds in representing the diverse and contradictory personalities that make up Wales. Are these stories not constructs still? Can there ever be 'innocent texts'? By their very nature, the stories that make up *Capture Wales*

are laden with meaning, but they are one of the few outlets where people are entirely responsible for their own representation (or so the BBC would say, it remains to be seen to what extent people create stories in line with what they think the BBC want to hear, or what kind of influence they have over stories in workshops). They provide a fresh way of communicating 'intrinsically interesting' ordinary life, and yet the whole project is in the hands of the BBC, and the reasoning behind this must be questioned. As Graham Murdock says:

> It is not enough to ask how far the diversity of social experiences, viewpoints, demands and aspirations are presented in the major institutions of public culture and whether the available range of aesthetic forms foster open debate. We also need to ask who orchestrates these representations? Who is licensed to talk about other people's experience? Who is empowered to ventriloquise other people's opinions? Who is mandated to picture other people's lives? Who chooses who will be heard and who will be consigned to silence? Who will be seen and who will remain invisible? Who decides which viewpoints will be taken seriously and how conflicts between positions will be resolved? Who proposes explanations and analyses and who is subject to them? (Murdock, 1999: 28)

In this view therefore, the intentions of the BBC must also come into question. Chris Barker says cultural studies is concerned with "modern industrialized economies and media cultures organized along capitalist lines in which representations are produced by corporations driven by the profit motive" (Barker, 2000: 8). Media organisations which operate within a capitalist commercial framework reflect and construct the way we are represented in society in accordance with the wishes of their owners, shareholders, sponsors and advertisers. They are there merely to deliver an audience that is in the mood to buy. Is the BBC as a public service broadcaster therefore an exception? Working within this same environment with an audience who are increasingly used to being approached as consumers as opposed to citizens, can these representations be avoided?

High/low art

We have seen Horkheimer and Adorno's views on the role of the audience as passive consumers of media output, but they also had much to say about the quality of that media output. Namely, that it was uniform and standardised

across the board. They saw output as cliché ridden, rarely going beyond what the audience has come to expect; "Culture today is infecting everything with sameness. Film, radio, and magazines form a system. Each branch of culture is unanimous within itself and all are unanimous together" (Horkheimer & Adorno, 1955: 94). Barker sums up their argument:

> They argue that cultural products are commodities produced by the culture industry which, while purporting to be democratic, individualistic and diversified, is in actuality, authoritarian, conformist, and highly standardised. (Barker, 2000: 44-45)

Media is prescribed and handed down to us in an authoritarian manner. As a result we, the consumers, are unimaginative and bland, unable to bring anything of our own to the table. This notion of a standard art form is not one that is unique to Horkheimer and Adorno. Notions of artistic quality have been under discussion for over a century. The main source of debate in this area has been surrounding ideas of high and low art, set out in the works of Matthew Arnold in the nineteenth century most eloquently in his 1869 work *Culture and Anarchy*. *Culture and Anarchy* outlined Arnold's view of culture as the study of perfection, where perfection is 'sweetness', 'light' and 'humanity'. He saw this culture as something that could be given to people as if from a higher plane; "the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light" (Arnold, 1869: 79). The responsibility for this task is given to those who Arnold calls the 'apostles of equality' (Arnold, 1869: 79) who, in the manner of the religious apostles, will impart knowledge and ideas to the 'masses', with little or no regard for feedback mechanisms. As Umberto Eco says in his 1980 work *Culture As Showbusiness,* "Another characteristic of the "serious" cultural event is that the audience must not participate" (Eco 1980: 152).

These notions of high and low art, and the almost religious dissemination of knowledge (uncomfortable as they now appear to us), were drawn upon by characters of great importance in the development of the arts and media industries in Britain. Lord John Reith, the first Director General of the BBC, strongly believed that it was his responsibility to educate the people, choosing what was deemed of import and suitable entertainment, and making this

available to all. This elitist view does not leave a lot of room for projects such as *Capture Wales* which rather than being a top-down media venture, is advertised as being more of a grass roots venture.

Discussions of 'quality' in culture, concerned with relative terms and social constructions, were responsible for the rise of Cultural Studies out of English Literature, representing an interest in contesting those views whereby high, minority culture is considered innately valuable. Raymond Williams' 1968 study *Communications* raises these issues with a number of questions:

> Why force art on such people [the 'masses'], especially since you will be in danger of reducing art to that level, mixing it up with the popular and commercial worlds? Wouldn't your effort be better spent on maintaining real art for those who value it? (Williams 1968: 98)

In reality, Williams asserts, this is nigh-on an impossibility, it being increasingly difficult to differentiate between the two.

In many ways, citizens' media represent this confusion. In Arnold's terms, it is 'light', 'human' and above all, represents a search for 'truth' (the truth of 'real' Wales in the case of *Capture Wales*). In this respect Digital Storytelling is the ultimate media form. But is it high art? Do the stories written, produced and edited by individuals themselves represent high quality in the way that those such as Reith believed was important? The boundaries between high and low art are blurred when we talk of projects of this type in the same way that studies such as Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy* blurred them. Hoggart highlighted working class art as of as much importance as that coming from the major media organisations; "it is not necessary, for success, that the programmes should be a form of professional art; if it is really homely and ordinary it will be interesting and popular" (Hoggart, 1957: 156). This fits into what Barker calls the anthropological definition of culture whereby it is an "everyday lived process not confined to 'high art'" (Barker, 2000: 15)

Walter Benjamin was another who disagreed with the Arnoldian view of high/low art, seeing it as elitist and illiberal. He saw this as only a way of creating boundaries, making some works of art inaccessible to the masses,

something that renders art undemocratic. Perhaps then, notions of 'quality' are unimportant in any discussion of *Capture Wales* and Digital Storytelling, perhaps it is enough that these stories are being told and heard, that culture is seen as democratic, without boundaries (whether this is the case in actuality, or whether there are some who aspire to some sense of 'quality' (possibly their own, possibly that of the BBC) will be seen in the following chapters).

Power

> Power is the name applied to that which structures culture, politics and economics. Power has many forms and there are many theories of power, but each draws its relevance from the sense that power names the things that determine how a life may be lived. (Jordan, 1999: 1)

'Power' is something we feel we have an innate understanding of. It dictates (either through our sense of having or lacking) the course of our lives, our sense of self and what we can achieve. Power is a much discussed and confessed notion infinitely bigger than this research project, so I shall concentrate on two areas and their contradictory existence in our current climate, that is, ownership, and empowerment.

Marxist theorists have engaged in debate about the ideological and hegemonic forces at work in our society for more than a century. Their ideas still hold much weight and are integral to Cultural Studies today. Marx proposed ideas about power relations whereby the dominant class in any society was necessarily the dominant intellectual force of that society, holding power over the ideas and values of the people. In *The German Ideology* (1846), Marx and Engels state that the "ideas of the ruling class, are in every epoch, the ruling ideas: i.e. the class which is the ruling *material* force of society is at the same time its ruling *intellectual* force" (Marx & Engels, 1846: 35). The institution that was charged with the task of delivering or creating these ideas in the people was the media. The media became the ground on which ideological battles were fought. Italian theorist Antonio Gramsci argued that certain parties or individuals achieved control through "inducing the

consent of the majority of subaltern, or subordinate, groups to a given socio-political constellation" (Durham & Kellner, 2001: 7). Consent was won through battles within the public sphere between the state and civil society, an area where the media were the chief source of information for rational intellectual debate.

This was not the only task for the media however:

> What holds together the many disparate and often conflicting parts of a society is communication. It has the power to unite, to forge the spirit of union, of belonging in community and nation. (Watson, 1998; 13)

The media are thus of prime importance in uniting people and giving them a sense of community – shared ideas and values. Through a process of hegemony, of which the media were the most important influence, the ideology of a nation could be created and controlled. One could make a solid argument however that this is changing, that more than ever we see the media presenting ideologies of a very different ruling class. During our time of increasing concentration of ownership in the media, the views expressed in those media became increasingly synonymous with the ideas of their owners as opposed to the political or monarchical leaders of a society. We see a time arising when the media are more than simply a site for ideological battles; they are involved in the creation of those ideologies themselves. In a study of *Capture Wales*, questions thus need to be asked not only about the political economy that it arises out of, but also about power relations and ownership. Who owns the BBC? Do the public have complete ownership? Or is the BBC a hegemonic force for a 'ruling elite'?

These discussions of power outline a scenario where we are the subject of somebody else's power. There is though a more optimistic notion; that of empowerment, our ability as a public to find spaces where we can wield power.

Michel Foucault's theories on power are more in line with this way of thinking, namely that power cannot be held by any one person (such as a monarch, press baron or judge), but is everywhere:

> As far as Foucault is concerned, power now functions in terms of the relations between different fields, institutions, bureaucracies, and other groups (such as the private media and other businesses) within the state. What characterises these relations of power is that they are not set in stone. Power can flow very quickly from one point or area to another, depending on changing alliances and circumstances. In other words, power is mobile and contingent. (Danaher, et al. 2000: 71)

Even those who appear to dominate are at the same time subordinate to somebody else. Power acts on us all, and can be owned by no-one (Danaher, et al, 2000: 74), it is thus enabling as opposed to purely debilitating. After his experiences with the penal system in the early 1970s, Foucault suggested a reformulation of traditional theories of power in his 1979 text *The History of Sexuality*:

> It was a piece I wrote at a moment of transition. Till then, it seems to me, I accepted the traditional conception of power as an essentially judicial mechanism, as that which lays down the law, which prohibits, which refuses, and which has a whole range of negative effects: exclusion, rejection, denial, obstruction, occultation etc. Now I believe that conception to be inadequate. (Foucault, quoted in Gordon, 1980: 183).

Foucault concludes his study thus:

> We are dealing not nearly so much with a negative mechanism of exclusion as with the operation of a subtle network of discourses, special knowledges, pleasures, and powers. (Foucault, 1979: 72).

In a discussion of power in his book *Cyberpower*, Tim Jordan, takes this idea to represent possible forms of engagement over the Internet, "Power is not exercised by the elite or the superior over their inferiors but traverses across all people" (Jordan, 1999:16). This perhaps utopian view of the Internet strikes a chord with many who feel that the World Wide Web and the possibilities of multimedia afforded by current technologies mean a genuine chance for equal access and exchange of knowledge. These technologies thus empower their users, the opportunity to do or act can be taken if one has the means and the

motivation. In this sense new formats such as Digital Storytelling could represent a taking back of power, an empowerment.

Talk of empowerment has been fashionable within a number of arenas since the 1990s:

> No respectable academic, policy or practitioner discourse is complete without its nod in the direction of the empowered consumer, the empowered citizen, the empowered worker. (Barnes & Warren, 1999: 1)

Barnes and Warren talk of empowerment strategies and their increasing familiarity in discourses surrounding social security and mental health (even if they rarely become practice) as a positive step toward inclusion of all people. The media is another arena within which talk of empowerment is rife, especially given the previous literature cited around active audiences and interactivity. Discussion of empowerment around *Capture Wales* involves a number of different possible areas for debate including an assessment of how empowered people feel as a result of workshops? How much power the BBC is handing over in actuality? It also includes asking the question how much do people want to be empowered? It is generally agreed that empowerment is a good thing, but how far will people take their empowerment? These questions will be assessed in chapter six of this thesis, and discussion around these points will form part of my ultimate conclusions.

Summary

> We know a lot about the media's institutional structures and about how people interact indirectly with them through consuming media texts, but direct interactions between non-media people and media institutions remain something of a mystery. What happens, for example, when people witness media production? What are people's experiences of appearing in the media themselves? These questions remain underresearched. (Couldry 2000: 3)

In many ways our media organisations have had a responsibility for the construction of society as we know it. Media organisations operating in capitalist commercial frameworks represent and construct the way we perceive ourselves and act (as we have seen), and reflect the things that are of importance to us (in fact creating them). Media agencies are a direct result of the base of society and the political economy within which they are operating and the BBC can be no exception.

They are however, facing a challenging time. The audiences they serve are perhaps becoming less and less dependent on them for information and entertainment due to the deployment of new technologies. Walter Benjamin used a quote from Paul Valery to predict immense change in art resulting from such developments back in 1955:

> The amazing growth of our techniques, the adaptability and precision they have attained, the ideas and habits they are creating, make it a certainty that profound changes are impending in the ancient craft of the beautiful. (Paul Valery in Benjamin, 1955: 211)

Profound change in art, culture and media, we have most certainly seen, witnessing our media agencies evolve almost beyond recognition to incorporate new technology.

To suggest that interactive, participatory media will be a dominant form at any time in the near future would be foolish at this stage. This represents a romanticised vision of the new media as being accessed equally by citizens across the globe that we know to be a false one. But we do see that in the eyes of those theorists above, the use of new media in the coming years

represents endless possibilities. There is an increasing understanding that with access *could* come profound change.

This piece of research aims to document how one form of participatory media impacts upon those people who take part in it – investigating the success or otherwise of the kind of interactive media envisioned above. This will be done with the work of these theorists in mind, but also with an emphasis on the BBC's role in the debate. Why is the BBC interested in advocating a form that not only merges new technology and storytelling, but teaches their audiences how to make media of their own? How does this fit into BBC strategies surrounding Nations and Regions, Charter renewal, and connecting with communities? And whether there is a gulf between the BBC's expectations for the project, and the experiences of participants in actuality.

This is where this piece of research hopes to develop the discussion of Digital Storytelling, by providing conclusions about knowledge gained by both the BBC and those individuals who make Digital Stories as part of *Capture Wales*.

Durham and Kellner state in the introduction to their anthology of cultural studies readings that:

> Culture is ordinary, a familiar part of everyday life, yet special cultural artefacts are extraordinary, helping people to see and understand things they've never quite perceived, like certain novels or films that change your view of the world. (Durham & Kellner, 2001: 6)

I expect to find that *Capture Wales* is one of these extraordinary cultural projects which alters people's perceptions of the media (what is 'sweet', 'light' and 'beautiful'), self and identity, community, and indeed, their world. The theorists referred to in this section provide us with a framework for studying these kinds of transitions, and keeping track of what are essentially changes in our humanity, this I intend to do in relation to *Capture Wales* and Digital Storytelling.

Research Question

What is the impact of the BBC Cymru-Wales *Capture Wales* project on its participants, and on the BBC itself?

Subquestions

1 Why has *Capture Wales* been set up by the BBC?
2 Is *Capture Wales* a radically new venture or a continuation of a history?
3 How do participants respond to the workshop process?
   - Do they have a more positive relationship with the BBC as a result?
   - Do they have a more positive relationship with the technology?
   - Do they have more intimate relationships with their communities?
   - Do they have more positive feelings about themselves as a result?
4 What is the future of the *Capture Wales* project and Digital Storytelling as a whole?
5 Is *Capture Wales* indicative of a growing trend toward more active participation in media production?

Chapter Two

Methodological Outline

The following chapters aim to document and analyse the BBC Cymru-Wales *Capture Wales* project with the research aims outlined in the introduction to this thesis in mind. This phenomenological enquiry has utilised a multi-method approach to data collection in a bid to understand the lived experience of those working on and taking part in the *Capture Wales* project. Both qualitative and quantitative data has been collected for analysis using a variety of methods. According to Gillham, this use of a variety of methods in tandem is the only means of achieving comprehensive data; "This multi-method approach to real-life questions is important, because one approach is rarely adequate" (Gillham, 2000: 2).

Data collection has encompassed questionnaires, interviews, participatory observation (both of the workshop process, and of the workings of the BBC), and more detached but equally valuable research of archival data surrounding the set up of the project, the selection process, audience research and feedback from participants (both formal and informal). Alongside this has run the study of information freely available in the public arena related to *Capture Wales* including the stories themselves and participant interviews available on the web at www.bbc.co.uk/capturewales.

The structure, time frame and sampling of this data collection will be detailed in this chapter.

Participant-observation

The first method employed for data collection, in fact the first task undergone in my research, was to attend a *Capture Wales* workshop as a 'participant-observer'. Jennifer Mason defines participant-observation as:

> ... methods of generating data which entail the researcher immersing herself or himself in a research 'setting' so that they can experience and observe at first hand a range of dimensions in and of that setting. (Mason, 2002: 84)

These can include behaviour, interaction, relationships, events, even emotional, experiential and bodily dimensions. Participant-observation can take on many forms, some more 'participatory', and some more 'observational' than others. It is believed that some kind of interaction or observation with an individual or group within its natural setting is preferable to data collected after an event, recounted in interviews or surveys; "not all knowledge is ... articulable, recountable or constructable in an interview" (Mason, 2002: 85). As a result, the researcher can expect to really experience how a setting or situation feels to those who are 'native' to it. Mason terms this the 'epistemological privilege', the opportunity to empathise with the researched (Mason, 2002: 85).

Sanchez-Jankowski agrees in his definition of participatory-observation as:

> methodology that has data gathered by the researcher being present, and participating in the activities of the subjects under investigation; directly observing them and the other social phenomena relevant to the research question. (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2002: 145)

However, he is aware of its limitations. Participant-observers have to be acutely aware of their position as such, and a variety of questions have to be asked about that positioning. For example; how are issues of ethics and representation dealt with whilst carrying out and reporting research? How aware of their positioning should a researcher be? And how aware should they make those others in the group under study (i.e. is the observation covert or overt)? (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2002); "there is not a participant-observation study that has not involved the concepts of 'representation' and 'responsibility'" (Sanchez-Jankowski, 2002: 144). The following may be true:

> You may feel it is more *ethical* to enter into and become involved in the social world of those you research, than to attempt to 'stand outside' by using other methods. (Mason, 2002: 87)

It may feel more ethical to get inside a setting than to try and describe it from outside, but at the same time, there are issues that must be considered;

"Observation is rarely viewed or experienced by researchers as an ethically straightforward or easy method" (Mason, 2002: 87).

Other problems with this method include assumptions about what is happening within the chosen setting; Is everything that is needed located within this setting? Or does a lot of the work backing up that setting actually take place elsewhere? How can a participant-observer hope to second-guess what others in a group are feeling? Can the researcher assume that others think in the same way as themselves? These questions or criticisms of the method mean that participant-observation is often best used in tandem with other research methods, rarely can data gathered in this manner be used to make theory that can be extrapolated across other populations, or even across the whole of the population under study.

The decision was made to take part in a workshop as the first introduction to the project (Ammanford, June 2002). This truly was the most in depth and invaluable introduction to the project and the process, experiencing the emotion, the mood, the group dynamics, the technology and the team as any other participant who has taken part in this study. The *Capture Wales* team are anxious not to make anyone in the group of participants uneasy at any point of the workshop process, so pure observation of the process is not looked upon favourably. This is understandable if a trusting environment is to be set up for the rest of the workshop. I hoped to be able to experience the workshop as those others in the group did (as far as was possible) and to collect fieldnotes on my own feelings during the process and my observations of others in the process. These notes were written either concurrently with events in the workshop (where appropriate), or after the event in breaks or in the evenings. Photographs were also taken of the workshop when appropriate (see appendix three). I was introduced to the rest of the group (nine other people) from the first gathering as a student of the university studying the project. I was then accepted as a member of the group and acted accordingly.

Participant-observation of the workshop process has equipped me with a more thorough understanding of the workshop process than could have been gleaned from talking to employees of the project, or even those who had participated in workshops. There is an element, especially of emotion, that goes alongside the workshop process (particularly accompanying the story circle), that can really only be tapped in to by attending one, which means taking part yourself (the *Capture Wales* team will not allow anyone to sit in on this process, all in the room have to take part). Also, participant-observation enabled me to find out whether the workshop setting felt uncomfortable, constructed or relaxed, and how the BBC *Capture Wales* team operate 'on the ground'. This has enabled a more thorough understanding of how participants are affected by the workshop process. In order to answer the research questions, it is necessary to understand the ways in which people interact and behave in the setting of a *Capture Wales* workshop. This enables a variety of dimensions to be understood that are hard to comprehend by simply reading feedback forms or talking to members of the *Capture Wales* team (this is a common complaint about senior BBC staff – that they have very little understanding of the workshop process in actuality, few having attended one in full).

Participant-observation was also deemed appropriate because at the time (June 2002), information about the workshop process and how it affected participants simply was not available by any other means beyond talking to the *Capture Wales* team themselves.

Since this time, I have attended a number of workshops in varying capacities across the participant-observer spectrum, this has involved time spent in Swansea, Cardiff (x 2), Harlech, Croesyceiliog and Aberdare (as well as the Ammanford workshop, see appendix three). Benefits of this have included gaining a wider view of the workshop process, how it differs from place to place, and with the varying characters in the room. To supplement this information, the decision was made to take part in and observe a workshop in the American model with the Center for Digital Storytelling. This took place in February 2004 in Polverigi, Italy where Joe Lambert and Nina Mullen (co-

founders of the center) were living and working at the time. This was crucial in order to enhance an understanding of the origins of Digital Storytelling as it now exists, and to gain access to one of the seminal figures of the 'movement', Joe Lambert.

The only real problem that has arisen out of this methodology has been with extrapolating my feelings during the workshop process across the board. I cannot assume that the way I responded to the workshop was similar to the experiences of others, I cannot overemphasise my ability to empathise, and understand that my fieldnotes themselves are reconstructions of events. The information that I collected about my group was perhaps very local, relevant only to that one group, and one setting. In response to this problem, the decision was made to send out a questionnaire to other workshop participants encouraging them to reflect upon their experiences.

Questionnaire

Participating in the workshop process and seeing the varying ways in which people around me approached and responded to it aroused a heightened interest in finding out what participants really gained from the experience in the long term– if that is, they gained anything at all. I was also interested in finding out how this matched or contradicted the BBC's expectations and assumptions, there being no formal means of assessment on their part (again, in the long term). It was decided that information about participants' feelings looking back on the workshop would be best collected with the use of a questionnaire.

Questionnaires tend to be a relatively easy way of collecting information from a variety of people from a variety of locations at a low cost; "A large amount of data can be collected with relative ease from a variety of people" (Wimmer & Dominick; 2003: 168). Questionnaires can be variously administered, but in this case, it was the decision to mail the questionnaires to potential respondents. The benefits of this methodology are that respondents can answer questions as and when they can, at their own pace, and anonymously

if they wish. Questionnaires also help to eliminate interviewer bias (as long as questionnaires themselves are non-assuming and non-biased).

The questionnaire was designed in order to answer in more detail the research questions associated with the response of workshop participants to the experience. Due to the method of reaching participants (by mail), questions had to be made clear, without complicated language or jargon. They had to be short, non-leading, and non-embarrassing in order to inspire response (so questions about income and occupational level for example, were avoided).

The questions are designed with the research aims in mind – specifically those concerned with assessing the impact of the project on participants. Respondents are asked firstly how they found out about the project and whether they attended the open evening. This is important in order to analyse just how representative the project is, for example, whether a disproportionate number of people were contacted because they have a previous relationship with the BBC. Knowing whether they attended the open evening gives an indication of just how much they knew about the project before signing up for the full five days.

The following three questions deal with the story itself, and at what point it was constructed. Asking participants whether they had an idea prior to the workshop and if and how it changed over the course is useful in order to establish whether people felt under any pressure to conform to an ideal. It also allows conclusions to be reached about what respondents learn about script development, and how to write for 'an audience'.

The following questions assess how respondents feel about the BBC team, the other participants and the technology used. These are crucial questions in terms of the research interest in how people respond to the workshop process. All of these questions remain open-ended in order to give respondents space to expand on answers, and in order to reduce bias.

These questions are followed by an investigation into how respondents feel about the BBC as a result of the workshop, why they feel the workshops are being held, and whether it has altered their opinion of the corporation as a result. This again allows conclusions to be reached about the ways in which people are responding to the process, and the BBC.

The longer-term impact of the project is the next area for questioning. In order to assess how the project is impacting upon people, non-leading questions are asked about whether the respondent feels the workshop has had a lasting effect on them, whether they continue to show their story and have continued to use the technology. Again these questions are left open in order to inspire a more detailed response.

Respondents are then asked to rate the experience in order to produce some simple quantitative data. The scale for quantification is from one to five, and respondents are told that one equals a most positive response, and five a most negative.

Lastly, the questionnaire asks whether the respondent has anything else to add about the project, or the BBC as a whole. I was anxious to give those who filled in questionnaires a space to add anything that they felt had not been touched on. The hope was that this might guide the research, and ensure that all areas for investigation were being covered.

Thus, the questions were as follows:

1. How did you find out about the *Capture Wales* project?

2. Did you attend the open evening prior to the event?

3. Did you have a clear idea about the story you wished to tell in advance?

4. Did this change over the course of the workshop?

5. If so, can you identify why?

6. How did you find the BBC team?

7. How do you feel the participants in the group responded to each other?

8. How did you find the technology? (For example, did you struggle with the computer, the software or the digital cameras?)

9. Why do you think the BBC is running these workshops?

10. Has the workshop altered your view of the BBC, or of BBC Wales?

11. Do you think that the workshop process has had a lasting effect on you?

12. Have you since showed your story to many people?

13. Have you used the technology learnt in the workshop since?

14. How would you rate the experience as a whole on a scale of 1 to 5 (1 being a most positive experience, 3 being a neutral experience and 5 being a most negative experience)

15. Finally, do you have anything that you wish to add about your workshop experience or your relationship with the BBC?

The questionnaire was thus made up largely of open-ended questions:

> Open-ended questions give respondents freedom in answering questions and an opportunity to provide in-depth responses. (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003: 169)

I hoped that open questions would inspire respondents to reflect openly and honestly about their experiences. I was also aware that their responses could be vastly different, and was thus unwilling to 'close' many of those questions. For example, 'Do you think that the workshop process has had a lasting effect

on you?' may be easily answered with a 'yes' or 'no' by some, but inspires more detailed and often intimate responses from others that I did not want to miss out on.

The only closed question asked was number 14, where respondents were asked to quantify the experience as a whole on a scale of 1 to 5. This was done in order to glean quantitative data that could work toward an understanding in numeric terms of what proportion responded positively to the workshop experience in retrospect.

The questionnaire was deemed the most suitable method for gathering information relating to the experiences of respondents due to the sheer number of people being approached and their geographical spread. Although there was no means of ensuring the quality of that data or its organisation, again, this approach was necessary due to the impossibility of interviewing all concerned. A total number of 163 questionnaires were sent out at five monthly intervals (August 2003, January 2004, June 2004) in order to target those who took part in workshops that were running simultaneously to my study, and to gain enough responses to adequately address the research questions. Of those 163 questionnaires, 116 were returned. Names and addresses were obtained from the *Capture Wales* team with their knowledge, and participants were informed that participation in questionnaires was voluntary and that their information would be dealt with anonymously where it appeared in the text. The questionnaire was accompanied by a letter introducing myself and the study in a nonthreatening and neutral manner:

Dear_____,

I am a student at Cardiff University, who is lucky enough to be spending the next couple of years studying the *Capture Wales* Digital Storytelling project. I understand that you were a participant in the _____ workshop in _____ and would be very grateful for your help.

I am interested in finding out if and how people have been affected by the workshop experience, and, how they view the workshops looking back on them. Through my research into *Capture Wales* I hope to provide a historical documentation of the project, which will be very much enhanced by the inclusion of YOUR views.

Enclosed is a list of questions which I would really appreciate you answering and returning in the envelope provided. If there are any that you do not feel comfortable responding to, feel free to leave them blank. Take as little or as much space in your answers, and lastly, thank you for your time.

Diolch / Thank you

The main problem with questionnaires as a research method tends to be that response rates are low; "In research terms, the response rate for mail surveys is very low – usually under 40%" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003: 183), "A typical survey (depending on area and type of survey) will achieve a response rate of 5% - 40%. This low return casts doubt on the reliability of the findings" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2993: 184). The 116 questionnaires received represented a response of 71 per cent, a high rate that appears to attest to the positive experience of those taking part in workshops, and their willingness to talk about their memories. This was highlighted in the letters, cards and notes that I received alongside questionnaires (examples of which are given in chapter six).

The nature of the project thus seems to have precipitated the high response rate. The only concern with this is that respondents are likely to be those who feel positively about the experience. This could mean that those who choose not to respond have actually had negative experiences or that they do not wish to dwell on them; "replies are often received only from people who are

interested in the survey, and this injects bias into the results" (Wimmer & Dominick, 2003: 184)

The decision was made to avoid asking questions about age, educational background and ethnicity. This was done in part because much of this information was already available through the BBC's archive of participants, but also to inspire response. I had been made aware by the *Capture Wales* team that many participants had had complicated and unproductive relationships with schooling and education, and made the decision to exclude such questions rather than alienate respondents. This was highlighted in at least one of the questionnaires received:

> Would you be happy to be contacted again in the future?
>
> Well?! I don't like writing - you can phone.

As questionnaires were returned it became apparent that participants were keen to talk about their experiences, and could do so on a number of levels. It was decided to carry out interviews with workshop participants for further data. This was carried out during the event with some participants, and others were questioned further after the experience (a total of 12 respondents). However, the bulk of interviewing was carried out with BBC executives and members of the *Capture Wales* team.

Interviews with BBC employees

In order to be able to give an in-depth discussion of the research question and specifically the subquestion about the BBC's reasoning for the project and its aims, it was vital to carry out interviews with those BBC executives who had been responsible for the projects take up, and those members of the *Capture Wales* team who have been responsible for running the project.

Qualitative interviews were necessary in order to glean information that was not otherwise available for research purposes. Given the lack of written

information about the *Capture Wales* project there was no other way of improving knowledge than speaking with these people:

> Qualitative interviews may add an additional dimension, or may help you to approach your questions from a different angle, or in greater depth. (Mason, 2002: 66)

Interview questions were prepared in advance and are detailed below, although these questions were tailored to each individual interviewed and their specific role in relation to the project. As Jennifer Mason says, questions must be meaningful to the interviewee, be related to their circumstances, not offend their rights and needs, flow, ensure an appropriate focus on issues and topics relevant to research questions (Mason, 2002: 74).

Although interviews are the best way of collecting data for this type of analysis they are not without their problems, the most significant of which is that they create; "data only about a particular research conversation that occurred at a particular time and place" (Wengraf, 2001: 1), they also rely on the individuals' ability to remember and vocalise their thoughts and events possibly years after an event. With this in mind, during the results analysis, interview materials have been cross referenced wherever possible to support findings, and data has been treated at all times as exploratory rather than as a 'final word' on the topic at hand.

Interviews were carried out at the BBC in both Wales and England (Hull and London). People core to the set up of the project and those working on it were spoken to at length in both a formal interview set up, and in a more informal context during my time spent at the BBC or away on workshops with them. Those interviewed were as follows:

Pat Loughrey, Director of Nations and Regions (Including BBC Cymru-Wales)

Menna Richards, Controller, BBC Wales (Responsible for signing off the project)

Maggie Russell, Head of Talent, BBC Wales (Responsible for introducing the project to Menna Richards)

Mandy Rose, Editor of New Media, BBC Wales (In charge of all 'Digination' projects in Wales including *Capture Wales*, Community Studios and Where I Live)

Iain Tweedale, acting Editor of New Media, February 2005

Karen Lewis, Development Producer, *Capture Wales* (Responsible for overseeing the project in BBC Wales)

Daniel Meadows, Creative Director, *Capture Wales* (On secondment from Cardiff University, responsible for bringing Digital Storytelling to the attention of the University and thus the BBC, also for facilitating English language workshops)

Gilly Adams, Director of the Writers Unit, BBC Wales (and facilitator of the Story Circle, *Capture Wales*)

Gareth Morlais, Producer, *Capture Wales* (Creator of the *Capture Wales* and Capolwg ar Gymru websites, facilitator of the Welsh language workshops)

Huw Davies, Trainer/Post Production Supervisor, *Capture Wales* (Post-production, facilitator of some English Language workshops)

Carwyn Evans, Researcher/Web Assistant, *Capture Wales*

Rupert Creed, Project Producer, *Telling Lives*, BBC Humberside (Based in Hull, facilitator of workshops)

An interview was also carried out with Joe Lambert, co-founder of the Center for Digital Storytelling in America and advisor to *Capture Wales* in its early stages.

As indicated above, interviews were carried out with a number of BBC employees and policy makers. This was considered the best way of collecting in depth information about the project from those involved in its day to day working, and also those involved in its set up and maintenance at a higher

level (namely BBC executives). Interview methods were altered in respect to the subject. Some interviews were organised around a very structured base (for example those in senior positions at the BBC), and some were much more creative (for example those with people at the BBC with whom I had spent more time). Typical questions included the following:

> Could you tell me a little about your involvement with Digital Storytelling?
>
> Why do you think it is important for the BBC to be involved with this type of work?
>
> What are the aims of the *Capture Wales* project?
>
> Do you think this could have an impact upon relations between the public and the BBC?
>
> Do you think it could change the relationship between the public and technology?
>
> Do you think that *Capture Wales* is truly democratic?
>
> Is it truly representative of Wales?
>
> Do you think that it is important that BBC Wales has pioneered this project?
>
> Do you think that it will play a big part in Charter Renewal?
>
> What are your views on the work in regard to its therapeutic nature?
>
> Is there any real way of quantifying the success of *Capture Wales*?
>
> Who is the audience for *Capture Wales*?
>
> Is there a community surrounding *Capture Wales*? If so, where do you think that community exists?
>
> What do you think is the future of the project? Do you think that it has a sustainable future within the BBC? Or beyond the BBC?

Interviews with BBC employees were carried out throughout the year as and when appointments could be made.

Ethnography

Further to the participant-observation carried out at the start of the project, the opportunity arose to spend time working alongside the *Capture Wales* team in preparation for the International Digital Storytelling Conference in November 2003. A total of six months were spent (two days a week, unpaid) working on delegate lists, invitations, mail outs and compiling conference packs. This enabled valuable access to the team, the process and the mood at the BBC during this time. It also enabled me to have a certain amount of input into the proceedings for the conference (a fantastic resource for my own research).

Ethnography is an invaluable research tool for collecting information about groups or organisation's practices:

> When you come across the term ethnography when someone describes the research they have carried out, it will usually mean that they have spent some time with the usually quite small number of people they studied in the place where these people live. (Machin, 2002: 3)

In this case, the people under observation were the *Capture Wales* team in their own environment.

This type of observation and input was invaluable in terms of understanding why the project looks and works in the way that it does, the motivations behind it (personal and organisational), the pressures, and the day to day running of the workshops. I was able to observe and listen to people going about their everyday work and come to my own conclusions (in order to supplement or authenticate that material collected through interviews with BBC employees).

This approach assumes that people's behaviour is determined largely by the culture within which they operate, that people's behaviour on the project is born out of the culture of the BBC (or perhaps the culture of the community for they spend a significant part of their time on the road):

> Ethnography is about locating a particular slice of action into something larger, into a whole way of life. Any instance of behaviour must be thought about as a person making sense of and

> finding their place in that world, armed with a range of cultural standards and values, deeply engaged with the minds of others in their society. (Machin, 2002: 2)

Being close to the team has enabled the creation of notes that give an insight into the day to day workings of the team, and which have been collected in an objective and unintrusive manner, (as far as is possible).

Ethnography is thus a useful, but easily criticisable research technique:

> The choices between involvement and immersion, rapport and over-rapport, familiarity and loss of self are often too starkly drawn to accurately reflect the full range of chosen and imposed identities, assumed during and beyond the field. The issue is not necessarily one of conversion, immersion or not, but a recognition that the ethnographic self is the outcome of complex negotiations. (Coffey, 1999, in Mason, 2002: 93)

Notes collected have been utilised in order to back up those findings from interview and questionnaire research. In no instance throughout this thesis are they taken as primary evidence in order to draw conclusions.

Archival strategies

Various documentation is held at BBC Wales relating to *Capture Wales* which, to the best of my knowledge, I was given free and uncensored access to. This included not only documents relating to the set up of the project, but also Application and Feedback Forms of all workshop participants.

Application Forms typically answer the following questions:

1. Please tell us a little more about your story idea
2. Have you thought about images you would like to use to illustrate your story? Please give us a few of your ideas.
3. Please can you give us a sense of your skills/experience with New Media and IT? Have you used Photoshop, digital cameras, scanner [Don't worry if you haven't]
4. Particular dietary requirements? Or other special needs?

Feedback forms, filled in by all workshop participants on the completion of the final day, include the following information:

1. Did the presentation evening give you enough information?
2. How useful were the writing and storytelling sessions?
3. How well prepared did you feel when you arrived for the main workshop?
4. Did you receive the support you needed from the team?
5. How would you rate your IT skills prior to attending the workshop?
6. How useful was the Photoshop tutorial?
7. How useful was the Premiere tutorial?
8. How accessible did you find the technology?
9. Did you gain any new skills?
10. Overall, how valuable did you find the whole experience?
11. Would you like the chance to make another digital story in the future?
12. Would you recommend a *Capture Wales* workshop to others?
13. Did you have any direct involvement with BBC Wales prior to this?

These questions are all responded to on a scale of one to five, a one indicating a negative response, and a five representing a positive response (although in some cases this appears a little inappropriate).

A total of 164 feedback forms were analysed in the course of this study (including my own).

Information from the *Capture Wales* website (www.bbc.co.uk/capturewales) has also proved enlightening. The stories themselves, all available to view on the site, provide webs of clues as to the motivations of the storytellers, content for analysis, and are accompanied by an introduction to the storyteller. These introductions have proved useful for analysis, being based on content supplied by the storytellers themselves in the weeks following the workshop. They provide an insight into the feelings of those participants in the immediate aftermath of the workshop, building on that information given in numerical form in the feedback forms described above.

Data analysis

Information collected in interviews and questionnaires has been coded into tables. Information from BBC employees and workshop participants has been dealt with separately, and these tables have formed the basis of the following research. Due to the mass of data gathered (both qualitative and quantitative) this was seen as being the best way of facilitating a manageable research base.

Note: Setting up the study

It is crucial to note that the research base for all of the above has been in Cardiff, South Wales. This holds some significance for the study as a whole for it perhaps skews the writer's viewpoint on a number of things, not least the usage and importance of the Welsh language as a more common means of communication and expression elsewhere in the country. It also has significance when talking about the geography, culture, economic conditions and political outlook orienting those who take part in the workshops.

The thesis is based around a case study design of one case study, that is the *Capture Wales* project. It is thus a detailed and intensive analysis of that scenario. There is no desire to generalise and extrapolate these findings across the board, for example, across the English regions *Telling Lives* project.

Part Two:
Two Histories

Chapter Three

Telling a History

> Man's mind stretched to a new idea never goes back to its original dimensions. (Oliver Wendell Holmes Jr in Swann, 2000: 7)

Previous literature in the field of narrative and its history, and how this has resulted in the growth of storytelling via digital means, has already been introduced in chapter one of this study. This thesis does not aim to provide a comprehensive documentation of this history (the growth of narrative or an analysis of 'literature'), but does see the benefit of placing Digital Storytelling within this (long and complicated) tradition of storytelling (Ong, 1982; Toolan, 1988; Herman, 2002). Thus, this chapter aims to briefly trace the development of storytelling from its oral origins through the print revolution and into the 'information age', the virtual home of Digital Storytelling.

The storying of events in order to make meaning (and pass on that meaning to future generations) is seen as being crucial to the development and maintenance of life and an understanding of our place or 'meaning' within that:

> Stories are the large and small instruments of meaning, of explanation, that we store in our memories. We cannot live without them. (Lambert, 2002a: 22)

> If we hope to live not just from moment to moment, but in true consciousness of our existence, then our greatest need and most difficult achievement is to find meaning in our lives. It is well known how many have lost the will to live, and have stopped trying, because such meaning has evaded them. (Bettelheim, 1976: 3)

It is in childhood, according to Bettelheim, that we learn to invest our lives with meaning, and this is done through the use of narratives (especially fairy stories). These entertaining stories stimulate the development of the imagination, help develop intellect, emotions, confidence and the ability to solve problems (Bettelheim, 1976: 5). These stories are laden with meaning

(they are most certainly not 'innocent texts'), and have proved a means of intergenerational moral education since long before the advent of the print medium. In compliment to Bettelheim's views about the influences of narratives on young children, Anne Pellowski of the World of Storytelling imbues storytelling with the following powers; fulfilling an educational role in developing language, vocabulary and listening skills; expanding the audience's view of the world; aiding mental health development and an ethical value system; introducing classic tales; entertaining and amusing; and teaching the audience about their specific cultural heritage (Pellowski, A).

Through stories then, we learn how to be human (this link has, as we have seen, been made with great regularity in popular and academic debate). This task has not varied greatly since the days of oral culture, and so too, the structure of traditional story (beginning, middle, end) has remained dominant (although not exclusive). What has changed however, is the range of media through which story is expressed:

> we shall see that conventional narrative structure changes very little through history but, in contrast, the way the narrative form is expressed evolves radically. (Lacey, 2000: 80)

With the advent of digital media (and even its precursors in the medium of print), we now see story experiencing great change. A proliferation in the means for telling story leads to a change in the range and number of voices being heard, and could even impact upon the range of messages available to us. We are, as Sven Birkerts admonishes 'living through a period of overlap' (Birkerts, 1994: 121).

Naming and shaming

Donald Hamilton's *History of Storytelling* takes us through a detailed history of that development. In (very) brief outline of this; complex vocal sounds were developed in order to associate the things people encountered in their everyday lives, and these sounds were eventually formed into sentences, with the result that more sophisticated ideas could be expressed. The tribe would then develop a language of its own, enabling those members who were

most adept at speech to form stories. These storytellers had the power to invent gods, laws, rules, myths and morals that would then be passed through the generations until they were finally collected and written down (Hamilton, 1999).

Walter Ong, in his 1982 work *Orality and Literacy* credits the rise of story as a means of communicating experience and knowledge; it is 'functional':

> Although it is found in all cultures, narrative is in certain ways more widely functional in primary oral cultures than in others. First, in a primary oral culture, as Havelock pointed out, (1978a; cf. 1963), knowledge cannot be managed in elaborate, more or less scientifically abstract categories. Oral cultures cannot generate such categories, and so they use stories of human action to store, organize, and communicate much of what they know. (Ong, 1982: 137)

It is significant to note that the foremost use storytelling was put to was as a means for the 'great and the good' to dictate the morals and rules a society would live by for generations to come. The power to name phenomena and pass judgement on 'good' and 'bad' is great, and was initially held by those of perceived storytelling ability. The importance of this status was recognised and much coveted in society and should not be underestimated:

> Human imagination has given mankind the unique ability to communicate abstract concepts and ideas among its people. It has given its storytellers power to emotionally enter people's minds just by the stories they told. These storytellers have the ability to create happiness or hatred or any other emotion humans may possess. Storytellers are the most influentially powerful people of the Homo Sapiens species. (Hamilton, 1999)

> Stories, including narratives, myths, and fables, constitute a uniquely powerful currency in human relationships. (McLellan, 1999)

Stories then, or the ability to pass them on, had immense ramifications in terms of who was given (or took) power in a society. Those who held this power for any length of time were imbued with a certain degree of immortality and enduring fame. A state of unending existence for the stories would in turn help keep the storytellers themselves alive.

These stories were passed down through the generations in a variety of ways, perhaps most notably in the form of religious accounts or fairy tales. Both have been inherited with a view to educating audiences and connecting them with their communities:

> In traditional cultures, the intermingling of personal stories, communal stories, myths, legends and folktales not only entertained us, but created a powerful empathetic bond between ourselves and our communities. (Lambert, 2002a: xviii)

> Stories teach us about our culture and about how we, as humans, are to interact with it. (ILS, 1999)

Communal stories formed (it was hoped) an attachment in the listener to a certain way of being – a set of values and rules. In this way we see that religious communities have sprung up around grand stories that people could learn to relate their lives to (often, in this instance, in terms of the judgement of right and wrong). Other communal stories were handed down for the education of future generations in the form of fairy tales. Bruno Bettelheim talks of the origins of the fairy story in oral play activities and its use as a means for transmitting cultural values and portraying the message:

> that struggle against severe difficulties in life is unavoidable, is an intrinsic part of human existence - but that if one does not shy away, but steadfastly meets unexpected and often unjust hardships, one masters all obstacles and at the end emerges victorious. (Bettelheim, 1976: 8)

So children learn that they too will age and eventually die, they too will feel impulses that are both 'good' and 'bad', that they will face obstacles and have to overcome. Through learning these 'givens', it is thought, children are better equipped to handle themselves in later life.

Walter Ong proposes a situation whereby writing is the natural progression for an oral culture:

> Oral cultures indeed produce powerful and beautiful verbal performances of high artistic and human worth, which are no longer even possible once writing has taken possession of the psyche. Nevertheless, without writing, human consciousness cannot achieve its fuller potentials, cannot produce other beautiful and powerful creations. In this sense, orality needs to produce and is destined to produce writing. (Ong, 1982: 14)

Writing would further the possibilities for creative possibility, for example, with the eventual writing down of the above-mentioned collections of stories (in the form of *The Bible* or *Grimm's Fairy Tales* for example). Thus, the passing on of stories became easier, and with increases in literacy, those who could read and communicate stories were not so rare; power was no longer held in the hands of so few. Writing, rather than stunting orality, according to Walter Ong, enhanced it:

> Thus writing from the beginning did not reduce orality but enhanced it, making it possible to organize the principles or constituents of oratory into a scientific 'art'. (Ong, 1982: 9)

This art would give stories increased immortality, as Ong goes on to say; "Though words are grounded in oral speech, writing tyrannically locks them into a visual field forever" (Ong, 1982: 12).

This writing down of stories meant that power was also, to some degree, decentred. With the arrival of the Gutenberg press this trend was amplified; it became possible to circulate ideas and stories 'en masse'.

From Gutenberg

> As we progress through the history of communication, we find that each new medium takes an older one as its content (as per McLuhan), and that, because of this, speech as the oldest medium has a presence in almost all newer media. (Levinson, 1999: 42)

As these same stories were recorded in print, their audience grew remarkably. No longer was it only those who were educated, well off and in specific geographic locales who were to have access to the written story. The advent of the Gutenberg press led eventually to the circulation of stories from one central point to a much wider audience and with that, the idea of authorship and ownership became an issue; 'The printed text is supposed to represent the words in definitive or 'final' form. For print is comfortable only with finality' (Ong, 1982: 130, see also Birkerts, 1994: 159), thus, in their printed form, texts could be 'owned'. Book publishing became a lucrative profession which was dominated by middle class men, centred in and around

London. However books, no longer tied to their tellers by orality, could reach much further afield:

> The printed book is the first great means of communication. Writing had made possible the recording of communication; printing made possible its rapid distribution. (Williams 1968: 22)

Alongside this proliferation, came a diminution in the notion of community as the ritual of storytelling around a central point (often a communal fire or hearth), eroded in favour of the book:

> As we moved from oral cultures to a world where the written word had primacy in communication, we lost a range of social practices that had enormous value in our communities. (Lambert, 2002a: xviii)

For hundreds of years, print narratives dominated and a mass of literature emerged. This canon of work, (much of which is still popular today), has gone on to form the basis of later experimentation uniting technology and storytelling, for example, on television, in film or on audiobooks (often the content of a medium becoming the content of a later medium). Alongside these developments ran the establishment of a vibrant newspaper industry and the eventual rise of the popular press.

During the nineteenth century, technological developments (such as the telegraph and later the telephone) led to new ways of communicating across time and space:

> It was not until the advent of the telegraph that messages could travel faster than a messenger. Before this, roads and the written word were closely interrelated. (McLuhan, 1964: 97)

Words were no longer tied to solid commodities, and more than ever, story was freed from geographical location. This technology would form the basis of a revolution that would involve both radio and television, Ong's 'secondary orality' (Ong, 1982: 133). This secondary orality resembled primary oral culture in that it necessarily focused on the present moment and fostered a communal sense (stories being shared by a group).

As we shall see in the following chapter, radio proved to be a new means of story transmission, at times conveying mass narratives, at other times,

delivering the stories of the people to the people. The BBC, as the only producers of content for radio in the United Kingdom, had an immediate monopoly on stories told in this manner. So too for the early years of television.

Story proliferated even further with the advent of the TV set. Martin Jackson identifies seven distinct ages of television:

1. The Pioneering age: 1946 - 1952 [which saw television hit one million homes]
2. The Breakthrough age -1953 [amid coronation fever, a further half a million sets are sold]
3. The Commercial age - 1955 [the birth of ITV]
4. Aunties Second age - 1964 [the launch of BBC2]
5. The Colour age - 1967
6. The Multi-channel age -1984 [the launch of SKY]
7. The Digital age - 1998

(Jackson, in Wedell & Luckham, 2001: 23)

Over the course of these developments, television firmly established itself as a more and more popular means of distributing and consuming story. Now we see the coming of technology which promises to distribute more varied stories on the airwaves. Perhaps (with projects such as *Capture Wales*) we will see in the future a change in direction of the flow of television story (perhaps so 'audiences' become contributors in an eighth stage of television – The Do It Yourself Age).

There has certainly been a growing trend toward television narratives being controlled by audiences so that they do not come from one central point at a predetermined time. The arrival of VCRs in the 1970s gave more control to viewers and the launch of Satellite and Cable technologies in the 1990s and then the PVR (Personal video recorder) or DVR (Digital video recorder) in the form of Sky Plus or TiVo have also increased the control viewers can expect to exert over their television sets. It is no longer strictly and universally the case that:

> The information that arrives on your TV screen is hardwired and inflexible; you consume what the networks tell you to consume. Your only feedback mechanism is the remote control. (Johnson, 1997a: 37)

These changes have run alongside developments in the 1980s and 1990s which saw a proliferation of means for receiving story, such as audiobooks (Birkerts' "vocal tyranny", 1994: 147), handheld e-books and eventually the Internet. But this evolution was in many ways preceded by developments within the print publishing industry.

Starting in the late 1950s and 1960s, there was monumental change within the book publishing industry. Alongside the 'cultural revolution' which originated in America and crossed the seas with the help of the 'Beat' movement, changes in both book form and content were deemed necessary and long overdue. What followed was a decade that would change the face of print narrative consumption. Alongside increases in literacy, an affluent youth, a decline in religion and an increase in protest came high profile battles over censorship issues, changes in book content and changes in book design and format (including the paperback revolution) (Kidd, 2001). Books experienced huge increases in sales and amidst an increasingly competitive market, gimmicks were employed on an increasingly regular basis to encourage sales. This involved experimentation with the format of such books as B. S. Johnson's *The Unfortunates (*1969), a box containing a series of unbound sections to be read in any order. Advertised as a 'literary happening' upon publication, *The Unfortunates* was a response to a society that some increasingly felt was losing itself. Jonathon Coe (in his introduction to the 1999 re-publication of the book) reasoned that the choice of format was a bid to portray the randomness of the mind:

> ... for the bound book imposes an order, a fixed page order, on the material. His [Johnson's] solution, as always, was simple and radical: The pages of *The Unfortunates* should not be bound at all. (Coe, 1999: ix)

Around this time, we also see the development of books such as the 'choose your own ending' style of children's book (for example Packard and Montgomery's *Choose Your Own Adventure* books launched in 1979. (Murray, 1997b)). Or books inspired by the postmodern movement such as Alasdair Gray's *Lanark* (1981) which ignored or questioned the conventions of linear narrative to the extreme. These developments in the world of print

publishing meant that narrative was beginning to push at the boundaries of the page.

Following these developments came changes in the film industry which also pushed at the ordering of narrative such as the *Back to the Future* trilogy (1980s), or, later, *Pulp Fiction* (1994) and *Memento* (2000). As Janet Murray said in 1999:

> now in the incunabular days of the narrative computer, we can see how twentieth-century novels, films, and plays have been steadily pushing against the boundaries of linear storytelling. (Murray, 1999: 29)

Indeed, these developments were a precursor for a type of storytelling that enthusiasts would argue the Internet was made for – hypertext storytelling.

Story leaves the page

> Digital storytelling appears in many forms. It began with the early hypertext designs found on the Internet and has progressed to include digital movies, interactive CD-ROM games, MOO's and MUD's and virtual reality. (ILS, 1999)

The World Wide Web as we know it today is the product of, if not a chronologically long history, then certainly a frenetic one. Developed primarily for military purposes by ARPA (the Advanced Research Project Agency) in America starting in the 1950s, the Internet did not receive 'mainstream' status until the second half of the 1990s. Once taken out of the hands of the military and into the worlds of art and research, it became clear that the use of binary transition on the web meant a variety of possible uses for the Net could be intertwined:

> Where to begin the exploration? Well, one solution is to begin exploring all the things the web *can* do that the other media *can't* do. Hint: The web is interactive. Hint: Web narratives need not be linear. Hint: Web narratives need not be predominantly text-based. (They need not even be predominantly graphics-based.) Hint: the web can incorporate several media at once. Hint: Different media (audio, video) effect people different ways. Hint: Surfing is by its very nature an intimate experience. Only one person at a time can click a mouse, whereas several people at a time can watch television or a movie screen. Hint: The more power a user has to

> control the narrative himself, the more the user will "own" that narrative. (Cloninger, 1999)

The possibilities of the Internet seemed boundless, and as individuals from all walks of life became interested in research and development online (such as games makers, businesses, commercial companies and artists), a complicated and exciting space emerged as something (potentially) everybody could be involved in, and exert power over.

If the content of a medium is another medium, then according to Paul Levinson, the Internet contains elements of nearly all those that have preceded it:

> older media become the high profile content of newer media, as novels in motion pictures, motion pictures in TV, and almost all prior media on the Internet. (Levinson, 1999:13)

The Internet takes as its content the media of television, radio, film, the telephone, the ampitheatre, the newspaper and above all, the oral culture which is at the heart of all of these things. Storytelling is perhaps then a natural progression for the Internet as an agglomeration of these older mediums. This convergence has led to a realisation that:

> ... a computer-based microworld need not be mathematical but could be shaped as a dynamic fictional universe with characters and events. (Murray, 1999: 6)

The Web, and computers in a more general sense, have been put to use by enthusiasts as a means of telling narratives since their inception as a "thrilling extension of our human powers" (Murray 1999: 7), a sentiment that echoes McLuhan's assertions about the 'extensions of man'. We have seen the link between narrative and humanity, and so the natural use to be made of this 'extension' was as a tool for storytelling. The process has been a long and complicated one, the result of which is a variety of means for telling stories:

> In order for the Web to fully mature as a new storytelling medium, not simply as a new digital mechanism for delivering legacy content, content developers and users must develop new storytelling forms which take full advantage of its unique attributes and functionalities. (Paul, 2003. 1)

Nora Paul alludes in the quote above to something crucial for thinking about the development of storytelling on the Web; that it includes a variety of new forms, that there is no singular means for presenting narrative online. Content can take on a variety of different characteristics, of which Paul goes on to outline examples; in real time or as recorded pieces; inspiring action or passivity; open or closed; linear or nonlinear; standard or customisable; set or manipulable; finite or appendable. The most significant of these (in terms of relevance to Digital Storytelling in the *Capture Wales* model) is the development of active over passive modes of use:

> Digital storytelling [in general] has created a paradigm shift from traditional *storytelling* controlled by the content developer, to *storymaking* in which the user is actively involved with the content. (Paul, 2003. 15)

In this respect, "The ancient art of storytelling is not lost but reformed by digital fictions" (Sloane, 2000: 7). More so than any other development in the twentieth century, the Internet and digital technologies have allowed the proliferation of stories not from one central point, but from a multitude of sources in what is often referred to as many-to-many communication. This occurs in a variety of different forms; MOOs (Multi-User Object Oriented Systems), MUDs (Multi-User Domains), CD ROMs, Blogging, Virtual Reality, Hypertext narratives and Digital Storytelling are just some of these. One thing common to all of these types of communication is the intangibility of them, and the possibility for agency that is the result of this intangibility – stories can come from any source; "we do not usually expect to experience agency within a narrative environment" but with computers, we are enabled to experience the "satisfying power" of taking "meaningful action" and seeing the results of that action (Murray, 1999: 126).

Storytelling via computers thus represents a further shift in the traditional relationships of oral storytelling, the print medium, and the proliferating mediums for the telling of stories that we have seen come of age in the twentieth century (specifically broadcast and telegraphic technologies).

As we saw in chapter one, there are those who believe that the advent of storytelling on screen will lead to a diminishment of the importance and frequency of book reading. This remains to be seen, and is certainly an argument worthy of recognition. Again, Sven Birkerts emerges as the most vocal of those arguing this viewpoint:

> Extremists – I meet more and more of them – argue that the printed page has been but a temporary habitation for the word. The book, they say, is no longer the axis of our intellectual culture. There is a kind of aggressiveness in their proselytising. The stationary arrangement of language on a page is outmoded. The word they say, has broken from that corral, is already galloping in its new lament, jumping with the speed of electricity from screen to screen. Indeed, the revolution is taking place even as I type with the antidiluvian typewriter onto the superseded sheet of paper. (Birkerts, 1994: 152)

Reading on screen is fundamentally different in its nature and, in the view of Birkerts, turns the notion of the author as wise, with something of value to say to the reader, on its head. The ability of an audience or reader to exert agency over a text frees the imagination, but also undermines or dethrones the core meaning of the text in its original state, throwing it into 'arbitrariness'. This argument rests on the assumption that this is a new and necessarily bad development. Post-structuralist and postmodern theories however hold that readers have always been able to unsettle the meaning of a text: "Historical meaning may thus be seen today as unstable, contextual, relational, and provisional, but postmodernism argues that, in fact, it has always been so" (Hutcheon, 2002: 64, see also Barthes, 1977). In this scenario, what is represented by new media is not new in any significant way, but is a continuation of a history.

Janet Murray and others disagree with the opinion that storytelling on screen is in any way an inferior token of computer use that will outmode book reading:

> Much of our culture has persistently ignored or missed the point of the significance of stories and this new medium. Stories are not an entertaining byproduct of the computer world but the main event, one of the culture's most revolutionary consequences. (Katz, 1997)

> The computer is not the enemy of the book. It is the child of print culture, a result of the five centuries of organized, collective enquiry and invention that the printing press made possible. (Murray, 1999: 8)

The computer will, Murray adds, reshape the ways in which we express ourselves through narratives, but it will never replace the novel, it will simply carry on its work 'within another framework' (Murray, 1999: 10), again, continuing a history.

This framework encompasses a variety of different methods for narrative creation. The most common of these to date has been hypertext storytelling.

Hypertext storytelling involves a number of different formats for telling narrative. Stories on the web can be as simple as a written piece to be read by scrolling down a page, a web of pages navigated by a series of links or a much more complex programme; "Hypertext, in fact, suggests a whole new grammar of possibilities, a new way of writing and telling stories." (Johnson, 1997a: 110). Nicholas Negroponte, an infamous optimist on the future of technology highlights the step forward from the written word as championed by Sven Birkerts when he says that "hypertext removes the limitations of the printed page" (Negroponte, 1995: 165). Hypertext narratives such as those on The Fray (www.fray.com), City Stories (www.citystories.com) and those at www.randomaccessmemory.org show the variety of ways in which hypertext narrative can be employed and added to by visitors to sites who feel inspired. In the same vein as the *Capture Wales* work, participants are encouraged to tell real life stories. More fictitious modes of storytelling also exist such as The Greatest Story Ever Told (John Updike in collaboration with 44 online users for www.amazon.com), Story Sprawl (www.storysprawl.com) or the Great Cardiff poem, which can be read at www.academi.org/cardiff_great_poem/cardiff/.

Sarah Sloane, author of *Digital Fictions*, highlights the medium as one where "suddenly eye and ear are riveted by what the hands can find" (Sloane, 2000: 8). Again this indicates the participatory and immersive nature of stories told

in hypertext. The computer (the Internet included) represents a 'pull' medium, where people actively seek content, it is not represented to them in order to be consumed without question. As a result, and this idea would surely be abhorrent to one such as Sven Birkerts, "readers and writers are taking on new roles" (Sloane, 2000: 10).

As a part of this, websites where people can engage in participatory production of story have sprung up almost uncontrollably in the form of MOOs, MUDs, Weblogs (and now even Moblogs (Perone, 2002)) in what many people now refer to as new 'communities' online:

> Recent media hype about the World Wide Web and Information Superhighway notwithstanding, what continues most powerfully to draw people to the Internet is its power and novelty as a medium of person-to-person communication. (Porter, 1997: xii)

Fulfilling a need for community that (in the eyes of practitioners like Joe Lambert) is not being met in societies where people gather very rarely (unless around the new hearth of the television, Lambert, 2002a: xviii), the Internet has arisen as a means of meeting people (a fact leading to no end of debate and controversy), engaging in discussion (on a variety of subjects) and carrying out personal relationships (friendship, romantic and sexual). This can take place in chat rooms, on message boards or in interactive role-playing game sites:

> People log on to newspapers, listeners, and the interactive role-playing sites known as MUDs and MOOs for the same reason they might hang out at a bar or on a street corner or at the coffee machine at work: they've either got something to say or else an ear to lend to those who do. (Porter, 1997: xii)

These MUDs use what Sherry Turkle calls a "relatively simple programming language" (Turkle, 1995) and represent what she calls a 'social world' (1995) that can seem very real, perhaps more so than any notion of community that visitors feel they experience in the locality of their everyday lives.

MOOs and MUDs cross over from the real to the completely fictitious, as has investigation into another means of telling story digitally – Virtual Reality.



Virtual Reality is something that has excited enthusiasts such as Brenda Laurel and Janet Murray greatly over the last thirty years (interest actually goes back as far as the 1950s and the work of Morton Heilig). Much money has been invested in Virtual Reality over this period, the promise being that in time, we will find ourselves able to be in one place whilst being (virtually) in another:

> The idea behind Virtual Reality is to deliver a sense of "being there" by giving at least the eye what it would have received if it were there and, more important, to have the image change instantly as you change your point of view. (Negronponte, 1995. 117)

Negroponte goes on to envision a future where our everyday lives are influenced by this type of interaction:

> Sometime in the next millennium our grandchildren or great-grandchildren will watch a football game (if they call it that) by moving aside the coffee table (if they call it that) and letting eight-inch-high players run around the livingroom (if they call it that) passing a half-inch football back and forth. (Negroponte, 1995: 122)

As far as Virtual Reality goes, this kind of interactivity is still pretty far off in everyday life. Given this reality, it is perhaps surprising that virtual reality has sparked such a polarised and often intensely aggressive response. Some have viewed virtual reality as something to aspire to (Murray, 1999; Laurel; 2000; Negroponte, 1995) but much popular literature and cinema has painted a very different vision of our future where Virtual Reality represents a very 'real' threat (*The Lawnmower Man*, 1992; *The Matrix*, 1999; *The Cell*, 2000).

Nonetheless, the capacity for living story through computers, in all of the means described above is potentially life altering, especially in terms of the increasing frequency and intensity of arguments for a resultant democratisation of the media as we know it. No longer should we need to depend on Birkerts 'premise behind the textual interchange' (Birkerts, 1994: 163) whereby 'wise', established writer imparts something to the reader. We can all create and distribute narratives:

> The Internet is clearly the foremost among new information technologies that promise to significantly impact the day to day circumstances of all social relations. The Internet is a real example

> of a broadband, wide-area computer network that allows each individual user an equal voice, or at the least an equal opportunity to speak. (Foster, 1997: 23)

The following sections describe in detail the rise and implications of one of these supposedly democratic means for telling narrative digitally – Digital Storytelling. This is done with the following question and commentary provided by Sven Birkerts in mind:

> What is the art of the storyteller? We can accept that it fulfilled deep human needs around the original blazing log. What functions does storytelling have now, in our premillennial moment, and how will digital media serve these? I mean in a deeper way – beyond *entertainment* – in a way that speaks to what's left of the soul. (Birkerts, 1997)

Digital Storytelling

> In ancient times, we used to tell each other stories around hearths and campfires. We lost much of that connecting, storytelling magic with the advent of mass media, that tended to turn us into passive consumers being entertained by stories made up by others. I see us using digital storytelling to connect again, relating our own experiences – in words, pictures, sounds, and music – to each other, in person as well as in cyberspace. (Warren Hegg in ILS, 1999)

We have seen in the previous sections how storytelling, though changing dramatically in terms of form, has changed little in terms of function – being principally about the manifestation of power and the education and entertainment of an 'audience'. The main difference with mainstream media at the start of the twenty first century has been that those people who decide on the messages that will be promoted through the dominant narratives in a society are often now wielding a very different type of power, that which comes with a more global reach than in the villages of old. In contrast to this trend, Digital Storytelling (as outlined by Hegg above) enables us, in his words, to 'connect again', telling more personal stories to a multitude of audiences, those in our geographical proximity, and those separated by time, space and traditional barriers to entry in the mass media – specifically access to tools and resources. This does not, it appears, only have an influence on global mass communications, but on how we as individuals personally

perceive ourselves in terms of storytelling ability. In this respect, the benefits of storytelling with multimedia lift it out of the screen, as well as off the page.

Digital Storytelling has emerged as the latest form of 'digital storytelling' (outlined in the previous section), as a response to, or as part of, the increasing time and effort devoted to the telling of personal narratives in the closing years of the twentieth century:

> Personal storytelling, in the forms of recitation and creative writing, had a renaissance in the 1990s. Educators, business people, creative designers, and community activists all found themselves drawn to the idea, as author and storytelling consultant Richard Stone has described it, of the "restorification" of our culture. (Lambert, 2002a: xviii)

Lambert gives as an example of this restorification in its most dramatic form the outpouring of emotion following the attack on the Twin Towers, September 11 2001. Stories of death, survival and heroism abound on websites such as www.thefray.com, 'The September 11 Digital Archive' at http://911digitalarchive.org and 'Stories from 911 and Beyond' at www.asmallvictory.net/photoblog. This 'sincere storytelling' (Lambert, 2002a: xix) is an example of the comfort that more and more people are finding in the telling of narrative, be it to a therapist, via email, in Internet chatrooms or on talk shows.

Digital Storytelling is an example of this in action, the use of multimedia to record narrative in the voice of the teller. This section aims to document the rise of what some now term a 'movement' (Lambert, 2002a; Atchley, Denise. 2003), imbuing it with the power to stir; a process which implies a non-retractable shift in the way storytelling is carried out. This history of Digital Storytelling is vital to trace, for *Capture Wales* has become a progression of this, the latest addition to this movement.

Definitions

Digital Storytelling has become as intangible, it would seem, as the zeros and ones behind its form. Pinning down a definition remains a complex task, even given the relatively modest amounts of literature on the topic. Dana Atchley,

the founder of Digital Storytelling in its earliest form, defined it as 'the art of using computers to create media-rich stories, and the Internet to share them' (Atchley, Dana in Story, 1999). As a result of this, collections of 'communities' could be created 'of common concern on a global scale' (Atchley, Dana (b)). We have, it is clear to see with only a minimal knowledge of the *Capture Wales* project and those affiliated with it, moved beyond this definition in some respects. With the rise of a project in the model of *Capture Wales* we can see practitioners of Digital Storytelling using not only the Internet to share stories (if indeed they choose to share them at all), but also more traditional, mainstream and supposedly impenetrable broadcast mediums (another example might be the Digital Storytelling work carried out by the Oxygen Media Group in the 1990s). Also, in contrast to the definition given by Atchley, there is an increasing concern with communities on a local level, not solely global 'communities' of common interest (often rallying against a common enemy). These concerns mean that perhaps a reworking of this definition would be appropriate.

Hilary McLellan, a specialist in the area of the educational and psychological implications of virtual reality, defines Digital Storytelling as 'the art and craft of exploring different media and software applications to communicate ideas or narrative in new and powerful ways using digital media" (quoted in Lambert, 2002b). This definition, more so than that of Dana Atchley, stresses the tradition associated with storytelling and narrative, and emphasises the power that can be embraced as a result of the process, a power that enables production outside of the mainstream media in the vein of the 'alternative media' (Downing, 1988, 2001; Atton, 2002) or 'Citizens' Media' (Rodriguez, 2001). The tradition of storytelling and its possibility to empower are common strands of concern in definitions arising from other sources:

> Digital Storytelling is the expression in multiple media of *age old forms of well-told tales* and new forms of *interactive, immersive* story experiences on the digital platforms. (Lambert, 2002b, my emphasis)
>
> Digital Storytellers are artists and writers that are passionate about combining the *ancient arts of storytelling* with the *new and powerful*

> tools of multimedia technology. (Harden quoted in ILS, 1999, my emphasis).
>
> [Digital Storytelling] allows creative people to express themselves in ways that are *'largely free of corporate filters and restraints'* (Floyd in ILS, 1999, my emphasis).

Emphasis has also been placed on the nature of the stories told. They are often defined as 'personal' or 'emotional' by their very nature (either for the writer or for the audience). According to a (now defunct) gathering of literature on Digital Storytelling (ILS, 1999), this emotional aspect is one of the three main values of Digital Storytelling:

1. Digital Storytelling allows the creation of stories without the interference of media professionals
2. Anyone with access to a computer can create a story
3. Digital stories create emotional experiences through the use of music, sound and the author's voice

(ILS, 1999)

Likewise, in a definition they borrow from Floyd (quoted in part above), emotion in the experience is seen as an integral part:

> It [Digital Storytelling] is the ability to transform a story into a multimedia work that not only captures the audience's attention but provides the viewers and listeners with an emotional experience. (ILS, 1999)

Even the 'Seven Elements of Digital Storytelling' employed by Joe Lambert (founder of CDS) to explain the process to workshop participants stresses 'emotional content' as one of the core means of pushing the writer to the heart of the story (Lambert, 2002a: 52).

When used as a corporate tool, it seems the emphasis has been positioned once again on Digital Storytelling as a means of telling *personal* stories that people will respond to positively (presumably more so than traditional corporate messages), and this may well be true, but stories cannot be defined by this fact alone. By this token they become sentimental and accusations of self-indulgence abound. Perhaps they should be defined in this way only in so far as they are 'owned' by the teller, not that they are essentially emotional alongside that.

We are then, no doubt talking about issues of power and control. As we have seen this is, and always has been, close to the heart of storytelling, defining its function from its very origins. But the difference comes when we begin to appreciate that in this new form (in theory) anyone can wield the power to tell narrative. These 'creative people' are, in essence 'any people' (with access and a certain amount of training). These people are the artists or writers of Digital Story.

So, our definition of Digital Storytelling borrows from all of the above:

Digital Stories are the result of (any) people taking ownership of multi-media tools in order to tell stories new and old, and distributing them through whatever means is available and desirable to them.

Dana Winslow Atchley III

Digital Storytelling has then, through time, technology and application, grown from that which Dana Atchley first defined. Atchley is the individual most commonly associated with the rise of Digital Storytelling, as Denise Atchley (his wife and co-founder of the Digital Storytelling Festival) credits; "Dana Atchley is widely acknowledged as the person responsible for founding the movement and coining the term Digital Storytelling" (Atchley, Denise, 2003). His particular brand of Digital Storytelling in the form of *Next Exit* (developed in collaboration with Joe Lambert at what would later become the Centre for Digital Storytelling in California) was born of an interest both in storytelling on the stage and the new set of tools made available by Adobe in the early nineties.

Dana Atchley was collecting stories, images and the personal tools needed to bring the two to life, from a very early age. By the 1970s, he was driving around the United States telling stories under the title of 'Ace Space'. It appeared a natural extension of the work he was doing to include the use of the new tools he was discovering for telling narrative:

> I've been fascinated by pictures and stories since childhood. Stories embody knowledge, and before the advent of the written word, they were the only way of communicating history. Tools such as the pen and movable type allowed us first to record and share

> our stories, then reproduce them to be shared by many. This is a modern extension of that experience. (Atchley, Dana in Story 1999)

The Adobe Suite of tools came along and, in his own words, 'changed my life' (Adobe, date unspecified). The result was *Next Exit,* a performance piece which saw Atchley sat on a tree stump on a stage next to a small television set displaying a fire burning on a loop (a throw back to the origins of storytelling). Behind him stood a large screen upon which he would play stories from his own archive of around 70 films. The interface was designed to resemble the highway, "the road, which was of course the major metaphor for his life and the show" (Atchley, Denise, 2003). From this interface, stories would be selected if and when they were deemed appropriate. The direction of the performance thus depended heavily on both whim and the guidance of the audience. Dana Atchley spoke of his stories as songs that could be shuffled around on impulse but made up an 'overarching story', that being the story of his life; "Each story stands on its own, but they also interconnect and combine in numerous ways" (Atchley, Dana, (c)), most notably, in the creation of what CDS refer to as a 'multimedia autobiography' (CDSb, date unspecified). *Next Exit* achieved Dana Atchley's goal of bringing an accessible form of narrative performance to the public, and more and more people began to feel comfortable with the idea of involvement with multimedia story:

> Dana's design choices and approach to the subjects of *Next Exit* encouraged many people who watched the performance to say, yes, I have a story like this. (Lambert, 2002a: 7).

This had been one of Atchley's chief goals, combining his love of technology and performance with the creation of an accessible means of telling story:

> He recognised how these short movies could be entertaining engaging experiences filled with history, visual imagery and meaning. And he wanted to find a way to broaden the reach of this idea and to make the process accessible to every one. (Atchley, Denise, 2003)

The result of this was the set up of a workshop for the public at the American Film Institute in Los Angeles in 1993. Joe Lambert credits this moment with the realisation that Digital Storytelling could really 'make sense' (Lambert,

2002a: 1). The intention was to encourage people who had been inspired by *Next Exit* to make their own short stories.

Over time, and through much travelling with the show, Dana Atchley built up a reputation as a great storyteller and fantastic communicator, and *Next Exit* developed in a number of directions. Apart from the performance, Dana Atchley Productions practised a number of different applications for Digital Storytelling. Alongside workshops in the process held over four days that could be attended by the public, Atchley also practised location-based Digital Storytelling (such as work at the World of Coca Cola Theatre in Las Vegas), and corporate consulting services for companies such as PriceWaterhouseCoopers and Adobe Systems themselves (Atchley, Dana, (b)).

Atchley was coming to terms with the tools of multimedia as a means for gathering and presenting stories that could be accomplished by anyone who had access to the means, and a story to tell. As a "gentle warrior for story" (Lambert, 2003) in every sense, the computers were a mere aid to Atchley's work, they were not the reason for doing it. A review in the *San Francisco Examiner* highlighted this point, saying Digital Storytelling in the mode of Dana Atchley "underscores a lesson many performers in this field may not yet have taken to heart. Computers can't be the main event, they should be a blank slate for the creative mind" (Atchley, Dana, in Adobe, date unspecified). The creative mind of the storyteller was what Atchley was interested in liberating, the computer was a way of making and delivering stories that could be accessed by all (in theory). Before he died in 2000, Atchley's vision was to create an international story exchange where people could take part in interactive workshops and train with the tools of Digital Storytelling. Atchley was still thinking in terms of the Internet as a vehicle for creation and distribution (albeit a version of Digital Storytelling that online, has yet to be achieved). But corporate Digital Storytelling, the Digital Storytelling Festival (an annual event started in Colorado in 1995), physical workshops that could be attended by members of the public, and putting his stories on the stage were actions that took Digital Storytelling out of the screen, and in the

process, rendered his initial definition of Digital Storytelling somewhat redundant. The movement perhaps had a bigger scope than he had anticipated, and his work was ready to be both persevered and built upon by his colleagues and friends in Berkeley, California.

Joe Lambert, Nina Mullen and the Center for Digital Storytelling (CDS)

Joe Lambert arrived at Dana Atchley and Digital Storytelling from a background in theatre and community work. Collaborations with media artists, designers and practitioners were common to this work, and Dana Atchley became one of these partners. Due to this history in the community, Lambert was able to look at the tools, and the uses being made of those tools, in a new light – beyond that of performance. Lambert (as he describes in his book *Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Communities*, 2002) was aware from very early on that this new medium could be a democratising one:

> The tools of digital technology should be used to democratise voice and therefore empower more people than the prior set of analog tools in contemporary communication. (Lambert, 2002c)

Digital Storytelling seemed, to him, to be the ideal form for this democratisation:

> I think that the digital media suggested that there might be a way to do film that wasn't expensive and as complicated as I imagined film and video to be, to do that work of capturing the stories of a more diverse group of people in a way that could reach a larger audience. (Lambert, in interview, 2004).

Lambert's feelings about the democratising promise of the medium and his work in communities led him to a model of Digital Storytelling that involved the public and their stories, but appropriated techniques from theatre – performance and art:

> The context for our work was personal storytelling. The computer seemed like a great place to help people integrate their family albums with stories about the experiences of their lives. I simply borrowed from the history of oral-history theatre, solo performance, conceptual art and progressive literacy campaigns to inform our particular practice (Lambert, (b))

The process aims to result in what Joe Lambert calls a "wonderfully democratic new art form" (Lambert, (a)).

CDS (previously the San Francisco Digital Media Center) have run Digital Storytelling workshops for the last eight years and made over 5000 stories with members of the public and corporations.

The main principles of the work of the Center are outlined as follows, and the ethos of Digital Storytelling as a democratic form can be seen (whether this talk of the democratic nature of Digital Storytelling is merely rhetoric will be addressed in detail in the concluding chapter to this thesis):

1. "Every human has a powerful story to tell"
2. "Listening is hard"
3. As a result of this, our culture is one where many can earn a living by doing little more than listening to people's stories
4. "We all see, hear, perceive the world in different ways, and so what form and approach we take to a story is very different"
5. Everyone is creative and should be encouraged
6. "The computer is a poorly designed, but massively powerful, instrument for creativity."
   (CDSa, date unspecified)

The work the Center embarks on aims to treat people by the nature of these principles, emphasising the egalitarian qualities of the form. Every person who attends a workshop is encouraged to produce a finished piece for show at the final presentation, and can then do with that story what they please (unlike with the *Capture Wales* workshops, participants are not bound by a contract and stories are not broadcast in any form or even posted on the website).

The methodology they employ is directly influenced by these principles:

1. "Story defines and leads all aspects of the process". It is the one thing that links every person in the room during a workshop
2. Students make first person stories
3. Stories are inspired by the participants visual archive
4. Students are taught the seven elements of Digital Storytelling (to follow)
5. All workshops have a group story writing and review process
6. The choice of software tools and production equipment have been considered in detail

7. The teaching of software is informed by the concerns of the group
8. Facilitators must pay attention to managing participants experiences
9. The final presentation.

(CDSa, date unspecified)

These aspects of methodology guide the workshop experience at CDS in much the same way that they now (informally or otherwise) guide the experience of those who take part in *Capture Wales* workshops. This is necessarily a very tightly scripted process, ultimately controlled by the facilitators of the workshop, and questions must be asked about the implications of this for any claim that control rests in the hands of the storyteller. These issues will be dealt with in part three of this thesis.

The Center for Digital Storytelling workshop process

In February 2004 I attended a workshop in association with CDS during Joe Lambert and Nina Mullen's time in Polverigi, Italy. This gave me not only an insight into the workshop process as run in the American model, but also into the differences between this model and that of the BBC Wales *Capture Wales* project (more on this in the next two chapters). The CDS website describes the workshop process as follows:

> Over the last eight years, the workshop practice has been honed and tested among a wide variety of contexts, involving an equally diverse number of people, from the techno-savvy to the techno-phobic. (CDSc, date unspecified)

Each workshop contains between eight and 15 participants making stories anywhere between three and five minutes long, and, quite significantly, the centre does not in any way advertise the workshops as a mode of therapy or emotional release.

The workshops consist of a presentation, the script process, software tutorials and then production workshops in the same way that the *Capture Wales* workshop does, but in the case of my group workshop in Italy (eight participants, five Italian, three British), was somewhat complicated by the dual language. The majority of the participants in the workshop were female, and below the age of 30. The two men who took part in the workshop were also of

this age group. All were already working, or considering working in the arts (of some description). There was a scarcity of extra help and extra resources, which hammered home just how well equipped the BBC team have been made. Each person did however have a laptop, and all (bar one) completed at least a rough edit of their film (the incomplete story was made by an Italian girl who fully intended to visit the Center and complete the story at a later date).

On the first day, participants were introduced to each other and the Storytelling workshop was preceded by an introduction by Joe Lambert to Digital Storytelling and the seven elements crucial to the construction of a multimedia story (as set out by CDS). These are as follows:

1. Point of View
2. Dramatic Question
3. Emotional Content
4. The Gift of your Voice
5. The Power of the Soundtrack
6. Economy
7. Pacing

(Lambert, 2002a)

This was followed by a story session, which involved the outlining of an idea, and discussion of the varied possibilities for taking the story forward (with much translation). Rather than a full day story circle (in the manner of *Capture Wales*), CDS is limited in time and so the main story idea was the immediate focus of the group. Over the next two and a half days, Photoshop and Premier tutorials took place, alongside much help from both Joe and Nina. Like the *Capture Wales* model, the CDS workshop ends with a presentation of completed stories to the rest of the group. The process, although necessarily different (the Center is working under very different pressures to the BBC in terms of time, resources and in this case, language also) was still intense, emotional and uplifting. The model is slightly different (or perhaps more specifically, *Capture Wales* has altered the model employed by Lambert and Mullen), but, as we will see, the ability to employ differing methods of workshop delivery is essential to the sustainability of Digital Storytelling in the long run.

Corporate Digital Storytelling

As has been mentioned previously, the work of Digital Storytelling in America has been intertwined with its fate as a corporate tool (see also Pink, 1999, Rosenfeld, 2000 and Vincent, 2003). Dana Atchley himself had much success teaching corporations how to tell stories through the use of multi-media tools. One of his former clients, the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Institute for the Future, Bob Johansen said this of Digital Storytelling:

> [It] is the most vivid clue yet to the question of 'What's next for PowerPoint slides?' for corporate presentations. Executives, in order to reach decisions, need data that they can understand AND a compelling story that brings the data to life for them. (Johansen, in Atchley, Dana, (b))

Corporations were not new to using media or even multi-media tools in order to get their messages across (either internally, or externally). Videos, presentations, CD-ROMS and the like had all been used in the past, with varied success. The appeal of Digital Storytelling seemed to be in Atchley's use of personal stories, highlighting how companies could mean an awful lot more to people than we might previously have thought. One example is the success of the storytelling video theatre at the World of Coca Cola in Atlanta, the result of someone in a position of authority seeing Dana Atchley's *Next Exit* show and asking Atchley to aid the president of Coca-Cola to become more of a storyteller, or, in the words of Atchley 'less "buttoned up"' (Atchley, Dana, (c)). At The World of Coca-Cola, stories are shown about the product, and audience members are invited to make their own stories about Coca-Cola on computers. In the first three weeks, 1,800 stories were made by members of the public (Rosenfeld, 2000). One such story, shown in the theatre itself, is that of Kevin from Oaktown who went to fight in World War Two with six bottles of Coca-Cola in his bag. Only one bottle made it home, where it sat on the mantelpiece in the living room for more than 30 years before the house burned down in a fire. Kevin ran back into the house and the only thing he rescued was the bottle of coke. He has now died and his daughter keeps the bottle on her kitchen worktop (Stepanek, 2000).

Traditional promotions tactics address the audience with a ""voice of god" narrator that provides a high-overview, integrated with fancy music and graphics. These presentations often don't resonate with the audience" (Atchley, Dana, (c)), they are often seen as overly corporate, stuffy and out of touch. This view resonates with that of others, including Eric Almquist, an Internet expert for a management consulting corporation in America and Ronald B Leiber:

> Back in the old days – pre-1995 – the success of a brand could be as simple as a top-notch ad campaign. But success on the Internet requires far more. Now you need to establish far deeper, interactive connections with customers if you hope to keep them. (Almquist in Stepanek, 2000)
>
> Surveys and focus groups can take you only so far. If you hope to understand what drives consumer behavior, search out the true-life anecdotes that reveal what your customers really want. (Leiber in McLellan, 1999b)

This kind of activity, we can see being employed at The World of Coca-Cola. Kit Laybourne, of Oxygen TV, a company who pioneered a Digital Storytelling project in the 1990s, furthers this notion, "By listening and sharing with your customers, you're essentially having them co-write your brand. And you're doing it for nothing, or next to nothing" (Stepanek, 2000). Customers are able to really think about and feel why the products are important to them, as opposed to being told through a series of repeated images and symbols that these things *should* be important to them.

The work that Atchley started with Digital Storytelling has grown into a profitable industry for many. www.seriousfunbiz.com, www.storycenter.org, www.digitalstorytelling.org, www.digitalvigilance.com and others offer services for businesses that promise to aid the gathering of stories and the completion of a digital project that will promote the company in new and exciting ways.

Corporate projects are dictated by the needs and desires of the organisation:

> Whether you are working for a commercial enterprise or a civic group, trying to capture an organization's story is a common idea for a digital storytelling project. For some, this is just another piece

> of marketing material, a step up from a PowerPoint presentation, and a step below spending $20,000 on a new promotional video. For others, the style of personal narrative, in a piece that is produced with a minimal but elegant design, stands out as a new way of communicating meaning and values in relationship to the products or services the organizations offers. (Lambert, 2002a: 105)

But all are driven by a common belief that the telling of story expresses vision and forges intimacy, trust and loyalty between companies and consumers and within those companies themselves that cannot, or should not, be dictated by traditional means:

> Stories speak to both parts of the human mind – its reason and emotion. Stories provide a tool for articulating and focusing vision. Stories provide a medium of communication, both internally within an organization and externally to customers, potential customers, business partners, business rivals, investors, and others. (McLellan, 1999a)

Corporate Digital Storytelling does seem to contradict those prior assertions that the form can be used for agency within all people, being an exercise driven by corporate capitalism in a bid for financial gain from those very people. One only has to do a Web search to see how prolific this business practice has become. In certain cases, we see the form 'bastardised' beyond recognition from that of Dana Atchley and CDS, and questions must thus be asked about the BBC's use of Digital Storytelling within communities. Is this merely a diluted form of corporate Digital Storytelling as practised (for the most part) in America? Or a genuine work of media literacy, training and connection with the public? These questions will underly discussion in the following chapters.

Digital Storytelling and community

Joe Lambert is of the belief that Digital Storytelling recreates conversations that people used to have in the village square and long since gave up in favour of mediated discussion forums, allowing people a more intimate and ultimately rewarding relationship with others in the community. Through the unfolding, unearthing and telling of stories, events, people and places are brought to life again:

> Essentially Lambert argues that Digital Storytelling strengthens communities because it provides them with the ability to remember the content of their lives. (ILS, 1999)

Digital media is something that is often spoken about in terms of community, and there has been a wealth of work trying to define what these communities are, where they exist, and how far-reaching they are. 'Community' in the sense of a geographically located body of people is crucial in these discussions. We will see in the following chapter that *Capture Wales* was set up with a view to connecting more closely with 'communities', those communities who are in joint ownership of the BBC, as opposed to those that exist virtually. They are the more tangible of communities.

There is however a certain community that exists in 'cyberspace' associated with Digital Storytelling that will be looked at. Those enthusiasts, professionals and practitioners in Digital Storytelling around the globe who are often referred to as a community:

> The community of hardcore enthusiasts, which I think is about 500 people in the world, is truly engaged in this notion of this kind of work and its potential. (Lambert, in interview, 2004)

These people, who gather at the Digital Storytelling Festival in Arizona, who participate in the workings of the Digital Storytelling Association, attend workshops, or events such as the Digital Storytelling Conference at BBC Wales, make up a group of people who understand what Digital Storytelling in this context means, and partake in discussion about its potential influences on media and the variety of voices available. This community is part of a larger community of people interested in new media and its ramifications; people interested in storytelling and theatre; and those interested in the empowerment of 'ordinary' people.

Digital Storytelling has a part to play in a number of different community settings, some of which will be looked at in further detail in the following chapters in relation to *Capture Wales*, namely how the project aligns itself with geographically located communities, and those other Digital Storytelling practitioners and enthusiasts. However, this study will not enter into detailed

discussion of the intricacies of and existence of 'cyber' communities although it appreciates there is a great deal of discussion to be had in this area (see Foster, 1997; Kollock & Smith, 1999; Jordan, 1999; Wilbur, 2000; Sanderson & Fortin, 2001 for examples).

What does Digital Storytelling borrow from traditional storytelling?

As has already been touched upon, it seems that narratives are still concerned with issues of power (with discussion around corporate Digital Storytelling being no exception). Alongside this constant has been, however, the change in story format; how stories are recorded and told.

Story is still built around traditional structures; a plot, and having a beginning, a middle, and end, and this is true of the conventional Digital Story. The form however, is much changed. A multifaceted approach to storytelling is seen, an assault on the senses including images, film, music and voice (and not just any voice, but the voice of the teller). This kind of storytelling has inspired interesting debate about whether this is a positive development from story on the page, or whether it signifies the loss of something integral to the story experience:

> The author masters the resources of language to create a vision that will engage and in some way overpower the reader; the reader goes to the work to be subjected to the creative will of another. The premise behind the textual interchange is that the author possesses wisdom, an insight, a way of looking at experience that the reader wants. (Birkerts, 1994: 163)

Birkerts believes (as we have seen) that this relationship is under threat with the rise of online technologies and narratives. But this is recovered with Digital Storytelling. It is the belief of those who pioneered Digital Storytelling both in the United States and in Britain that Digital Stories reveal something of great importance about the author, the teller of the story, to the receiver of the story. In this sense, Digital Storytelling IS traditional storytelling, representing the transfer of wisdom. The same function practised through a new, but equally effective medium. As storytelling was about making associations between good and bad, right and wrong, the natural world and

that of humans, so it is still (in the form of Digital Stories) "all about making connections (Atchley, Dana in Story, 1999).

Corey Hitchcock in his study 'Storytellers of the New Millennium' sees this as the case:

> These tools, and many others, are helping or perhaps even forcing writers and artists to think outside the realm of traditional linear narrative. Every aspect of storytelling, structure, plot, character, pace, voice, timing, and setting, has the potential to be morphed by digital contact. (Hitchcock, 1997)

'Morphed' that is, not 'made obsolete'.

The future of Digital Storytelling

The future of Digital Storytelling, according to its practitioners, is bright. It is not the ultimate or last port of call for storytelling, but neither is it insignificant because of this:

> The future of digital storytelling is as unlimited as a storyteller's creativity and imagination. No doubt, as technology expands, so will the art of digital storytelling. (ILS, 1999)

There are those who are always working toward the next technological breakthrough, the next age, and with this new expansion in the functionality and malleability of technology, new art forms will arise. Those enthusiasts (people like Dana Atchley or Daniel Meadows) will constantly be foraging for the next way of using what they know in new, creative and democratic ways.

Possible outcomes of the Digital Storytelling 'movement' are outlined on the University of North Carolina, School of Information and Library Science website:

1. "Digital Storytelling has the potential to change the way that millions of people communicate"
2. "The recent development of software programs such as *MediaViews* will enhance the ease and ability of storytellers to produce digital stories.
3. Virtual story swaps will become a way in which storytellers share stories
4. Digital Storytelling clubhouses will appear.

(ILS, 1999)

The future of Digital Storytelling then is not static. It involves not only spreading the word and tools as they stand, but also pushing for new developments, new formats and platforms for distribution. It also means pushing more people to believe that they have a story worth telling. There is a lot of 'damage' to undo in this respect. And this is perhaps where BBC Wales and the *Capture Wales* project come in, the usage of broadcast, the connection with public through a trusted corporation, the ability of enthusiasts to connect with exactly those people who do not feel they are being represented through mainstream media, and the collection of stories that would never otherwise be heard:

> I believe the notion of story, transformative reflection, and the capacities of computing machine being forged together into some sort of new life machine process is catching on with people ... We still have much work to do. We still have to imagine a future where people value their own lives stories more than the constructed lives of sixteen faux "survivors" on an island in the Pacific. In other words, the movement has just begun. (Lambert, 2002c)

Lambert sees Digital Storytelling as a movement that could be revolutionary in terms of community art and regeneration, the democratisation of media, literacy and access to digital tools. But he appreciates the problems inherent in any 'arts in the community' project that uses resources of this nature:

> ...My fellow community artists argued that computers were the tools of an elite class of users. How could you go into a community of working people with machines that cost $15,000 each and expect to make a sustainable, accessible program? ... But underneath my attitude was: Be patient, cost will not always be the principal factor mitigating broad digital literacy. (Lambert, (b))

Daniel Meadows was, by this time teaching a Digital Storytelling module in Cardiff University's School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies. Meadows was concerned with representation, digital literacy and the traditional flows of media power, and attended a Center for Digital Storytelling bootcamp in California in November 2000. The BBC *Capture Wales* project that followed, as Joe Lambert acknowledges below, would be crucial to the development of the 'movement', and furthering debate about how to produce sustainable initiatives:

> I think it is clear the BBC's role in this work may be quite influential and the gravitational pull of that work may have a big impact on our planning. (Lambert, 2002b)

Chapter Four

The BBC: Public Service and Connection With the People

This chapter aims to take an in depth look at the BBC; how an institution based on the premise of public service broadcasting has arrived at its current position (locally, nationally and globally), and how media projects using contributions from the licence paying public fit into this positioning. Here, I document the history of the BBC's attempts to connect with the communities it serves with a view to understanding if and how *Capture Wales* fits into this history either as a continuation of the theme, or as a radically new venture.

Public Service Broadcasting in the United Kingdom

Public service broadcasting has endured a volatile relationship with both the British public and the various political climates within which it has operated since its inception over three quarters of a century ago. These relationships, at times unstable, at times critical to the state of 'nation', have survived on the premise that public service media provision somehow benefits viewers and listeners, giving them something that would be obsolete in a purely market driven commercial media environment. This 'something' has most frequently been encapsulated in the buzzwords 'inform, educate and entertain'. For John Reith, the first Director General of the British Broadcasting Company (later the British Broadcasting Corporation), this philosophy was crucial if public service broadcasting was to prove itself to be a vital, indispensable means of media distribution:

> 'I wonder if many have paused to consider... the incalculable harm which might have been done had different principles guided the conduct of the service in the early days' (Reith, 1922: 34). (Franklin, 2001: 19)

The principles upon which Public Service Broadcasting in Britain was to operate were straightforward enough; that if the airwaves were the property of the public, they must be used to provide content that is in that public's interest, not to deliver commercial messages. Reith firmly believed that content that would truly enrich the lives of licence payers could never be produced in a media landscape where audiences were brought and sold for profit.

This maxim, that public service broadcasters had a responsibility to inform, educate and entertain, has remained core to the BBC's understanding of its function within a society that has changed monumentally since its birth. In the 2002/2003 Annual Review for BBC Wales, the opening line detailing the purpose of the BBC reads "Our purpose is to enrich people's lives with programmes and services that inform, educate and entertain" (BBC Wales, 2002/2003: 1). In the 1998 paper *The Big Switch? Digital Future – Turn-on or Turn-off?* echoes of this were also in evidence in the Government's defence of the concept of public service broadcasting:

> Public service broadcasters inform, educate and challenge it [the audience] in a way that few purely commercial enterprises are free to do. (Quoted in Franklin, 2001: 31)

In that same paper, the five key aims for public service broadcasters moving into the new millennium (as defined by the Government) were outlined as follows:

1. They must provide a benchmark of quality for the industry
2. They must provide something for everybody
3. They must inform, educate and entertain.
4. They should provide the public with value for money
5. They should reflect the diversity of the nation.

(in Franklin, 2001: 32)

Thus, we see that the BBC (as the UK's largest and most recognisable public service broadcaster) is operating within a media spectrum that expects the traditional 'inform, educate and entertain' values of public service broadcasting to be upheld. Above and beyond this though, it seems the BBC must continually justify its existence to the public that maintains it; providing quality, value for money and diversity of content and representation.

As a publicly funded model of media production and distribution, broadcasting within a public service framework has come under attack since its beginnings for (in the view of its critics) not, in actuality, being capable of fulfilling one or all of the aims outlined above. Often, these attacks centre on the supposed 'out-of-touch-ness' or the paternal nature of public service broadcasting and its broadcasters.

One of the fiercest critics of public service broadcasting in recent years has been Rupert Murdoch, head of the News Corporation media empire and staunch critic of both the BBC and public service broadcasting in general. In 1989, at the Edinburgh Television Festival MacTaggart Lecture, Murdoch launched a ferocious attack on the very notion of public service broadcasting along the following lines of argument; that it was deployed by propagandists in the interests of a broadcasting elite; that it stifles viewer choice; that monopoly is an unhealthy and undesirable media environment; that it promotes a single, narrowly defined set of cultural values; that spectrum scarcity is a myth; that it cannot cater for both mass and minority audiences. Lastly, he accused public service broadcasting of not in actuality being in the control of the people, but instead, of being dictated to by bureaucratic organisations (Murdoch in Franklin, 2001: 40).

Although one has to acknowledge that some of the concerns raised by Murdoch are worthy of reflection, (not least his views on public service broadcasting's ability to cater for different audiences and be responsive to them) it is hard to envision Rupert Murdoch fighting the cause for affordable, fair, representative, diverse and democratic media output. It is even harder to imagine that he would ever desire to be the custodian of such output. The press reaction to this lecture (outside of the Murdoch press) was scathing. Clive James pointed out in *The Observer* that "The wolf had come to lecture Red Riding Hood on how to find her way through the forest" (Barnett & Curry, 1994: 128).

Alongside Rupert Murdoch's attacks ran the criticisms of former Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher who viewed public service broadcasting (and especially the BBC) as paternalistic in its programming, unresponsive to public demand, economically inefficient, ill-funded and incongruent with public standards of taste and decency. In fact, Thatcher viewed public service broadcasters with the same contempt she reserved for other publicly funded bodies, which were challenged on the grounds that they were outdated and damaging to notions of fairness and competition.

Public service broadcasting then, in the eyes of its most vehement critics, was failing in its responsibilities to the public. More than that though, it was trying to conform to a list of responsibilities that were themselves primitive and undesirable in a society that was unrecognisable from that which initially gave rise to it. James Curran sums up this positioning:

> Public service broadcasting appears vulnerable because some of the beliefs that sustained it for two generations have come to be questioned or rejected outright. (Curran, 2002: 195)

Values, ideas and beliefs have indeed changed, indicating that a reappraisal of the very idea of public service may be in order. In a time where we have seen immense political and social change; the decline of the church; differing tastes, work and leisure preferences; increased feminism and the decreasing influence of 'nation', it is perhaps not surprising that many feel that public service broadcasting needs to prove itself as worthy of its ongoing support by Government and the people. Indeed, Pat Loughrey, Director of Nations and Regions at the BBC (the separation in basic terms of London from the rest of the United Kingdom, the regions being other parts of England, the nations being Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales) acknowledges this:

> ... this is a much less deferential society. Our attitudes to church and state are fundamentally altered. And the BBC, like all other public institutions, needs to be dextrous, changing. (Loughrey, in interview, 2003)

Above and beyond this need to 'take stock' of the effects of our changing society is the realisation (according to Curran), that we have entered a new technological phase, one heralded by the crushing in the 1990s of the major justification for public service broadcasting – spectrum scarcity (no longer an

issue due to the widespread launch and take up of cable and satellite technologies). This new technology, it stood to reason, would fundamentally alter the broadcasting spectrum and the place of public service within it, especially in terms of audience share and the viability of a licence fee. Debate raged during this period along these two lines of argument – the technological and the social. Much of this debate was pessimistic in its outlook, seeing the future of public service broadcasting as bleak at best:

> In this new digital age, the vitality and security of public service broadcasting is likely to be increasingly threatened by those who believe it has a diminished role to play in the brave new world of the twenty first century. (Puttnam, 1999: 4)

> Public service broadcasting will soon be dead. It will soon be dead because it relies on an active broadcaster and a passive viewer... It's a gonner because given the choice at the end of a tiring day viewers don't always choose what's good for them. Many will always pass on the wholesome, healthy and carefully crafted in favour of the easily digestible, pre-packaged, and the undemanding. They devour the entertainment, play with the information and leave the education on the side of their plates thank you very much. (Eyre, 1999: 44)

> Public service broadcasting is in trouble not simply because its intellectual rationale is under attack. Its problems are likely to worsen, it can be argued, because they are rooted in fundamental changes in British society. (Curran, 2002:198)

It would seem that perhaps James Curran is correct; public service broadcasting *is* in trouble.

So why then does public service provision still dominate the broadcasting spectrum in Britain? James Curran goes on to ask that very question; "Why, if the political and social trends of society are so inimical to public service broadcasting is it still standing bruised but intact?" (Curran, 2002: 201-202). His answer; that the programs are popular, perceived quality is high, they are trusted, independent, secure access to information, conserve the cultural system and represent the people. Quite a list, and one that fulfils, (in the main), the previously discussed requirements of public service broadcasting.

Could it be then, that the future of public service broadcasting is not so bleak? In the 2000 Government paper *A New Future for Communications*, it is stated that "The Government believes that we will continue to rely on public service broadcasting for one clear reason – it works" (DTI and DCMS Stationary Office, 2000: 36). It is not only the British Government who have pledged their support for public service media provision. The European Broadcasting Union, in their 1995 contribution to the G7 meeting, espoused public service broadcasters as being in a vital position, (especially given the changing technological climate they are operating in), to; safeguard access for all to resources and archives; integrate people; maintain and develop programmes of originality and national/regional identity; provide a point of reference and orientation (quality, credibility, information and analysis); optimise the educational functions of existing and new media; get closer to audiences and communicate directly with them. In short, they see public service broadcasting as indispensable both now, and in the future (European Broadcasting Union, 1995).

Perhaps then, public service broadcasting is more vital and valid than ever. In a twist to the tale, the changing environment which so threatens public service broadcasting could be the very environment that justifies and secures its future:

> The new technology which reinforces both commercial pressures and globalisation does not remove the case for public service broadcasting – on the contrary it increases the need for it (Davies & Graham, 1997: 14)

Public service broadcasting however cannot take this future for granted. Its funding mechanism, content, organisation, relationship with the public and Government, in fact, its very existence, will always be called into question, not least by those whose interests lie in a market oriented media landscape where creating profit is prioritised over creating something of cultural significance, but also, by the paying public. Public service broadcasting will continue to have to justify itself, and the BBC, as arguably the most recognisable public service brand in the world, is no exception.

The BBC as Public Service Broadcaster

As has been outlined above, public service broadcasting has had both its supporters and critics. The same is true of the BBC. Set up under Lord Reith as a public service broadcast company, it clearly rejected the commercial model, more; it has been suggested (Davies, 1994: 3) due to predicted uproar from newspapers than as an outright rejection of advertising as a funding mechanism. Whatever the immediate reasoning behind the decision, it left the BBC free to treat the audiences (in theory at least) as citizens as opposed to consumers of media. The BBC would have a responsibility to inform and educate audiences and thus encourage them to "play a full part in the democratic and cultural life of the nation" (Eldridge, et al. 1997: 45), that is to take part in critical, rational debate within the public arena. The other chief mission, as we have seen, was to 'entertain', an altogether (it would seem) more complicated mission that would lead in time to accusations of middle-class'ness', a lack of representation and a spoon-feeding of cultural values through its programming.

The current Agreement (1996) between the BBC and the Government highlights the perceived importance of 'informing, educating and entertaining' to the Corporation; "the Home Services (a) are provided as a public service for disseminating information, education and entertainment" (Department of National Heritage. 1996a: 6). The current Charter (1996) outlines the objectives of the Corporation in much the same way:

> ... provide, as public services, sound and television broadcasting services (whether by analogue or digital means) and to provide sound and television programmes of information, education and entertainment for general reception in Our United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. (Department of National Heritage. 1996b: 2).

The BBC, set up with these values, has at various times been under attack for falling short of its mission.

After the initial launch of the BBC in 1922, there was an almost immediate response to what would become one of the most treasured and criticised media organisations in the world. By as early as 1925, the BBC was broadcasting to 85% of the UK. There is little record of audience response to the organisation and its output in the early years, but after the initial excitement surrounding this new media form had worn off, complaints started. As a result, Reith, having resisted audience research, finally gave in come 1936 and set up the 'Listener Research Department', to some controversy. As a result of this department, changes were made to the output of the BBC – an increase in music and comedy in particular. It appears that from the outset, audiences wanted to have a say in the output of their national media outlet.

Apart from changes in output content, the BBC has undergone transition in the means for output over the years. From radio to television, from one television channel to two, from one radio station to a whole range of local and national radio stations, from analogue to digital. The BBC has survived a phenomenally effervescent media landscape in transition, and (according to many critics and 'consumers' of output) remains central to our notions of truth, honesty, quality, nation and culture. As Harvey and Robins said in 1993; "The BBC is central to the cultural life of Britain. It is one of the major British success stories of the post-war period" (Mulgan & Paterson, 1993: ix).

Indeed, some grand protestations have been made about the essentiality of the BBC to all things British and more:

> It is hard to overestimate the benefit which we derive from having the BBC as a bastion of public service broadcasting. (Smith, 1998: 8)

> A public organisation like the BBC is needed because it offers 'merit goods' that set standards, and influence both the wider broadcasting industry and the market. (Curran, 2002: 205)

> With some justification the BBC is perceived around the world as the best provider of information, education and entertainment programming. (Briggs & Cobley, 2002: 184)

> The BBC's influence on broadcasting extends beyond its own programmes... it makes an investment not just in itself but for the nation's skills base. (Barnett & Curry, 1994: 9)

> It [the BBC] is the keeper, as it were, of our national conscience. (Puttnam, 1999: 4)

> The BBC has a long-term pact with the public, and if it were weakened and impoverished by the politicians who happen to be temporarily in power, a vital part of our democracy would be irrevocably damaged. (Hagerty, 2003: 6)

> In particular, the BBC has played a crucial role in conceiving and cementing notions of 'Britishness' (both at home and abroad), intent on constructing a deep sense of national consciousness and consensus. (Creeber, 2004: 29)

Few doubt the contribution of the BBC to the nation's technical skills base, and as a benchmark of quality ('quality' as a word bandied about in relation to broadcasting of both a public service and commercial persuasion. It is a question of taste, value and never-ending controversy). But there have been those who try to deny the BBC any gravitas beyond that:

> The BBC has plentiful enemies to torment it. The right hates it as a nationalised industry, denouncing the poll tax licence fee. The Telegraph forever dreams of some imaginary golden age of all our BBC yesterdays ... the Mail has its own weird agenda about the BBC's licentiousness. But the BBC's most venomous opponent is the Murdoch press. (Toynbee, 1999)

Seeing the BBC as an example of unfair competition, Murdoch has rallied against it – and as we have seen, the whole notion of public service broadcasting – for years. Asked once whether he believed the BBC should really be forced to cancel the license fee and fund itself on the back of 'bring-and-buy sales', he replied with a smile; "If they were a little more hand to mouth they would be more responsive; and a little less arrogant about their audience" (Horrie, & Clarke, 1995: 38).

Margaret Thatcher's views were again in line with those of Murdoch on the issue of the BBC. Thatcher believed that there needed to be considerable debate about the future of the Corporation, hence the Peacock Committee, set up to investigate the future of the licence fee in the 1980s. The committee, handpicked to include Tories and known antagonists of the BBC, was

expected to return a verdict suggesting the introduction of some degree of advertising on the BBC. To both Margaret Thatcher and the nation's surprise, this was not their conclusion. Instead they recommended that, for the time being, the licence fee remain, but with a more diverse range of payment options, and a possible move towards an introduction of subscription services in the future.

Those with a vested interest in the privatisation of the BBC are never going to be in agreement with the 'poll tax' licence fee which they feel makes the Corporation too secure, not having to bow to the demographics of their audiences (in terms of advertisers) and thus having an unfair advantage. But there are others who rally against the BBC simply because of its attitude and output.

The BBC is often accused of being traditional and unresponsive to both societal change and audience needs. These issues are never far from the national papers, with the Murdoch press in particular tending to take the view that the BBC is more often than not authoritarian and outdated. It is argued that the BBC has been unrepresentative and heavily censored from the outset, actively discouraging the use of regional accents and reflecting John Reith's strict Calvinist morals. In essence, they accuse the BBC of trying to dictate culture to the masses, not letting them guide or create that culture themselves. Some argue that this situation has changed little over the years:

> Too often the BBC has behaved as an irreproachable purveyor of quality cultural fare above and beyond the doubts, reservations or criticisms of its users. Too often it has acted as if it did indeed know best what viewers *really* wanted. (Drummond & Peterson. 1985: 89)

Menna Richards, the current Controller of BBC Wales acknowledges that the BBC have had a reputation for being "slightly aloof and paternalistic" (Richards, in interview, 2003), as does Pat Loughrey, who sees the BBC's biggest challenge at the current time as to become a "more accessible, less pompous, less lecturing BBC" (Loughrey, in interview, 2003). In other words, this is a time when the BBC should be repositioning themselves, casting off their traditional image and accepting contributions from the people.

By the end of Reith's time as Director General, there were nine million licence fee payers nationwide. But content was seen to be, in the most part, directed toward the middle classes. It was not until the launch of ITV in 1955 that the BBC was forced into being more populist and innovative. Over time a change to a markedly more everyday approach in output can be seen, including the inclusion of regional accents and minority characters.

The BBC, in its own words, sees its vision as to be 'the most creative organisation in the world" (BBC Wales, 2002/2003: 1), and as part of this, upholds its values as; trust as the key; audiences being at the centre of everything; delivering quality and value for money; being creative; respecting each other and celebrating diversity; and working together (BBC Wales, 2002/2003: 1). It thus aspires to be more approachable, representative and accountable than perhaps Reith's BBC ever was. As our notions of 'Britishness' mutate due to immigration and societal change, the BBC has tried to change in accordance, launching soaps, reality shows and new radio and television channels aimed at capturing a smaller 'niche' market not served by commercial programming.

But the environment the BBC is operating in – the social, technical and media landscape – continues to change. With recent alterations to the Broadcasting Act over regulation of the market and media ownership, public service broadcasting has had to enter competition for such things as rights to national sporting events and events deemed to be of national importance (such as the Queen's Golden Jubilee). The BBC thus finds itself operating in a harsh and often hostile climate, a climate that does not promise to become any less punishing in the coming years.

There are then, as we have seen, those who defend the BBC and all it stands for, and those who will not rest until it ceases to be, rallying even against the very ethos of public service broadcasting. It is easy to find yourself positioned betwixt these outlooks – aware of the benefits of the BBC (and of public service broadcasting), but conscious of the fact that within our changing

technological and social environment, the role of the BBC could – or should – be altering. It is increasingly hard to anticipate when and if this alteration will occur – and what form it shall manifest when it does. As Steven Barnett and Andrew Curry say, "Predicting the future of the BBC is a hazardous activity" (Barnett & Curry, 1994: 246). Statements attempting to do so are liable to start with warning phrases like "As long as..." or "If they can...". Such sentences tend to end with some sort of reference to 'accountability', 'the people', and 'the licence payers'. The BBC needs to connect and represent, critics say, in order to survive:

> Pluralism should now be added to the objective of the broadcasting system. Public service broadcasting organizations should be required to give adequate expression to the diversity of opinions, perspectives and values in society. This should be incorporated into the BBC's Charter, the next Broadcasting Act and be one of the official aims of the proposed new regulator of commercial broadcasting, the Office of Communications. (Curran, 2002: 212)

It seems that, like public service broadcasting, the transitory climate in which the BBC operates could be its saviour or its downfall. It could rise to the challenge represented by new technology and our changing society, or become unjustifiable, especially in terms of public funding. One thing is clear, the future of the BBC is dependent on the maintenance of its public service ethos, which *has* to mean connecting with the public, giving them a voice and representing their differences, vitality and sense of identity – individual, local, regional and national. On all of these levels, it is crucial that the BBC begins to operate at a more visible level.

The changing technological environment provides challenges and opportunities on a scale the BBC has never seen before. The BBC will undoubtedly struggle to keep audience share high, face increased hostility to the licence fee, find resources (staff, equipment and ideas) tested and experience ferocious questioning in the lead up to Charter Renewal. But alongside these challenges, the BBC, if they use technology wisely, are in a position to increase reach, continue to lead the way in terms of trust, quality and education, connect more closely with individuals and communities, and most significantly, be in a position to innovate. This they can hope to do

secure in the knowledge that they are backed by one of the most recognised, trusted, established and sought out brand names in the world. This challenge should be embraced, and seems to have been. Pat Loughrey for one asserts that in terms of the BBC "I will not be pessimistic about the future" (Loughrey, 2003).

The BBC and the Licence Fee

The BBC has been vital, say its supporters, for launching educational and community initiatives, showcasing new talent, broadcasting events of national importance, introducing the public to new information and communications technologies, uniting people, providing a benchmark of quality and trust, and getting the public involved. To this end, the licence fee is indispensable; "The BBC as a truly independent cultural force needs a licence fee" (Miller & Allen, 1991: 117).

Now with some 20,000 employees (although this number is currently undergoing change), an expanding array of television channels, a vibrant internet presence and a host of radio stations, we are, proportionally, getting more value for our money than ever before out of the BBC. Unlike in America, where PBS is forced to make regular appeals for money and enjoys limited success, the BBC has had the constancy of the licence fee, which has increased (rather erratically) in line with inflation and the technological and social landscape it is being collected in. The current licence fee is £126.50 per year (as at April 2005) or roughly 35p a day, and includes provision for analogue channels, digital channels on terrestrial, cable and satellite, radio channels also available through televisions, digital radio and the Internet. The licence fee also funds the orchestras, publishing arm, research and training, and projects such as *Capture Wales*.

All this and more funded by the public. But the licence fee, first collected by the post office, will always be vulnerable. It is an easy target for the BBC's opponents; being hard to collect, and rising anually. In the summary of

evidence to the Peacock Committee in the 1980s, there were questions raised about the collection of the licence fee:

> Whether the BBC could get extra income through the licence fee is not in the terms of reference, but it is not clear whether the Post Office collects it cost-efficiently. In inner city areas with a reputation of violence it is almost voluntary. (Docherty & Peasey, 1986: 38)

Even now there are issues surrounding the collection of monies to the BBC. According to a 2002 report in the Sunday Express, of the £2,371 million collected a year, £132 million is spent on collecting that same money (Bailey, 2002: 30-31). Even the varied methods of payment recommended by the Peacock committee in their findings have not ensured the licence fee will be paid in full, by all:

> The licence fee, apart from being a highly regressive impost, hitting the poorest hardest, is also an inefficient one. Approaching 20% of potential revenue is lost through a mixture of evasion and collection costs. The evasion problem is bound to become more difficult as more people make little or no use of BBC television. (Hargreaves, 1993: 42)

By the end of 1924, 1,129,578 licences for radio had been sold in the United Kingdom, that is ten per cent of households. By July 1937 58 per cent of households in Wales held a licence. Things slowed down with the introduction of the television and radio licence, (only 10,048 had been sold by May 1952), but after the success of the televised Queens Coronation (the first time television viewing outnumbered radio listening for a single event), the figure rocketed to 638,182 (March, 1964, at which time the licence fee had not yet broken the £10 barrier). It was not until the 1980s that there were great increases in the price (despite a temporary freeze on increases by Margaret Thatcher) to £58.

Problems arise in any discussion of the licence fee when we consider the changing media environment. As the number of channels proliferates, it is entirely probable that the BBC's audience share will drop. If this is the case, how can further increases in the licence fee be justified or indeed, any licence fee at all?:

> ['Would-be-privatisers'] ... forecast that the BBC's share will hit a 'legitimacy barrier', below which public funding will no longer be defensible. (Collins & Murroni, 1996: 144)

> As a consequence of the deregulation and fragmentation of European markets, public service broadcasters have emerged in theory as the guarantors of old-style normative broadcasting principles. But it is by no means certain that they will have the resources to continue this role indefinitely. (Steemers, 1999: 240)

> The status quo of a compulsory licence fee with all proceeds paid to the BBC is bound to become indefensible. (Barnett, 1991: 115)

> No more hours of TV will be watched; viewing will be spread thin. The BBC awaits the decision on whether the licence fee will keep up. (Toynbee, 1999)

> Questions about the financing of the BBC, combined with growing concerns about the licence fee as a funding mechanism in circumstances of declining audience share in a multi-channel environment, have documented policy concerns in the public sector. (Franklin, 2001: 48)

All factions have cause for concern; the public do not want to pay for both a licence fee and their digital channels (especially if as a result of going digital they do not watch or listen to much BBC output); the satellite and cable companies are worried about unfair competition; and the Government are worried about the state of play for analogue switch off in 2010. The BBC should be concerned with how it defends the licence fee in the face of all this hostility, especially bearing in mind the following two certainties; the BBC would struggle to survive without the licence fee, and would change beyond recognition if privatisation were to occur. In the lead up to Charter Renewal and analogue switch off, we have seen vociferous debate over the legitimacy of the licence fee, not only within the BBC and Parliament, but in people's homes, public houses and academic institutions. This debate included the holding of seminars by the Department of Culture Media and Sport for attendance by the public, which take the licence fee as one of the three main concerns (the others being Governance and Content). It has also included the publication of a Government Green Paper recommending the continuation of the licence fee into the next Charter period.

However, increasing hostility toward the licence fee coupled with the changing media climate mean that the BBC must prove itself to have not only significant audience share (an increasingly hard claim to make, prove and sustain), but reach. If the BBC continues to 'reach' over 90 per cent of the UK population (BBC, 2003b), if people are affected by them, made aware of their need for them (or more accurately, made aware of the diversity of services they would lose if the BBC were to accept advertising or disappear altogether), then they will survive. This involves entering a much closer dialogous, co-dependent relationship with audiences. Something that we have seen is vital for the BBC. All routes lead to the audience.

The BBC and Government

The relationships between the BBC and the various governments that have been in place over the years have encountered many twists and turns. At times accused of being in the pocket of the government (often the view of papers like *The Guardian*), at other times under attack from that same government, the BBC have struggled to strike a balance that pleases both sides – and the audience. Never more so than post-Hutton enquiry 2004, have we seen this relationship called into question.

The BBC currently has an Agreement with the Secretary of State for Culture Media and Sport (previously the Secretary of State for National Heritage), which accompanies the Royal Charter. This Agreement outlines services provided by, and expectations of, the BBC – including the expectation that there will be an Annual Review. The Royal Charter, renewed by the government every ten years outlines the 'constitution' by which the BBC is run. The current Charter and Agreement run out in 2006, and the recent Green Paper published by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport has laid out plans for its continuation for the following period.

The Royal Charter not only sets out the relationship between the BBC and its audiences and government, but also establishes the grounds upon which the National Broadcasting Councils shall operate. Each of the three councils (for

Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland) consists of a Chairman (the National Governor), and between eight and twelve members. The functions of the National Councils are outlined as follows; "representing the distinctive culture, language, interests and tastes of Our People in the country for which the Council is established" (Department of National Heritage, 1996b: 9). This involves monitoring public opinion on broadcast output in the region and advising the Corporation as to the needs and interests of its members. Dealing with audience comments, proposals and complaints, ensuring that all are given consideration by the Corporation, as well as advising on potential programme input from the area also come under the remit of the Broadcasting Councils.

For Charter renewal to take place, conversation takes place between the Board of Governors and the Broadcasting Councils in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. These Broadcasting Councils have been able to offer Governors advice on their specific location, the needs and desires broadcasting-wise of the people in that area, any budgetary concerns, and a reflection on public opinion.

Ultimately then, the government are responsible for the maintenance of the BBC. However, the BBC cannot take support from that government for granted. It is at times variously solid, slippery, and completely absent.

Outright criticism has come from the government on a number of issues, not least the feud after the Falklands war reportage, and the controversy surrounding the death of Doctor David Kelly after the conflict in Iraq, 2003. Individuals who have created trouble for the BBC in government include the following; Margaret Thatcher, a staunch critic, Winston Churchill, who was famously anti-BBC, fighting Charter renewal in 1946 (Davies, J. 1994) and Allistair Campbell, who in 1997 called the BBC a "downmarket, dumbed-down, over-staffed, over-bureaucratic, ridiculous organisation" (Underwood, (a)). Despite opposition however, the BBC remains intact, and with the new regulatory board OFCOM operating at arms length from government, it will be interesting to see what happens to this relationship in the future.

As the BBC approaches Charter Renewal again, all efforts have been made to demonstrate to the government that the BBC is an integral and necessary part of British culture, as Steven Barnett and Andrew Curry say in conclusion to their book this is absolutely vital:

> The story told in this book is a series of defensive engagements, fought out in Whitehall and White City, in which the BBC's form has been pummelled almost out of shape, but appears, so far, to have survived with its core intact. The battle which is about to begin is a more difficult one, for to survive beyond the charter period which begins in 1997 will require a public battle for the hearts and minds of its constituents, rather than a handful of civil servants and ministers. (Barnett & Curry, 1994: 263)

This is indicative of a necessary change in attitude, making the public aware of the importance of the BBC. A battle for the hearts and minds of licence payers that takes as its weapons projects such as *Capture Wales*.

The renewal of the Charter beyond 2006 would come as a relief to the BBC, especially given concerns and discussion raised by the public and the media during the Hutton enquiry and its aftermath. But this renewal comes with a proposition for real change to the governance of the corporation outlined in the recent Green Paper (2005). The Board of Governors would be replaced by an independent BBC Trust, a decision welcomed in the BBC's response via press release:

> For the first time in the BBC's history, there is now a clear distinction and appropriate separation between governance and management, and a greater emphasis on objective, evidence-based scrutiny of BBC activities. (Grade in BBC, 2005)

There is thus a desire on behalf of both the corporation and government to provide a necessary distance between the two moving into the next Charter period.

The BBC and audiences

The concept of the audience has long been a problematic for producers of media content and academics alike. Linked only by their positioning as 'users'

of a commodity or media, audiences are what John Hartley (1999) calls an 'imagined community'. By their very nature, they are intangible and for the most part, immeasurable. Not only this, they are an 'assumed group', accredited with a number of similar characteristics, interests and goals. In his book *Uses of Television* Hartley eloquently describes this scenario in respect to television audiences. Television is:

> ... no respecter of differences among its audiences; it *gathers populations* which may otherwise display few connections among themselves and positions them as its audience 'indifferently', according to all viewers the same 'rights' and promoting among them a sense of common identity as television audiences. (Hartley, 1999: 158)

New commodities, including media content, are produced with a view to satisfying a perceived consumer or audience need; they are 'constructed'. The demand must be seen to be great enough to justify expenditure and so a determinable audience must be located. This audience will be ascribed certain givens in terms of needs and desires (often as a result of market research) and a product will be developed to match these. Geoff Mulgan acknowledges that this has often been the case at the BBC:

> It has reached out to almost every conceivable audience group, from the largest and most general to the smallest and most specialist, although very often over-reliant on its own judgement of audience need. (Mulgan, 1990: 105).

In the case of the BBC, assumptions must be made, and 'gathered populations' become a necessary evil. This is especially the case however for those media institutions operating within a commercial framework. Without audiences, media organisations become redundant. Within this commercial model, audiences themselves become a commodity to be constructed and sold to advertisers. The same is true within the public service model of media provision. Although there is no pressure to bow to advertisers' demands, a sizeable demand for a product must be detected, especially if they are dependent on that same audience for funding (as is the case with the BBC). Essentially, as with commercial media companies, public service broadcasters are after one thing; a portion of viewing time, this makes the location and measurement of audiences vital.

Looking at the methods of market research into consumer demand provides an interesting insight into the priorities and hopes of media institutions and their responses to market needs and pressures. Alongside this, it helps us to determine who in actuality is driving the market for new media ventures. Can this be credited to media institutions or their audiences? How is the influence of a new venture measured and analysed? How is their relative success or failure measured? And how can their influence on attitudes, values and notions of self be quantified? Answers to these questions are important when planning any new media development, but are problematised in any discussion of *Capture Wales* and the BBC. These issues will be dealt with in full in part three of this thesis.

The current Agreement, up for renewal in 2006, outlines the following as integral to public service programme content; The Home Services must:

> 1. Stimulate, support and reflect, in drama, comedy, music and the visual and performing arts, the diversity of cultural activity in the United Kingdom.
> 2. Contain comprehensive, authoritative and impartial coverage of news and current affairs in the United Kingdom and throughout the world to support fair and informed debate at local, regional and national levels.
> 3. Provide wide-ranging coverage of sporting and other leisure interests.
> 4. Contain programmes of an educational nature.
> 5. Include a high standard of original programmes for children and young people.
> 6. Contain programmes which reflect the lives and concerns of both local and national audiences.
>
> (Department of National Heritage 1996a: 6)

There is obviously a grave and understandable concern that audiences should feel not only valued, but represented on screen. This has been attempted through flagship programmes such as *Eastenders* or *Casualty*, but is hard to achieve given the diversity and contradictory nature of many members of society. Real representation of the public (in Britain) has been tried through the projects briefed later in this chapter, and is now being tested with *Capture Wales*. Chapter six will attempt to identify whether this is being achieved in actuality.

The BBC Wales *Capture Wales* project is an example of just how complicated defining an audience can be. Is the audience the traditional one, at home watching the digital stories on television? Is the audience the participants of the workshops? Is the audience the BBC? (or even the BBC in England)? Depending on how the project goals are defined, very different conclusions can be reached about who is 'consuming' the project. Perhaps it is the case that in a situation such as this, when it is impossible to tell who is the audience and who is the producer, media provision is finally changing for the better, a more democratic and participatory relationship emerging between media institutions and those previously lumped together as gathered populations or audiences.

The BBC and new technology

The BBC occupy a crucial role in the take up of new technology by members of the public. The BBC was responsible for the take up of broadcast technology (both radio and television), the BBC's Internet presence has been a port of call for many getting used to the World Wide Web, and Freeview will provide a means for people who have no history with digital television to get involved. This is perhaps expected of the BBC as public service broadcaster:

> The information society will very much depend on well-informed citizens having the ability to take part actively in the new technologies. Public service broadcasting can play an important part in helping people to find their way through and benefit from the new media. (Dries & Woldt, 1996: 25)

In recent years, the BBC has built up a great presence online and on digital under the banner of BBCi (the overarching title for interactive and web applications provided by the BBC both on television and on the Internet).

BBC Internet

Under John Birt as Director General of the BBC, work began in 1997 on an online service that, by September 2003 (as reported in the *Financial Times*) had a reach within the UK market that was only exceeded by American companies Google, Microsoft and Yahoo (Tait, 2003: 4).

The website is a source for information on current news topics (in 43 languages), local information, weather, health, education, sport, finances, music and entertainment. Websites are dedicated to individual channels (both radio and television), programmes (for example *EastEnders*), and even events (such as the *Singer of the World*, Cardiff competition). Users can enter into any one of a number of relationships with the website; as browser, unique user (receiving emails for example), critic (providing feedback on services), or as content contributor (for example on message boards).

The most varied examples of such interactivity are perhaps found on the BBC's local websites where visitors are invited to make contributions in the form of discussion, recommendations, stories or even images. The BBC *Where I Live* sites provide opportunities for interaction on a level no other British broadcaster does. For example, the South East Wales *Where I Live* site (www.bbc.co.uk/wales/southeast) gives users the chance to post views, stories, pictures and queries (in the 'Your Say' or 'I Love Wales' areas of the site), as well as access archive material (such as programmes about the area and Digital Stories), listen to the radio, find out about BBC events and workshops in the area, visit the community studio and hear about local projects (for example, the Voices from Pil project, Newport), and find out how to take part in these.

The *Capture Wales* project also has an interactive web presence. On the site (www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales, see appendix three), users can watch stories, find out how to make them, learn about the history of the project, read workshop participants views, comment on the stories and contact the team at the BBC.

This kind of interaction is invaluable to both licence payers and the BBC, providing a means for two-way knowledge exchange from which both parties can benefit. The real benefits of these developments are yet to be seen and, I believe, yet to be truly exploited. There has been little independent and publicly available research into how these services are utilised, and what kinds of benefits can be derived from them. The BBC, and their rivals, would do well to play close attention to the uses made of their sites, and possibilities for development, especially given the previously identified need to close the gap between audiences and producers.

BBC Interactive television

The up and coming switch to digital has meant that the BBC has had to multiply its services available through cable, satellite and terrestrial providers. No longer was the kind of interactivity associated with programmes such as *Points of View* and *Watchdog* going to be enough to compete in an environment where people were learning more than ever the benefits of interacting through email, SMS messaging and the red button. Starting with the ability to access further information about programmes on television such as *Walking with Dinosaurs* and *Walking with Beasts*, the BBC has grown increasingly comfortable with giving viewers and listeners the chance to choose how they consume media. Perhaps more so than ever, the BBC's initial aim of treating audiences as citizens is being realised.

The latest venture into new technological ground comes in the form of Freeview. Following the collapse of ITVdigital in 2002, the BBC, in conjunction with SKY successfully applied for three digital television licences that were left over. The Independent Commission agreed that the BBC-Crown Castle Application was "most likely to ensure the viability of digital terrestrial television" (BBC News, 2002). Ahead of the government switch off of the analogue signal proposed in 2010, it was felt that this was the best way of attracting people to digital television who might not otherwise have trusted or felt the need for it. Former Director General Greg Dyke was in agreement that this was the most fruitful option saying "we believe that a simple, entirely free-

to-view digital option has the best chance of success with consumers" (BBC News, 2002). This is critical if the analogue signal switch off date is ever going to be met bearing in mind that in 2002, only 40 per cent of households had digital (Department of Culture, Media and Sport figure quoted in BBC News, 2002), a figure that needs to rise to 95 per cent of homes by 2010 (Sky News, 2002). It is thought that Freeview may attract a further five million homes in its first five years.

In line with identifiable trends in digital and satellite television technology such as; increased channels (including an increase in niche channels); increased quality of sound and vision; increased variety in modes of reception and payment; increased interactivity (personal programming schedules, editing and two-way applications); and increased tele-shopping, banking and learning opportunities (Dries & Woldt, 1996), Freeview provides a (rather limited) means for people who have previously avoided these applications to 'go Digital' without getting too technically involved or paying over the odds.

In November 2001, the BBC in Wales launched BBC 2W, a specific digital service for those living in Wales (although it is available across the United Kingdom on satellite):

> BBC 2W is a primetime digital service between 8.30pm and 10pm each weeknight and is the most significant development in broadcasting in Wales since the launch of S4C ... With digital take up in Wales higher than the UK average, BBC 2W is very important for audiences in Wales and early indications show that the audience likes what it sees. (BBC Wales, 2001/2002: 11)

BBC 2W was a response to feelings within Wales that elsewhere within the media, the people were being ignored or misrepresented:

> We launched 2W because of a demand from audiences for more programming about and from Wales. The research that we conducted reflected some very clear views about what the audience want to see and what they don't want to see. They don't want introspection, they don't want self-obsession, and they don't want as they put it 'anything too Welshy'. They do want to see a Welsh dimension within our programming, but they also want to see programmes that are as good as anything broadcast elsewhere. Viewers recognise that network television services have neglected Wales in the past, and that is why we are trying to listen

> and respond to their demands for more programming about Wales. (Richards, 2002)

Services on digital are thus catered to local needs, and offer opportunities for a merger between BBC output and 'consumer' input. As audiences interact more with the BBC, through the Internet, SMS messaging, their red buttons and the like, the more we see a democratic relationship emerging (whereby audiences have more input into the output of the Corporation, and more chances to get their voices heard on a variety of topics). As Geoff Mulgan said in 1990, "At the level of rhetoric at least, the centre of gravity has shifted from the producer to the consumer. Changing technologies have provided part of the push" (Mulgan, 1990: 95).

The BBC and national identity

The BBC has been ascribed the task of preserving and contributing to a sense of national identity since its very beginnings (a difficult task given the fact that there can surely be no single national identity). If one of the chief aims of public service broadcasting is to inform and educate the people to a point where they can partake in public debate, (with a view to participating in both the democratic purpose and the cultural life of the nation), then the BBC must be inextricably linked to our notions of 'nation' and 'identity'. Lord Reith saw one of his chief missions as 'making the nation as one man' (a term gendered enough to be indicative of its time and setting within a very masculine industry) (Buscombe, 2000: 57), uniting them with a sense of shared identity that could be reflected and built on through broadcasting. Buscombe goes on to link this with the Arnoldian idea (outlined in chapter one) of 'sweetness and light'. This notion assumes that there exists a national interest or national conscience that could be informed, educated and entertained as one. Thinking in most schools has since moved on from this notion, acknowledging that there can be no national conscience, and that the diversity inherent in a nation (or nations) such as ours must be celebrated and reflected in broadcasting output. In the 1992 Department of National Heritage *The Future of the BBC* Green Paper it was stated that:

> The BBC could produce programmes of particular interest to United Kingdom audiences, which reflect the British way of life, history and culture, national political issues and the UK's evolving place in Europe and the wider world ... In this way, the BBC would sustain a sense of national identity and extend diversity at a time when programmes are increasingly produced by organisations with multi-national interests for transmission in more than one country. (Department of National Heritage, 1992: 101)

This was seen to be the way in which the BBC as public broadcaster could and should be moving; to reflect a national identity that was made up of more than one prescribed character, location and set of values. This was also true of thinking at the BBC, and still is. In the (then) Director General Greg Dyke's review 2002/2003, he outlines not only the need for uniting the nation as part of the 'unique national role' of the BBC, but also the desire to provide enough 'range' of output to "make sure we serve all audiences in the UK". (BBC, 2002/2003)

The people who pay the licence fee must be assured through output that they are included, that there is a 'nation', but that it is made up of a rich tapestry of differing and often contradictory personalities, who the BBC can both teach, and learn from. Again we see how *Capture Wales* fits into the ever-evolving mission of the BBC, reflecting these various personalities under a banner (*Capture Wales / Capolwg Ar Gymru*) that unites as opposed to segregating them.

The BBC are expected not only to represent the nation, but to partake in, record and reflect upon events deemed to be of significance to that nation. During times of military conflict (within the UK, Europe and beyond), royal occasion (from coronation to jubilee) and sporting triumph (not to mention failure) expectations are high:

> One of the functions of a public broadcaster, and certainly one of the justifications, is to make events of national significance available to every household in the country at no more than the cost of the licence fee. In doing so, it plays a cultural role in making the nation more cohesive. It creates shared experience. (Barnett & Curry, 1994: 134)

Having these events relayed to us by one national, trusted broadcaster forces a confirmation or reappropriation of our sense of national identity. The BBC must however be careful not to patronise or homogenise audiences (as we have seen) by assuming them to be and feel 'British':

> It is no accident that the organisation is named the *British* Broadcasting Corporation. As foreign influences threaten to become harder for the commercial sector to resist, it will be even more important for the BBC to uphold the standard of indigenous programming in the nation whose name we proudly bear. (Davies, Gavin in BBC, 2002/2003)

Notions of Britishness have always been, and will continue to be integral to the workings, values and output of the BBC. This 'Britishness' (too often a substitute for Englishness) we shall see in the following sections, often sits uncomfortably next to notions of Welshness, Scottishness, Irishness or indeed European-ness. This especially has been, and continues to be (even as we see an emphasis on thinking globally) the case in Wales, a nation that has fought for over three quarters of a century to be taken seriously, or to be treated independently of the BBC in London.

The BBC in Wales

As a public service broadcaster, the BBC can reasonably be expected to produce programming and report events relevant to all those who contribute toward the licence fee. The current Agreement confirms this expectation stating that the Home Services should not only "contain programmes which reflect the lives and concerns of both local and national audiences" (Department of National Heritage. 1996a: 6). On top of this the BBC should endeavour to "contain a reasonable proportion and range of programmes for national audiences made in Northern Ireland, Scotland, Wales and in the English regions outside of London and the South East" (Department of National Heritage. 1996a: 6). It can be seen that, in the history of the BBC, there has been a struggle to make this the case for those living away from London, and, due to issues associated with the dual language, especially so in Wales.

John Davies provides a detailed historical account and analysis of the struggle for BBC Wales and BBC Cymru in his book *Broadcasting and the BBC in Wales* (upon which much of this section is based). Even before the launch of public service broadcasting in Wales from Eldon Street, Cardiff at 5.00pm on 13 February 1923, the fight was on. Scotland was granted two stations, and, even though its population perhaps did not justify it in the eyes of some (being smaller than that of Bristol), Wales was given a national station.

To start with, there was very little interference from London over output. Station directors and their staff were given a free reign, thus everything transmitted by the Cardiff station was unique to Cardiff, and when desired, output could be in Welsh (for example the 1924 St David's Day output). By 1924, Cardiff was also home to one of the first Listeners' Societies, discussing programming and feeding back audience response to the station.

The first great controversy arose when the Swansea station was opened in December 1924. Swansea decided it wanted to broadcast 'the best' quality, and that this meant the output from London. The rivalry between Cardiff and Swansea over such things as the fight for the title of 'capital', language and status was well ensconced by this time, and Swansea was overjoyed to get its way. From that point onwards, Swansea received three nights a week from London, three from Cardiff, and succeeded in securing one of its own (Davies, J. 1994).

Further protestations came from the inhabitants of mid and North Wales who had little or no input into the programming output – in Welsh or English. However these protests mattered little, for centralisation had begun. Reith's Unionist persuasion led him to believe that things operated best from one central base but; "Not everyone in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland saw themselves as one nation, of course, and conflicts existed in the BBC between London and 'the regions'" (Eldridge et al, 1997: 47). This was nowhere more evident than in the fight for programming in the Welsh language. With centralisation came the death of the 'Welsh Hour' in 1925

(due to a switch off of English speaking listeners) and the fight for BBC Cymru-Wales began in earnest.

Regional policy implies that there has been some confusion over how to deal with the geographical split of the United Kingdom since the outset:

> In the first place what was already presumed was the unity of the culture and identity of the United Kingdom, a presumption which glossed over its many disunities. There was the obvious problem of the two 'stateless nations' – Wales and Scotland – each being defined as mono regional adjuncts, not so much of England as of London. (Scannell, 1995: 35)

This problem translated into the output of the BBC in Wales. By May 1929, Cardiff was producing only 21 hours a week of programming (compared to 27 in May 1927), and London's hours of output had increased from 29 to 42 hours per week. This trend continued throughout the 1930s and output thus became highly unrepresentative of those living outside of London. As Grace Wyndham Goldie said in *The Listener,* (1939):

> For it is the business of regional broadcasting to be expressive of the region. It is its business to be a channel for regional talent. But there is more than that. For it is also the business of the regions to express the everyday life of the regions, its daily work, its past, its attitude of mind, and above all the quality of the people. (Quoted in Scannell, 1995: 36)

It appears however that this was not to be the case. As a result, Welsh talent began to migrate to London, and the issue of language was swept under the carpet with Director General Appleton's rather ludicrous assertion that Wales "of her own choice" was "part of the commonwealth of nations in which the official language is English", and that "if the extremists who desire to force the language upon listeners... were to have their way, the official language would lose its grip" (Davies, J, 1994: 49). Far from being a legitimate fear, it appears this was a fobbing off of a problem that was of little concern to London:

> 'The average Englishman,' wrote an emissary from Head Office in 1935 'who is perfectly prepared to regard the Scotch and the Irish as being essentially different in outlook and character from the English... is seldom prepared to believe that the Welsh are a different nation – in fact, if there is any general attitude towards the Welsh, it is that they are a nuisance.' (Davies, J, 1994: 49-50)

Bad feeling toward Wales and the Welsh was not kept behind closed doors however, the 1934 Handbook for the BBC contained an article entitled 'Some Thoughts About the Welsh' including the line "What the world needs today is more dead languages" (Davies, J, 1994: 58).

Wales would not receive its second official channel – in Welsh – until 1937, when Radio Cymru first came on the airwaves. The current Agreement acknowledges this privilege:

> [The Corporation undertakes to provide] an additional sound programme service for general reception in each of Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively and two additional sound programme services for general reception in Wales. (Department of National Heritage 1996a: 5)

However, television broadcasting in Wales enjoyed a high speed take off. At the end of 1957 Wales was given a fifteen minute daily Welsh news bulletin, and by February 1964 BBC Wales itself was launched for television. This heralded the growth of BBC Cymru-Wales in terms of staff, resources and output. The 1970s saw a great increase in BBC Wales's output (made in Wales) from 26 hours a week in November 1974, to 137 hours a week in August 1981 (Davies, J, 1994: 345). By this time, there was a greater concern with the wants and needs of the population of Wales. Demand for a soap opera in Welsh resulted in *Pobl y Cwm*, (late 1970s), requests in 1980 from the Asian Society of Wales resulted in a series of Hindi and Urdu programmes on Radio Wales, and in November 1982, S4C was launched as "the first channel in the European Community with the primary duty of broadcasting in a 'lesser-used' language" (Davies, J. 1994: 378).

John Davies celebrates the accomplishments thus far of the BBC in Wales, but acknowledges that these accomplishments have not been achieved without conflict:

> After a very shaky start, the BBC has treated Wales with benignity – with particular benignity in recent years. With the whole concept of public service broadcasting now coming under attack, it surely behoves the Welsh to regard the BBC with benignity. The story of BBC broadcasting in Wales is the most remarkable example in Welsh history of the playing of the patriot game. The game was

> lost; and the game was won. And it will have to be won again. (Davies, J, 1994: 389)

Not all are convinced however that the 'game' has ever been won, and tensions remain today. As recently as 1993, Euryn Ogwen Williams expressed concern about the BBC's treatment of Wales:

> It may be difficult for a large, London-based monolith organisation to believe that the centre of the world to people living in Wales is Wales, and that the view of the world follows the lines that emanate from the living culture of an ancient nation. (Williams, 1993: 61)

These are concerns expressed every day by viewers and listeners to BBC output (not least participants interviewed in the course of this study). If the government expect the BBC to; "continue to broadcast radio and television services for people in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, reflecting their interests, activities and cultural heritage" (Department of National Heritage, 1992: 101), then why do people so often consider themselves to be unrepresented still? It appears the game, or indeed the war, is still being fought. In 1993, the population of Wales made up five per cent of the overall population of the United Kingdom. Despite this they enjoyed only one per cent of network production (Williams, 1993).

As we have seen, public service broadcasting and the BBC are in a time of uncertainty, the only way of survival being to communicate more closely with the public it purports to serve. This has to be the same for the BBC in Wales. The trend for listening to the demands of the public even in the face of great hostility must be continued. As John Davies points out, this is a game that will have to be continually refought. If the Welsh people wish to maintain their own BBC in the quagmire of a larger organisation that is being increasingly encouraged to think globally, they cannot sit and do nothing. And far from it. It is the opinion of Pat Loughrey that employees and decision-makers at BBC Wales are some of the most vibrant, resourceful and innovative people working in the media today. It only remains to be seen how responsive to their audience they can be – and this is one of the aims of this study.

The BBC and community projects

As part of this responsiveness, or perhaps conversely, to inspire responses from audiences, the BBC have worked with communities and individuals to create 'real' content using 'ordinary' people since the 1930s. Above and beyond their mission to inform, educate and entertain, the BBC (or perhaps more precisely, certain individuals within the BBC) have sought to connect with the public, documenting the audience and giving them a voice, creating content and giving them a means for increased confidence in the BBC and a mechanism for feedback.

These projects have at times seemed (to the cynic), responsive to the extreme; responsive rather than initiative to changes in technology, changes in the media landscape, to society and to changes within the BBC. It stands to reason, it could be argued, that following the launch of ITV and commercial broadcasting, or following the rise of the VCR, we would see such projects emerging, forging intimacy between the audience and their public broadcaster. It cannot go unnoticed also, that these projects have often been the brainchildren of remarkable individuals, which begs the question, would this kind of interaction ever have arisen without them?

We have seen the need for the BBC to invest in its relationship with licence payers, deducing that there can be no more vital a mission for the BBC in our new technological climate than connection. In the view outlined above (a rather technologically deterministic one), debate surrounding public service broadcasting, the advent of digital technologies and the future of the licence fee cannot help but inspire a response from the BBC of this nature.

Our new broadcasting ecology, it could be argued, affords the BBC the luxury of repositioning itself (which it will have to do) as a truly democratic, responsive media Corporation working in conjunction with licence payers to create content, exchange knowledge, share experience and truly represent the people. In a time when audience share perhaps pales into insignificance

in favour of 'reach', community projects of the kind described below are invaluable to the future of the BBC.

But this is not an entirely new phenomenon (although there is perhaps a new and intensely threatening catalyst). There has always been a concern with inclusion:

> In all sorts of ways the early BBC stations sought to establish an interactive relationship with their audiences, a relationship in which the broadcasters did not set themselves up as superior to their listeners but treated them as equals and acknowledged that they were accountable to them. The stations tried to become integral parts of the local community, working with the civic authorities, with local cultural organisations, businesses, universities and schools, churches, hospitals and so forth. They were open to their publics... The early stations worked at what we might now call community services: that is, they interacted with and became part of their local culture. (Scannell, 1993: 29)

The most notable examples of this type of interaction were, however, down to the exceptional nature of a few individuals who took it upon themselves to work with the public, in whichever format they deemed most appropriate (and coincided with the prevalent technological modes of the time they were working in). These people, and their projects, are looked at in the following section, but are preceded by a look at 'oral history', an idea that exists at the core of this type of work.

Oral history

Recording 'oral history' is seen as a precursor for this type of exploration of the 'ordinary', and is defined as 'spoken history: it is the recording of people's unique memories and life stories' (Perks, 1995: 5).

As a means of archiving stories, events and feelings, it is seen as infinitely preferable to record the voice of the people in their own words as opposed to telling the stories on their behalf, or on behalf of an unrepresentative group:

> Oral history is thought-provoking, challenging, exciting to collect, rewarding to use and historically vitally important if we are to have not only a more accurate picture of our past, but also a more rounded view, which takes full account of society's marginalised groups as well as those with influence. (Perks, 1995: 32)

Through voicing the stories of those previously marginalized groups, a more accurate representation of history emerges, one that is legitimised by those 'ordinary' people:

The Oral History Society, created in 1973, on the back of the Oral History Journal (1969) attested to a growing interest in recording indepth interviews with such 'ordinary' people which have, over time, enlightened researchers, organisations and archivists views of the world. The Society advocates the use of Oral History recording in the following scenarios:

1 "Local and family history"
2 "In schools by young people to explore their own community"
3 "In community and residential work with older people"
4 "In museums, galleries and heritage displays"
5 "At local archives and libraries" as sources
6 and as "an important source for many radio and television programmes"

(Oral History Society)

In this way, a workable, representative archive can be built on a range of topics, and used as a valuable resource for both research and the media in a way that:

> personalises, colours and enlivens. It rescues the individual from the crowd, and redresses a balance which has tended to give greater credence to the powerful and influential, the great and the good, in society, to the detriment of the ordinary and everyday. (Perks, R. 1995: 5)

One of the largest and most recognised oral history projects, certainly in Britain, is the Mass Observation project which started in 1937 and ran until the 1950s where:

> A team of paid investigators went into a variety of public situations: meetings, religious occasions, sporting and leisure activities, in the street and at work, and recorded people's behaviour and conversation in as much detail as possible. (Koa-wing, 2001)

Alongside this, there were a national panel of diarists who recorded their movements and responded to questioning by the mass observation team (Koa-wing, 2001).

The archive was created with a view to recording what it meant to be the 'Man [or woman] on the Street', filling a gap within society that offered them little or no means for feedback:

> Much lip-service is paid to the Man in the Street – politicians and newspapers claim to represent him, scientists and artists want to interest him in their work. Much of what they say is sincere, but it must remain ineffective while the Man in the Street has no medium through which he can express with equal publicity what *he* thinks of *them.* (Madge & Harrisson, 1939: 11)

Thus, an 'anthropology of ourselves' could be created (Madge & Harrisson, 1939: 12).

The project has been quoted as being a direct influence over those other projects that are being discussed below (for example Rose, 2004). The project has enjoyed a revival since 1981, and collates data to be added to the collection at the University of Sussex. The initial project ran alongside the recordings of Olive Shapley discussed below.

Olive Shapley

Olive Shapley was a self-confessed liberal who went against the grain spending time in the 1930s recording for broadcast on BBC radio the needs and desires of 'ordinary' people. In her autobiography, *Broadcasting A Life*, Shapley eloquently describes how, as a child, she felt caged not only by her God (Shapley was raised in a strict Unitarian family), but by her sex. Feeling that her means for expression was hindered by limitations imposed upon her from outside of her control, she became obsessed with what would later become known as the 'documentary style', portraying lives and stories that were previously excluded; "As is probably clear, I was fascinated by the nuts and bolts of other people's jobs and lives" (Shapley, 1996: 53). Through meeting inspiring individuals it became clear to Shapley that the best stories were going unheard. For example, Shapley says of her one time landlady:

> Her jokes seemed to me so much better, so much funnier, than the jokes the scriptwriters wrote, and her point of view on almost anything was worth having. She was certainly one of my inspirations for the experiments I was to make at putting real live people on radio. (Shapley, 1996: 36)

Given space to explore this idea whilst working for the BBC in Manchester, Shapley made use of a mobile recording van and portable recording equipment in order to tape people. The first programme to be aired was *£.s.d* in 1938, a study of shopping compiled largely from radio snapshots of Shapley's friends. In her autobiography, Shapley says "In a humble way, I think we were making broadcasting history" (Shapley, 1996: 50). In her obituary in *The Guardian*, Anne Karpf is less modest about Shapley's successes calling her "a pioneering radio producer, one of the first to midwife the voices of ordinary people onto the airwaves" (Karpf, 1999). As part of this, the 'subject' could take a certain amount of responsibility for how they were to be defined and represented to the listening audience.

Previous to the recordings of Olive Shapley, the BBC had been accused (as we have seen) of attempting to dictate culture to the people, 'giving' it to them, and letting them have no part in the creative process. Shapley's work marked the beginning of a trend toward representing the 'real' audience and telling their stories, a trend very much alive at the BBC now (with projects such as *Capture Wales*). In her autobiography, Shapley voices just how important this change was, believing that broadcasting was "at last on the right track". (Shapley, 1996: 51)

Through Shapley's recordings, broadcasting did indeed change, especially at the BBC. A rise in documentary style programming and the future accommodation of projects such as *Video Nation* can be attributed to risk takers and innovators such as Olive Shapley. Using the people as content, trusting their voices, dialect and stories to convey something never before attempted was truly groundbreaking.

The Radio Ballads

The Radio Ballads consisted of eight stories to song commissioned by the BBC and created and produced by Ewan MacColl, Charles Parker and Peggy Seeger between 1957 and 1964. The ballads were a collection of "sound pictures, impressions in fragmentary interlays, of song and speech and music

and chanted chorus" (McCormick, 1999), described by MacColl and Seeger as:

> ...the work of a team of singers, songwriters, technicians, instrumentalists and others who were consciously attempting to apply the techniques of folk creation to one port of the mass media – radio. (Aston: 2)

They were different because they were not bound by the same editorial restrictions as other radio output, thus retaining a personal feel. This made the project risky – both in terms of audience reception and reception by others at the BBC. The producers, aware of the possible controversial nature of the project they were embarking on, published an introduction in the *Radio Times* before the first broadcast (2 June 1958) stating that 'we took liberties with conventions you may cherish' (Aston: 5). They were aware not only of the radical nature in terms of format and content, but that what they were doing could change the very nature of the radio experience.

Charles Parker later identified the main attributes of *The Radio Ballads* as follows:

> the innovative use of the tape recorder; the re-assertion of oral tradition; the re-direction of the dramatist back from the 'slice of life' concept of drama to a concept of 'drama and ritual'; and the replacement of actors in their usual role as mimic of experience by real people – the living voice of the past. (Aston: 5)

This replacement of actors by real people was not initially one of the aims of the project. The first, *The Ballad of John Axon* had, during the making, taken on a quality that could not be re-created – authenticity. The speech of 'real' people – their own timing, words and cadence, the producers realised, could not be manufactured. This was true from the first visit to the wife of the deceased John Axon. MacColl and Parker had intended to make a formal musical of his life using actors, but after the visit all of this changed. As Ewan MacColl wrote later:

> I listened to those tapes for the best part of a fortnight. Their impact was enormous and it was immediately apparent that we had recorded a unique picture of a way of life told in language charged with the special kind of vitality which derives from involvement with a work-process. The problem was how to use it. (MacColl, 1981)

The solution was that from that point on, the stories would be told by the participants themselves. These participants ranged from the industrial (*The Ballad of John Axon*, *Song of a Road*, *Singing the Fishing* and *The Big Hewer*) to teenagers (*On the Edge*), polio victims (*The Body Blow*), travellers (*The Travelling People*) and a sports star (*The Fight Game*).

The Ballad of John Axon was aired on 2 July 1958 and began with the words "We present, the ballad of John Axon, the real life story of a railway man, told by the men who knew him, worked with him, and set into song by Ewan MacColl" (*The Ballad of John Axon).* The emphasis, it can be seen, was on the 'real', the story being told not by the BBC, but by those who had lived, worked and interacted with the subject – John Axon.

After the broadcast of the first ballad, there was a flood of letters to the BBC requesting that the programme be repeated and a great deal of enthusiasm from the press. *The Observer* went as far as asserting that "nothing in radio kaleidoscopy, or whatever you like to call it, will ever be the same again" (Aston: 8). In 1960, *Singing the Fishing* won the Prix d'Italia, and perhaps even more significantly:

> there were quite a lot of people – particularly teachers – who wrote to Charles Parker singing the praises of the radio-ballad format as a learning resource and enquiring whether copies could be made for educational use. (Aston: 3)

This was especially the case after the broadcast of *On the Edge* about the struggles of being a teenager. *The Radio Ballads* producers had expected the recording of teenagers views on life and the world in *On the Edge* to be one of the biggest challenges they had faced, aware of the supposed difficulties of persuading the young to open up eloquently and honestly, if at all. In opposition to this, they in fact found (in MacColl's own words) that "It was as if they had been waiting for someone to listen to them and once started, there was no stopping them" (Aston: 13). Even now, it is impossible not to be struck on listening to this of all the ballads, by the candid nature of the speech. It is hard to imagine any parent of the time listening and not being both devastated and overwhelmed by the content, an insight into the thoughts and

dreams of children that would otherwise never have been heard. Thus, the power of the medium as a means for people to represent themselves as never before, in essence, to be heard, was established.

There is some controversy surrounding the end of *The Radio Ballads*. In the changing broadcast environment of the 1950s and 1960s, the BBC were facing competition from the commercial broadcaster ITV and, bearing in mind the rising expense of *The Radio Ballads* project, it was called to a close. *The Ballad of John Axon* had involved the recording of 40 hours of actuality, *The Travelling People* involved 300 hours of recording. Ewan MacColl himself said of their demise:

> the Radio Ballads were expensive to produce (almost as expensive as an hour's all-in wrestling on TV) and the budget for radio productions was shrinking fast. (MacColl, 1981)

There had also been some issues surrounding the last broadcast ballad *The Travelling People* which had been reacted to with some venom by some within the BBC for its portrayal of 'outcasts', angry and unsettling. It appeared that, as the producers had feared, some at the BBC were not ready for the voice of the people if this meant the voice of *all* the people. Charles Parker bit back, referring to the decision-makers at the BBC as 'bland bastards' (McCormick, 1999). It seemed that "There was no longer a place in radio for the sponsoring of innovative art forms for a minority audience" (McCormick, 1999).

The BBC Community Programmes Unit

Indeed, with the changing media landscape, this could well have been the case for the BBC. With the concurrent rise of television, there was a squeezing of resources for radio, and a lull in innovative projects that involved taking risks and using the audience to create content. It was not until nearly two decades later with the set up of the BBC Community Programmes Unit that these things once again became practical and desirable to the BBC.

The Community Programmes Unit was responsible for a number of access programme series including *Write On* and *Video Diaries*, *Open Door* and

Video Nation. All of these projects were responses to pressure to represent and connect more closely with audiences.

Open Door

The BBC *Open Door* series was a bid to cater for communities and individuals who believed they should be given access to the means of production, and airtime to show the resultant content:

> The pressure on the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) to provide some form of community access was addressed in 1973 with the introduction of the Open Door series and represents the first public access to television in the UK. (Hunt)

This, coming at the same time as the BBC's first real competitor in the market for television – ITV. The BBC obviously felt a need to close the perceived gap between the licence payers and the makers of television. Starting in 1973, the *Open Door* series allowed 'ordinary' people access to broadcast time and resources. One programme involved a group of people from the National Union of the Deaf (a campaign group for the deaf) who were chosen to come and make an edition of *Open Door* called *Signs of Life* in 1979. The programme involved deaf presenters who had not been seen before, and deaf producers, directors and editors behind the scenes. The programme was responsible not only for making people think about issues of access to television (the BBC, campaigners and British audiences as a whole) but also led to the introduction of a magazine programme for deaf people.

For the first time, under the Community Programmes Unit, licence payers who felt that they were being under or mis-represented on television could come forward with broadcast ideas of their own and reasonably expect them to be considered for the series.

The project ran for more than ten years, receiving applications from both groups and individuals for resources (people and technical) and airtime. Crucially, those whose applications were accepted maintained some editorial control over the outcome of the piece. This was something that had never before been attempted. Even Olive Shapley's recordings and *The Radio*

Ballads, though providing a step towards a democratisation of the airwaves, had retained editorial control over the output. However, ultimate control of representation rested with the BBC:

> Not that Open Door, which beget Open Space, went the whole nine yards. There remained a belief that although ordinary people might very well be capable of speaking to a camera, pointing it surely had to be a job for the boys. (Barnard 1993)

Video Nation

The BBC Community Programmes Unit was also responsible for *Video Diaries*. This was a precursor to the *Video Nation* project which involved the BBC supporting amateurs in the production of their own programmes. *Video Nation* was conceptualised by Mandy Rose and Chris Mohr (from the BBC Community Programmes Unit), as a project that would provide "an anthropology of Britain in the Nineties seen through the eyes of the people themselves" a "fusion between *Video Diaries* and *Mass-Observation*" (Rose, 2000: 174). It was also, rather self-consciously perhaps, a means for the BBC to counter accusations that their demographic representation of the British public was far from realistic; "The BBC needed to find new ways of reflecting the wide range of views, attitudes and lifestyles that were out there and the *Video Nation* project was one way of doing that" (Rose, 2000: 177).

During a period of research for the series, the team took camcorders to film prospective contributors and asked them why they wanted to take part. Rather revealingly "Again and again they said that they felt misrepresented or unrepresented on TV" (Rose, 2000: 181). The extent of this under-representation they could not have predicted:

> We were surprised however and then nonplussed by just how many people said that they felt their lifestyle or community was not currently reflected. Gays, single mothers – sure, but also Christians, and Pagans, and housewives in Cheshire and bikers and bankers – everyone seemed to feel it. At first I wondered whether it was a symptom of what Robert Hughes has called the 'culture of complaint'. But seeing the material that people have recorded, I have come to realise that they were articulating something very significant about the gap between television representation and lived experience. (Rose, 2000: 181)

The series, given the go-ahead in 1992 from the then BBC2 Channel Controller, Alan Yentob, was broadcast between 1994 and 1999, and now maintains a strong presence on the BBC website. Hi-8 Cameras were handed out to a cross section of members of the public, and their everyday lives became the subject of two-minute videos shown on BBC2:

> We asked them [participants] to record things that bothered them and things that they wanted to celebrate. We encouraged them to record significant moments as they occurred. We tried to encourage them to see what some of them saw as their mundane reality as a potentially significant part of the mosaic that *Video Nation* could be of life now. (Rose, 2000: 175)

The contributors were ultimately responsible for the content of the videos, even if they were not, in actuality, editing them as was the case with *Open Door*. They were given a right of veto. Nothing could be broadcast without the seal of approval from the contributor; "With an awareness of the suspicion with which the public often regard the media we enshrined that in a contract so that it was a legal obligation on our part" (Rose, 2000: 175). Even more so then than in the works of Olive Shapley or *The Radio Ballads,* the public were being given the opportunity by the BBC to choose how they would be represented to the rest of the nation. A more democratic, satisfactory and, it seems, popular way of producing media. To those involved in the project, and to those watching, it appeared that there was a fundamental change occurring in the way television was produced and in the focus of the content.

In a letter entitled 'Goodbye' from one contributor (whose videos can still be seen on the website), we see both of these things in evidence; "I want to thank you all for making us ordinary folks feel very special. I believed that everyone is unique, talented and remarkable – but your programmes *proved* it". He goes on to say "The honesty of the 'Video Nation' idea was never fouled up because you let people do it with zero intrusion". The contributor is aware however that beyond the benefit he has gained from contributing, and acknowledging that a different and more democratic style of production has emerged, there is one other crucial factor; for him, the immortality that the project provided him with was irreplaceable:

> Long after I've popped my clogs (and even all my donated organs have done the same) there might just be some pile of tapes somewhere in the bowels of the BBC that has hours of my garbled gibberish on it. Historians a century from now might unearth it all and declare their discovery – "We've reconstructed the polarity of the magnetised spots on this primitive ribbon of tape. A picture is appearing at last. Who the hell is he?"

This kind of immortality is that which now surrounds a character such as John Axon, but which will be all the more visible due to the continued presence of the stories on the Web.

Another contributor, Conrad Gorner from Lancashire, described taking part in *Video Nation* as "one of the greatest achievements of my life" going on to say that "Doing *Video Nation* has given me a massive lift. The BBC actually listens to *me*, Conrad Gorner" (France, 1999: 5).

Others, including members of the press, spoke with great energy and enthusiasm about the project, fully supporting the BBC's decision to give the public a voice:

> Intense, human, unpredictable – and shorter than a commercial break. You wonder afterwards whether you imagined it or not. Yet every so often a character will stick in your mind for weeks... The programmes have a quiet dignity which comes from the fact that people are being honest. (France, 1999: 5)

> *Video Nation* lets the silent majority matter, and the results will map the extremes of our emotional weather ... *Video Nation* rescues the popular voice. (Penman, 1994: 10)

Probably best summed up by a contributor in his letter to Mandy Rose, *Video Nation* "was a cracker", "a simple, original, unpolluted window onto a hundred human lives that brought us joy and pain and wonder".

The tapes (over 10,000 hours worth at the close of the television project in 1999) are now stored at the British Film Institute archives.

The Century Speaks

At the end of the last century BBC local and national radio stations took part in perhaps their most ambitious project involving the public to date (certainly

in terms of the number of people involved). This was a UK wide project aiming to document the various experiences of audience members. The result was an oral history presented through 40 radio programmes. The archive is now kept at The Millennium Memory Bank (part of the British Library).

Contributions to the Bank fall under headings such as 'Where we Live', 'Belonging', 'Getting Older', 'Technology', 'Eating and Drinking', 'Money' and What's Next'. Participants were chosen 'from all walks of life' (British Library Sound Archive, 2003), throughout the United Kingdom, showing differing perspectives and values on the same topics. Examples of participants in, and stories arising out of, *The Century Speaks* project include John Ward, a retired company director who participated stories about his experiences of contracting polio and growing up; Otto Shillingford, an eight year old school boy from London who contributed his thoughts on such diverse themes as life, death, and Homer Simpson; and Jean Williams, an ex-community worker from Pontypridd who spoke about aging, her sons experiences with drugs and her greatest beliefs and fears.

Each participant contributed on at least one occasion through interview to the archive, a collection of oral history that provides "a unique and invaluable snapshot of how the British think of themselves and their past from the perspective of the beginning of a new millennium" (British Library Sound Archive, 2003). The interviews were recorded in 1999, and broadcast the same year between September and December in a series of programmes on radio called *The Century Speaks*. In all there were 6000 contributors to the project, and it remains one of the largest history projects since *Mass Observation* in the 1930s. The BBC, in collaboration with the public, have produced a lasting series of documents that archive the state of the nation at the turn of the millennium.

This, unlike projects run by and through the Community Programmes Unit, did not give people the same amount of editorial control. The focus of this project was perhaps somewhat different. Rather than connecting with the

public and giving them contact with the BBC, *The Century Speaks* was, it seems, more about providing an archive of what life in the United Kingdom was really like at the turn of the century. The trick is finding a project that manages to unite these two themes, and this the BBC are attempting to do with the *Capture Wales* project.

Other activity along 'connecting' lines

There are a number of other contemporary projects that take as their mission connecting with communities. The current *Voices* project, launched in 2002, was designed to "strengthen further the links between BBC in the nations and regions and their communities by giving people who wouldn't normally be on air a chance to be heard" (Harvey, A, 2002: 1). This sentiment is echoed by the Executive Officer of the project, Gloria Abram when she says "'we want to widen and further strengthen our connections with underserved audiences and find a diverse range of new contributors'" (Abram in Harvey, A, 2002). The project aims to give voices to children, single parents, asylum seekers, travellers and members of ethnic minorities, and took Pil in Newport (South East Wales) as one location for activity 'because of its rich cultural mix and heritage' (BBC, 2003a). A £1 million investment has allowed the creation of content, predominantly for radio broadcast (perhaps because this is the cheaper option).

Another example of a bid to connect with communities, although not through broadcast output, has been through photography. Zoe Kleinman talks in an article for the BBC's *Ariel* publication about a plan to take photos of 12,000 'listeners' (in 2003), a project that was inspired by a desire to make the corporation more accessible and familiar to members of the public, specifically those aged between 15 and 24; "They were snapped as part of a huge project by the network to connect with its audience" (Kleinman, 2003). This and other current projects (with the exception of *Capture Wales*) maintain editorial control of output within the BBC, but are indicative of a desire by the corporation to be visible within local communities.

Coda

The projects outlined above no doubt indicate an ongoing desire within the BBC (perhaps pushed more by certain individuals than others) to work with communities in the creation of content. Even the most high profile of these however, created very little quantitative impact on the overall output of the BBC (hours-wise they were certainly not creating a wealth of content being aired). They could therefore be considered to be very small steps in terms of democratising the media. But for those people who are involved in the creation of this content (both the members of the public and those working at the BBC), the outcome is perhaps of much greater significance.

Mandy Rose says in her article 'Through the Eyes of the *Video Nation*' "If *Video Nation* has brought something new to the landscape of broadcasting what is it? What can we learn from this experiment in public access?" (Rose, 2000: 174). The answer can only be that *Video Nation* (and the other projects outlined above) bring the exchange of knowledge between media producers and audiences into the broadcasting landscape. The importance of this (to the future of the BBC especially), we have seen, cannot be overestimated. *Video Nation* and projects like it provide knowledge about the needs, expectations and desires of the audience the BBC serves. Only through this process can the BBC hope to keep a grip on their audience through what promises to be an intensely challenging couple of years.

Every 'intrusion' into the minds and stories of the licence paying public described above, has provided such knowledge. Every project building on the one before, using new technology, using insight gleaned, and increasingly providing people with a democratic two-way relationship with a media corporation that was set up, as we have seen, with the intention to inform educate and entertain. Perhaps these words should not, (and increasingly do not), appear in isolation, but instead, are featured alongside words such as 'respond', 'innovate' and 'challenge'. These are most certainly words that have been used to describe collaborations between the BBC and the public,

never more so than with *Capture Wales*, the subject of part three of this thesis.

Part Three:
Capture Wales: The Results

Introduction to the Case study: *Capture Wales*

> One incident in particular stays with me. In the summer of 1995 while reshooting the "bootboys" picture, one of them – Phil Tickle – had taken a heartfelt swipe at my documentary methodology. He was outraged by the process I had used for tracing him – publishing his picture in a local newspaper – explaining that it had unfairly exposed him in the close-knit community of his home town, Barrow-in-Furness. I had no business dropping into his life uninvited and so publicly, he said. And he was right.
> Why should the tools of media production always be in the hands of professionals? Perhaps the digital age was providing new tools, tools which could be made so accessible that people might make their own media at home, broadcasting to the world from their front rooms?
> Digital Storytelling would allow Phil to make his own media, rather than have it done to him and, in the process, a story might be told unlike any that ever was told.
> ...
> And so, as it turns out, my singular contribution to the Digital Storytelling movement is that I became the catalyst for its development inside broadcast television. (Meadows, 2003a)

So we have seen the background of the Digital Storytelling 'movement' and the BBC's interest in the arena of connecting with communities. As Daniel Meadows points out above, he would be the force that joined the two, resulting in the set up of *Capture Wales*.

The following chapters aim to answer the research questions outlined in part one. I begin by using interview research with BBC employees to locate the project's aims, problems and measures of success, then chapter six details questionnaire and interview responses from workshop participants in order to come to conclusions as to the impact of the project, what it means to be 'captured'. Chapter seven discusses the conclusions of these two chapters in reference to the future of the project, and the sustainability of Digital Storytelling in Wales.

Chapter Five

Hitting Buttons: The Set-up and Delivery of *Capture Wales*

> What could the provinces provide that London could not? They could reflect the life and variety of the areas they covered. And so, by default, the regions came to excel in programmes that reflected back to their audiences the culture of everyday life in the areas they served. (Harvey, S in Scannel, 1995: 32)

We have seen that the BBC has a history of conflict between London and the regions – specifically Wales, and that, for some (John Davies for example) the history of the BBC has been simplified and romanticised in order to eliminate this conflict. In reality, it seems there was little room for the kind of programming celebrated by Sylvia Harvey above. However, there has been, as we have seen, a growing desire on the part of the BBC to connect with audiences, a hunger for 'approval'.

The following chapter details how the *Capture Wales* project has been set up with these considerations in mind. Interview research with BBC employees is utilised to introduce and contextualise *Capture Wales*, the project's aims, the events that led to its inception, and the workshop process in its entirety.

The aims

Ian Hargreaves' proposal for the project entitled *Welsh Lives* in January 2001 outlined the perceived benefits of a Digital Storytelling project for BBC Wales as the following; creating fresh output for BBC Wales Digital TV and Internet, making an original and sustainable contribution to community self-expression, connecting with communities (not in a corporate manner but through a project which depends on those communities), opening up new lines of talent in

journalism, script-writing and visual skills, and also high profile and strong marketing themes (Hargreaves, 2001).

Hargreaves also highlighted the following benefits for Wales; access and teaching for Welsh people to the latest multimedia technology whilst creating sustainable bases for further deployment of a technology vital to the future, a boost to the Welsh creative economy, asserting identity and escaping the confines of mass media images of celebrity and raising community self esteem (Hargreaves, 2001).

The crux of the proposal was that *Welsh Lives* (later *Capture Wales*) could provide a 'major piece of social enquiry' at the same time as generating 'highly entertaining material'. Hargreaves gave the following warning:

> This project will not work unless it can engage effectively and in a robustly sustainable fashion with real people in real communities. It is not a visiting road-show. (Hargreaves, 2001)

There was then a desire to connect with communities, create an archive for output and teach skills in a way that would be beneficial to Wales.

Digital Storytelling specifically seemed to excite people more than other projects proposed around the same time, and this had a lot to do with the fact that it utilised new media:

> This was a really powerful way of capturing other people's stories and giving them an opportunity to not only make their story and learn new skills, but to enrich the BBC's services. (Richards, 2003a)[2]
>
> Menna's big thing was connecting with communities, user generated content, building up the new media area. At that time there were I think five people working on it and there are 50 people working in it now, three years later. (Meadows, 2004a)[3]
>
> There was this whole issue being talked about in the press a lot about the digital divide, people not having access to new media. (Lewis, 2003)[4]
>
> There is also the thing about technology now is making things so interactive that if the BBC doesn't do some of this work it is going to fall behind its competitors... The BBC wants to keep ahead of the game. (Creed, 2004)[5]

Interviewees (especially those who have worked on the project) are eager to talk about the possibility of empowering the public or democratising media:

> The people have never been trusted with a considered narrative. The audience is patronised by people waving cameras at them, and people going out with an agenda. Even your celebrity driven food slop makeover programme has an agenda... Whereas this is a different kind of television. (Meadows, 2004a)
>
> I think it is incredibly important to be constantly challenging this notion of 'them' and 'us' between the professionals and the public. So that is part of our job... It is about democratising media. Bringing as many people into a more active engagement with the media. (Rose, 2004)[6]
>
> [Digital Stories show] a genuine commitment to the ethos behind giving power to the people. (Creed, 2004)
>
> It is impossible that the BBC will produce all of the content ourselves. So, to provide the skills, the mentoring, the opportunity for members of the public to produce content in their own right rather than just being the raw material for our content seemed strategically attractive, and still does. (Loughrey, 2003)[7]

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[2] Menna Richards, Controller, BBC Wales. In interview, 07 August, 2003.
[3] Daniel Meadows, Creative Director, *Capture Wales*. In interview, 27 May, 2004.
[4] Karen Lewis, Project Producer, *Capture Wales*. In interview, 16 Dec 2003.
[5] Rupert Creed, Project Producer, *Telling Lives*. In interview, 02 April, 2004.
[6] Mandy Rose, Editor, New Media, BBC Wales. In interview, 12 February, 2004.
[7] Pat Loughrey, Director, Nations and Regions. BBC. In interview, 28 July, 2003.

Mandy Rose, Editor of *New Media* accepts that these are important progressions enabled by Digital Storytelling, but that they cannot be the only reasoning behind a project such as this. As a public service broadcaster, there is an obligation to go beyond this:

> You could not justify *Video Nation* or Digital Storytelling if it was only about putting the camera in the hands of people or teaching them how to edit. I think it is a good thing to do, but in a media literacy class or in further education. We can justify it because the stories are fantastic, engaging, different. (Rose, 2004)

Reasoning must therefore go beyond this, hence talk of connecting with communities, and, most importantly perhaps in terms of justification for the project, creating content. Mandy Rose above touches on one other area where Digital Storytelling shows its difference; the types of stories being made and their telling in the voice of the public. This again, is touched on by others in interview:

> I think that most of what we do is prose, but Digital Storytelling is poetry. (Loughrey, 2003)
>
> What is it that the BBC alone can do? What is the one grain of sand? Where do we put our grain of sand that makes a difference on the beach? And what is interesting is that because of our editorial skills, we can help them make their story better than it has ever been. (Russell, 2003)[8]

Thus, the reasoning behind the projects inception was multiple, to connect with communities, to broaden a skills base, and to produce content that is unique and representative as an archive.

The events

Capture Wales was born of a relationship between the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies, and BBC Cymru-Wales, enabled in part by the involvement of Professor Ian Hargreaves, orchestrator of the meeting where seniors at BBC Wales were first introduced to Digital Storytelling and Daniel Meadows (who was at the time lecturing in

photojournalism and new media at the university). Maggie Russell, present at that meeting, had been newly appointed as Head of Talent under Menna Richards, Controller, BBC Wales, and was, at the time, being paid to think in terms of how better to 'connect with communities':

> Now what's interesting is that when I say that now, in July 2003, it feels like quite an old fashioned phrase, it feels like it's a phrase that we use a lot – connecting with communities – three years ago, the idea that the BBC was paying somebody at quite a senior level to think about that was quite a radical idea. (Russell, 2003)

Connecting with communities was a chief concern for Menna Richards:

> I believe very strongly that the BBC has to be about the audiences it serves and that what we as a broadcaster must achieve is a sense amongst the audience that the BBC is for them. And it isn't just about being broadcast to or broadcast at, it is about participating in the process. (Richards, 2003a)

and Digital Storytelling could help achieve this aim:

> Ian showed me the stories and I realised that *if* we could work together, here was an opportunity for us to develop something that was a way of communicating with audiences that was new, and fresh, and exciting, and different from anything else happening in broadcasting. (Richards, 2003b)

Maggie Russell approached Menna Richards after learning of Digital Storytelling and Richards was quick to approve, as she says on reflection:

> This is a fantastic project. This will help us get closer to audiences. This will help us hear voices and stories that we would never otherwise hear. Lets just do it! (Richards, M. 2003)

Pat Loughrey, Director of Nations and Regions, was in agreement that in order to show dexterity and a willingness to change with the times, the BBC needed to do something new:

> I think that any public service broadcaster worth their salt is constantly on the lookout for innovative, groundbreaking ideas. (Loughrey, 2003)

Digital Storytelling was given the go-ahead for a pilot period and launched in April 2001. An initial investment was made which enabled a team to be put together and participants to be found for a pilot workshop in the Elan Valley

[8] Maggie Russell, Head of Talent, BBC Wales. In interview, 29 July, 2003.

(Mid-Wales) where Joe Lambert and Nina Mullen (from the Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley) would introduce Digital Storytelling and teach the necessary skills.

According to interview research, it appears that there was little opposition to Digital Storytelling at BBC Wales. Rather than being pushed through the workings of the BBC, there is a feeling that it was pulled; nurtured and given adequate funding, risky as it might have been:

> People were really receptive. (Russell, 2003)
>
> I never felt there was any resistance, quite the opposite. (Lewis, 2003)

There is a sense among interviewees, both BBC executives and members of the *Capture Wales* team, that Digital Storytelling hit the right buttons at a time when interest genuinely was in connecting with audiences:

> I think we hit a good moment. I think we hit a moment where there was a genuine sense of looking for something new and original. And there was the money to take a risk. (Russell, 2003)
>
> If we had come two years before it would not have happened. I am convinced of that... suddenly we had this idea that seemed to hit all the buttons at the right time. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> So it is unlike any other project I have ever had in that it hit its moment. There was an agenda at the BBC which was fulfilled or in part fulfilled by what Digital Storytelling could do. (Meadows, 2004a)
>
> It just pressed all the right buttons, the wider agenda of the BBC and all the things that they wanted to do in the run up to Charter Review Digital Storytelling seemed to be a project they could stick a banner to. (Meadows, 2004a)

Alongside the timing of the project, interviewees credit the people involved for the take up of the project. *Capture Wales*, they are convinced, could not have happened without the involvement of those very specific individuals; Daniel Meadows' technical knowledge and vision, the risk-taking culture of Menna Richards at BBC Cymru-Wales, Ian Hargreaves' understanding of the changing nature of media and the impact of the Internet, and Maggie Russell

as the person who would bring these people together and nurture the project. Karen Lewis, Project Producer of *Capture Wales* says "you can never underestimate the fact that the right people were in a room at the right time. It was serendipity" (Lewis, 2003).

Correspondence over the following months indicates a great deal of discussion leading up to the pilot bootcamp in the Elan Valley, summer 2001. This bootcamp was attended by a variety of people including Ian Hargreaves, BBC employees, artists and community developers and was led by Joe Lambert and Nina Mullen alongside Daniel Meadows. The bootcamp was followed by the first community workshop held in October 2001 in Wrexham where aside from some technical glitches, all went well and everyone finished their stories. The next workshop would be held in Blackwood, the first all MAC workshop, and last in the pilot stage.

Capture Wales quickly received some very high praise, not least from Greg Dyke, Director General of the BBC at the time:

> Just towards the end of the pilot, when Greg Dyke came down for a meeting, and he hadn't been in post long either, and he was looking at the BBC to do something different. It was all banging on about the BBC getting down off its soapbox and getting in touch with its audiences. He came and sat in the digilab here with me and Menna and Daniel and we showed him some stories, one of which was _____ and he was really moved and he just said this is fantastic. And the next thing we knew he was talking about it everywhere. (Lewis, 2003)

Capture Wales was to be 'under the spotlight' (Lewis, 2003) from very early on in its life. The project was launched almost before the team was actually in place, the time was most definitely right. *Capture Wales* was initially given a three-year go-ahead in which to hold workshops, build a profile, create a team, produce content, train trainers and pass on skills in order to make Digital Storytelling sustainable within communities after the BBC Wales team had left.

Since 2001, workshops have been held in a number of locations in Wales (see appendix one).

During this time, more than 250 stories have been made. The team in Wales has also passed on their skill to two teams in England (Blackburn and Hull) who made digital stories under the banner of *Telling Lives* (talked about in more detail later in this chapter).

Over the last three years, the *Capture Wales* team has received much praise, as has the project, receiving the WDA Interactive Innovation Award in 2002 alongside a BAFTA Cymru (2003) and an award for Karen Lewis as a 'Woman in Information and Communications Technology' from the Technology Wales Awards (also 2003). The stories themselves have made a home on the web at www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales (see appendix three), and enjoyed a season on Radio Wales, and regular appearances on BBC 2W, the digital channel for Wales. They also receive some airtime as part of *Wales Today*, the core BBC news programme for Wales watched by roughly 300,000 viewers every weekday, an audience share of 35 per cent (BBC Wales, 2004). For a full breakdown of those appearances outside of the *Capture Wales* website, see appendix two.

Digital Stories shown on BBC 2W are introduced with the following lead, and then the storytellers themselves have an opportunity to talk about the story:

> Everyone has a story to tell.
> All over Wales, in workshops run by the BBC, people are making digital stories about real life experiences.
> They use pictures from their family albums, favourite possessions, even long lost treasures from their loft.
> Each story is as individual as the person who made it.
> Here is one of the storytellers.

After the story, details are given about how to get in touch with the *Capture Wales* team for audience members who are interested in telling their own stories.



Left: Studio set up for interviews with participants for BBC 2W.

The next step for the *Capture Wales* team will be to find a slot on network television for digital stories made in Wales, and to make the project sustainable within communities.

The team

The *Capture Wales* team at the time of writing consists of the following people:

> Mandy Rose, Editor, New Media, BBC Wales
> Daniel Meadows, Creative Director
> Karen Lewis, Development Producer
> Gareth Morlais, Producer, (Welsh speaking)
> Melanie Lindsell, Associate Producer
> Huw Davies, Trainer/Post Production Supervisor
> Lisa Heledd Jones, Researcher (Welsh speaking)
> Carwyn Evans, Researcher/Web Assistant (Welsh speaking)
> Lisa Jones, Project Co-ordinator
> Gilly Adams, Story Circle/Script Facilitator
> Dafydd Llewelyn, Story Circle/Script Facilitator (Welsh speaking)
> Simon Turner – Freelance musician/sound engineer

For the initial pilot period of the project however, there was only Karen Lewis and Daniel Meadows (at that time still working at the University prior to his secondment at BBC Wales). Eventually, the team would be put together and perhaps unsurprisingly, would contain mostly people who were not 'career BBC people' (Adams, 2003)[9]:

> None of us have come through the broadcasting route, and that is really really crucial. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> That team now is a fantastic team, a fantastic gang of people. Probably the BBC's first multiskilling team. (Meadows, 2004a)
>
> It's no accident that none of us are career BBC people. (Adams, 2003)

[9] Gilly Adams, Script Facilitator, *Capture Wales*. In interview, 18 May, 2004.

Most have a background in community work of some description. For example, Gareth Morlais has set up a community radio station in Sri Lanka, Carwyn Evans is very much involved with community Eisteddfods, and Karen Lewis has a background in community development and community arts. The skills of community engagement, it appears, were seen as crucial attributes to members of the team. These skills, as will be seen in the next chapter, are invaluable when dealing with members of the public revealing personal information.

The *Capture Wales* team have, over the last three years, travelled around Wales holding workshops and have honed in on a specific methodology that is outlined below.

The workshop

Much of the following information is gleaned from participant observation and the BBC Wales *Digital Storytelling: How We Do It* document edited by Daniel Meadows (2002).

The workshop process consists of five full days and two evening sessions that run as follows:

Presentation Evening Initial Gathering evening Story Circle day Image Capture day Production Workshop running over three full days

It is hoped that over the course of these events, participants will:

1 Write a script
2 Record voice-over
3 Select or create a piece of music and /or sound effects
4 Be introduced to new media production
5 Create and edit a Digital Story inside their notebook computer

(Meadows, 2002: 4)

Presentation evening

The presentation evening is held approximately one month before the main workshop begins. Meetings are open to the public and are attended by all of those who have an interest in attending a workshop or learning more about Digital Storytelling. The aim (according to targets set out for the team) is to have 40 attendees at the presentation evening. Prospective participants are advised as to the structure and expectations of the workshop process. Examples of stories are shown and the background to the project is laid out in such a way as to be informative, yet fun:

> The mood should be light and entertaining. It should not be delivered as a "BBC meets the people" corporate event. (Meadows, 2002: 11)

The presentation evening is publicised through a variety of means:

> This event is publicised via grassroots networks, including arts organisations, voluntary sector groups, ethnic minority associations, and local community groups among others. (Meadows, 2002: 5)

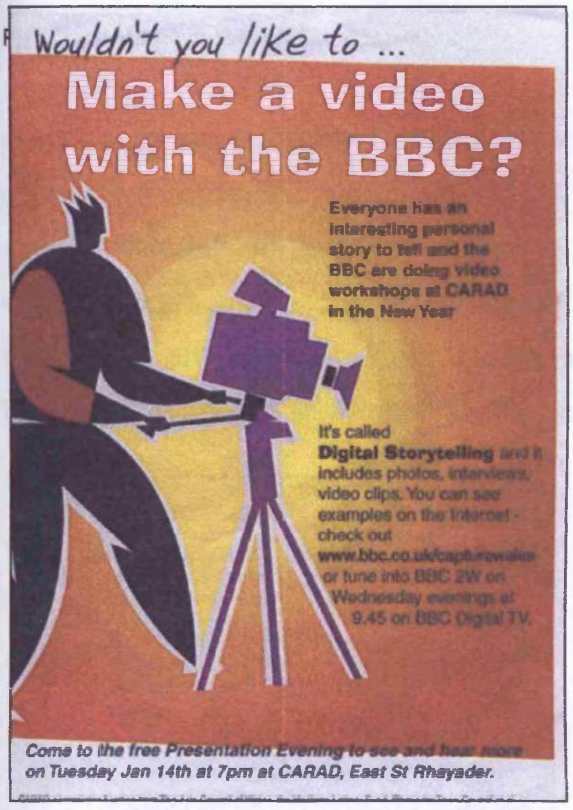
Adverts for workshop presentation evenings also appear in the local press, for example the Harlech, Newport and Ammanford workshops were advertised in *The Western Mail*, and the Newport workshop also in the *South Wales Echo* (examples below and over the page).


LLAFAR BRO

mehefin 2003

CIPOLWG AR GYMRU - TRWY LYGAID RHAI O BOBL Y FRO

Left and Over: *Capture Wales* publicity through CARAD and Llafar Bro.

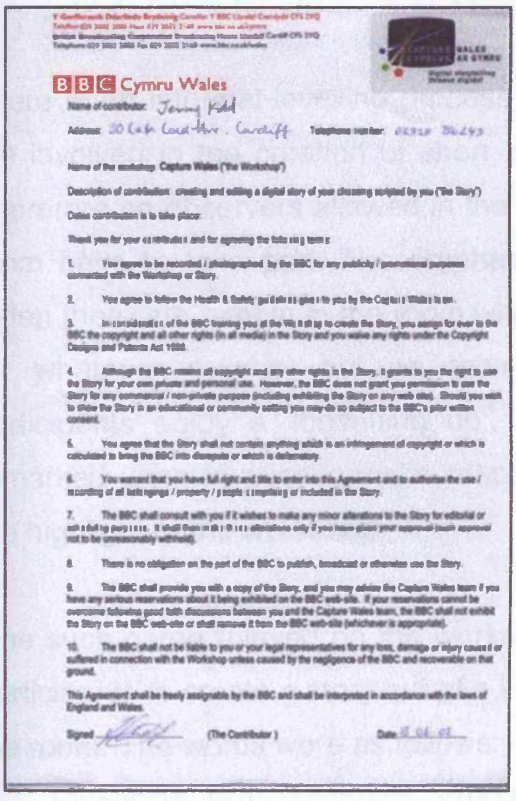


There is also an emphasis on approaching individuals personally in order to explain the concept of Digital Storytelling and ensure an audience, as the above means can be 'hit and miss'. Following the presentation, application forms are handed out and sent in to the team. These forms ask the applicant to commit to all dates and times for the workshop, as well as asking questions about their story ideas, images and current technical skills. Once received, decisions can be made by the team about their suitability in terms of diversity of story, and diversity of individuals.

Initial gathering

The gathering is held one week before the story circle (the first full day of the workshop). Ten participants and members of the BBC team meet and discuss the forthcoming workshop set up. By this time, participants have a story idea that has been approved by the *Capture Wales* team. The gathering serves to introduce the group members to one another and to give a more detailed description of the process they are to undergo, the software and any limitations (in terms of copyright).

Participants are issued with their contract at this stage (of which they keep a copy). This contract signs copyright over to the BBC and agrees to the BBC's use of materials for publicity purposes. It also stipulates that any persons whose images are used in the course of the film have given their consent and that if there are any later reservations in respect to the BBC's use of the story, the BBC shall cease to exhibit the story on the website.



BBC Cymru Wales

Name of contributor: Jenny Kidd

Address: 20 Cefn Coed Ave, Cardiff Telephone number: 02920 [illegible]

Name of the workshop: Capture Wales ("the Workshop")

Description of contribution: creating and editing a digital story of your choosing scripted by you ("the Story")

Dates contribution is to take place:

Thank you for your contribution and for agreeing the following terms:

1. You agree to be recorded / photographed by the BBC for any publicity / promotional purposes connected with the Workshop or Story.

2. You agree to follow the Health & Safety guidelines given to you by the Capture Wales team.

3. In consideration of the BBC training you at the Workshop to create the Story, you assign for ever to the BBC the copyright and all other rights (in all media) in the Story and you waive any rights under the Copyright Designs and Patents Act 1988.

4. Although the BBC retains all copyright and any other rights in the Story, it grants to you the right to use the Story for your own private and personal use. However, the BBC does not grant you permission to use the Story for any commercial / non-private purpose (including exhibiting the Story on any web site). Should you wish to show the Story in an educational or community setting you may do so subject to the BBC's prior written consent.

5. You agree that the Story shall not contain anything which is an infringement of copyright or which is calculated to bring the BBC into disrepute or which is defamatory.

6. You warrant that you have full right and title to enter into this Agreement and to authorise the use / recording of all participants / property / people comprising or included in the Story.

7. The BBC shall consult with you if it wishes to make any minor alterations to the Story for editorial or [illegible] purposes. It shall then make such alterations only if you have given your approval (such approval not to be unreasonably withheld).

8. There is no obligation on the part of the BBC to publish, broadcast or otherwise use the Story.

9. The BBC shall provide you with a copy of the Story, and you may advise the Capture Wales team if you have any serious reservations about it being exhibited on the BBC web-site. If your reservations cannot be overcome following good faith discussions between you and the Capture Wales team, the BBC shall not exhibit the Story on the BBC web-site or shall remove it from the BBC web-site (whichever is appropriate).

10. The BBC shall not be liable to you or your legal representatives for any loss, damage or injury caused to or suffered in connection with the Workshop unless caused by the negligence of the BBC and recoverable on that ground.

This Agreement shall be freely assignable by the BBC and shall be interpreted in accordance with the laws of England and Wales.

Signed [illegible] (The Contributor) Date [illegible]

Left: BBC *Capture Wales* contract in the researcher's name.

Alongside this, participants are given a crib sheet for the following weeks' events.

Story circle

The story circle takes place ten days before the production workshop and fulfils the following functions:

1 To inspire the confidence of participants in their own storytelling skills
2 To help participants generate ways of telling their stories
3 To kick off the workshop in a spirited atmosphere of mutual co-operation and shared endeavour
4 To give the team (usually the story facilitator and the workshop leader) a chance to listen for each participant's individual voice

(Meadows, 2002: 26)

The day has been designed and is led (in the case of English language workshops) by the *Capture Wales* story facilitator Gilly Adams, and is:

> ... very much a process of sharing. It is also that in the process of sharing and the playing of games, the having fun, with which we start, we are able to get over some of the things, the cultural stuff that people bring into the room with them, which begins, 'I can't write. I got two out of ten for this at school and I don't want to be made to feel that you are about to give me two out of ten'. (Adams, 2003)

There is an informal levelling process in the form of game playing where all are involved in the creation of short, often ridiculous, stories and scenarios. There are no observers allowed in the story circle process, any 'spares' in the room have to take part. The emphasis is not on the writing of the stories (often there are people in the room who find this challenging or uncomfortable for whatever reason) but on their telling. Through these games, the participants enjoy a 'loosening up', a confidence boost that is frequently remarked upon in questionnaire responses (detailed in the next chapter) as the highlight of the workshop.

One such game (played on the workshop I attended in Ammanford) requires participants to create a story out of a list of random words donated by those in the room. The words were as follows:

> Plasticine, Why, Umbrella, Wood, Pink, Rough, Nurse, Harlequins, Students, Farmers, Cinema, Goats, Bananas, Mannequins, Challenge, Smooth

As can be imagined, stories are often farcical and nonsensical and the mood in the room is light and relaxed.

In the afternoon, participants each discuss their story idea in turn. Following the morning's games, this is not as terrifying as one might imagine. This is carried out in the form of a 'group conference' (Kamler, 2001), whereby all present are involved in a questioning, critical process. The group are, on the whole, responsive, sensitive, and full of ideas. Each member of the group goes through their story idea, including their thoughts on images and effects thus far, and those others in the room respond to it. By the end of the day,

participants have a clearer idea about their script and 'needs' in terms of materials. They will continue to work on their scripts until the beginning of the production workshop, often seeking assistance from the *Capture Wales* team in the interim.

Image capture

The following day involves the participants bringing in the images and objects that they intend to use in their stories for 'capture'. This involves scanning photos, using digital cameras and not a little imagination on behalf of the team and participants. Each participant is allotted an hour to bring in their various materials and liase with the team, invariably, participants decide to stay for longer and often use this time to further their script development.

Once images are captured both participants and team members have time to reflect on story progression prior to the production workshop the following week.

Production workshop – day 1

The first day of the workshop process is devoted to two things; completing voice tracks and introducing participants to Photoshop.

On arrival at the workshop, participants are brought together in order to read through their scripts. This session enables participants to 'catch up' with others' stories, but also for the team to get an idea of how well developed scripts are. Once scripts have been discussed and signed off, voiceover recording can start. The BBC employs a sound engineer for this purpose. This task often proves the most difficult for participants; there are very few people who are comfortable with the sound of their own voice. The sound engineer's job is thus not only to get the sound track, but also to relax the participant, the only way of ensuring that the voice over is recorded in their 'real' voice.

After lunch participants are given a one-hour introduction to Photoshop. They learn how to crop, size and store their images, as well as creating certain

effects. One of the main tasks at this juncture is to ensure that all participants are comfortable with file management, a vital skill for those of all abilities that often has to be taught.

The afternoon session continues in this manner. Participants take it in turns to record their voiceovers, and whilst waiting, get to grips with their images in Photoshop.

Production workshop – day 2

Day two of production involves the completion of a rough-cut of participants' stories in Premiere, that is, a version of their film that has no holes in terms of voiceover and images. The effects come later.

The morning session begins with a further tutorial on Photoshop where participants are introduced to the basic tools for creating title pages for their stories. These tools can also be used for creating any credit pages desired by the participants at the end of their stories.

In the afternoon the group begin working in Premiere, the non-linear editing package used for creating the finished product. An hour-long tutorial is enough to teach participants how to line up their images with their voices in order to create a rough finished edit of their story by the end of the day.

Production workshop – day 3

Day three is a shorter day for the participants due to the screening of their stories at the end of the workshop. Stories need to be finished by mid afternoon in order for the *Capture Wales* team to output the stories on to tape for the performance.

The morning session begins with a further introduction to Premiere where participants are shown how to add effects to their films. The aim of the morning tutorial is to teach simple effects without confusing or complicating

stories. Too much information and not only can participants start to panic, but they may overload their stories with effects that actually detract from their effectiveness. For the final day, members of the team are assigned certain individuals who they will be responsible for helping complete their films, and further effects can be created with them if participants desire.

For the rest of the session participants work on their stories individually, and the sound engineer talks with those who want or need to add sound effects or music to their stories and helps create them.

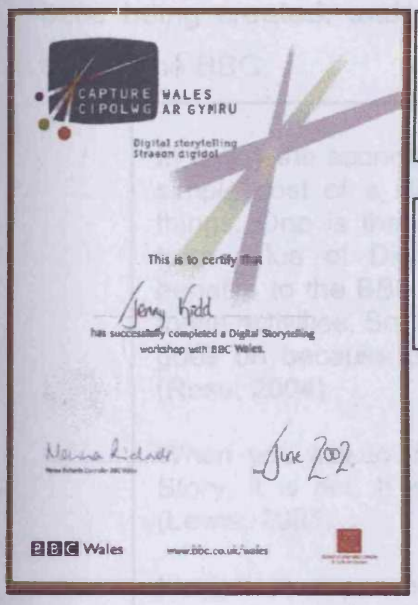
By 4.00 p.m., the room can be set up for the final screening of the Digital Stories and participants are free to invite friends and family members to watch. One of the team members acts as a host (often Daniel Meadows) and introduces the films and the storytellers (who are invited to say a few words if they wish).

The final screening of films is an incredible experience for workshop participants, an emotional and enjoyable celebration of their work over the past few days. It is often the case that storytellers have been so wrapped up in the creation of their own stories that they have had little connection with the films of others.

Invariably, the screening ends with an impromptu speech of thanks from one or more of the workshop participants attesting to the positive experience of the past few weeks and thanking the team.

The workshop process is thus a long and emotionally charged experience for all involved. It continues however for the members of the BBC *Capture Wales* team who have the job of taking the finished stories back to the BBC in Cardiff and post-producing them. This involves making VHS tapes, creating QuickTime films, RealMedia files, adding a BBC logo to the end of the film and creating CDs for workshop participants. Post-production also involves a number of processes key to archiving stories and their base materials effectively for any future use (for example, on the web).

Participants receive a copy of their story on VHS and CD, and a certificate of completion (see below). They will continue to hear from the team in the form of newsletters (also below):



Left: BBC *Capture Wales* certificate received post-workshop.

Right: *Capture Wales* newsletters 1 to 4, received post-workshop.



The cost

Digital Storytelling was never going to be a cheap option for the BBC. The hardware and software required to produce broadcast quality material is expensive, and there has been no desire to produce anything less than the best simply because the project involves working with the public. Also, the logistics of running a project such as this across the country require serious financial investment.

The initial investment in the project was to the tune of £150,000 for the pilot workshops, the first of which involved using artists and community group leaders whose time required payment (Russell, 2003).

Since then, the cost of each story has been estimated as being between £2,000 and £3,000, perhaps a lot of money for a piece of web content, certainly an incredibly small amount of money for a piece of televised material.

Throughout interviews it has been expressed by BBC employees that the only way to look at the cost of the stories is alongside the other benefits derived from the workshop process such as the partnerships being made, the skills base being created, and the good feeling being built amongst participants toward the BBC:

> In a way the economy can be seen to work in different ways. The simple cost of a story underestimates a whole bunch of other things. One is the partnerships we are developing, the longer-term value of Digital Storytelling in Wales, and frankly, the benefits to the BBC of being seen in a very positive light around those activities. So, in a way I am finding it easier to justify as time goes on because of that cluster of activity going on around it. (Rose, 2004)
>
> When you say to me why is it so expensive to make a Digital Story, it is not. It is what goes on around it that is expensive. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> It's far too expensive for web only. About £3000 apiece is very expensive... you cannot justify the economics online. The cost per user is mad. Way and beyond any other online content. (Loughrey, 2003)
>
> But it is only expensive if it isn't on television. It's expensive new media. (Meadows, 2004a)
>
> The Real problem is that it is expensive. But you only have to start looking at it in terms of TV and it isn't so expensive from an accounting point of view. (Creed, 2004)

More expensive than other online content it may be (other user generated content online includes stories submitted to local sites or messages posted on hosted message boards – both of which are free content), but compared to television content, Digital Stories begin to look rather inexpensive:

> A couple of times I have invoked the comparison with drama which is to say if you look at the budget ... it could seem quite a lot, and yet, if you think that is less than half the cost of an hours work in drama, and you think of the impact of the stories that live not just for a day online, but indefinitely online and if you think of the impact of those pieces ... and also think about the individual impact on those people, suddenly actually the fact that it is less than half the cost of an hour of drama starts seeming not very much at all. (Rose. 2004)

Beyond being cheaper when looked at in this way, Mandy Rose believes that they make infinitely more memorable content:

> There are many dramas that have, you know, which people may barely remember I'm afraid, for long after they have been on ... And while we have these people flitting across our screens all day long, all night long, on 50 channels, they are often not very vivid to us. They are shockingly unvivid, scarily unvivid. That thing about bringing people vividly into your minds and your thoughts is really really important. (Rose, 2004)

There has thus been a great effort made to get stories on network television, to further justify costs to those who criticise, and this is where the teams both in England and Wales have hit their strongest and most tiresome barriers.

The barriers

It is important that time is taken to look at the various complications and limitations of the *Capture Wales* project. Contact with workshop participants and discussions with Senior Executives about the project paint a picture of events and processes that is both positive and organised. However, on speaking to members of the teams both in Wales and England, it can be seen that this is often an oversimplification of the situation:

> I think the danger of this work, and the danger for you, is that you get everything rosy all the time. Of course it is fantastic, but ... there are things that niggle away with me. (Lewis, 2003)

Conversations with team members have highlighted the following as the greatest barriers; limitations of the technology and the form, finding participants, copyright complications, lack of communication within the BBC itself (especially over the issue of televising stories), and the bureaucracy of partner organisations.

Limitations of technology and the form

From very early on in the project's lifespan, the decision was made to concentrate on the use of MAC computers using Adobe software (Photoshop and Premiere). This was done in order to produce stories of the highest quality suitable for broadcast, but also because, at the time, there was no

suitable PC alternative for dealing with multimedia. It would also simplify the workshop process if all participants were using the same equipment.

Most participants however are used to working within a PC environment (if they are familiar with computers at all), but, as Daniel Meadows points out, this is not as problematic as might be expected:

> Yes, the machine was new to the participants but that was not what made the workshops difficult... what made the work difficult was the whole idea of working in multimedia. The use of the AppleMac was, in fact, a great leveller: participants who thought they knew computers soon found out that they didn't and those who didn't soon found out that it wasn't rocket science. (Meadows, 2005)

The team however had to learn to cope with and teach MAC technology from scratch:

> Some of the biggest hurdles have been the silly ones, like the technology. Initially, the technology was really difficult, because we were working in a PC environment, and it was new ... so both of us [Karen and Daniel] had to learn what we could and couldn't do. (Lewis, 2003)

Alongside this, workshops were being held and complications arose with the use of images, length of stories and peoples' differing abilities with computers.

Having learnt the most effective and non-patronising ways of dealing with these difficulties, another issue has arisen. The speed of technological production and replacement means that the software being used, and even the hardware it is taught upon, quickly become out-dated. Without hugely inflating the cost of the project, it is impossible and impractical for participants always to be using the most up to date equipment. This causes complications for any claim that participants should be able to replicate their experiences outside of the workshop environment.

The form itself has also been in need of acclimatisation to the workshop environment. The Digital Storytelling form as used by the BBC is a strict one, more formalised than that of the Center for Digital Storytelling. Stories must be a maximum of 250 words, and no longer than three minutes from start to

finish in order to satisfy technical limitations (with regards to getting stories on the Web) and also to preserve the 'multimedia sonnet' nature of the pieces (Meadows, D. 2004a). These limitations are strictly imposed by the team after past experiences with stories that were too long or used too many images.

Copyright

Alongside problems with the form and technology have arisen complications associated with copyright issues:

> We made loads of mistakes like allowing people to use images which caused all kinds of problems... at the end of the day I think it is our responsibility to those individuals not to have to go back and say the BBC is in court next week because of an image used in your story. (Lewis, 2003)

Rules for publishing on the Internet are very different to those for publishing on television, and as such there has been a steep learning curve for all involved. These have not been insurmountable problems, but in the early stages, proved to be one of the biggest expenses of the project and slowed the output of stories to the website.

The websites (in Welsh and English) were designed to be "exhibition sites for the digital stories" (Evans, 2005)[10], giving information about the storyteller, the story itself and a limited insight into their experience of the workshop. The *Capture Wales* website has been the primary means for story display, in fact, at the beginning of the project, it was the only means for their display:

> At one-point in the project's life, apart from being screened in public presentations across Wales, publishing these stories online was the only outlet for digital stories. (Evans, 2005)

In the past, there are stories that had to be taken down from the website and amended to exclude any images that breach copyright law. But the team are now fastidious about ensuring all images, music and text can be used with a minimum of fuss, and when working with children, extra caution is taken to ensure that all images or footage are clear of references or stills that could cause problems. It is hoped that this does not lead to any kind of compromise

in terms of the stories made, that they are not hindered or diminished in any way, and that inability to use certain images or musical assets inspires a more creative approach to detailing a story.

Finding participants

Another problem for the team has been ensuring workshop participants for all venues:

> I think the perennial difficulty that still remains is finding people for the workshops. The resources that go into that sometimes doesn't make sense (Lewis, 2003)

There is an effort by the team's researcher (who is responsible for finding people and ensuring their attendance at the initial presentation evening) to find participants who provide a broad spectrum in terms of representation and balance:

> Say we have got 30 applicants, the first thing we look for is a balance of people. That is really important. We want to try and reflect the community as much as possible. So if we are only in one town once, you don't really want ten 65-year-old ex-farmers, so you have to get a range of people. And then it is fair to say that once we have gone beyond that, if we have the luxury of choice, we do look at peoples' story ideas. (Lewis, 2003)

It seems a journalistic sense of balance is preserved even for this type of content when possible, whether it is appropriate or not. Beyond this however, from speaking with members of the *Capture Wales* team, it seems that the selection process is, in the words of *Capture Wales* Project Producer, Karen Lewis, 'very unscientific':

> I often think, oh what if we picked the wrong person, there is probably a better way of doing it, but we haven't found it. (Lewis, 2003)

There is no desire for prescribed stories to be told, unlike in England where the *Telling Lives* team were often under pressure to fit stories into wider themes of interest to the BBC (at any one time this has been 'Teenagers', 'Growing up in care' or 'World War Two'). In Wales, no such pressure exists

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[10] Carwyn Evans, Researcher/Web Assistant, *Capture Wales*. Email interview, 17 March 2005.

and all are considered to be of equal value, but a wide selection is seen as being preferable to having many stories told about the same things.

There are exceptions however to the way participants are chosen. One instance to point out is the workshop in Harlech where there was a struggle to find enough participants. Only ten applicants meant that all were taken. But, as with any other workshop ten very different stories were produced. Other exceptions include the workshops carried out in schools with pupils taken off timetable. Teachers play a big part in decision-making about which pupils should be chosen, and their criteria for that process is often very different from that of the *Capture Wales* team.

The barrier that has proved to be the most restrictive however, is that which involves the BBC itself.

The BBC itself

There are very specific ways of operating within the BBC that, it seems, do not prove to be conducive to helping a project such as *Capture Wales*. The main problem in this area has been the acquisition of network television time for the showing of stories.

According to those in senior positions at the BBC, network television is the natural home for Digital Stories; they often talk of *Video Nation* being a precursor in this sense. Executives see this as an inevitable progression for the project:

> For me, I would really like to see it on mainstream television and see how it would hold its own. I am convinced that it would very well. And then you have lots of share and reach and appreciation including peer review. I think if we put it in a glass case and throw sugar at it in some protected zone off peak a) it wouldn't do justice to its power and b) I don't think we would ever know how well it would compete. (Loughrey, 2003)
>
> They would be crackers not to [put them on network]... I have not met a single person outside or inside the BBC who has not thought this is a fantastic project. (Richards, 2003a)

But it appears it is not as easy as this to get content noticed:

> Every person working in the BBC is working towards getting their stuff on at a certain time etc. etc. so it is a big complex broadcasting game. (Creed, 2004)

Rupert Creed, Project Producer of the *Telling Lives* Digital Storytelling project carried out in Hull touches here on something vital that is easy to forget when talking about the BBC – that internal competition is huge, it does not naturally follow that content produced by the BBC should find a home on Network television:

> In my naivety I assumed that if this project was wanted, then someone would say it is going on here. And that is not how it works; we have to persuade people that they want it on television. Suddenly you are in the internal processes of the BBC and it's quite a lengthy process: You get resistance at various points. Some people think it is great, others think it is not for them (Creed, 2004).
>
> I used to think I work for the BBC, the BBC are paying for this project, and we can't get it on the television, there is a communication problem there. So that is absurd. (Davies, H. 2004a)[11]

Senior Executives, it seems, have little to do with channel output, these decisions being taken by middle managers and controllers who have their own strong ideas about what content belongs where:

> It is a real insight into where the power lies with the media. Because I always thought that as Director General or Controller you could do basically what you wanted but actually it is the controllers of the individual channels and the editors of those channels that is where the real power lies. Some of those people have said really awful things about Digital Storytelling. They hate them. (Meadows, 2004a)

The teams, especially in England, have hit hurdles in the shape of these individuals who do not desire user-generated content to penetrate their schedules. One example is the editor of the news programme *Look North*. When approached about the possibility of putting *Telling Lives* Digital Stories on in the same way that *Wales Today* was showing them in Wales, the team

[11] Huw Davies, Outreach Producer, Capture Wales. In interview 31 March 2004

were told that the stories were "too dense, too intelligent" (Creed, 2004) for the programme. In this respect, they hint at real revolutionary content and alarm bells start sounding. As Roland Barthes says of photography in *Camera Lucida* (1984) "Ultimately, Photography is subversive not when it frightens, repels, or even stigmatises, but when it is *pensive*, when it thinks" (Barthes, 1984: 37). There was real animosity toward the stories in part due to their tone, and in part due to their appearance, "the *Look North* editors hated the material, they did not like Digital Storytelling" (Meadows, 2004a). As a result of this, *Telling Lives* had to change their methodology and concentrate on themed stories. Workshops have taken place on the subject of Care, Teenagers, World War Two, and Valentines Day. In this manner, they were able to get content on network television sporadically. The Valentines Day stories, five or six of which were chosen to air, were enthusiastically received by the output editor of BBC London (although not by the output editor in Hull).

There has been a more positive reception in Wales. Stories appear regularly on television, but again, struggle to make it onto network television shown throughout the UK. Daniel Meadows is not overly optimistic about getting them on in their current form:

> I sometimes think that yes it will all happen and they will be freestanding on television. That would be lovely ... but actually I think that isn't likely to happen. So how do they get on? Well they ride the back of other projects (Meadows, 2004a)

The 2003/2004 Annual Review for BBC Wales highlights the need to get programmes on Network television in the National Governor's Summary for Wales (Professor Merfyn Jones):

> During my two years as National Governor, BBC Wales' increasing success in gaining network commissions, particularly in Factual, Music, Arts and Drama, has been notable. However, Council felt that life in contemporary Wales and the other constituent parts of the British Isles was not adequately reflected in network television output and we will endeavour to ensure better representation. (Jones, 2004)

It appears that through 2004/2005, this will be a particular concern across the nations and regions. The statistics show, however that the BBC in Wales are fighting against a tide of declining output on network in the past year:

2001/2002	73
2002/2003 (According to 2002/2003 Review)	102
2002/2003 (According to 2003/2004 Review)	90
2003/2004	86

The figures show a discrepancy in the results given by BBC Wales. In the 2002/2003 review, the figures showed an increase in hours from 73 to 102 hours. Following that, a decline to 86 hours in 2003/2004 (a rather large decline). The 2003/2004 figures show that the 2002/2003 output figure was only 90 hours, a much smaller drop is thus evident. Either way, the turn in the trend for getting output to network television cannot be reassuring for those trying to secure Digital Storytelling a window of opportunity on network.

In the same way that the *Telling Lives* team in England finally achieved network time, so the Wales team have attempted to follow on the back of the *Who Do You Think You Are* genealogy project late in 2004, (a BBC2 commission). Stories sit behind a red button option displayed for the duration of the programme.

Stories also now sit within a red button option available nationally through BBCi on satellite. Subscribers can press their buttons and access a 'You Stories' option that loops *Video Nation* shorts and digital stories, changing daily (although to date no Welsh language story has been broadcast on television).

Members of the teams both in England and Wales are not convinced however that this is the best way of getting stories on television. They are though aware that at this juncture, if Digital Storytelling is to be given more time and become sustainable, this is the only option:

> I know the power of these films, and I know that they would work on television. No doubt, if people weren't patronised, if they were treated sensibly not cynically, and given its proper space like it is on 2W, it would work wonderfully on network, and you would have the whole bloody nation wanting to make them. So it is frustrating having something you know is really good, and you can't see a way to make it happen. (Meadows, 2004a)

It has been seen that the BBC's history shows a genuine desire to (at times) connect with communities and tell people's stories. But in reality, Digital Storytelling has hit barriers within the very organisation whose risk taking and foresight at executive level sparked the project, a fact that Daniel Meadows puts down to the current cult of celebrity:

> I think every form has to fight ... television is just incredibly conservative and unambitious, stuck in its ways, it just appalls me that you can't deal with any topic without getting a celebrity involved. 'Got corns on your feet? Let's find a celebrity whose family make shoes!' or a fat celebrity so we can deal with fat people. What a sad world we live in. (Meadows, 2004a)

In his eyes, this current trend undermines the very notion of public service television, something that could be affirmed and justified by the showing of Digital Stories, giving the people back some air time for their own stories (or those who get to take part at least).

This is perhaps the most frustrating barrier hit by the Digital Storytelling teams, the struggle to be accommodated within the very organisation that funds them.

Organisational politics from outside the BBC however have also had an impact on the project. Examples of this include the problems associated with trying to plan workshops with certain groups of people, such as inmates at Cardiff prison (a workshop that has yet to get approval and take place), and also, trying to run workshops alongside other organisations which carry their own bureaucracy. For example, disappointment followed a pilot workshop for

the proposed WDA e-communities project (see WDA, 2002) when it was announced that the project would not come to fruition (Kable, 2004). It had been hoped that the pilot might lead to an ongoing relationship.

Thus, the Digital Storytelling teams remain without a large backer to sustain the momentum built up by BBC workshops. As will be seen in chapter seven, these kinds of partnerships will be vital for the future sustainability of Digital Storytelling in the UK, and were the principal aim of the third year of the project's lifespan. It cannot be presumed that Digital Storytelling will be continued in the future by the BBC, as we have seen, it hit a moment and received much praise and support, but all are aware that this support could disappear at any moment.

There are thus huge barriers that face the Digital Storytelling teams, and are not easily overcome. Technology will continue to change, and expensive updates will be necessary in order to avoid teaching members of the public how to use software that is out of date. Alongside this it seems, the BBC will continue to operate in a manner that confounds expectation:

> So you can see how this precious thing of letting people tell their stories can be buffeted and taken in different directions. Partly because of the economics, partly because of the processes of the BBC decision-making, so it is not always plain sailing. (Creed, 2004)

Cipolwg ar Gymru

Capture Wales' welsh language equivalent, *Cipolwg ar Gymru*, has been holding workshops alongside the English language project and has made a total of 43 stories (on the website www.bbc.co.uk/cymru/cipolwgargymru/ 23/08/04). There was a feeling from the very beginning of the project that there should also be an emphasis on the telling of stories in the Welsh language. This was made possible by the inclusion of Welsh speakers on the *Capture Wales* team. The language of Cipolwg ar Gymru workshops is Welsh only (although the first Welsh language stories were made in predominantly English language workshops) and are now led by Gareth Morlais:

> They felt they needed someone who was a Welsh speaker to lead a Welsh language workshop. Karen asked me if I would be able to do that and I said I think I can... It was really important to me that the opportunity was open to people who wanted to tell their story in Welsh, if they wanted to, they could. We tried, with the early workshops doing them bilingually, but that was so problematic, we had the Denbigh workshop and we had to get translation facilities there and it didn't feel really quite natural. If they were telling a Welsh story we were always having to translate what they just said, and it felt a bit, it wasn't very spontaneous as a monolingual workshop. So Karen and I decided to have some in Welsh and some in English and I think that was a good decision. (Morlais, 2004)

Creating content in the Welsh language is seen as crucial if notions of a 'Welsh' identity are going to be championed, and, in the long term, preserved:

> Increasingly a nation is becoming what television says it is. Peoples' perceptions of themselves are developed through these external influences rather than through personal and shared experiences. For Wales these external influences are more likely to come from Los Angeles and London than they are to come from Cardiff and they threaten the sense of being Welsh and therefore the long-term survival of the Welsh language. (Osborne, 1995)

Going against this trend, Maggie Russell who, as we have seen, was behind the project's introduction to BBC Cymru Wales, says that it was an intention from the start to involve the dual language possibilities of Wales:

> One of the reasons I thought it would work so well when I first heard about it is that I thought it would be perfect for a bilingual culture... it is a potentially genuinely bilingual medium as well as could be all Welsh or all English. I thought that would make it more interesting really. (Russell, 2003)

For some this is a great challenge. Some of those participants telling stories in Welsh struggle to do so, they may not want to write their stories down as they lack confidence, or they may be unused to playback of their voice speaking in their mother tongue:

> The biggest problem in the Welsh language workshops is getting people confident enough to tell the story in Welsh. Even if it is the language of daily use. They are frightened of writing it down, all of that stuff. That is interesting in its own right. A lot of Welsh speakers are very nervous about how people in their community will see their story. (Lewis, 2003)

These problems are worth dealing with though, for the chance to tell stories in their language of choice:

> Some of the older people who have told stories, it's their language from cradle to grave and it's the language in which they express themselves, they are used to telling their stories in. When they tell their stories in English, they can do it, but it hasn't got that naturalness really. Its like you are asking someone to fight with one hand behind their back. (Morlais, 2004)

There is however, according to Morlais, something fundamentally different in the tone of the Welsh workshops that directly relates to Welsh history:

> One thing about the Welsh language workshops is they do seem to evoke a memory of storytelling together that I remember as a child. Mine is a bilingual background, very much something you would do on a Sunday, tell stories, and there is something that reminds me of that, that I don't get quite the same feeling that it is one of the rituals of the English speaking Welsh domain. There is something quite ritualistic, and that we are quite comfortable and accustomed to sitting down and listening to stories, and telling stories, and that naturalness is a difference. (Morlais, 2004)

There is a feeling that, by concentrating on Wales, due to the relatively small Welsh population, more people can make stories, and a better reflection of the Welsh public can be made, including those whose first language is Welsh:

> It is much easier to make an impact in Wales than it would have been in England. With the demographics, and you couldn't even touch the surface of trying to cover the whole of England, there are too many people. But in Wales you can make quite an impact. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> I've always felt we can make a lot more difference in Wales than we ever could in England. The amount of investment, 1.2 million in Wales, goes an awful lot further than 300,000 in England. (Meadows, 2004a)

There is however no pressure put on those making stories in either language to tell a story that is specifically 'Welsh' in theme:

> It's very interesting. We get a lot of people saying stuff like, 'oh, I'm English, can I apply for a place on a workshop', or 'looking back I don't think my story was Welsh enough' and we say no, it's about capturing the stories of people living in Wales now, you don't have to be Welsh, you don't have to make a story about Wales. The fact that you are living in Wales, you are part of the fabric of the life of Wales, is what we are trying to capture. (Lewis, 2003)

There have also been other benefits of Digital Storytelling specifically to BBC Wales.

BBC Wales

There is a real feeling amongst those interviewed that BBC Wales is benefiting in a multitude of ways from Digital Storytelling, not least from the fact that, for once (it seems) the BBC in Wales has been able to pilot a project that was taken on by the BBC in England:

> It is tremendously significant. Because this is a project that has captured people's imaginations across the BBC. And the fact that we have been asked to roll this out in other parts of the UK and in England principally is very significant. Because the BBC can be very territorial, the kind of place where people say 'Not invented here, not our idea so we are not doing it'. It's less like that than it was... I mean from Greg Dyke down, people know that DS is a BBC Wales project, and that he has championed it along with other senior people at the BBC, and said 'You have got to look at this, you have to see what they are doing in Wales because it's just fantastic'. So yes, it has been very significant. (Richards, 2003a)
>
> Well, it's certainly been important for us in Wales. It's very very rare for Wales, BBC Wales to spearhead any pan-BBC projects... I don't know if it is unprecedented, but it is very very unusual. So for us in Wales it is very important. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> I think BBC Wales is very proud of this project... And because BBC Wales is a relatively small set up, Wales only has a population of something like 3 million, so it is a smaller operation than say the English regions, so it is right to be proud and to let people know about the things we do that are significant... So Wales and BBC Wales have to stick up for themselves and make sure people know about the successes because they can be overlooked. (Rose, 2004)
>
> There must be a huge amount of kudos for Menna, not just when Mark Byford, Director General comes along and sees a Digital Story and relates it back at a public meeting, and Greg Dyke before that. And it's good for Mandy as well, we have television content coming from the new media department. You wouldn't expect the Internet department at the BBC to be generating television. (Morlais, 2004)

Digital Storytelling, and the fact that the project was taken on in England, even merits a mention in the Controller's Introduction to the BBC Wales 2001/2002 Annual Review:

> One striking aspect has been the development of digital storytelling which has brought fascinating and revealing personal histories into the light. It's shown how much ability and interest lies outside the familiar mainstream of television and radio. So much so that other parts of the BBC are turning to Wales to develop the idea in their own areas. (BBC Wales, 2001/2002: 6)

However, there is a sense that there has perhaps been a lack of publicity or that the project has at times been overlooked simply because it is a BBC Wales venture. Mandy Rose, who came from the BBC in London to work at BBC Wales as editor of New Media (in part due to her desire to work with Digital Storytelling) says:

> I have to say that I think if we had been running this project out of the office in London, we would have had more press about it by now. I think it is a really significant project, and if we were in London there would have been more coverage. (Rose, 2004)

We will never know what would have been the result of a Digital Storytelling project originated in London; we have though seen that teams elsewhere in England have struggled similarly to get airtime. Perhaps this is the nature of dealing with localised content in an organisation as large and Londoncentric as the BBC has been. But then it is because of this separation that the BBC in Wales has had the freedom to take a risk with Digital Storytelling at all:

> Menna Richards was a new, very open-minded controller who had the courage to go with it. And that is really what it takes in this business is someone who will make a brave decision. And an investment. And you find that element often more easily away from the centre of a large organisation. (Loughrey, 2003)

Discussion with Pat Loughrey, Director of Nations and Regions, paints a picture of BBC Wales that, under Menna Richards is particularly innovative:

> Very adventurous, open-minded, editorially driven, and the quality is very high. The work they do is very high. They do fabulous factual work across the board and Digital Storytelling kind of fits beautifully into that sense of editorial enterprise and entrepreneurship. (Loughrey, 2003)

Loughrey advocates a BBC where editorial and financial freedom within the nations and regions encourages this innovative and risk-taking culture:

> The licence fee is collected equally across the country. Therefore it should be distributed evenly across the country and the best people to make the decisions and ideas for the people living in Wales are the people living in Wales. (Loughrey, 2003)

Now this culture is in place (we have seen the struggle to gain this type of independence), the next fight will be to have content produced viewed with the same integrity as content produced elsewhere in the country, and adequate space being given on a national platform for its display, we have seen in the above section that this may be increasingly difficult given the squeeze on output from Wales.

Telling Lives

Under the Management of Barrie Stephenson, *Telling Lives* operated in Humber and Lancashire from 2002 to 2005:

> *Telling Lives* aims to capture the richness of life in this region through digital stories told by the people who live here (*Telling Lives* publicity material)

As has already been explored, the *Telling Lives* team had to behave a little differently in terms of the stories that were made and the pressures that they operated under. This came about in June 2003 when the project was given a thorough review:

> In terms of participant approval it was massively high, this project is delivering a huge, huge benefit to the people who take part, but the reach of the project was much too small... In terms of the economics of it, it was thought we could not afford to run this type of project without it reaching a bigger audience. Hence, it had to reach a bigger audience through television. So from the end of June last year there was a big change in focus, which was to say how do we get this on television. (Creed, 2004)

The answer was to run themed workshops where people were able to come along and tell a story of importance to them, but on a particular subject (an idea somewhat at odds with the very notion behind Digital Storytelling that everybody has a story, and should be able to choose the story they want to tell).

In this respect, the range of stories was less important than the desire to reach as wide an audience as possible, and this is something that made those on the team a little uncomfortable. They felt that they should not be in the business of creating stories that fit an output prescribed by the BBC:

> If you say this project is about the stories people want to tell, at the other end of the spectrum is the stories the BBC wants to tell so suddenly the workshop isn't open to anybody to tell any story they want. (Creed, 2004)
>
> What has happened to them [the teams in England] is that they have been shoehorned into going for TV commissions. It is to me, it starts to feel too much like traditional television... and that whole mantra about 'everybody has a story to tell' for me goes down the pan when we say, you all have a story to tell, but we only want these types of story for TV. (Lewis, 2003)

The workshops however were a success in that they have produced material that made it onto network television. *Telling Lives* achieved an audience of 2.9 million in a lunchtime slot as part of the Taking Care series on BBC 1 and made the top ten in *Broadcast* Magazine in terms of audiences that day. The stories were also part of a pilot system for play on demand digital interactive television in the region. A total of 156 stories lived on the *Telling Lives* website as of September 14 2004 (www.bbc.co.uk/tellinglives).

In February 2005 however, came the announcement that *Telling Lives* is to be discontinued. The Hull team ceased work in March 2005, and the Blackburn team will stop work in May. The decision highlights the true attitude of some within the corporation toward 'user-generated content', an inadequate overarching phrase for all content produced involving input from the public. The *Telling Lives* archive will be given to the local *Video Nation* initiative, and will no doubt be housed upon their website.

Radio Stories and Shoebox Stories

Capture Wales especially has been involved in piloting other associated offshoot projects within the BBC. Karen Lewis and Gilly Adams have piloted Radio Stories in a variety of formats, and Huw Davies has come up with the

concept of Shoebox Stories (which now runs out of the Community Studios around Wales). These formats differ from the stories of *Capture Wales*, but are made with the same ethos in mind – everybody has a story and should have the space to tell it on the BBC. Simpler in their formation, these stories can be achieved in a day and have been aired on Radio and on the *Where I Live* websites.

Shoebox Stories stemmed from a concept that Huw Davies had been working on previous to his employment at the BBC whilst he was a community artist. The idea germinated from an interest in an old *The Jam* album cover:

> A really cool album cover, and in the centre *The Jam* were in bits. An ashtray, a beer can, a cup of coffee, a couple of vinyls, guitar strings. I thought that's lovely, you can make your life out of bits. Inanimate objects. (Davies, H. 2004a)

The idea had been to help with youth art projects where people were lacking in inspiration. Inanimate objects would be stuck to a piece of wood and cast for painting, "the shoebox story idea is a digital version of that" (Davies, H. 2004a).

Within one day, a script is written, the technology is introduced and the story is made. Shoebox stories tend to be less than a minute in length, and often do not go into as much detail as Digital Stories. The skills learnt are minimal, but participants, who attend workshops in Community Studios are made aware that the technology is always there for them to develop their skills with. Between three and five workshop participants are given a 20-minute introduction to Photoshop, and a 30-minute tutorial in Premiere. Software is taught in a way that emphasises its 'drag and drop' nature making it accessible to all. One participant (aged 76) who had never used a computer before renamed this method 'finger on, finger off' in reference to pressing the mouse. Huw Davies talks of the Shoebox Story workshops as more of an introduction to the software unlike full *Capture Wales* workshops which are a real training experience:

> After it, [the workshop], they understand if they open up Photoshop it is not just a big mess of colours. They know how to get something in there, how to play with something, and how to

> put something somewhere at the end. That's what you need to know about a piece of software isn't it? How to open it. How to do something with it. And where does it go when it's done. You can play with it after. (Davies, H. 2004b)

There are currently 31 shoebox stories in existence (September 2004), and these live on the *Where I Live* websites.

Denise Atchley's response to the Shoebox Stories when they were presented at the Digital Storytelling Festival in June 2004 was as follows; "Us Americans are in awe, those are amazing Huw, short, concise and just touched everything". (Atchley, Denise. 2004)

The audio stories workshops have been trialled with the following reasoning in mind:

> ... because we felt that the nature of digital storytelling is such that some people are excluded from it simply because they can't give up the amount of time, so we got interested in other ways of collecting those stories. (Adams, 2003)

The audio stories provide a "sound tapestry for Radio Wales" (Adams, 2003) not under the banner of *Capture Wales*, but with its ethos in mind. Audio Stories now live on the BBC website in the local South East Wales *Where I Live* site.

The audience

Audiences for *Capture Wales* Digital Storytelling are multiple. When employees of the BBC were asked who they think the audience for the project are, their answers vary:

> The big test is when we keep putting these stories on television, whether the audience spot the difference, and see them as somehow more heartfelt, somehow less sympathetic that the bulk of modern television. (Loughrey, 2003)
>
> I absolutely feel that it is not just one audience; I think that stories have a real diverse audience potentially. (Rose, 2004)
>
> We do not think about it in terms of audiences. Which is sort of healthy. (Creed, 2004)
>
> I hope it is the public, maybe I am being a bit naive there. (Morlais, 2004)

What is noticeable is that those that work closely to the project talk more readily about the audience as being those individuals participating in the workshop process. They are in agreement that measuring audiences for Digital Storytelling on the Web or television does not do justice to the impact that is made with those individuals on the ground who take part.

Members of the team do however express a desire to know how all the varying audiences are responding to the stories produced – whether that be the workshop participants, television and web audiences in Wales, or indeed the audience that is the rest of the BBC.

In terms of the television audience, it appears that there is very little idea as to who and how many they are:

> We have no way of knowing what the audience, or the public, actually thinks about this stuff when they see it on TV, we have no way of knowing that, they haven't been out there enough. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> Every August the BBC does a thing called the Beaufort survey which does measure approval. But the researcher said to me that it is not going to show up in that... It is still going to be a while before that is picked up on a survey where they just pick out x number from the population. (Rose, 2004)

Stories on 2W are not measured because audience figures are too low to do a proper survey, and figures for those watching stories on *Wales Today* are

estimated as being one in ten of the Welsh population. There is, as yet, no feedback specifically on responses to digital stories shown on *Wales Today* (although focus group research being carried out on BBC Wales services in Spring 2005 might yield some information).

Figures for the *Capture Wales* website are more easily available for the team to analyse, but show that audience figures are low:

> I think at the moment, to be very honest, the hits on the *Capture Wales* website they are very small ... And that is for all sorts of reasons, Real Media not playing well on the web etc. I think there are a lot of people who go to that website who are friends of friends, who go to that website, and people from the Centre for Digital Storytelling, from the Digital Storytelling community, and I'm not sure how many people visit it who just know nothing about it. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> But we are not driving a lot of traffic to the site. I could not pretend that we are. (Meadows, 2004b)

Impact would be much easier to assess it seems, if the stories were to get a regular slot on network television (which we have already seen has its own complications). In this way figures would be higher (or if not would be indicative of a disinterest) and analysis would be less difficult and infinitely more productive.

There is, as has been detailed, a sense of the audience as being those other regions or departments in operation at the BBC:

> It helps to change perceptions that we can lead, particularly in this area we have been leading, or the team have. (Russell, 2003)

This is described as being an effect that is felt locally:

> I know that the staff working on the project here feel immeasurably enriched by the experiences they have had, and because of that, because of the enthusiasm, the whole building has begun to realise that there is something going on here that we have never done before. (Richards, 2003a)

But it is also felt nationally. Thus, it seems to be especially significant when those in London sit up and take notice of what is happening with Digital Storytelling:

> We do presentations on Digital Storytelling, you know, once a week within the BBC.... With *Video Nation*, we were part of documentaries and no-one ever came and asked us how we did it... But now, we got a letter from documentaries in London saying we are trying to think of new ways of democratising media, can you tell us about Digital Storytelling. So there is something different in the air. (Rose, 2004)

For the first time, the BBC in Wales are seen as pioneers, risk-takers who are willing to invest in newer forms of media and cease to patronise their audiences, allowing them the opportunity to take part in media production.

In terms of the workshop participants as 'audience', members of the *Capture Wales* team and BBC executives have their own ideas about how they think they are affected by the process. When asked whether they thought the workshop process would affect the way participants thought about the BBC, they answered as follows:

> I certainly think that it is [having an effect] within the individuals we have worked with and the ripple effect, the people that they tell about it. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> It could change the way [they think]. And it should change the way... its got to be doing it by degrees, according to the people who have been involved. (Davies, H. 2004a)
>
> I think it could. People were very suspicious at the beginning. What is in this for the BBC? What is it about? And when they have the experience people love it and it makes them feel great about the BBC. (Adams, 2003)
>
> I think it is having a remarkable effect on the people who take part in the workshops that is anecdotal... So I think there's no question that those people who make stories, it has a massive impact in terms of how they feel about the BBC. (Rose, 2004)

> It does make people feel differently about the BBC, that the BBC might be a place for them, where they might have previously felt that it wasn't. (Richards; 2003a)
>
> My experience from the testimony of the people who have told their stories, has astonished me. I am a long way back, I am a bit of a faceless person really, and people stop you and say 'This changed my life'. And I mean that is a hell of a thing and a hell of a responsibility. (Russell, 2003)

They are also of the belief that workshops change the ways in which participants feel about themselves:

> I think self-confidence is one of the biggest parts of it. Very big. And a lot of us through school and work kind of think that our voice, our story isn't significant. (Loughrey, 2003)
>
> It's all about the people who make the stories. It's them. It's all about what they are prepared to do, what they are prepared to tell, the risks they are prepared to take, and it does demand huge confidence, or overcoming lack of confidence to do it. (Richards, 2003a)
>
> I think the sense of achievement is massive, because it is not an easy thing to do, and I think the validation that their story matters is also very special. (Russell, 2003)
>
> I've done it for years and years and I'm not a philanthropist, I don't want a medal in heaven or anything but I just get a real buzz out of seeing other people get that buzz. (Davies, H. 2004a)
>
> I mean it's easy to say glibly that of course it has a profound effect on everybody. There are people who come along to the workshops and enjoy it, and never think about it again. But there are also people who come along and think it has changed their lives. (Lewis, 2003)

It will be seen in the next chapter whether these presumptions about the effects of the workshop process on participants also ring true with the participants themselves. The results of a questionnaire survey and interviews are presented which truly analyses the 'participants as audience'.

Charter Review

In my interviews with BBC executives, I asked them whether they thought that Digital Storytelling would play a part in the BBC's bid for Charter Renewal in 2006. Responses were as follows:

> Definitely. I doubt it will be big, but it is a significant part of the BBC being more fleet of foot, more in touch ... It adds to the decent return we get for the licence fee. (Loughrey, 2003)
>
> I hope so, I think they are examples of the way in which the BBC connects with its audiences. (Richards, 2003a)
>
> These services which get into a more direct relationship with the public including making content are going to be important ones. (Rose, 2004)

Karen Lewis, the project's producer is in agreement that *Capture Wales* should and probably would form a part of that bid

> Yes, Key. Absolutely key. If you start looking at what it is that makes the BBC distinctive, and what it is that offers something that if we were a commercial outlet that we wouldn't be able to do, then it's that stuff. Definitely. (Lewis, 2003)

It seems that Digital Storytelling will be a part of a larger 'User Generated Content' umbrella under the Charter proposal. The BBC, eager to prove that it is accountable to the public and that they have a vital part in producing content, will use such projects as exemplifiers. This is much the same positioning as Digital Storytelling takes in BBC Annual Reviews, public documents attesting to the value of the BBC over the previous year. In the 2001/2002 Annual Review for BBC Wales, Digital Storytelling merits a mention from Menna Richards in her introduction, and in the following two reviews (2002/2003, and 2003/2004), the National Governor's Summary by Professor Merfyn Jones have made specific mention of the project:

> I would also like to note the achievement of the inter-linked projects known together as DigiNation, consisting of open centres throughout Wales, online services tailored for different areas and short, striking films produced by members of the public in special workshops. These are all new ways for the BBC to respond to the needs of our diverse audiences. (Jones, M in BBC Wales, 2002/2003

> The groundbreaking work of New Media in English and Welsh and its role in the development of multi-platform production was recognised as pivotal. The pioneering Digital Storytelling initiative continues to bring new voices and perspectives to all services. (Jones, M. 2004)

Documents have already been written around the issue of Charter Review that refer to Digital Storytelling as an exemplar of work within communities. BBC Wales' contribution to Building Public Value documents (2004) and an Alan Yentob (Creative Director for the BBC) document entitled *The BBC's Impact on Culture: Submission to the Independent Panel on Charter Review* (2004) both look at *Capture Wales*, even going as far as citing some of those findings from the following chapter in order to show the 'value' that is associated with the project.

Community

BBC respondents are mixed in their opinions about the communities formed by the workshop process. The most obvious community engendered by the process is that of the group of people taking part in the workshop:

> *Capture Wales* might look like a neat device for generating web and television content, but first and foremost it is about community building, about that workshop process (Meadows 2004c)

There is a hope that this community will continue to exist after the workshop has reached an end (and that more stories will be made if possible), but, in speculation, members of the team are doubtful that this happens:

> My hard-nosed experience of community work suggests that with all the will in the world, that it is very rare for people who come together very intensely to keep together for very long. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> Each time there is a workshop there is a very strong mini-community thrown up by the participants in the workshop. A very wonderful, perhaps temporary community of people who take part ... Some of those people I know stay in touch, but they don't all necessarily. (Rose, 2004)

This is seen as being in part due to the lack of continuation to the ventures. Only when a sustainable project has been set up will this community be possible. Until that time, there is a sense that the BBC is 'parachuting in' and then leaving.

This sustainable community could mean a continuation of the work through the BBC (in Community Studios or on The Bus) or through an online community (as part of the *Capture Wales* website), a venture that would need careful planning and much discussion (according to Gareth Morlais, currently in charge of maintaining and developing the website):

> I can't see a way that I could justify us having a password protected area as it would be questionable use of the license fee money to make an exclusive area that isn't visible to everyone who pays their license money. We would have to have a really good reason for that. Which means we could have a message board, but if you look at the BBC message board, they tend to be host moderated. (Morlais, 2004)

This would be a problem, according to Morlais due to incidences of criticism of the stories. It would become very hard to monitor or censor posts on a message board, yet posting criticism or 'hate mail' could lead to great offence to the storytellers. He concludes that: "just because something is doable it doesn't always mean it is the best plan really" (Morlais, 2004). Numbers also, at the moment do not justify a space, it has, in the past seemed a 'self-indulgent' vision. If and when these situations change, there is likely to be a review of this policy.

In the meantime, another way to continue community would be through the use of partnerships (with council or educational establishments), or, it could involve the development of an online space where people can continue to make stories and discuss ideas outside of the BBC (such as Daniel Meadows' Digital Storytelling website and online tutorial). Mandy Rose advocates a combination of the above spaces:

> Once we have got that as an online application it will be great to have alongside that some space where people are talking online and sharing issues, problems, challenges in terms of the process. I

> think there could be a very strong community around that. (Rose, 2004)

This hints at that other community that *Capture Wales* is undoubtedly a part of, a larger, more intangible virtual community of enthusiasts online:

> And then there is another community which is the scattered worldwide community of people who are interested in doing Digital Storytelling in lots of different places in the world who came to the conference (Rose, 2004)

These enthusiasts, who gather at the Digital Storytelling Festival in America, are members of the Digital Storytelling Association, and attended the BBC Wales and WDA Conference in Cardiff, work in a variety of disciplines and have varying degrees of interest in Digital Storytelling.

There are thus a number of communities operating in and out of *Capture Wales* Digital Storytelling that meet in different ways in order to continue their work and their storytelling.

Technology

As will be seen in the following chapter, the technology is the aspect of the workshop that participants look back on more negatively than others. All have managed to complete their films, but many have struggled with aspects of the software and hardware. One of the aims of the project, as we have seen, was the creation of a skills base throughout Wales of people who were comfortable with the technology, and, in some cases, go on to make more films:

> Ian Hargreaves' vision at the beginning of the project, one of the things in that was about Digital Storytelling enhancing people's confidence in digital tools in Wales. (Rose, 2004)

Members of the teams in Wales and England are more realistic however about the use of technology in actuality:

> We have always said that of the people who take part in a workshop maybe two or three of those will go on to use those particular tools again, the other seven may not. But on the other hand they might, some people feel more confident about IT in general. (Rose, 2004)
>
> I think this is a bit of a myth at the moment about spreading it [the technology] ... I think there is a very obvious problem. The software is too bloody expensive ... So I don't think it happens as much as it could, although I think it will increasingly happen as these multimedia tools are getting cheaper and cheaper and more common. (Creed, 2004)
>
> I would love it if people could keep going. I mean, we are working very hard to build partnerships with local colleges and organisations so that the tools and support are there for people to go on. And I am doing a lot of work on an online tutorial, it is an obsession with me to make it useful, have people all over testing it. But I am not kidding myself that we are going to turn the whole nation into a nation of television makers on the kitchen table in one year or three years. (Meadows, 2004a)

Daniel Meadows goes on to detail the current state of play in terms of further Digital Stories coming out of workshop participants after the event – a scenario that actually looks quite promising for the involvement of other institutions. In 2003, over 50 stories came into the *Capture Wales* team that they had little or no involvement with. These include stories from Yale College, Wrexham, and Blackwood Miners' Institute programmes detailed in chapter seven. In this way, every year more stories will be made without the BBC's involvement until the BBC becomes, in theory, merely a platform for their display.

A difference is evident however when talking of individuals' use of computers and their ability to make digital stories independently. As software becomes cheaper, it will be the case that most home computer systems come with simple editing tools. At the moment though, Meadows is not convinced that people are aware of the possibilities of multimedia use in their own homes:

> I think people buy computers on the whole in ignorance. The whole market is geared around word processing and using the Internet. So your average computer user wants to be able to write letters, send emails and download music and do a bit of surfing. That's about it. We need to change the culture so that we can walk into

> PC World and say I want a multimedia computer please. (Meadows, 2004a)

If people were to appreciate the benefits and relative ease of multimedia as their computers become better equipped, then the BBC may see a faster rise in stories coming in from individuals as well as organisations. Until that time, and as the next chapter indicates, people may benefit from the technology in a multitude of ways, but rarely in the furthering of their Digital Storytelling skills.

Therapy

One aspect of the workshop process that was perhaps not anticipated in the aims of the project but is certainly in evidence in questionnaire responses is its therapeutic nature. Joe Lambert talks in interview of this being a natural by-product of this type of work:

> The manipulation of old photos of oneself, or the re-composition of a series of old photos into a collage using that method of digital image manipulation tool like Photoshop, seems to be in itself a kind of therapeutic process. Just by itself. The manipulation of the material and then you make it into a film and do a few things, even as simple as zooming in to emphasise a certain part of an image, or re-composing it by pan zoom in, it seems to me that on a core psychological level that this is really powerful. (Lambert, 2004)[12]

The *Capture Wales* team members are certainly aware that for some participants this is a challenging but rewarding aspect:

> I wouldn't imagine that was what was in the initial set of intentions, intending it to be therapy... People seem to open up far more openly to strangers, especially if they are being really nice to them. So you do tend to get in that position sometimes. (Davies, H. 2004a)
>
> You cannot legislate for what people will tell you. Sometimes they will tell you things that you won't necessarily want to hear, or others in the group might not want to hear or might resonate with them in some kind of painful way. (Adams, 2003)

[12] Joe Lambert, Centre for Digital Storytelling, California. In interview, 7 February, 2004.

> Digital Storytelling workshops tend to be peppered by people roaring with laughter, embracing each other, dancing, bursting into tears, getting slightly upset, ... They tend to be fairly emotionally charged events and we are now quite good I think at being able to handle that quite well. Most of the feedback we get seems to suggest that people feel better about themselves as a result of doing workshops. (Meadows, 2004a)

Experience of this in workshop scenarios can be uncomfortable or hard to manage:

> We have never lost someone from a story circle but you can't get complacent about it. It is always a possibility. (Adams, 2003)
>
> It's quite hard really. When I feel that happening what I usually say is, 'You don't have to tell that story' give people the escape clause ... It does make me feel really prickly, all of that side of it, a very exposed thing, especially the story circle. (Morlais, 2004)
>
> I think it is very, very easy for us to tip over the line. We have had one or two occasions in workshops, particularly in the story circle where it has felt quite close to becoming unmanageable. Where you are actually exposing stuff that has been buried for a long time and been triggered. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> If you invite people to tell you personal stories, then they will tell you things that are very painful, or they will tell you things that fill them with emotion and sometimes fill other people in the room with emotion as well. And you cannot legislate for that. (Adams, 2003)

There have in fact been times when the teams (in England especially) have faced worrying incidents with participants in workshops who have been overcome by the experience.

The team is aware that some might question the appropriateness of such involvement by the BBC:

> I knew that we were taking something that was essentially therapy and turning it into broadcast television... I can say hand on heart that no one has ever been coerced into telling a story they don't want to tell. Quite the reverse actually. (Meadows, 2004a)
>
> We are not there as counsellors; the experience is not therapy. (Adams, 2003)
>
> We are not counsellors; we are not there to do that. (Lewis, 2003)

Conversation with BBC employees thus reveals their understanding of the nature of the workshop process for some, that it can be both overwhelming and emotional. There is a feeling that those executives at the BBC who talk publicly about the benefits of Digital Storytelling have little understanding that on the ground, the team are dealing with these kinds of issues. There have been meetings within the team about this subject, and all members have been in contact with trained counsellors. Gareth Morlais also astutely points out that for years, television broadcasters have asked for stories, painful and fresh, for documentaries, news broadcasts or reality television, and that in all these cases "There is always a risk" (Morlais, 2004). This type of intervention has been especially worrying due to the lack of control that those subjects have over the final output, and their representation within it.

The following chapter will detail participant's responses to this aspect of the workshop and discuss the consequences of those feelings.

Measuring the success of Capture Wales

When asked how the success of the Digital Storytelling initiatives is being measured, answers again vary. Success could be measured in terms of the number of stories made, their 'quality', how many are on television, audience responses, participants responses, 'approval' rating, the list goes on:

> What I would say is that there is a pressure on us to justify everything. That is not something special about Digital Storytelling, as the manager of this department I report quarterly on our performance which involves looking at each element of what we do and offering outcomes against targets we have set ... In Digital Storytelling, we set targets which were the number of workshops we would do a year, and the number of people who would go to workshops, the number of people who answered forms saying they had had a positive experience in the workshops and we have a target in terms of cost per story. (Rose, 2004)
>
> The content is obviously crucial, and there are obviously ways of measuring that in terms of cost per viewer and the like. But people spend far too much time worrying about stuff like that. I think that key thing for me is the sustainability of the project, and while the BBC has started it, the BBC can't sustain it forever. (Richards, 2003a)
>
> Boy is it a success, you can go to a website, you can see them, they change peoples lives. (Russell, 2003)
>
> I see the success in terms of the response we get from the people in workshops. That's it. I think that it gets much more difficult when you start to quantify it in terms of money, I'm glad I don't have to do that. (Adams, 2003)
>
> Yes, I think it has [been a success], and I think it is difficult to quantify. In my view ... you have to look away from the traditional way of looking at it which is each digital story cost x number of pounds, how many people watch it. This is actually about changing the relationship between the media and the people outside. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> I suppose they've got loads of tick boxes or whatever, loads of figures, costs per workshop in relation to end product, how much it gets on telly, so a lot of it is internal proving its worth ... Obviously it has to be cost effective so some poor bugger has to fill in those boxes. (Davies, 2004a)
>
> I measure it by how it touches the lives of people making stories as much as anything. That is the benchmark I am naturally drawn to. The trouble is they don't teach you how to measure that on MBA courses do they, so the key performance indicators are more to do with how many stories per year, quantity, not quality of engagement they use to measure it ... But I definitely haven't got the same aims for the project as, say, Menna, I would say that we probably have very different aims, but then, the controller of a TV station has to stand up at senior management level and justify it. And it's money that talks really at that level. (Morlais, 2004)

Measuring audiences, as we have seen, is complex, and to date has not been feasible for *Capture Wales*. In terms of cost per film, we have seen also that

this is a contentious issue in terms of analysing the project's success, at least until the stories find a home on network television, and measuring quality is an entirely subjective pursuit hardly appropriate for the study of digital stories.

For members of the *Capture Wales* team, interest lies in finding out how participants respond to the experience. This is their measure of success, and the subject of the following chapter.

This discussion of participants' responses is followed by a discussion of the future of the project and possibilities for its sustainability, either within the BBC or through the development of partnerships and institutions that can further the Digital Storytelling movement in Wales.

Chapter Six

'I jumped into the pool and it wasn't deep at all': The Impact of Capture Wales

This chapter details the results of questionnaire and interview research involving workshop participants. Where appropriate, additional materials are used in order to present a cohesive picture of respondents motivations for, and opinions of, the workshop process.

Firstly the participants are described. Simple demographics of both workshop participants and my respondents are displayed, followed by a presentation of research findings.

The participants: demographics

> What many of today's writers and critics realise, I think rightly, is that there is no future in imagining an artificial Wales, but only in engagement with the real nation in all its diversity. (Davies, 1999: 25)

Participants in *Capture Wales* workshops are, as we have seen, chosen on the strength of applications and with diversity in mind. If a truly original and entertaining archive of Wales is to be built (one of the aims of the project), it is necessary to include the stories of people from all walks of life. Issues of representation and 'cultural diversity' are undoubtedly at the forefront of BBC decisions about involvement of the public in the creation of content:

> In contemporary Britain, more especially since the Labour Government came to power in 1997, funding bodies in the arts and museum sectors have been required to pay more attention to questions of representation and to what has come to be termed 'cultural diversity'. (Weedon, 2004: 22)

A demographic analysis of the first 191 people to take part in workshops held with the public reveals that this is indeed the case with *Capture Wales*.

Alongside this, a demographic breakdown of those participants who filled in my questionnaires is given:

Table 2: The sex of the first 191 participants in public *Capture Wales* workshops

	Male	Female	
Under 16	5	3	
16 – 18	5	6	
18 – 24	11	15	
25 – 34	20	19	
35 – 44	21	16	
45 – 54	17	17	
55 – 64	9	9	
65 – 74	5	7	
75 +	3	3	
TOTAL	96	95	191

According to Table 2, 50 per cent of workshop participants are male, and 50 per cent are female, this is not dissimilar to the 2001 census information for Wales which states that 48 per cent of the Welsh population is male, and 52 per cent female. In this respect, workshop participants reflect the population of the country fairly accurately in terms of gender. Questionnaire results collected from a sample of 116 workshop participants also reflect a similar scenario with exactly 50 per cent male and 50 per cent female (of those who did not answer anonymously):

Table 3: The sex of 116 respondents to questionnaires

Gender	
Male	51
Female	51
ANON	14
TOTAL	116

In terms of age, the figures for the census, the workshops and my sample are as follows:

Table 4: The age of those taking part in workshops and this study as compared to the 2001 census

	Percentage in Census 2001	Percentage in workshops	Percentage in sample
UNDER 16	20	4	0
16 – 24	11	20	13
25 – 44	27	40	28
45 – 64	25	27	28
65 – 74	9	6	11
75+	8	3	6
AGE UNKNOWN	-	-	14
TOTAL	100	100	100

This shows that in terms of workshop participants, there is perhaps a weighting toward those aged 25 – 44, and an under-representation of both the older and younger age groups. This has been levelled somewhat recently with the inclusion of more school workshops with under 16-year-olds. Table 4 also shows that my questionnaire responses are weighted toward those of an older age (over 65) in comparison with the percentage in workshops as a whole, and an under-representation of those in the younger age groups who have taken part in workshops.

A more detailed breakdown of the ages of those who returned questionnaires is as follows:

Table 5: The ages of questionnaire respondents

Age of respondents	Total	Male	Female
16-18	3	2	1
18-24	12	6	6
25-34	16	6	10
35-44	16	7	9
45-54	22	14	8
55-64	11	7	4
65-74	13	5	8
75+	7	4	3
ANON	14	-	-
AGE UNKNOWN	2	-	2
TOTAL	116	51	51

Table 6 below shows the geographical spread of those 191 workshop participants and 116 respondents to questionnaires. Participants are located by way of workshop:

Table 6: Geographical spread of participants

	Workshop Participants	Questionnaire Responses	North / South / Mid Wales
Ammanford	11	7	South West
Bangor	8	3	North West
Blackwood	17	10	South East
Blaenau Ffestiniog	11	4	North West
Cardiff (including stories made at BBC Wales digilab)	19	8	South East
Croesyceiliog	10	-	South East
Denbigh	10	9	North East
Harlech	10	7	North West
Machynlleth	10	8	Mid
Newport	10	6	South East
Port Talbot	11	7	South West
Porth	7	1	Mid
Rhayader	10	8	Mid
Rhyl	9	6	North East
Swansea	10	6	South West
Tredegar	10	7	South East
Wrexham	8	4	North East
Ystalyfera	10	-	South West
Monmouth	-	9	South East
Workshop Unknown	-	6	
TOTAL	191	116	

Participants in workshops held in Croesyceiliog and Ystalyfera were not targeted for questionnaires due to the complications of dealing with youngsters (all participants in these workshops were under 16). An additional 9 people responded from the Monmouth workshop (held after the initial analysis of workshop participants).

The above classifications, Mid, South East, South West, North East, North West have been made according to the BBC's 'Where I Live' sites for Wales (www.bbc.co.uk/whereilive). In all, 57 per cent of workshop participants have been from the South of Wales (42 from the West, 66 from the East), 29 per

cent from the North (29 from the North West, 27 from the East), and 14 per cent from Mid Wales.

Workshop participants and questionnaire respondents thus reside all over Wales. But, as can be seen there is a bias toward those living in South Wales (particularly the East). This is in keeping with the overall population bias of Wales (all three dedicated 'cities' in Wales are in the South and act as population centres).

It is also important to look at the workshop participants in terms of their ethnicity. Wales is made up of predominantly White British people (95.99 per cent according to the 2001 census). The largest of the ethnic minorities are Chinese (0.40%), British Indian (0.28%), British Pakistani (0.39%) and Black (0.25%). According to the census in 2001, many deemed these categories to be unsuitable, self-selecting themselves as just 'Welsh' (14.39%), an option that was not on the list (an increasing trend recognised by Morgan & Mungham, 2000). Feelings thus run high amongst a portion of the population that to be 'Welsh' is separate to or preferential to being 'British'. In terms of *Capture Wales*, the ethnic breakdown of participants is as follows:

Table 7: Workshop participants and questionnaire respondents by ethnic grouping

Ethnic grouping	Percentage in 2001 census for Wales	Percentage in workshops – first 191 people	Percentage of questionnaire respondents
White: British	95.99	87	77
Of which: Welsh	-	73	59
Elsewhere in UK	-	14	18
White: Other	1.28	3	3
Indian/ British Indian, Pakistani/ British Pakistani, Bangladeshi/ British Bangladeshi	0.76	3	3
Black	0.25	3	5
Chinese	0.4	1	0
Unknown		3	12
TOTAL		100	100

The total percentage of White British participants was 87 per cent, a total that can be broken up into 73 per cent White Welsh residents, and 14 percent of

participants born elsewhere in the UK. In the 2001 census, it is identified that 21.43 per cent of residents were born elsewhere in the UK a figure noticeably higher than the workshop participant level. Those born in Wales are figured in the census at 75.39 per cent, again higher than the workshop participant level.

There are then significantly higher proportions of ethnic minorities taking part in workshops than make up the total population of Wales. This is perhaps a bid to represent a previously 'voiceless' portion of the population. Given the fact that relatively few stories are made by *Capture Wales,* it would be virtually impossible to represent as small a proportion of the population as these individual groups make up.

Questionnaires were received also predominantly from White Welsh respondents. 59 per cent were Welsh born, 18 per cent from elsewhere in the United Kingdom, and a total of 11 per cent were received from ethnic minorities. Ethnic minorities and those from elsewhere in the country (especially England) are thus well represented in the following results sections. Those Welsh born, English speaking persons taking part in workshops are less well presented, possibly due to the exclusion of people attending school workshops from the sample (these are predominantly attended by Welsh-born students) but, where appropriate, further interview research has been used to even the balance.

Conclusions

In terms of providing a representative sample of Wales, the *Capture Wales* team have managed to provide a balance that certainly represents the various voices of the public more readily than mainstream television in Wales (in the first 191 stories), as is its intention:

> The Wales of Capture Wales is not just the media cliché post-industrial Wales of pit closures, redundant workers, quaint folk in pointy hats, Shirley Bassey, Tom Jones, Catherine Zeta Jones, and picturesque hillsides covered in sheep. For Digital Stories tell about Wales from the inside. We deal in all sorts. (Meadows, 2004e)

People are also being enabled to tell their stories in the Welsh language (a total of 43 stories in August 2004), a significant development not least in terms of inspiring confidence in ability with the spoken word.

Those 116 respondents who filled in questionnaires as part of this research are also suitably varied in terms of sex, geography, age and ethnicity.

The following results sections detail the findings of those questionnaires, alongside analysis of the stories themselves, and of feedback received by the *Capture Wales* team. Where appropriate, these results have been dealt with in terms of the above demographics.

The story

Why do people want to tell their stories?

Website information on participants documents their desire to tell their particular stories (www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales). Although individually articulated, there are threads that run through this reasoning such as the wish to tell a story *now*, that the timing is right and may never be again:

> I felt now was the right time to tell this story.
>
> I chose to tell this particular story as it was in my memory and I had the photos and I was in the right place on the right time.
>
> It seemed appropriate at this time, to make a digital story which reflected my long-term passion for penguins.

This is often linked to the desire to impart knowledge to others – that their story can help others in a similar situation to come to rational and rewarding decisions about their future:

> We wanted other people to gather strength from the possibility that not all bad news spells doom and gloom for ever.
>
> I feel that if my story gives just one victim, man or woman, the courage and incentive to get out of a similar situation and turn their lives around too, then my story will not have been made in vain.
>
> If my story can help anyone to come to terms with their depression,

> then it has been well worthwhile.
>
> I hope it acts as a deterrent for other young people who are thinking of following the same road as I did.
>
> I wanted to tell this story as hopefully it will be an inspiration for other children with disabilities.
>
> I hope this film will give people like me the inspiration to kick the habit.
>
> I wanted to tell this story in the hope that it might inspire people and make them realise that life is there for the taking.
>
> The moral of my story is about being individual, having choices and being a little different.
>
> I wanted people to appreciate how important and how fragile we all are and how it affects us when we lose those very special people in our lives.
>
> The focus of my story is not looking back reminiscing, but look forward... I can't change my past, but I can let it have a positive effect on my own and my children's future.
>
> I want to portray the fact that we are all unique, worthy of respect and have at heart a dignified desire for peace and co-existence.

As can be seen from the above quotes, there is often a desire to pass on a message born of experience. Others took this a step further. Alongside this, their intention was to obtain some kind of closure on an episode or theme in their life by talking about it. They expressed a will to 'self-medicate':

> It was pure chance, coincidence or fate even that I made my film. I went along to a meeting with my mum just to accompany her, mum was invited to make a film of her own. She was one of the nine people but only eight arrived at the meeting. I was asked if I would like to take the place of the person that didn't show up and if I had a story to tell of something that has affected my life. Yes, I had a story to tell and in a strange way telling this story would be putting the past to sleep, a moving on process.
>
> [The story intends to] officially announce the end of my dream – a bit of self-therapy if you like.
>
> My story's about how I gave up farming as a result of the foot and mouth crisis... I chose the story because it covered an important episode in my life which could so easily not have been documented.

Another common reason for the telling of a particular story is the storyteller's wish to commemorate a life, to pin it down before it is lost to others, and even to themselves:

> I needed to sanctify what was a very small, and very short life, which would have gone otherwise unnoticed.
>
> I wanted to reclaim my uncle's story and make something positive out of it.
>
> It's a tribute to my mother.
>
> A celebration of my mother's life. I wanted to show that you can be thankful and celebrate life without being overwhelmed by grief.
>
> I wanted to capture and relive something of the memories of my father.
>
> I wanted to record the stories that Miss ____ ____ has told me.

Other stories centre on the storyteller's passions. They are love stories with often interesting subjects, human or otherwise:

> I'm pathological about spreading the word of the multiple benefits that yoga brings.
>
> I was going to tell a story about my mental health problems, but after the storytelling workshop I decided to make it more personal and tell my own love story.
>
> because I like motorbikes.
>
> I chose to tell this story because its [sic] one of my obsessions.
>
> The story is about introducing myself to Wales, saying, 'I have arrived and my God – I love this place'.
>
> My story is about a chair in our dining room at home which is featured in every photo we take.

Stories of passion for a 'thing' often prove to be stories articulating feelings for family or friends through that object, as is the case of the final quote above. Other stories centre around a wish to describe childhood events, pass on a message, or the importance of family/local history. Some participants express a wish simply to entertain the audience through comedy, and others treat the question itself – Why this particular story? – with humour, and a rather

accurate understanding of broadcast limitations; "I chose to tell this story due to the fact that my initial idea – about a number of prominent Hollywood actors in compromising positions was rejected immediately".

Another respondent stated his main reasoning behind attending the workshop was not to tell a story as such but as a social venture; [Resp]: "Well... gets me out of the house and that's the main thing".[13]

The reasoning behind storytelling with *Capture Wales* is thus varied and unquantifiable. The content of the stories gives a little more about the participants away, their tone, theme, length and pacing gives the viewer an insight into the life of the storyteller not evident in the web interviews. These themes are interesting to look at, and, as has been indicated above, are sometimes common, and at other times absolutely unique and uncategorisable.

What do people tell their stories about?

The *Capture Wales* team, for ease of browsing on the web, divides the stories into five categories (previously four), Community, Challenge, Family, Memory and Passion (passion being the added category).

At the time of analysis (May 2004), the categories stood as follows:

Table 8: Website categories

Challenge	33 stories
Community	28 stories
Family	36 stories
Memory	27 stories
Passion	30 stories

[14]

Within these categories, story themes vary hugely. Browsing through the stories and noting some of those themes, there was obviously some

[13] All answers prefixed with [Resp] have been obtained through interview research with workshop participants. All responses without are from questionnaires unless otherwise indicated.

[14] Some stories appeared in more than one category.

recurrence. Those most commonly noted by myself (a very subjective analysis) were as follows:

Table 9: Website story themes

Family	59	Loss	5
Memory	34	Faith	5
Overcoming	25	Humour	4
Journey	20	Myth	4
History	19	Drugs	3
Passion	15	Change	3
Childhood/Growing Up	15	Nature	3
Love	14	Protest	2
Wales	14	Music	2
Community	12	Fantasy	2
Identity	9	Politics	1
Friendship	8	Pain	1
Home	8	Art	1
Dreams	8	Unemployment	1
Memorial	7	Education	1
Fear	7		

Common themes (as one might expect) include family and memory. This could be explained by the emphasis of the medium on the photographic image, a moment in time, as could other common themes of history and childhood. Given the opportunity to tell one story (and only one) it is not surprising that many choose to tell stories of family, journeys that have been made (literal and metaphorical) or obstacles that have been overcome. This last theme tends to involve those films that pass on a message born of experience:

> I want people to experience...
>
> I tell this story in the hope...
>
> If my story can help...

The therapeutic nature of the workshop for some participants (dealt with later in this chapter) could explain these themes of overcoming, memorial, fear, loss and pain. Stories of this nature often come out of the story circle experience on the first full day of the workshop. Gilly Adams, facilitator of that story circle, has the following to say about the overriding themes of Digital Story:

> Over and over it comes up that people are concerned about the people they love, about their family, that their lives should have some kind of meaning, that they are distressed by the loss of parents, that they love their children. Very obvious things, but because it's obvious, it doesn't mean that it is not profound. (Adams, 2004)

Common themes are thus to be expected, and are, according to 52 per cent of respondents, already in place before the start of the workshop:

Table 10: Do people have an idea of the story they want to tell in advance?

	Percentage of respondents
Yes	52
No	34
Fairly good idea	8
Mixed	6
TOTAL	100

One participant expresses the mixed nature of feelings previous to the story circle as follows:

> I was aware of the story I wanted to tell beforehand but not the manner in which it should be told, i.e. funny, sad, retrospective etc

The story circle inspires confidence in participants that their story is as worthwhile as the next, inspiring participants to clarify their ideas and often to make them more personal:

Table 11: Do people change their story idea?

Did your idea change?	Percentage	If yes, why did it change?	Percentage
YES	66.5	Made more personal	17
NO	28.5	Clarified story	14
Slight change	1	Developed idea	12
No Answer	4	Condensed story	12
		Due to team	10
TOTAL	100	No reason given	9
		After story circle	5
		Simplified idea	5
		Story deepened	4
		Due to materials	4
		Due to technology	3
		Wording changed	1.25
		Structure changed	1.25
		Influence of group	1.25
		Now regret change	1.25

In all 77 respondents' stories changed from their initial idea. The most common response indicated that this was due to a desire to make the story more personal, often after the story circle experience whereby those in the group are encouraged to tell their stories, not those of others. This was especially true of those who answered 'no' to the previous question about having a story idea prepared in advance:

> The booklet re: storytelling helped me focus story.
>
> More personal after the story circle.
>
> The penny dropped.
>
> We did an activity called the love and hate game. It came out of that.
>
> [Resp]: I had to elaborate with it a bit because there weren't enough 'I's in it, it was more a general thing, and because the idea of it was to be a personal thing, to me intensely personal, and on paper it wasn't as personal as I wanted.

This suggests that there is an emphasis within the story circle on pushing the 'I' to the centre of the story, making them more personal. This is an idea that would perhaps make some uncomfortable, especially given the ethos of the

movement that all stories are necessarily different in tone and topic, as are their tellers.

Others found that they were able to focus much more on the central premise of their story and thus clarify and condense it. Many participants profess to have found this a particularly tricky but valuable exercise:

> It was difficult for me to keep the story short and clean.
>
> Original idea had to be cut down drastically.

Eight respondents indicated that their change in story idea was directly influenced by the team (or of one particular member of the team). None of these persons indicated that the team had an adverse affect on their story, however, one respondent did indicate that they regretted changing their story, but did not give a reason for that initial change. This again perhaps sits uncomfortably with the ethos of the project that everyone has a story to tell, and that that story is best told in the voice and words of the storyteller themselves. Daniel Meadows justifies those changes to stories initiated by the team in the following way:

> I think that changes to stories advised by the team tend to be because of one (or any combination of) three things: 1. The need to fit the form. Digital Storytelling is a new media form (as well as a New Media form). Everyone, no matter what storytelling skills they may already have, needs to learn it... 2. The need for clarity. We do not serve our participants well if we help them to make films which are confusing. 3. Length. There are always some participants who are slow to "get it". They want to make a docu-drama, or a 30 minute think piece. They don't understand just what a concentrated thing a two-minute film is. Naturally these participants are reluctant to change their ideas... but they have to; otherwise they simply won't have any story at all. (Meadows, 2004d)

This, rather than a pressure to conform to an overarching idea of 'quality', is where change stems from.

This is an entirely different set up however to that employed by the Center for Digital Storytelling. There is a different approach to the workshop, in part

enabled by participants' contrary expectations from the experience, resulting in greater freedom for the story makers. There are far fewer limitations on story form and construction, in most part due to the fact that stories are made without a view to broadcast on any platform. They are thus without restrictions in terms of length, copyright or number of images to be used. The story can also, if the teller wishes, be entirely free of clarity to a 'general' viewer.

This is a model that in theory is infinitely more in keeping with freedom of expression and representation. But is one that would be entirely inappropriate within a BBC setting (a discongruity that will be taken up in the closing chapter of this thesis).

For some, the process of creating their story is looked back on with ease with humour:

> It fell together in one nice parcel not too big to go down the toilet. Truth- balance - realism – humour.

After the event

Table 12: Do people show their story post-workshop?

Have you shown your story to many people?		Total Percentage	
Yes, to everyone	48	Yes	76
Yes, to family/friends	40	No	23
No, reluctant	5	No Answer	1
No, due to technology	6		
Just No	14		
No, but will	2		
No answer	1		
TOTAL	116		

Of the 116 respondents, 76 per cent had shown their story to people since their workshop – either to family or friends, or, more frequently, to everyone they know:

> Oh yes...
>
> Relatives, friends, anyone else I could rope securely to a chair for long enough.
>
> I show the film at every opportunity.

> Yes, to groups I teach to show them what technology is capable of.
>
> Yes, it's gained almost cult status.
>
> Bored them to death.
>
> Not myself personally, however shown on TV, been recognised in the street.
>
> To a few. Others contacted me after seeing it on the web. A long lost friend contacted me from the US.
>
> It's a bit embarrassing, I like it when they look when I am not in the room.
>
> Shown it to family, cat seemed dispassionate.
>
> Very proud of it. Showed to many people. Many staff have seen it and found it emotional and powerful.

Of the 116 respondents, 14 per cent commented on public viewing spaces for their story, that it had been viewed by people they knew either on television, within the community (for example in a public meeting on a big screen) or that it had been heard on the radio. Four respondents talked of being approached in the street following an airing of their story. This was in all cases viewed as a positive experience:

> JK: How does it make you feel?
> [Resp]: I enjoy the exposure, didn't think I would enjoy the notoriety but I do!
>
> JK: How do people react when you tell them about your story and the workshop?
> [Resp]: Positively – it is surprising how many people can remember it from its broadcasts on television.

Interestingly, some of those who answered 'yes' but only to friends and family for whatever reason (for example it being a very personal story) often do not connect with the idea that the web is essentially a global stage. They still view it as an intimate exchange, but one that will not impact upon the day-to-day workings of their lives in the same way that showing it to others around them might. It does not occur to them that people they know might stumble across the story independently:

> A few through the internet but not so many as it feels quite personal.
>
> To family – it's personal. I don't mind strangers on the Internet looking at it, strangely enough.

However 23 per cent (a significant proportion) had not, for various reasons shown their story to others since the workshop:

> I can count on one hand. I have enough criticism from 'brainless ****heads' without a double dose from what I created.
>
> No, more keen on using skills.
>
> Do not show, but proud.
>
> No, I will get round to it.
>
> Not yet, no time!
>
> No, I don't have it.
>
> Not so much recently.

Of these 23 per cent, the majority (92 per cent) still rated the workshop experience very positively. One participant whose story portrays a particularly negative time in her life does not choose to show the story on a regular basis despite having had an overwhelmingly positive experience with *Capture Wales;* "I have not showed the film to many people because it is not a subject I care to dwell on. I got out and got a life". This does not make the benefit gleaned any less, in fact the participant goes on to urge others to take part; "The only thing I wish to add is EVERYONE should get involved with a *Capture Wales* project. No matter how sad, bad or glad, your story should be told".

Others tended to put their lack of follow up viewing down to time scarcity, shyness, or the fact that the story has been aired in other arenas such as the television or within the community.

This rating could perhaps have been improved had technology not been an issue. Some participants expressed frustration that their stories were not online or could not be watched due to faults with the technology:

> Unaccessible to most who I told, so I stopped telling them.
>
> No, never on the web as not finished.
>
> No, the video has a fault.

One of these respondents for example, rated the overall experience as a three (a neutral experience).

Conversely, some respondents suggest that the product is not of great importance to the workshop experience as a whole, that perhaps it is about other things such as self-fulfilment, using the technology or working with the BBC (in line with Clemencia Rodriguez's 'Video as Process' citizens' media reviewed in chapter one). One participant goes as far as to say that the reason he has not shown many people his story is that he just wants to get on and use the technology.

For those people who I have had a chance to question further, it seems that for some, feelings about their story do not alter over the years:

> [Resp]: The feeling doesn't change with time, I am very pleased with myself [Said two years after event].
>
> [Resp]: feelings? Always good.

For others, and for various reasons, feelings have changed and viewings are less frequent:

> [Resp]: I guess less frequently than I did earlier on, when it was every few minutes! Life has been rather difficult/hectic/problematic during the last six months or so and the inclination to indulge myself wasn't there. Things are OK now so I may drag it out.
>
> [Resp]: I showed it to my parents and some of my closest friends, but now I don't really watch it. I know it's there, sometimes if I want to I can go and watch it. I am quite proud of it because it was, they

help you, but you do it, the editing and using all the software, so whenever I am feeling useless or something I'll think 'Oh yeah, I did that, and that was alright'. So I fall back on it, I don't actually go and check it out, but I use it in that way. When I think that I am lacking anything.

[Resp]: I have become more accepting of it over time... I'm very pleased I did it, but there's still the part of you that cringes at your own perception of yourself! I suppose it's been viewed a couple of times a year since making it.

Interestingly, it seems that participants often view watching their piece as a self-indulgent act. Something that we have seen is in line with Marxist views of this type of activity; that it necessitates a concern with the 'self' over and above 'community'. Rather than being an act of 'responsibility' (McAdams, 1993), society teaches us this type of work is a narcissistic mission. As Barbara Kamler points out after working on the 'stories of ageing' project in Australia, older members of society especially are uncomfortable with being given the space and time to think in this way:

> In the early weeks of the workshops, however, women often resisted foregrounding their own experiences because, as they later discussed with us, women of their generation had been actively discouraged from talking about themselves. (Kamler, 2001: 68)

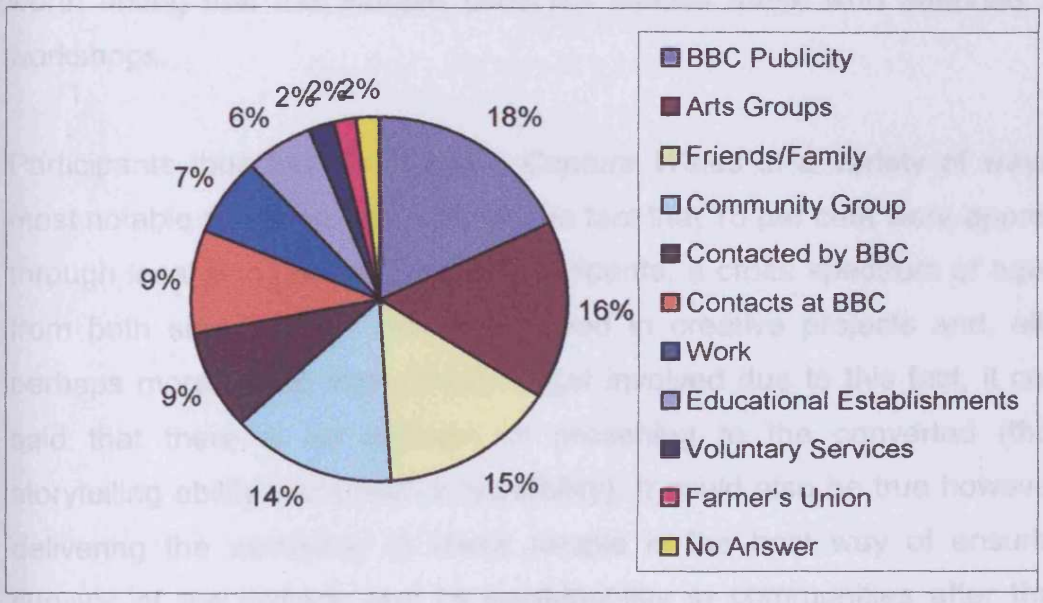
As a result, some *Capture Wales* participants are embarrassed by the work, even though their experiences overall have been very positive.

Only one fairly negative response was received when talking about feelings toward the story in retrospect. The respondent, who said in their questionnaire response that the story was 'not all mine', had not experienced a change in feeling when questioned another year later; [Resp]: 'No I still feel that it is not really what I wanted'. This respondent does however admit to still watching the story 'occasionally'. In no case I have experienced has a storyteller completely turned against their story or not watched it since the workshop.

The workshop

This section deals with participants' views of the workshop process, specifically, their responses to other members of the group and the BBC team. It begins by taking a look at how participants found out about *Capture Wales*:

Figure 1: How did participants find out about *Capture Wales*?



A total of 18 per cent of participants found out about the workshop through BBC publicity; press materials, a stand at the National Eisteddfod, the Digital Storytelling Conference held in Cardiff (November 2003) or through other conference appearances. 15 per cent heard of the project through friends and family members, again, a possible result of receiving or stumbling across BBC publicity materials. Very few respondents had found out about the project through viewing stories on television or on the BBC website, a fact which perhaps says something about the nature of publicity the project has received through the BBC's own outlets.

The largest proportion of attendees questioned (30 per cent) gained knowledge of the project through local arts and community groups including creative writing and arts groups, the Community Arts Network, camera clubs, Arts Development Officers (specifically Kate Strudwick at the Blackwood

Miners' Institute), local women's groups, and in one instance, the Indian society.

9 per cent had been contacted directly by the BBC, and another 9 per cent found themselves on workshops due to contacts at the BBC (either through friends or short-term placements with BBC Wales at the time).

Only 6 per cent found out through an educational establishment, but, it is worth noting that this sample does not include those who attended school workshops.

Participants thus found out about *Capture Wales* in a variety of ways. The most notable figure here is perhaps the fact that 16 per cent were approached through local arts groups. These participants, a cross spectrum of ages, and from both sexes, were already involved in creative projects and, although perhaps more willing than others to get involved due to this fact, it could be said that there is an element of preaching to the converted (those of storytelling ability and creative possibility). It could also be true however, that delivering the workshop to these people is the best way of ensuring the survival of the project, and its sustainability in communities after the BBC team have left. These groups are best placed to carry on the work and to seek funding. There is however, a sense that access is restricted to those who are likely to attend groups within communities, be involved with the arts or have some kind of link with the BBC. They are also individuals who have the opportunity to give the time commitment required by the workshop (including three 'work' days).

Prior to discussions about the workshop process, it is worth having a quick look at how people responded to the open evening, held up to one month before the workshop begins:

Table 13: Did respondents attend the open evening?

Attendance at Open Evening	Percentage of respondents
Yes	79
No	17
Was none	3
Can't remember	1
TOTAL	100

Respondents who volunteer information about their open evening have the following to say:

> Assessing round faces around a round table. Who. Why. What stories have they to relate?
>
> A stranger with strangers. ODD.
>
> Encouraging.
>
> It was powerful and exciting.
>
> Yes, very scary.
>
> It was a night to remember one I will never forget.

Participants are thus intrigued, excited and anxious to varying degrees. They also hint (above) at curiosity about others in the group, these 'strangers' and what stories they might be there to tell.

Questions were asked regarding the feelings of respondents to the rest of their group by the end of the workshop. Responses show that in most cases, they are certainly no longer regarded as strangers:

Table 14: How did respondents feel about other group members?

Positive resposes		Negative responses	
Got on well	52	Strange	1
Bonded	18	Close Distance	1
Friends	12	Competing	1
Supportive	11	Difficult	1
Team	10		
All very different	6		
Helpful	6		
Family	5		
Positive	5		
Friendly	4		
OK	3		
Good	3		
Encourage	2		
Community	2		
Excellent	2		
Respect	2		
Enthusiasm	2		
Protective	1		
Humour	1		

Answers themselves are enlightening as to the intimacy and urgency felt by many of the participants:

> The bond was one of the most important aspects of the whole experience.
>
> You get to know people very quickly in intense environments.
>
> I felt as if I had known them for years.
>
> We formed a tight-knit community very quickly.
>
> We were all sad when we finished.
>
> Closer with each tea break.
>
> By the end, like a close family.
>
> With interest, enthusiasm and with time, emotion.
>
> We built a good bond. It was a good mixture of age, sex, race, religion etc.
>
> The group workshops were for me one of the best and most valuable experiences of making my story.
>
> The participants were social like bees in hives.
>
> We became a bit of a beeb family for five days, everybody

> interested in the other stories and how they were progressing. The days flew by!
>
> A good mix of strange folk telling urgent things to one another.
>
> [Resp]: You have all this empathy with people that last week you did not know or care for, you really felt something, we were a group. I don't want to dramatise it too much, but it is a really good feeling.

For some, the group process is something that they would normally be very uncomfortable with. One participant said the following:

> I found the process of telling impromtu stories, produced most remarkable results and a great deal of unforeseen emotion all round. I feel in my case that it was due to the fact that normally I am not the most forthcoming of people about personal matters, yet I joined in. There was a degree of catharsis all round. I would be interested in finding out whether this normally happens in a Digital Storytelling exercise, for to encounter so many tears amongst what were basically strangers is something I find novel.

For another participant, feeling like part of a unit was something they had not experienced before:

> Great atmosphere, felt part of a team. The first time I have felt like that really

For some respondents, this group feeling has continued:

> We gelled – it was a very special experience and continues to be so.
>
> We have met up again and enjoyed each other's company.
>
> Three years on and we greet each other with hugs and kisses. The workshop experience throws you together.
>
> [Resp]: I am happy with the follow up and now feel part of a community. I have since met a number of the 'gang' and enjoyed reminiscing about the workshop.

For others, this has not been the case, but they would be happy if it were:

> We need a reunion to chat about the good times we had at Denbigh. (You can come too, if you're good).

This positivity crosses over into respondents' feelings about the *Capture Wales* team:

Table 15: How did respondents feel about the *Capture Wales* team?

Helpful	47	Lovely	2
Friendly	38	Listening	1
Excellent	16	Adaptive	1
Professional	13	Cheerful	1
Supportive	12	Sympathetic	1
Enthusiastic	11	Generous	1
Encouraging	11	Innovative	1
Patient	10	Shoulder to cry on	1
Approachable	7	OK	1
Fantastic	6	Enabling	1
Knowledgeable	6	Outstanding	1
Easygoing	3	Aware	1
Relaxed	3	Open minded	1
Brilliant	3	Not patronising	1
Informative	3	Excited	1
Nice	3	Caring	1
Wonderful	3	Realistic	1
Skilled	3	Good humoured	1
Respectful	3	Family	1
Amazing	2	Magnificent	1
Inspiring	2	Kind	1
Fabulous	2	Not strict	1
Flexible	2	Sensitive	1
Courteous	2	Down to earth	1
Positive	2	Great	1
Dedicated	2		

This is perhaps as one would expect given the nature of the workshop, being not dissimilar to feedback for other workshop environments.

As Table 15 indicates, the team were viewed in a variety of ways. Words used to describe their contribution range from those reflecting on the team as an approachable and easygoing unit to those casting the team in a supportive, caring role. Phrases such as 'shoulder to cry on', 'sympathetic' and 'listening' hint at the therapeutic nature of the workshop for many involved.

Respondents volunteered individual experiences and opinions about the team:

> One of the joys of the project was the enthusiasm of the BBC team. They were generous, knowledgeable and often innovative.

> Really great folk, with whom I was pleased to be associated. I can't praise them enough.
>
> Really, really amazing.
>
> Some good, some bad, some ugly.
>
> One could not wish for a more easy going, friendly crew.
>
> Happy and go lucky, friendly with a smile for all. But who would not be with such a job.
>
> Nothing short of magnificent.
>
> I shall always remember the team with great pride.
>
> Their commitment and enthusiasm was infectious.
>
> I love the *Capture Wales* team to bits.
>
> I hope to remain friends with all of them forever.
>
> V[ery] good, friendly, helpful, persuasive, can't fault them indeed. Welsh speaking a great help.
>
> [they] Never put you down.
>
> The *Capture Wales* team are lovely people (though none of them fish).

Often, as can be seen above, respondents align themselves with the team, they were 'associated' with them, they remember them 'with great pride', as if they were their own. Alongside this, they describe an assault on their prior expectations of the team:

> The BBC Wales team was an interesting lot – they are clever people who have the cleverness to appear ordinary, so that after a short period of time no one was in any way in awe of the 'Great BBC Entities'. We all became part of a team.
>
> They did far more than they needed to do.
>
> Wonderful, so different, focused and very talented.
>
> Their love of the project made you want to give it your all.
>
> I have the highest regard for them following the experience.
>
> Because of the team involved, it didn't feel at all as if the BBC wanted to do this for their own gain – it felt like a genuine desire to give the community access to the means of media production, and an opportunity to express themselves and tell their stories.

Only one response hinted at a slightly negative experience with the team, describing them as 'very hard worked' and as a result 'I would have liked more of their time to tidy up my story'. This response was not indicative of an overall negative experience, the respondent rated the experience at the highest level of praise in other respects.

The technology

The following sections utilise BBC *Capture Wales* information, feedback forms filled in immediately after the event attesting to participants' perceived skills growth and enjoyment. 164 of these feedback forms were analysed alongside the 116 questionnaire responses.

Looking at these responses to the technology is crucial in order to analyse the project in terms of the BBC's aim to increase the skills base amongst those who take part, and the desire of those such as Daniel Meadows to teach people how to make media their own:

Table 16: How did people rate their competence with technology prior to the workshop? (Of 164 BBC responses)

Rating (5 most positive)	Number of responses
5	16
4	36
3	61
2	26
1	19
0 (self-selected as an option)	4
-5 (self-selected as an option)	1
No Answer	1
TOTAL	164

BBC feedback received immediately after the workshop experience shows that 32 per cent of respondents rated their ability in the top two categories, 37 per cent in the middle of the spectrum, and a total of 30 per cent rated themselves as 2 or less (including 4 zero's and one minus five which were self-selected).

When rating their experience with the technology during the workshop, 87 per cent gave it a 4 or a 5 for accessibility. Only one person rated the technology a 1 for accessibility.

When asked to rate their overall skills growth (not only with technology, but obviously to include this), the results were as follows:

Table 17: How did people rate their skills growth immediately after the workshop? (Of 164 BBC responses)

Rating (5 most skills)	Number of responses
5	109
4	40
3	11
2	3
1	0
No Answer	1
Total	164

91 per cent of responses to the question rated their skills growth as either a 4 or a 5 indicating that respondents feel they have gained IT skills from their prior rating. Not one response indicates that there is no perceived skills growth.

However, questionnaire responses made some time after the workshop (often as much as three years), give a very mixed view of the technology in retrospect:

Table 18: How do participants feel now looking back on the technology?

Positive		Negative	
Help from the team	42	Struggled	19
No struggle	22	Difficult	6
Fine	11	Needed more time	4
OK	9	Tricky	1
Great	6	Slow	2
Interesting	2	Stressful	1
Fascinating	1	Advanced	1
		Daunting at first	1
New	5	Bewildering	1
Nerve racking	1	Confusing	1
Overawed	1	Overwhelming	1
Mind blowing	1		

When it comes to the technology, we see the biggest negative response of the results. The majority of workshop participants have not previously used the software required for the workshop (Adobe Premiere and Photoshop), and few are familiar with controlling a MAC. 36 per cent of respondents mentioned that they had benefited from help from the team, often that they could not have coped without this help:

> Difficult to control mouse.
>
> I think I am literate but I found it overwhelming and stressful.
>
> My weak area.
>
> Thank God for the team!
>
> Struggled with most of it – previous experience in the 1970s.
>
> I would have liked more time to get to know it all.
>
> I was nannied along.
>
> Very difficult as I am a technophobe.
>
> Struggle was not quite the word.
>
> I was nervous of messing things up, not getting it right. Thought BBC Wales team were marvellous and made me feel at ease. They also allowed my son to come in and help me.

> I am not the most technologically competent and I was v[ery] slow with it. I do not respond v[ery] well, & [sic] never have, to oral instruction – I have a memory for written instruction.

38 comments were made that could be considered to indicate that the experience with the technology was negative in retrospect, and a total of 93 comments were made that were positive:

> Fine, but I got obsessed.
>
> The opportunity to use the BBC's technology was what attracted me to the project.
>
> I jumped into the pool and it wasn't deep at all.
>
> Good old Apple Mac.
>
> Daniel Meadow's [sic] little workshops were ideally presented at the correct intervals and just the right amount of technical information. From there on the back up was always first class.
>
> The funniest part.
>
> Loved the technology.
>
> I enjoyed watching my film come together.
>
> fascinating and straight-forward.
>
> My first introduction to technology. Fantastic. Thanks to them I have since had the confidence to do more.

This indicates that there was some overlap, that some found the technology both stressful and exciting. As one might expect, the majority of older respondents professed to have struggled with the technology. A total of 68 per cent of respondents over 65 struggled, as did 36 per cent of those aged between 35 and 64. Only 10 per cent of those aged under 34 talked of struggling with the technology:

Table 19: How old were those who struggled with the technology?

Age	Number
16-18	1
18-24	0
25-34	2
35-44	6
45-54	6
55-64	6
65-74	9
75+	5
ANON	1
TOTAL	36

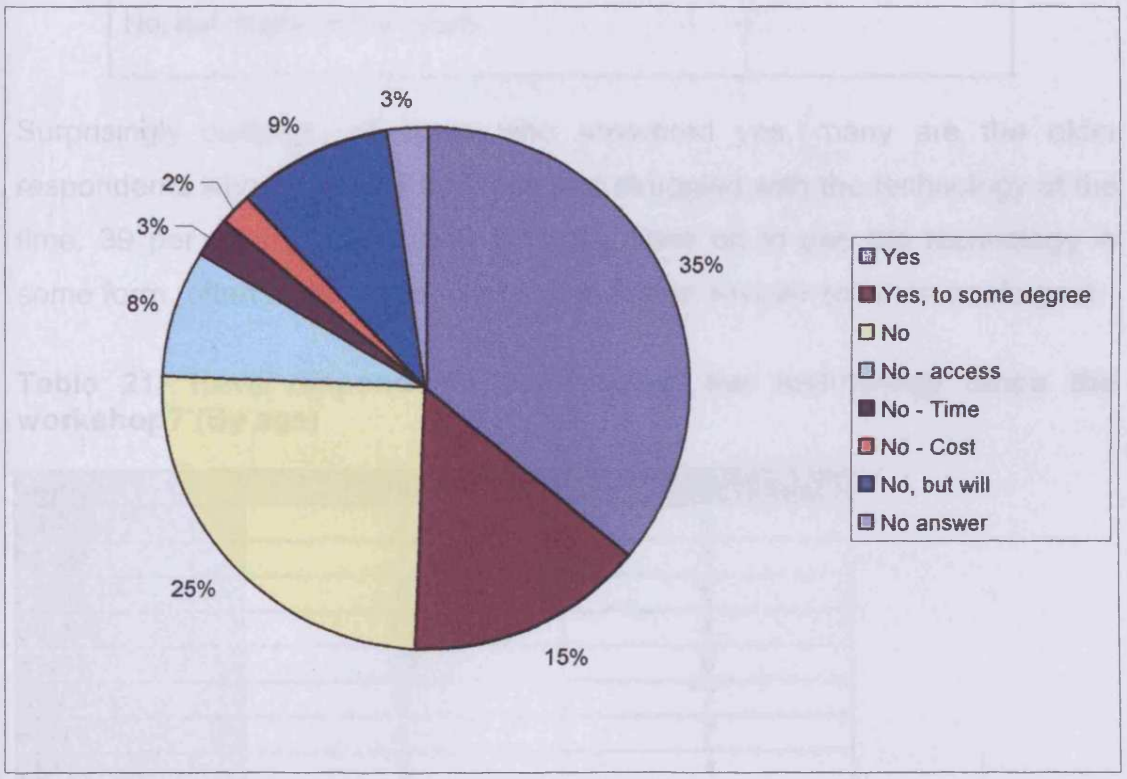
It also appears that there are trends when looking at the geographic locations of those who struggle in workshops. Those living in the North West are least likely to struggle (only 16 per cent of responses), followed by those in Mid Wales at 29 per cent and South East Wales at 35 per cent. The most likely participants to struggle lived in the North West and South West. This is possibly due to the fact that workshops held in those areas tend to be filled with older participants. Other workshops tend to be more varied in terms of age:

Table 20: Where do those who struggled with the technology live?

Location	Number
Monmouth	5
Mach	3
Newport	3
Blackwood	4
Denbigh	2
Ammanford	4
Swansea	3
Bangor	1
Harlech	1
Blaenau	4
Rhayader	2
Tredegar	2
Port Talbot	1
Rhyl	1
ANON	1
TOTAL	36

In terms of the BBC's ambitions for Wales as a nation of Digital Storytellers, it is vital to see how many participants have gone on to use the technology again, and to what end:

Figure 2: How many are still using the technology?



A total of 51 per cent have used the technology in some form since the workshop, 47 per cent had not. 9 per cent answered that they had not used the technology but fully intended to in the near future, some of those others who cited their answer as a 'No' reasoned that it was too expensive or that they did not have access or the time to dedicate to exploring the technology:

> I would like to but have been short on time.
>
> I don't have anywhere to use it.
>
> No unfortunately, do you know how much it costs?
>
> No access to programmes.
>
> No equipment but would love it.
>
> Sadly no, acquired the software but need a more reliable computer, as soon as that is dealt with, I will have a few more tales off my chest.
>
> No, I'm not computer minded.

No time or need. As time goes on, I am less confident.
No, but I would love the opportunity to do so.
No, but maybe in the future.

Surprisingly perhaps, of those who answered yes, many are the older respondents who answered that they had struggled with the technology at the time. 39 per cent of those over 65 have gone on to use the technology in some form (often in the use of digital cameras or simpler software packages):

Table 21: Have respondents been using the technology since the workshop? (By age)

Age	Yes	No
16-18	2	1
18-24	7	4
25-34	8	8
35-44	12	4
45-54	13	9
55-64	4	7
65-74	4	7
75+	3	4
NO ANSWER	3	
ANON	14	
AGE UNKNOWN	2	
TOTAL	116	

Table 22: Have respondents been using the technology since the workshop? (By sex)

Sex	Yes	No
Male	29	20
Female	25	25
No Answer	3	
ANON	14	

57 per cent of men had gone on to use the technology, and 49 per cent of women. The extent to which the respondents are using the technology however is hugely varied:

Yes, I have another story to tell.
I enjoy trying to reproduce the experience on my own home computer using the down to earth notes of Daniel Meadows.
I can now turn on our PC and am able to use it.
Myself and one other formed a company film/TV/Video production with a humanitarian perspective as a result of meeting each other.
Yes, I am currently scrapbooking a number of projects.
Used Photoshop and going to get Premiere – and will use it!
A little, I have an imac but no expensive software.
Yes, to an extent.
Some, not a lot. I don't use MAC.

Participants volunteered the following information about their use of technology post-workshop:

Table 23: In what ways are people furthering their use of technology?

On a PC	8
Digital Camera	5
Photoshop	5
In their job	4
Joined a course	4
Digital Storytelling	3
Email	3
Premiere	2
Video Project	1
Using Avid	1
imac but no software	1
Acquired Software	1

Two respondents have gone on to teach others the skills of Digital Storytelling in the way that the BBC had envisioned, helping the project become sustainable in the long term:

I've been building my skills (and my own workshops) ever since.
I cannot praise the support that the BBC have given me too highly. Their help has enabled me to establish digital workshops at Yale college which has meant people in the Wrexham area who have missed the BBC workshop have been given the chance to attend a workshop at Yale.

The experience

The following section details respondents' attitudes to the workshop process as a whole. This information is again used alongside BBC feedback materials from immediately after the event (164 responses)

Table 24: How did respondents feel about the experience at the time? (Of 164 BBC responses)

Rating (5 – most positive)	Number of responses
5	149
4	15
3	0
2	0
1	0
TOTAL	164

Immediately following the workshop experience an overwhelming 91 per cent of respondents rated the experience in the top bracket, and 9 per cent in the following bracket.

In comparison, questionnaire responses looking back on the experience are as follows. (Participants were rating the experience on a scale of 1 to 5, 1 being a most positive experience, 3 being a neutral experience, and 5 being a most negative experience):

Table 25: How do respondents rate the experience looking back on it?

Rating	Number of Responses
1	93
2	15
3	3
4	2
5	0
No answer	3
TOTAL	116

Looking back on the experience, 80 per cent of respondents rated the experience as a positive 1, 13 per cent in the next bracket. The numbers have declined, but only slightly.

Table 26: How do respondents rate the experience looking back on it? (By age)

Age	1	2	3	4	5
16-18	3	-	-	-	-
18-24	9	2	-	-	-
25-34	10	5	1	-	-
35-44	12	3	-	-	-
45-54	20	1	1	-	-
55-64	7	2	1	-	-
65-74	13	-	-	-	-
75+	6	1	-	-	-
AGE UNKNOWN	2				
ANON	14				
NO ANSWER	3				
TOTAL	116				

Table 27: How do respondents rate the experience looking back on it? (By sex)

Sex	1	2	3	4	5
M	41	7	2	-	-
F	40	8	1	-	-
NO ANSWER	3				
ANON	14				
TOTAL	116				

Older respondents tend to rate the experience incredibly highly overall, the most positive group being those between the ages of 65 and 74, 100 per cent rating the experience as a 1. The least positive grouping is the 25 – 34 age group. Of those three respondents who rated the experience as a neutral one, two were male and from ethnic minorities (one aged 25 - 34, one aged 45 - 54). Both men expressed the neutrality of their experience as being a result of high expectations, one hoping the workshop would lead to a job in the film industry, and the other expecting more answers to his technical queries. The other respondent was a Caucasian Welsh speaking woman aged 55 - 64 who had struggled with the bilingual nature of her workshop experience. One respondent who rated the experience as a four was anonymous, and put their negativity down to a less than positive group experience. (The other respondent who rated the experience as a four was overwhelmingly positive about the experience and possibly did not understand clearly the rating instructions for this question).

Examples of written responses to the workshop process overall are as follows:

> Making a digital story was something I had never dreamt of doing, and I was reluctant to give up my weekend to take part in the course! But it turned out to be one of the best weekends I'd had in a long time.
>
> I am constantly amazed at how instantly people who watch these stories want to make one themselves.
>
> I really enjoyed the whole experience and am really glad I took part. I learnt a lot and (cliché!) a lot about myself.
>
> Every aspect, including all follow-up experiences have been very positive. We have been treated well – fed and made to feel important. Better than any workshop I have paid to go on.
>
> I learnt a lot about myself and the BBC.
>
> I thought that I will get a job in film industry, since I have not been successful.

Again, when asked whether the workshop had had a lasting effect on them, the majority of the respondents answered in the affirmative. 79 per cent said yes and 11 per cent said no (others were mixed in their response:

Table 28: Has the workshop had a lasting effect on respondents?

	Number of responses
Yes	92
No	12
Mixed	9
No answer	3
Total	116

The reasoning behind the answers given varies hugely. Some respondents highlighted the therapeutic nature of the workshop as having had a lasting influence on them for whatever reason:

> Telling my story felt as though I had lifted a heavy burden from my back. The slate was clean and I could move on. That period of my life now had a line drawn under it.
>
> It allowed me to be proud of myself and who I am. It's possibly given me the opportunity to reach others who may have experienced similar problems to have hope, without this media it

> would not have happened. It allowed me to come to terms with the loss of my grandson and my grandmother. Boosted my confidence no end.
>
> It changed my life.
>
> Telling and making the story was a kind of a catharsis.
>
> It was a very emotional and cathartic experience.
>
> Personally I gained a lot emotionally from my experience because of the story I told. It was therapeutic for me and my family.
>
> In a way I won't go into detail over, it has helped to lay a personal ghost.
>
> Yes, it took a lot of courage to write my story and admit that I had been ill.
>
> Yes, I feel I have left something which will still be here for others to see long after I'm gone.
>
> I will always be grateful to BBC Wales for the opportunity to lose my inhibitions about my poor English and spelling and get on with telling a story.

This will be dealt with in further detail later in this chapter.

Some talked about changes in their working lives as a result of the workshop experience:

> Yes, I now run Digital Storytelling workshops.
>
> It has progressed my work/career.
>
> Certainly, it has brought me closer to my community and inspired more work.
>
> Without a doubt it has changed my life. I went out and got a grant, set up my own project.
>
> Yes, I work on the project as a result of the workshop. Get more lasting than that!

Others hinted at a change in their attitude to technology that would have an impact upon their lives:

> It has made me much more interested in a whole new area of technology, media and art.

> Yes – new technology is good, very good, and pushes forward, and I have to accept the same.

For others, the response was more mixed:

> A bit.
>
> An effect, not necessarily lasting.
>
> For a while.
>
> yes, but it's not all mine.

Or, in some cases, a resounding 'no':

> no, except mysterious jargon is clearer as I progress through computer class.
>
> I enjoyed myself, but it has not changed my life.
>
> Not at all.
>
> I doubt it.
>
> Not a lasting effect. Only something as overwhelming as a love affair can do that.

Both men and women were equally likely to respond positively, men were slightly more negative, and women more likely to respond in a mixed manner. Younger respondents gave a greater number of negative responses (between 18 and 34). This does not seem to be indicative of an overall negative response to the workshop experience, but does show that amongst younger participants there tends to be a lack of reflection after the event.

Table 29: Has the workshop had a lasting effect on respondents? (By sex)

Sex	Yes	No	Mixed
Male	41	5	2
Female	43	3	5
ANON (Sex Unknown)	8	4	2
No Answer	3		
TOTAL	116		

Table 30: Has the workshop had a lasting effect on respondents? (By age)

Age	Yes	No	Mixed
16-18	3	0	0
18-24	9	2	0
25-34	12	2	2
35-44	16	0	0
45-54	16	1	4
55-64	9	1	1
65-74	12	0	0
75+	6	1	0
AGE UNKNOWN	2		
NO ANSWER	3		
ANON	14		
TOTAL	116		

The BBC

Perhaps the most telling set of results are those that indicate how participants feel about the BBC in retrospect.

When asked why they thought the BBC were running these workshops, the majority of respondents correctly identified at least one of the aims of the project as identified by the BBC (connecting with communities, gathering an archive of stories, and training the public):

Table 31: Why do respondents think the BBC is running the workshops?

Community centred responses		BBC centred responses	
Interaction with public	20	Content/material	11
Gather stories	24	Image/ PR	8
Working with communities	26	Explore tech	5
Teaching skills	14	Licence	4
History/ archive	14	Public service	3
Give ordinary people voice	12	Get ideas	3
Wales	10	Fulfilling targets	2
Give people power over media	3	One person pushed	2
Empower	2	Charter	1
Deeper reach	1		
Cultural awareness	1	No idea	8

A total of 46 responses cited interacting with the public and working with communities, 38 mentioned collecting stories and building an archive and 14 cited teaching members of the public the tools of production:

> To provide deeper reach into the community, provide better value for the licence payer, to capture hidden histories and fresh content, to give some of the power of storytelling back to the viewer.
>
> I think the BBC realises that there is more talent outside the BBC than is to be found inside it, and talent and stories are two things ...most thinly spread with today's multiplicity of TV and Radio - in fact in some places they both disappear altogether!
>
> To 'Capture' Wales.
>
> It is bringing the BBC to the people who should matter to them.
>
> To give people a chance to tell their own story.
>
> Reality TV has proven to be extremely popular, and these workshops are an excellent alternative view of the 'real' public.
>
> Like the lager, they reach the parts that other public bodies don't.

There is a sense in answers to this question that respondents feel this attitude is something new from the BBC:

> In the past I have met many people from the BBC who have talked about a commitment to community work but with no evidence of anything to back it up. The *Capture Wales* team is a breath of fresh air and is doing more good PR for the BBC than they may ever realise.

And as such, is long overdue:

> Presumably to break down the barriers between 'us and them' which that old bugger Lord Reith erected and which persisted for so long. Information flow and therefore programme production is now a two-way business in the Beeb and this is good.

Respondents are aware that what they are experiencing is a new two-way process of knowledge exchange; "The landscape of the UK is changing and I think the BBC are learning just as much from the experience as the participants themselves".

Interestingly, eight respondents had 'no idea' why workshops were being held. Eight responses highlighted the Public Relations' benefits of the project, three talked of fulfilling public service responsibilities, and three talked of fulfilling targets and the Charter:

I don't know really.
No idea, however I believe it is a good idea.
No idea, but I found it most enjoyable.
[Resp]: I haven't a clue!
They probably see some potential future profit/gain out of the project.
Probably because one keen person pushed for it.
Fulfilling management targets.
To fulfil their community remit.
To let us know they can share.
I hope it's because it sees them as contributing toward its responsibilities as a public service broadcaster.
I guess it's the image they want to present – in touch with the population, inclusive – it's also quite a cool experiment.

One anonymous respondent gets the reasoning spot on:

> Probably because one keen person pushed for it. Probably also there will be a value to the corporation in terms of programming, market placing, justifying internet presence – pragmatic and hard

> headed judgements. I think the sharp end is run by people who love the stories.

Respondents are more decisive in their answers when they are asked whether they feel the workshop has changed the way they view the BBC.

Table 32: Has the workshop experience changed respondents' views of the BBC?

Yes	66
No	38
Mixed	7
No Answer	5
TOTAL	116

57 per cent responded that yes it had changed their opinion. Of those responses, the breakdown is as follows:

Table 33: Reasoning behind respondents' change in opinion about the BBC

More approachable	28
More community minded	13
Specifically BBC Wales	8
Production process	6
Sense of ownership	3
Good use of money	2
Now watch more BBC	2
Less cynical about interests	2
Money for minority not majority	1

Of those who answered yes, 62 per cent reasoned that they viewed the corporation as more approachable and more community minded:

> I now feel monies are being spent to bring communities together.
>
> Yes, the BBC work with Joe Public not just big actors.
>
> I met them as real people.
>
> Yes, they are approachable everyday people who want to include their public in the programs they show. Before the workshop BBC/Wales were like out of reach planets, higher beings, dictating what we should see without sometimes considering their audience.
>
> Yes, they are not the 'almighty BBC' they're just the BBC.
>
> I have formed closer links with the BBC since the workshop.

> I feel they are kind, helpful and approachable, before they were faceless voices and anonymous people.
>
> I have much more positive views, I feel much more a part of it.
>
> It did enormously. I expected 'suits', was taken back to discover it was run by humans.
>
> It could be the start of a beautiful new relationship.
>
> I am less cynical about their interests.
>
> They are now human beings not aliens.
>
> Yes, especially BBC Wales – not the cliquey sober-sided lot I always thought ... or is the Digital Storytelling team an exception?

Some (as above) stated that it had changed the way they viewed BBC Wales specifically (eight responses) and that it had opened their eyes to the production process (six responses):

> I feel nearer to the people running BBC Wales.
>
> Yes, specifically BBC Wales.
>
> I feel a better connection with Auntie Beeb, certainly with Cardiff.
>
> I always watched BBC Wales, but to be involved first hand altered my view.
>
> My experience of the BBC in Wales in the past has been very secular and cliquey [now], less fortress-like.
>
> It isn't very often that people can access things like this without living in a major city, especially with a company as reputable as the BBC.

Of the 33 per cent who answered that their view of the BBC remained unaltered (a total of 38 responses), 22 did not expand on their answer, 12 professed that they had always had a high opinion of the BBC and that the workshop had only strengthened that view, two said they had no opinion about the BBC, and one respondent felt that the BBC had fallen standards:

Table 34: Respondents whose opinion of the BBC had not been altered by the workshop process

Reasoning for answering 'No'	
No Change	22
Always thought highly of them	12
No View	2
Fallen Standards	1

Some examples of those who answered in the negative are as follows:

> No, I have always loved the BBC and this just re-enforces my view.
>
> I can't really say that I had a view in the first place.
>
> Not so much.
>
> Not really, only the time consuming process of production.
>
> Not really, except individually I encountered some lovely people.
>
> No, I don't think I have one, nor have I ever had one.
>
> Only as far as Digital Storytelling because it tells the truth.
>
> They have fallen standards.
>
> It altered my views on directors, editors, etc. But not of the BBC itself. TV is just TV after all.

Some respondents volunteered information about resultant changes in the way they watch television. Having been on the production end, there is a real understanding of broadcast values and processes. This affects the way people interact with their televisions in some instances:

> An insight into what happened behind the box.
>
> Now I can see just how much work goes into the shortest of programmes.
>
> I look at such programmes with respect because I know the joy it has brought to its maker.
>
> I did not realise it takes a lot of people for a small film.
>
> [Resp]: I appreciate a LOT more what effort goes into making programmes and have a much greater sympathy towards broadcasters in general. It is great to have even a small understanding from this viewpoint.

> [Resp]: I shall have great respect for all the things I have seen. Here is a lot more to it than I ever thought.
>
> [Resp]: It makes you realise how gifted and clever some people are.
>
> [Resp]: when you actually realise what editing means... you realise it's a big project, even just a two-minute film or whatever. It made me appreciate that, I was a bit sceptical before but it's an honourable occupation [laughs].

Others had changed the way they view television in a more superficial sense – the experience was making them watch more BBC output:

> Now watch more BBC Wales.
>
> Have watched a lot more BBC programmes.
>
> There is a lot more to BBC Wales than Wales Today and Scrum V.

This can only prove to be a good result for the BBC, more people watching their output, and others having a newfound respect for the process. In none of the questionnaires received however was there any indication that respondents felt 'they could do better', were frustrated with the quality of television as a result; [Resp]: "It has not made me feel in a position to criticise or evaluate other people's TV work". This absence perhaps has great implications for any long-term aim to turn participants into critical makers of media themselves.

The self

We have seen how narrative and ideas of identity and self are interlinked – that storytelling enables people to explore and express 'who' they are, and that Digital Storytelling might be a new and more democratic way of making those stories heard (chapter one). *Capture Wales*, as we have seen in this chapter, involves the telling of personal stories that affects people in a variety of ways – not least in enabling them to draw a line under incidences in their past and move on (the therapeutic nature of Digital Storytelling). In these

instances, often the product of the workshop appears to be less important than the process itself, Joe Lambert, co-founder of the Center for Digital Storytelling in California is aware of this therapeutic nature and says in interview:

> The manipulation of old photos of oneself, or the re-composition of a series of old photos into a collage using that method of the digital image manipulation tool like Photoshop, seems to be in itself a kind of therapeutic process. (Lambert, 2004)

Lambert is very much aware however that this is not exclusive to Digital Storytelling:

> I don't think it is a huge leap to say that almost any creative endeavour has a therapeutic dimension. The act of making things is therapeutic, whether it is sewing or basket weaving or sculpting or digital story making. (Lambert, 2004)

Indeed, Barbara Kamler acknowledges the difficulty of separating creative work and therapy:

> Without being insensitive to Bella's pain or to the memories of loss engendered in the group, I struggled with the fine line between personal writing and therapy. (Kamler, 2001: 59)

Clemencia Rodriguez is in agreement that projects such as this can have a profound impact on notions of self for participants:

> ...I do believe that the process of storytelling often engendered by participatory video gives light to instances of intense self-investigation. (Rodriguez, 2002: 118-119)

A total number of 31 people responded at some point in their questionnaire that the workshop's therapeutic nature was an important part of the process for them, a part of the process that is a by-product in the eyes of the BBC. The workshops were not set up with this in mind, and it is questionable whether the BBC should be involved in issues of therapy or counselling with workshop participants.

No respondent confessed to feeling negatively about this therapeutic aspect in a questionnaire, however, when questioned further one respondent admitted to feeling uncomfortable with the story circle process in that it "[Resp]: tried to make you interact with people on a different wavelength just because you were in the same place at the same time".

For some respondents, however, this was far from the case. One respondent was completely bemused by my questioning on the topic:

> JK: did any part of the workshop process feel like therapy?
> [Resp]: I would never have even thought of using the word! Should it have seemed like that to the participants? It was enlivening, exciting, interesting, friendly, very well-tutored, new – so many things but hardly therapy?

This respondent was not of the belief that the process had had any affect at all upon his sense of self. However, a number of questionnaire respondents and interviewees did go on to talk about how the experience had actually impacted upon their sense of self. One storyteller even entitled their story 'self' and explores personal expectations, fragmentations and confusions:

> It allowed me to be proud of myself and who I am.
>
> [Resp]: Actually putting your self out there when you read the script, kind of revealing yourself.
>
> I learnt a lot about myself and the BBC.
>
> JK: Did you find that the workshop made you think in a different way about yourself?
> [Resp]: I found I had something to offer despite my disability.
>
> [Resp]: It was uncomfortable initially to be so open about yourself with a group of strangers but it was an incredibly beneficial, self developing experience, in my opinion.

Even one respondent who regretted having changed her story had learnt something about herself; [Resp]: I thought I would have been stronger and would have stuck to my story the way I wanted to have it made.

Being able to order events and express feelings about passions, loved ones and situations that have been overcome enables these individuals to consolidate who they are; the act of construction gives them a sense of unity and peace. As in Kamler's work, the story remains "a highly crafted text – rather than an anguished outpouring of self" (Kamler, 2001: 58).

Alongside any impact on self, it is possible to locate trends in narrative psychology in the stories told. According to Dan P McAdams, the stories and scenarios we create as part of our overarching personal myth are dependent on our age. Younger people are at a stage where they concentrate on issues of power and love, and more senior people tend to be at a reflective stage, looking back over their life and ordering events. In some respects this is indeed true of the stories of *Capture Wales*, that peoples' digital stories somehow reflect their overall positioning in terms of their life story. A look at the website confirms this:

> So what do others think of me? Well, dare I say, there's a few people watching this thinking, "good grief, the boy's a nut!" Others let me carry on with it. Some show interest and want to know more. My mum... well she just lets me carry on with it but she just thinks it's all a bunch of mumbo.jumbo! And as for my dad... I don't think he's noticed. But who cares! This is me! (Male, aged 16 – 18)
>
> I'm not gay, I just love drama. (Male, 16 – 18)
>
> If you think this is all I am, stop, take note. (Male, 16 – 18)
>
> I'm Jessica Jones. A regular 14 year old but with a very big pink obsession. I'm in love with the colour pink.

As can be seen, younger peoples' stories often (but not exclusively) talk of power relations, discussing stereotypes, and passions (one third of those stories on the website 'Passion' page are by participants under 25 – a number out of proportion with their overall percentage of stories made). Passions tend to be hobbies more often than people (directly). Older participants also are keen to talk of their passions for family (the majority of stories on the 'Family' page) or hobbies, but also their tales of overcoming challenge. These stories tend to show a certain level of reflection on life and their meaning within that (22 of 34 stories on the 'Challenge' page are by older participants, only 6 by under 25's):

> I am merely aware that our time here is painfully short and that I will never be able to converse with my descendants beyond the next generation or two. So I wanted to say hi to all of you who have come to be after my passing... This is my message in a very new bottle, set adrift in time. (Male, Middle aged)

When looking at the website, one finds comments under many of the stories (a total of 122 in May 2004) from others around the world. These people profess (more often than not) to have gained something from the viewing of the story, but what is interesting is the manner in which many 'commentators' have come across the story; by searching for their own name on the Internet:

> This story is cool, I never new there was another me in Wales.
>
> I found this story because I have the same name.

This shows an innate human interest in the self, perhaps even a narcissistic tendency. As an audience, these viewers on the Internet have a mechanism for feedback unlike those watching television (or at least a less complex mechanism) and use it to tell how inspiring they have found the stories:

> As someone who has MS I found this story inspiring.
>
> Memories are flooding back.
>
> My own memories were dragged out from deep within looking and listening.
>
> The words are so sweet in my ear, please write some more.
>
> I enjoyed the story because it was so 'true' and 'real'.

Capture Wales thus inspires questions about the self that we can go some way to answering. Interestingly, the desire to make more stories is expressed by many I have been in contact with. Perhaps these stories, of differing tone and subject, would suggest that in our current age, the 'self' certainly is fragmented, full of contradictory selves or 'narratives of the self'.

Wales

> It has been said that there are as many 'Welshnesses' as there are Welsh people. (Osmond, 1998: 1)

Identity is a complicated issue in Wales. We have seen that the majority population is White British, and that of those, there are some who defy census categorisation in favour of self-selecting as 'Welsh'. We have also seen that

the Welsh population (in 2001) was made up including a very small ethnic minority, and a relatively small number of people from elsewhere in the United Kingdom. This would seem to assert the overarching title of the project '*Capture Wales*' as being a truism, that what is being captured is a very 'Welsh' view of the world (although not stereotypically 'Welsh'). However, we have seen that a significant percentage of those taking part in workshops are from outside Wales, not least the relatively large sample of people from ethnic minorities making stories. But how do those people feel about being part of a project that celebrates Welshness? This question is one that made up a part of all interviews with workshop participants (although not all of those who answered questionnaires). Of those who were asked, there were none that professed to have previously thought about the subject, and none that rejected the *Capture Wales* title. Those who categorised themselves as Welsh tended to be 'proud' (their word) of the fact:

> [Resp]: I am very proud of being Welsh so the description is of no consequence.
>
> [Resp]: Absolutely fine. I am very proud of being Welsh and that it's people in Wales who were first part of developing the project.
>
> [Resp]: Great, I am Welsh.

They absolutely do not mind being described as Welsh, or as a part of Wales. One respondent shows an awareness that any project hoping to *Capture Wales* has to give all those who live in Wales the opportunity to make a story (although he cites only Welsh examples):

> [Resp]: It's a snapshot of Wales as it is. Crikey yeah, you've gotta take it all in haven't you. They've got to go to Rhyl as well as Carnarvon and Treorchy to get a picture.

Those who I have spoken to who are not 'Welsh' (that is, they were not born in Wales), have differing attitudes toward being part of a project such as this. None express any concern at the title or feel it is a blur on their identities:

> I don't mind how I am described.
>
> I am from Birmingham/Coventry and came to Wales when the RAF sent me to Anglesey half a lifetime ago and now feel more Welsh than English. The project is certainly showing the diversity of

> ethnic backgrounds now feeling at home in Wales.
>
> I love Wales. I only wish I could speak the language but I have a bad memory and don't like making a fool of myself... I never felt I belonged in Birmingham.

Workshops, or at least those workshops where the working language is English, enable people to come together simply due to the fact that, even temporarily, they inhabit the same geographic space. Perhaps as a result of this fact, stories are diverse (if not in overriding theme, then at least in tone, image and voice), and a more realistic archive of Wales at the start of the twenty-first century can be built up than could possibly be created by the BBC without the public's involvement:

> I have enjoyed seeing the stories that other people have written. It has made the world seem smaller by being able to share our experiences with so many different people in Wales.

The communities that are built in the process of *Capture Wales* have very little to do with being 'Welsh', they appear to be more about the intimacy that has been shared through the experience. There is also a feeling that whatever their nationality, the storytellers are uniting against a common enemy; those stories given a space for expression every day in the mainstream media:

> Its good to hear what Joe Public has to say about his life instead of the usual celebrity. Joe Public's story has more grit because he lives in the 'real world'.

Participants' views on the future of Digital Storytelling

Participants are eager to see the project continue, and many add that they would love the chance to make another story. They feel it would be a shame for the project to be discontinued at this stage as it produces genuinely fascinating and original stories.

Those who have had a chance to see stories on television have enjoyed the experience; "I have loved seeing the stories on TV", and those participants who I have spoken to further have all visited the website at some point or

another (with no exceptions). Participants do feel that it would be a waste if the stories were not shown on national television:

> JK: How would you feel if the stories were to go on National television?
> [Resp]: A further boost to my already swollen ego
> JK: Do you think that they should?
> [Resp]: Oh yes.
>
> [Resp]: I was astonished when I found out that they were only on Welsh TV. There can be no excuse for not putting them on nationwide. [This interviewee has no access to BBC 2W]
>
> JK: How would you feel if the stories were to go on National television?
> [Resp]: Fantastic... I think that there are 'network' politics that mean that some pieces will never be broadcast, but I think that there should certainly be some sort of screen time given to this.

Only one respondent felt that the stories should not go on television. This respondent (who had felt the story was 'not all mine') felt that the stories were not representative of the real Wales:

> Not as they are at present the stories do not portray the diversity of the Welsh they are a small insight into the people that live in Wales and there are far too many of them although telling different stories they are saying the same. This I feel the BBC should look at.

Some urge further developments in the community that would enable them to make further stories and keep in touch with those in their workshop:

> [Resp]: It would be good to see some sort of expansion of the service, definitely. I think setting up a lasting tutorial guide or workstation in each main area that a workshop has taken place will be vitally important in ensuring the continuing success of the project and maintaining the exciting initiative of the direct feedback of experiences from anyone that feels the need to talk about them.

And one respondent, who has gone on to develop her own Digital Storytelling workshop sees further developments that could be enabled in the community by Digital Storytelling; "Digital Storytelling has massive implications in the search to address social exclusion/community development" (dealt with in further detail in the following chapter).

Participants' responses to my research

Those who chose to respond to the questionnaires sent out were eager to do so. They attested to the positive experience of talking or writing about their experiences even though some of them were looking back with as much as three years distance from their workshop. Letters and cards sent to me alongside questionnaires contained the following sorts of sentiments:

> What a great project you've got.
>
> Please do get in touch if you need more information.
>
> Thank you for your interest.
>
> I would be delighted to be contacted by you any time in the future to assist with your study. You will be pleased to learn that in spite of my advanced age (62) I too am a student with a NUS card.
>
> More than happy to help.
>
> Good luck in your research.

Only two respondents were reluctant to be contacted again in the future.

Summary

As can be seen from the results, a varied and contradictory range of people have passed 'through the doors' of *Capture Wales*. In terms of skills, sex, geography and ethnicity, there have been no barriers to entry for participants as there might be to traditional media. Education and economics, also a major barrier to traditional media, have neglected to be an issue. Participants have also been given the option to tell stories in their language of choice (English or Welsh). For all those involved, a platform has been found to voice opinion on a range of topics, most notably; family, memory, overcoming, journeys, history, passion, community and identity. These stories have been enabled by the BBC and given a platform regardless of the storytellers' intentions in telling the story, be they to impart knowledge, self-medicate, commemorate a life, describe a passion, make people laugh or because the time just felt right. There has been no discrimination or notion of 'quality' that stories must live up

to in order to be given display 'space' on the web. However, due to severe limitations on the provision of television airtime on the BBC, 'quality' has become an issue in television broadcasts and in the case of one respondent, their achievement has become, in part, devalued:

> I was a bit disappointed for all the group (and myself) that only two were chosen for the TV viewing when there were so many good ones, and the BBC repeat the ones they have over and over.

The workshop itself is seen as an overwhelmingly positive experience for most that I have been in contact with. The only two respondents who had negative feelings about the project were both female, and of middling age. One had had a bad group experience (in a bilingual workshop); the other felt that her story was 'not all mine'. This second respondent filled in a very positive questionnaire, but was less positive with further questioning later on: "[Resp]: they should not put pressure on people to make drastic changes to their initial idea there is more than one way of telling a story". Beyond these two responses, *Capture Wales* is viewed in a very positive light.

There are perhaps some quantifiable discrepancies in terms of those who find out about workshops through community and arts groups and those who find out through other means, but perhaps until stories are given a proper space within the BBC framework through which to promote workshops (that is, television and web space at a higher level). Those people who can be approached or who are actively looking for events of this nature in their area will be the obvious candidates.

Within workshops – possibly in the ways that might be typical of meetings such as this – group camaraderie and feeling for the team run high. For some, the group experience (especially the story circle) is the most important aspect of the workshop. The team members, it seems, are the biggest surprise of the event being approachable and easygoing. Some individuals talk of the team taking on a supportive, therapeutic or counselling role as shoulders to cry on, a far cry perhaps from other visions of the BBC as 'suits' or 'faceless' beings.

As a result of workshops and this kind of contact we see 57 per cent of participants questioned actually positively altering their opinions of the BBC, the organisation is more approachable and more community minded than they had previously thought, specifically (for some) the BBC in Wales. Many have previously thought of the BBC as self-serving, cliquey, and 'not for them', they show surprise that the BBC would even consider this type of interaction with the public.

Beyond these changes in how participants view the BBC run very real changes in how participants feel about the technology, and even how they feel about themselves.

Most are confident that their overall skills base has grown through the workshop, including their ability with the technology. That is not to say that they do not struggle, 68 per cent of those over 65 admit to struggling with the technology, especially those in the North West and South West of Wales. However, 51 per cent of respondents are continuing to use the technology learnt in some way, shape, or form; specifically using PCs and digital cameras. For those who have not carried on to use the technology, access, time and cost are the main obstacles, but many have intentions to go on and use the technology at some point – a dramatic development for some who previously had little or no confidence in their ability to pick up the skills at all.

Respondents who volunteered often very sensitive information about the impact of the workshop on their lives show that there are very real developments for some that mean they can order and better understand events in their past, draw a line under these events and express their feelings about them. These therapeutic benefits are possibly out of the realm of BBC public service expectation, but are a natural by-product of a project such as this where photographs, memory and story are core to the outcome. In total, 79 per cent of respondents felt the workshop was having, or would have, a lasting effect on them.

Therefore, we see that on the ground, *Capture Wales* is, for many, about issues that go far beyond the initial remit of the project or its intentions. A positive, respectful exchange is occurring benefiting both the public (or those members of the public who take part) and the BBC.

Coda: An autobiographical reflection on the workshop process

Here follows a subjective but honest account of the workshop process and its outcomes through the eyes of the researcher. It is important that the process is outlined from the researcher's point of view as it provides a more in-depth and personal account than has been enabled through the research already presented. From start to finish, the process is outlined, and where relevant a critical stance is taken.

Attending the Ammanford workshop in June 2002, I had little idea what to expect of the process. My limited knowledge of the project at that time, coupled with my positioning as researcher of it, made me unaware of the type of experience I was to undergo. Other workshop participants, although not all from Ammanford itself, were familiar with the setting even if the group, team, technology and expectations were new to them.

Prior to the initial gathering, Digital Storytelling was much of a mystery to me. Brief conversation and email exchanges with Daniel Meadows had outlined the basics, but until the presentation evening, I had little understanding of what would be expected of me. I found myself in a slightly different situation to those other participants prior to taking part because I was safe in the knowledge that one of the workshop spaces would be earmarked for me, I was in no way in competition with those others present in the room.

On meeting the other workshop participants at the gathering a week later, it was evident that a mix of people had been chosen. Certainly not the usual 'type' of people I spend my precious weekends with. We were:

Four men, seven women; six 'older', five 'younger'; seven 'Welsh', four 'English', zero 'ethnic minorities'; three farmers, two teachers, two artists, one BBC employee, one carer, one secretary, one researcher; zero technical experts.

This initial gathering was brimming with wide-eyed charm as each of us became aware of those others in the room and the prospect of our own limitations. One participant asserted (with humour, but truth), that his technological competence drew short of owning even an alarm clock to wake him in time to make the early mornings. It seemed that for someone like myself, the technology was not to be my downfall, but perhaps the script would. This is where, personally, my initial fears lay. In the past I have enjoyed creative writing, but with an audience of one, and I was anxious not to 'make a fool of myself'.

My initial aim had been to make a story about those people who had impacted upon me throughout my life who I no longer am in communication with; they now live only in a box under my bed in the form of photographs. The crux of the story was; 'in only 23 years, how could I have collected so many faces'. However, the final story made was very different. The subject is more focused, the story more personal, changes that occurred as a result of the story circle process. It is difficult to identify exactly why this change occurred. It is true that the focus of the story circle was on personal memories and experiences and I believe it is thus natural that a personal story would be the outcome of such a process. I recall talking through my story idea, but being sidetracked and telling a story about my dad. The group responded with greater enthusiasm to my tangent than to my initial story idea, and thus the final idea was solidified (see CD for final version). In this respect, the story was not 'directed' by the BBC or the others in the room, but was a co-production.

The introductions to the technology I found well paced and effective. I certainly learnt more real skills (with more interesting outcomes) in those three days than I had at any time during my previous education, which included a period studying electronic and desktop publishing. Recording my voiceover I found to be easier than I had imagined. As was the case for everyone else in the room (and for those in other workshops I have attended since), this was initially daunting in the extreme. It appears nobody likes the sound of his or

her own voice. I recall recording three 'takes' of the script, one of which was then loaded onto my dedicated laptop for use in the final cut.

For those parts of my story that were not easily portrayed through the images I had brought with me, a certain amount of creativity was required in order to make a rough cut without any holes in it. Staying in a hotel, I had no access during the final workshop period to my family photo albums and memorabilia. I was grateful to members of the team who enabled a sequence involving a number of willing worms from a fishing tackle shop, and a local pub door. I do not feel in any way that that 'help' was leading or constricting.

The final presentation was an emotional experience both for myself, and those other workshop participants in the room. By this time we did feel like a community, and spoke freely and easily with each other. It felt to me that the workshop had been made up of varied personalities that somehow had created a community around a common goal. I think this had a lot to do with the fact that we were sharing large parts of ourselves that elsewhere, we are encouraged to keep hidden. These complete strangers (as they were at the beginning), now knew more about certain aspects of my personality and history than my best friends – or even my family – ever would. This was not, for me, a therapeutic experience, although it was certainly an interesting exercise in expression of the self, and those memories I had part forgotten. I have since seen six of the other workshop participants for various reasons, but do not have ongoing relationships with any of them.

Following the workshop, there was a period when both myself, and I would say my father (the subject of the story), found the whole thing a little embarrassing. A couple of months passed before he viewed the piece, and only then when it was aired on BBC 2W. I think that he was quietly pleased, although we spoke very little about it afterwards. Since then, my mother has instigated 'screenings' for unsuspecting relatives at every available opportunity. I myself have only felt inspired to show my friends after the consumption of a few too many glasses of wine. The story's presence on the

website however is of no consequence to me. It appears that like some of my respondents, my feelings display an inconsistency in attitude toward the story, that it is something I should guard close to my chest in certain spheres I inhabit, but that is available to all who should want to see it in actuality.

The workshop process has however developed my use of technology. I went on to make a story as part of a CDS workshop (see CD), and have made one more, at home, on my own computer. My computer use itself has flourished. As a result of the workshop process (and no doubt my positioning alongside the project) I now own and am comfortable using a MAC, and have assisted participants in *Capture Wales* workshops. I have noticed that my file management has improved and I am more adventurous with programmes that I have been using for years. I have also gone on to acquire a digital camera, something that I had not previously considered investing in.

I do not profess to speak for those other participants in the Ammanford workshop, only for myself when I say that I truly did feel a sense of empowerment as a result of and through the workshop process. Field notes made at the time attest to this feeling, one that arose without being accompanied by feelings of catharsis or therapy. There is something liberating in being given the time and space not only to explore new technology, but to become absorbed in one's own thoughts and memories, something which we have been made to feel is self-indulgent at best in our culture of speed-up, and move-forward. There are however very real questions to be asked about the place of this kind of activity in public service provision where all are paying and few are benefiting, indeed, the place of this type of work in broadcasting generally. This is an argument taken up in the closing chapter of this thesis.

Chapter Seven

Sustaining Momentum: The Future of *Capture Wales*

Sustaining Digital Storytelling in Wales beyond the life of the *Capture Wales* project is seen as a vital goal for the BBC:

> I think the key thing for me is the sustainability of the project, and while the BBC has started it, the BBC can't sustain it forever. It wouldn't be appropriate for us to do so. Nor desirable I don't think. (Richards, 2003a)
>
> Its fair to say that Wales really does lead Europe in terms of Digital Storytelling ...The next stage of this is about how we actually roll that out. (Tweedale, 2004) [15]
>
> If the revolution is to mean anything, Digital Storytelling must be properly sustainable. (Meadows, 2003b)

The initial funding obligation for the BBC ended 31 March 2005 in Wales, and decisions are currently being made as to the scope and sustainability of the BBC's involvement with Digital Storytelling in the future.

There are a number of options for the BBC:

- Giving the *Capture Wales* team go-ahead for further work.
- Maintaining some more limited involvement with Digital Storytelling through partnerships.
- Abandoning the project completely.
- Abandoning the project in its current form but continuing a commitment to the stories in another way (for example through a web archive).

Decisions will be made according to the perceived success of the project, and, no doubt, its cost will be a major consideration.

Work during the last year of the project's life span has thus concentrated on achieving sustainability for the project both within the BBC: "This is part of our

[15] Ian Tweedale, acting Editor, New Media, BBC Wales in April 2004, speaking at the BBC Wales Digital Storytelling Education Seminar

endeavor this year to find a million different reasons why the BBC should continue it" (Meadows, 2004c), and beyond it. As Menna Richards points out, this was a key aim of the project at its inception; the handing over of knowledge:

> I don't think it is something that the BBC can sustain forever, if we have to do that, then I don't think long term it has worked. I mean, it's worked absolutely in the sense that we have reached out to audiences we wouldn't have previously, we have enriched our content, we have made programme makers think differently, but we have to evolve and I like to think that over time, someone else will take it on. (Richards, 2003)

This thesis is unable to substantiate any claim that programme makers are thinking differently as a result of *Capture Wales*. To make such a claim will require much further work and assessment in the long term.

The BBC, as we have seen, has to be sensitive both to market pressures and to their multiplicity of audiences. Digital Storytelling hit all the right buttons at a certain time for the BBC, and it remains to be seen whether this will ring true in the future:

> Like everything I think that the BBC is going to be a victim of trending, and short attention span. And so while it is popular now, it may not be popular later and they are going to need the next big idea to come wafting through ... I don't think that any of us have any illusions, things get popular and then they go away. (Lambert, 2004)

Capture Wales workshops, especially in their current form, thus have an uncertain future:

> Menna might turn around and say she wants to fund it for another three years, she might well do, I don't know, I honestly don't know. So we are working under the assumption that for the next year, we will carry on as we have done now, but also trying to branch out a bit. So if there is no more funding in after the third year, we have left something in place that will keep it going, if there is more funding, then great, carry on. Who knows? (Lewis, 2003)

BBC Executives have, on the whole, been positive about the future of *Capture Wales* workshops in interview:

> JK: Do you think there is a sustainable future for Digital Storytelling?
> PL: Yes
> JK: At the BBC?
> PL: Yes. Yeah. Yeah
> JK: Running workshops or just bringing in content?
> PL: I don't think they are separable. (Loughrey, 2003)
>
> I think it will carry on. It won't necessarily carry on in exactly the same shape it is in. But I'm sure it will carry on. I just don't think people would be crazy enough not to want it to carry on. (Rose, 2004)
>
> I think it will stay alive [at the BBC] as long as it is vibrant, it will need to reinvent itself all the time, everything does. I don't think that this is more special than anything else. (Russell, 2003)

Those working as part of the *Capture Wales* team are less positive, appreciating that the continuation of the project involves a number of factors very much out of their control:

> Yes, I think it is very difficult for Karen and Mandy. I don't underestimate the amount of politics that goes on. There will be a moment when it all comes to an end, let's just make as many stories as we can while the going is good. (Adams, 2003)
>
> The good news is that the BBC's Director-General Greg Dyke, really likes us, ... and from the start has given us money and a lot of support. The bad news is that in the wake of Lord Hutton's inquiry into the death of Government Scientist David Kelly the BBC came in for a lot of criticism about the way it reported the Iraq war. Greg Dyke was forced to resign. The good news is that early in his reign Greg's successor, Mark Byford paid us a visit and was completely spellbound by our work... The bad news is that Mark Byford has himself now been replaced by another Mark, Mark Thompson... We haven't met Mr. Thompson yet, oo-er!" (Meadows, 2004b)

Digital Storytelling at BBC Wales has become a 'key part' of their 'core delivery', and as such, should be continued for at least the next few years (Tweedale, 2005). It forms part of the BBC's Community Strategy for 2005, and as such, should be continued at least into the following year.

However, careful not to presume this indicates a more long term commitment, the team are aware that the continuation of the project in its current form is

dependent on the culture created within the BBC by those at the top, their priorities, concerns and relationships with external forces.

There are, it seems, a number of options going forward for those stories made as part of *Capture Wales*:

1 Digital Stories on Network Television
2 A *Capture Wales* Archive
3 Digital Storytelling through the BBC Community Studios

Digital Stories on network television

As we have seen, the acquisition of a regular network slot is a priority for team members. They are of the opinion that not only is this a natural home for the stories (in the same way that it was for *Video Nation*), but that this could be crucial to the future of the project, it being harder to cancel *Capture Wales* if it had a weekly slot, and a quantifiable audience:

> I would say the biggest challenge, the one thing that maybe we want to focus on for the next year, is to crack network TV ... But as yet, we haven't got any Wales stories out on network TV. And that is a tough one, a tough nut to crack, but something that we would like to do in year three. (Lewis, 2003)
>
> We are at a really critical time in our life. We are coming to the end of the funding period and everyone is a bit nervous about what will happen, whether it will be renewed, how we can engineer a way of fitting it into other things that are going on at BBC Wales. It would be really hard for them to pull the plug on it if they were getting shown on network television. I don't know if it is essential. It would be interesting to see if we don't get the television exposure whether or not they would renew the mandate. I don't know whether they would or not. (Morlais, 2004)

It appears that building faith, persuading often hostile people and building a following takes time and much dedication, something which requires a further time commitment from the BBC in Wales.

October 2004 saw the first real steps towards content on network television, as part of the BBC 2 *Who do you Think you Are* series (celebrity-led inquiry into family history). Digital Stories from both Wales and England were

available to watch under a red button option for the programme, available nationally to all cable and satellite subscribers in the UK.

This is however still a long way from any *Video Nation* style commitment on the part of BBC network television. The *Video Nation* shorts, according to New Media Executive Editor Gerard O'Malley in 2002 were 'only on television because online wasn't around at the time' (in Loughran, 2002: 7). This rather depressing view of the Internet as natural home for 'User Generated Content' within the Corporation speaks volumes about the barriers now being faced in Wales, where there is, in actuality, very little space on mass visual mediums such as television for content produced outside of the 'professional' school.

There are those however who feel that getting content on network television should not be seen as an ultimate goal for Digital Storytelling simply because it was the home of *Video Nation*. This view holds that digital technologies provide more suitable viewing environments, that 'video on demand' is the best home for stories made; "This sort of content is not ideal for linear TV" (Tweedale, 2005). Commissioning plans and schedules do not allow for content of this type, and, if we are to believe official dialogue, "the future of where television is going is 'on demand'" (Tweedale, 2005). The BBC are certainly showing a commitment to this philosophy, with the launch in March 2005 of 'Your Stories', a top level 24/7 BBCi proposition that will include stories made as part of *Capture Wales*. This perhaps hints at a future for the stories as an archive available interactively.

A *Capture Wales* archive

There is thus a possibility for the content being produced by the BBC in Wales to become part of a sustained archive of stories. This currently exists on the *Capture Wales* website, a space that the BBC would in all probability continue to host indefinitely should the project cease to continue. However, this archive, a 'living archive', is in need of fresh content that is currently provided by *Capture Wales* workshops:

> I think it would remain as an archive, but if there were no stories being added to it then it wouldn't be much of a living archive would it,

> it would just be one of those dusty cobweb-filled archives. (Morlais, 2004)

One solution would be additional content provided by partner organisations or individuals practising Digital Storytelling tools after workshops (in the same way that *Video Nation* now continues to build its online archive through contributions):

> *Video Nation* is a good example, they made the website work and funding is being found and it is being sustained. So I think Digital Storytelling stands as good a chance of being sustained. (Lambert, 2004)

Alongside this web archive, there has been talk of keeping a physical archive in one of a number of places that could be accessed by anyone wishing to view a snapshot of life in Wales, a National Storytelling Centre.

> It adds a different kind of accessibility to them in the long term ... And if some researcher wants to find out about Wales in the late twentieth century, then they would be able to watch a whole bunch of stories and it would give them a remarkable insight. (Rose, 2004)

Another possibility for archiving the stories enabled by our current technological climate is the use of interactive television. In this way (as was trialled by the *Telling Lives* team in England), stories could be selected within a 'red button' option. For example, a story could be shown on BBC2, and a red button for interactivity shown. Within the option, stories could be played on a loop (as with *Your Stories* above), or self-selected from a list by the viewer. In England, Kingston Interactive Television (KIT) has been the platform for experimentation, making it possible to "create television how we want it to be" (Creed, 2004), relevant to the viewers' needs and interests, and accessible as and when it suits them.

The above methods for archiving stories do not require the continuation of the project in its current form. However, as Gareth Morlais points out above, the risk is the creation of a dusty cobweb-filled archive. Any archive would be vastly improved and authenticated if it was constantly growing and dealing with pertinent, contemporary issues. Through the use of partners or individuals, content could be added from outside of the BBC. However, before

this is possible, a workable base of contributors must be built through the workshop process. As we have seen, this too takes time.

Digital Storytelling through the Community Studios

Chapter five detailed the creation of more workable formats for Digital Storytelling through the BBC Wales Community Studios. Both the *Audio Stories* and *Shoebox Stories* trials show ways in which stories can be created in less time, at a lower cost, and in a way that could be carried out through the Community Studios with local residents. These have been concocted as a means of supplementing the archive being created through *Capture Wales*, not as an alternative. However, they do suggest a means for providing stories if the *Capture Wales* project itself was to discontinue.

To date the success of these ventures is yet to be seen. At this moment in time, both prototypes are heavily reliant on the use of members of the *Capture Wales* team. Those BBC employees working at Community Studios have a number of responsibilities; Digital Storytelling would be only one in a list of things for them to do. Also, it must be remembered that Community Studios in Wales would favour certain locations in terms of stories (being located in Newport, Carmarthen, Wrexham, and on the travelling Community Bus for Mid Wales).

The best possibility for maintaining Digital Storytelling in Wales, it seems, is through the creation of a skills base within the community beyond the BBC in order to bring in content:

> But clearly this works, it's very powerful, we have a lot of skills base; the team have developed a way of delivering it. And the issue now is that this could be and should be much bigger than the BBC. And how do we get there? Because it would not be right to do that on licence payers' money. (Russell, 2003)

The answer to this has been in the development of partnerships.

Partnerships

The creation of partnerships has been seen as being integral to the future of Digital Storytelling in Wales; "What we want to do, and we are doing it already, is to expand out the partnership base", including a lead partner in each of the five main areas of the country (Tweedale, 2005). These partnerships would not only help to sustain the 'movement', but would represent a significant shift in the thinking of the BBC:

> The challenge is finding enough strategic partners so that we can be enabled to pass the skills on. But it is really hard you know, it takes time, and it is something the BBC hasn't historically been good at really. (Morlais, 2004)
>
> One of the things that is exciting about this project to me and shows that the power at the BBC is in a really different place than it was ten years ago, is that right from the start Menna said that she wanted us not just to run workshops to make stories but also to work with other bodies in Wales to make Digital Storytelling have a life beyond what the BBC can do ... That to me was an important part of the process and shows a significant difference to where the BBC was ten years ago. (Rose, 2004)
>
> It's good to be in partnerships. Historically the BBC has not been good at partnerships really, I always say that at one stage we used to produce our own hymn book. No other hymn book was good enough for the BBC; we had to have our own distinctive separate hymn book. And you know what I mean by that, everything was exclusive. That is not good. (Loughrey, 2003)
>
> I think Digital Storytelling in a way is a complete aberration on the part of the BBC. (Adams, 2003)

Partnerships are seen as being beneficial to the BBC for a number of reasons highlighted in interview responses:

- Lowering costs
- Improving the ways in which audiences are accessed
- Improving the range of expertise on offer
- Overcoming any limitations of using the BBC name (e.g. mistrust)
- Developing more content
- Accessing new skills
- Providing new promotion opportunities

One such hope was the Welsh Development Agency (WDA) e-communities project (WDA, 2002). It was hoped that through the third year of the *Capture Wales* life span, workshops would be held as part of e-communities in a bid to

produce a sustainable model of action. As it turned out, the WDA e-communities initiative would not be the long-term partner that the *Capture Wales* team were hoping they would be. After a pilot workshop in Tredegar, the e-communities scheme was abandoned (Kable, 2004).

Another unfortunate set back in the progression of partnerships has been one within the BBC itself. Daniel Meadows had been in discussion with the BBC World Service Trust about running a project in Cairo, Egypt with Arab women. The project was intended to assess the impact being made in the light of the United Nation's promise to deliver education to women around the globe by 2015, and the women were to get to make Digital Stories highlighting their experiences, and using the technology. Again, Meadows shows his contempt for the shortsightedness of many working within the BBC and their lack of understanding of the very nature of the making of Digital Story:

> The bad news is that the courage of BBC World Service Trust producers has subsequently failed. They have decided to deliver the project in a watered-down version. The Arab women will get to tell their stories and make storyboards, but their ideas will be realised as films back in London. I could spit. In fact I have spit. (Meadows, 2004b)

It appears that in the eyes of the World Service Trust, films made back in London would represent 'better' television, or at least television with a wider audience. In this scenario, the women's stories are told with the interests of the audience in mind, not because there is an interest in voicing the women themselves.

However, the quest for sustainability continues, aiming to go beyond partnerships and the bureaucracy associated with them. The hope is to ignite fires of interest in third parties who can go on to create stories, possibly for use as content by the BBC (should those storytellers wish):

> What we are asking for is funding for another three years. And even more clearly than in the past I think our targets will be more about how we pass on the skills to other people, third parties. And I think what I would like to see as the future for Digital Storytelling is that there are more people doing it outside the BBC, but in a way so that if those people want to they can have a BBC platform on TV or on the web or radio as well. (Morlais, 2004)

These third parties include educational establishments and local councils as a part of community regeneration initiatives.

Educational establishments

In November 2003, BBC Wales, (in conjunction with the WDA) held a conference in Cardiff to promote and debate the uses and experiences of Digital Storytelling within the community. An education panel was held in order to discuss current educational trends, and the possible impact of multimedia upon them. It was agreed unanimously by the panel of educators and researchers that Digital Storytelling could help teach the value of multimedia, self-expression and creativity in a fun way whereby students and pupils learn *with* technology at the same time as learning *about* it. Sue Williams of *Hyperaction* vocalised this scenario:

> Using multimedia tools is a way of engaging the interest of young people who are much more confident and excited by this technology than some of us! And so we are actually trying to put something new into their pencil cases if you like ... Now we actually have another tool in our arsenal, which is to offer them the opportunity to tell and create their story in a way that engages their interest through digital media. (Williams, Sue. 2003)

During *Capture Wales* workshops, we have seen, participants learn the tools of multimedia using industry standard software, but aside from this, they learn valuable communication skills including how to tell stories effectively and succinctly, and often learn a little about themselves and their history (especially given the emphasis on photographic elements for stories). Education itself can thus be both formal and informal, and has taken place in both formal and informal educational settings.

Information and Communication Technologies are seen as an increasingly vital part of learning in a world where literacy itself "is essentially multimedia, composed of an amalgam of words, pictures, sounds and the moving image" (Abbott, 2001: 9). Educational systems are seen as a vital means for imparting the necessary skills for living and working in our new media age.

Children entering schools at this time undoubtedly possess computing skills way beyond those of the preceding generation, and the world of learning must appreciate this:

> Young learners are already learning to cope with an increasingly complex and multimedia-enriched world, and educational environments and tools will need to take account of this. (Abbott, 2001: 122)

It has in the past been the case however that "the majority of schools are not used to paying for expensive technology" (Gisert and Myngen, 1995: 299). This scenario, coupled with traditional teaching approaches that view computing and multimedia as complicated, resource-heavy and issue-laden, has meant that schools have experienced little change, and will not change "unless it is acknowledged that the present structure of schools is not the ideal or final one" (Geisert and Myngen, 1995: 305).

At this time however, it is also true that:

> Teachers are always looking for new approaches to teaching subject information that will motivate students to research, study, write, make links between areas of knowledge and stimulate them to use their initiative and find out things for themselves. (Lachs, 2000: 1-2)

Lachs goes on to support the use of multimedia in classroom environments for it "opens up a number of avenues for learning additional skills and concepts at the same time as learning the subject matter they are presenting" (Lachs, 2000: 6). Here we see how Digital Storytelling could prove its relevance within a variety of learning environments - both formal and informal.

Capture Wales workshops in schools

Chris Lovell, Head of English at Aberdare Boys' School, spoke at the Conference about the possibilities of Digital Storytelling as a medium for connecting with pupils within schools:

> Pupils, if you turn round and bring out *Macbeth* in a written format, will turn round and say 'oh that's boring', without having looked at it. If you show them the S4C animated tales, you are already accessing pupils through that visual stimulus. And I believe that digital stories also offer that opportunity in education. (Lovell, 2003)

Digital Storytelling, according to those speaking at the Conference, has possibilities across the curriculum for pupils of all ages. Alongside the teaching of the skills associated with making digital story (how to use the software, the hardware, how to tell stories in a succinct and powerful way and manage time), run other less obvious educational uses for the stories created as part of *Capture Wales*. As an archive of Wales stories provide contemporary accounts unlike any other source (invaluable oral history), they provide transcripts of speech that can be used in the classroom, and above all, they are free to access.

To date, the *Capture Wales* team have led three workshops in schools, two in English and one in the Welsh language, making a total of 30 stories. In each of these workshops, pupils have been chosen and put forward by the schools in order to represent a broad spectrum of ability, age, and experience, and the workshop has been heralded as a phenomenal success.

At the BBC Wales Education Seminar (April 2004), representatives from Croesyceiliog School in Cwmbran spoke about their experiences with *Capture Wales*. The Headteacher Helene Mansfield spoke of the reasoning behind the workshop, to aid both teachers and pupils in the use of new technologies:

> It occurred to me that if I felt this way about technology then probably a lot of my colleagues did too, just as much as I did, fear the technology ... I felt that there was something in it for the students, something in it for my colleagues and something for the school. (Mansfield, 2004)

Eight pupils and two teachers took part in a *Capture Wales* workshop at the school, working, unlike in a normal classroom situation, with 'real people... their teachers are not real' (Mansfield, 2004). Sue Williams, (quoted above) is of the belief that a valuable and insightful part of the process of Digital Storytelling is the growth of a partnership between teachers and pupils, a process that requires the teacher to 'surrender your expertise ... let go of the body of knowledge' in a process that benefits both parties in terms of knowledge acquisition. Through the process teachers involved certainly felt that in the eyes of the pupils, they became more human, as Sam Williams, English and Media Studies teacher at Croesyceiliog testifies:

> Me and the other teacher who took part, I think we were more frightened than they were because it was really difficult for us. You stop being a member of staff, they stopped calling us Sir and Miss and called us by our first names ...there was so much communication, I found it incredibly liberating, not only did we find out an incredible amount about them, but they found out a little more about us. I don't mean intrusively. (Williams, Sam. 2004)

Sam Williams talks positively about this type of interaction with pupils, it being non-threatening, and insightful. She is also positive when talking about the benefits to the pupils as she sees them:

> In terms of the benefit to them, I could talk through each and every one of them and tell you how it has affected them, not changed their life, that sounds slightly corny, but to a certain extent with some of them it has changed the way they interact with each other, their confidence, their ability to use the technology. And the follow up of that, coming down to the BBC to record their introductions [for BBC 2W] I think has just added to their whole enjoyment of the experience. They have found it incredibly rewarding. (Williams, Sam. 2004)

As a result of the workshop, she not only knows her pupils a little better, but is, as Mansfield hoped she would be, a little more comfortable with the technology:

> On a personal level, I really did not know how to use the stuff, and now I feel a lot more confident, a lot more able to train other members of staff in the department, and a lot more confident within the classroom as a teacher teaching media... professionally it has been a fantastic experience. (Williams, Sam. 2004)

Following the perceived success of the workshop, Mansfield plans to increase the school's Digital Storytelling involvement beyond *Capture Wales*. In two years time, she plans to take the whole of Year Nine off timetable and get them involved in something creative along the lines of Digital Storytelling. This project will involve a number of departments, drama, IT, technology, music, media and English.

Mark Jefferies, English Teacher at Aberdare Boys' School voices similar sentiments to those of Sam Williams in a letter to Menna Richards three months after a workshop was held at his school:

> You [Richards] and your staff deserve great credit for commissioning and supporting this remarkable project. It is

> educative, creative and inspiring, touching the lives of all who are fortunate enough to participate. Encouraged and validated by your team, essentially diffident lads were able to explore their own thoughts and feelings before sharing them in this inspiring and moving way. A special experience for us all and something we shall never forget. (Jefferies, 2004)

Aligning himself with his pupils, Jefferies has benefited from surrendering his expertise and feels at one with the group of 'learners'.

However, Digital Storytelling has made an impact in classrooms beyond holding *Capture Wales* workshops in schools. This has been enabled by members of teaching staff who have attended *Capture Wales* workshops within the community, and taken their newly acquired skills into their teaching environments.

Digital Storytelling in schools beyond *Capture Wales*

One such example is Krys Narbed, Head of the Performing Arts faculty at St. Martins Comprehensive School. Following successful completion of her own story through *Capture Wales*, Narbed has taught the skills of Digital Storytelling to her A level class entirely independently of the BBC (although some pupils have been lucky enough to visit BBC Wales Broadcasting House to complete their stories). The thinking behind the course was as follows:

> I started the year with my largest A level class to date, almost 30. And I was looking for a project that would create a buzz for these 16 year olds, that would expand their skills but also something that would excite them and meet their aspirations. I wanted something that every student could identify with and do well, from the cleverest to the least able, the boys and the girls, and I wanted to get past that adolescent 'cool' to reach the zest and strength of feeling that I know is equally the hallmark of the teenager. And I think Digital Storytelling does all these things. (Narbed, 2004)

In actuality, "all the students took the idea of Digital Storytelling and ran with it ... I've never experienced such interest in the students for seeing each other's work" (Narbed, 2004). Pupils came from across the school expressing interest in the projects, and in future, (Narbed intends to run the course again) an event will be arranged for pupils to show parents and friends their stories on a

big screen; "You have heard of the BAFTAS, well, as our school is called St Martin's, I plan to call ours the SMAFTA's" (Narbed, 2004).

Outside of school environments, Digital Storytelling work in colleges has been led by work at Yale College in Wrexham, where a variety of options for creating Digital Story exist and are facilitated by Simon Collinge, Tony Pugh and Steve Bellis. This work is particularly interesting because it has involved the exploration of different forms for storytelling, including work on PCs and work with dyslexic students. Since a presentation at the North East Wales Institute of Higher Education at which Simon Collinge was present, the college has gone on to run a Digital Storytelling Unit on the BTEC (Business Training and Education Council qualification) and also on the GNVQ (General National Vocational Qualification). Since September 2004, Digital Storytelling has become an 'enrichment activity' on offer to all students at the college. Stories are also made over the course of ten weeks on a validated Open College Network evening course, in a very different model to that of *Capture Wales*:

Week 1 – Gathering
Week 2 – Story Circle
Week 3 – Script and Storyboard
Week 4 – Production: Image Capture, Sound Recording
Week 5 – Soundtracks completed / titles / editing (basic)
Week 6 – Rough Assembly of Images on Timeline
Week 7 – Transitions and Movement
Week 8 – Working Toward a final edit
Week 9 – Final Edits finished and burning CDs
Week 10 – Showing of stories / evaluation

The class is promoted through the BBC Wales North East Where I Live (www.bbc.co.uk/wales/northeast) website in the following way:

> Join us at Yale College, Wrexham on a unique digital storytelling evening-class. For two hours a week, over a 10-week period, you'll learn how to script, write and record a voicetrack, and produce your own digital story using old photographs, objects or memorabilia. (Yale College publicity through www.bbc.co.uk)

The college now hopes to set up a Centre for Digital Storytelling, enabling individuals and groups to create digital stories within communities. In 2004, the college was recognised with a UK Beacon award for their work with Digital

Storytelling.

Those teaching Digital Storytelling at the College are quick to point out the benefits of teaching through this form for those with learning difficulties, particularly dyslexia. They figure dyslexic students to make up to 10 per cent of those taking part in classes, and, by their own reckoning, these are some of the 'best' students. The nature of the Digital Storytelling method of 'drag and drop' seems to be favoured by those with difficulties working with the written word:

> I taught a girl called _____ years ago, and try as I might, I taught _____ for two years, we tried to do basic VHS editing with her, I sat and held her hand and did diagrams for her, and to this day she can't edit VHS video. But she has made two digital stories. The drag and drop nature of digital stories and the visual timeline meant that there was no problem for her, no barrier whatsoever. So it's actually a way around the problems of dyslexia. (Pugh, 2003)

One student who had completed a Digital Story at the College had the following to say about the experience:

> It was much easier doing a digital story than other things I have had to do considering my dyslexia. It's just remembering where things are, it's quite easy because it's all images and computer based, which I find a lot easier than paper. ('Katrin', 2003)

Alongside these benefits however, all those working independently of the BBC highlight barriers facing their work that have been laborious and time-consuming to overcome, namely the fact that equipment is expensive, classroom time is precious, classes are often large, ability is varied, and schools and colleges are, by and large, PC environments.

Although Narbed and those at Yale college have managed to surmount current obstacles, those working as part of *Capture Wales* are aware that many educators would soon give up on encountering these barriers. Karen Lewis acknowledges some of these pressures in interview:

> I think there are two things that would stop it. One is the speed at which technology progresses, so the cost of buying the equipment. I mean, our kit is already out of date. And the equipment is very expensive. And the other thing is the time. The time to dedicate to learning how to do it properly. Especially if you are going to go and do it in an education environment. (Lewis, 2003)

Despite these things however, Lewis is convinced that the proven positive experience of making digital stories in educational environments will sway people to consider the possibilities of Digital Story. This, coupled with recent changes within schools make working with multimedia in classrooms an increasingly viable option. In 2003, there were 1.7 million computers in UK schools, (an increase of 337,000 on 2002), a number that will undoubtedly rise again given the £435million budget for UK schools in 2003/4 for spending on information and communication technologies. The majority of teachers now have some level of access to computer equipment for curriculum purposes (BESA, 2003). Issues surrounding teacher confidence and out of date software will need to be addressed, but in the meantime, working with computers within education involves creating a balance between achieving the most inspiring environment in the classroom given your level of proficiency and that of the computers around you.

As both Daniel Meadows and those at Yale College develop tools and guides for working within PC oriented environments, we see the form ready to adapt from that strict model developed within the BBC. This necessitates (as we see in this and the following section) new methods for delivery of the workshop process, indeed, it may cease to be a workshop at all. In these contexts, we see Digital Storytelling being used no longer as primarily a broadcast tool, but as an educational or community development tool. Its measures of success are thus understandably different.

Community development strategies

> Arts projects have become an important part of community development strategies. (Newman et al, 2001: 1)

Local Councils: Case study: Caerphilly County Borough Council

Kate Strudwick, Arts Development Officer (ADO) for Caerphilly council, has been responsible for one of the most innovative and resourceful Digital Storytelling projects in Wales outside of the BBC. As an attendee of the initial *Capture Wales* pilot workshop in the Elan Valley, Kate Strudwick was keen to

become involved with Digital Storytelling and hosted the second public *Capture Wales* pilot workshop at the Blackwood Miners Institute:

> Apart from having a really good time with some wonderful people, the boot camp experience led me to realise that this exciting new art form had its natural home in the community, and could have huge impact within my remit as an ADO for Caerphilly County Borough Council. (Strudwick, 2003b)

Strudwick's initial intentions for attending the Elan Valley workshop were to advise the BBC as to the practicalities in actuality of doing this type of work within the community. Alongside this, as an Arts Development Officer, Digital Storytelling seemed to meet some of her objectives in terms of the community, particularly those concerned with activating members of society previously excluded, in a way that not only improves infrastructure and services, but gives people a voice:

> In digital storytelling I discovered an exciting and engaging art form that could make a real contribution to achieving some of the aims set out in the council's strategy. If you can give a voice to people whose voices are rarely heard, then you can encourage social inclusion. (Strudwick, 2003b)

Strudwick was initially sceptical about Digital Storytelling in the hands of the BBC however, believing that the project represented the BBC temporarily showing interest in people and their communities that could not be sustained:

> I am quite sceptical about television and about how people worship television. I mean, you say you are from the BBC and go to these places the doors are opened. But there is a feeling that it's here today and gone tomorrow and there's no real commitment. (Strudwick, 2003a)

Continuity was key in order to provide value within the community. Kate Strudwick has (with help from the *Capture Wales* team) spent the two years since the initial Blackwood workshop setting up a sustainable model for Digital Storytelling, addressing the practicalities of working with limited resources within communities:

> Identifying the benefits for digital storytelling for the community is the easy bit. More difficult was working out how such projects can be achieved when the reality is a tiny budget that is already overstretched, no staff and no equipment. But then, this wasn't the whole picture. (Strudwick, 2003b).

Strudwick describes how those limitations were addressed:

> ADO's are accustomed to having to use our imagination and a bit of creative focus. So, although we may not have the resources of the BBC, we realised that paradoxically we had other advantages, not necessarily open to them. Firstly, we have flexibility, including the ability to go on delivering the project in a number of different ways simultaneously. Secondly, we have the benefit of a very supportive line management, which allows us to make the best use of potential opportunities. We have an excellent track record of developing partnerships, both with our colleagues in other departments and with external agencies, and much experience of fundraising. This of course is one of the essential spin-offs of an inadequate budget. A third possibility was that although it might take a while for us to secure funding for a new project, we were currently involved in projects that were already funded and be easily adapted to include elements of digital storytelling. (Strudwick, 2003b)

A grant from 'Awards for All Wales' to the tune of £4,500 was achieved, and the purchase of equipment was enabled: a computer, scanner, printer, digital camera, digital video and microphone. The decision was made to use a MAC computer as opposed to PC technology principally because it would be designated arts equipment rather than office equipment, and was thus less likely to be 'borrowed' by other departments. An office space within the Blackwood Miners' Institute was made available, and Digital Storytelling was finally a possibility. Initially, a 'halfway house arrangement' was reached with the BBC whereby the story circle, script writing and image capture was carried out at the Miners' Institute and the Production workshop was carried out at the BBC in Cardiff with much success. But, in the long term, and bearing in mind the practicalities of transporting participants, finding time and the aim to include all those in society who might previously have been excluded for whatever reason, the decision was made that Digital Storytelling would have to be on offer in a much more flexible format.

Digital Stories are now made in a variety of ways through the Miners' Institute by people from all over the borough. As will be seen in the following section, much work has been trialled with excluded members of society, specifically those with mental health issues and physical disabilities. Stories do not have to conform to the strictures of the *Capture Wales* Digital Storytelling form (250 words, limited images, copyright restrictions etc), but can adhere to that form

if their creators wish to submit the finished story to the *Capture Wales* website.

Social inclusion

As is outlined above, much of the work carried out in Blackwood has been with the intention of including those members of society who have previously had their voices excluded.

Kate Strudwick's experiences in story circles highlighted a problem; that it was not always easy for people to articulate their experiences or memories:

> I have had some story circle sessions where people have just given a stream of unconnected sentences, that they are very difficult for people to understand in normal terms because they don't seem to make sense. Now maybe out of that I would pull a strand out and suggest they have one idea. Often in the story circle people have two or three ideas and that is not a problem, but when they are having 70, that is just a jumble of words. (Strudwick, 2003a)

New methods are thus employed, especially for those who suffer from mental health problems:

> Quite often having a difficult group, where people perhaps have difficulty having any sort of memory whatsoever, challenges the person leading the workshop to have other ideas ... I think the idea is to try and get people relaxed and stress free, so that they can get in touch with their creative instincts. So anything that is stressful, like trying to force people to have memories when they haven't got any, is to be avoided in certain circumstances. (Strudwick, 2003a)

Workshops are run on a very different timetable to those of *Capture Wales*. For many people with mental health problems attention span can be short, and so sessions must be run around these difficulties. Films can take anywhere between one day and a couple of months to create:

> Trying to keep people who are at different levels of mental health and different capabilities in terms of computers and different stages in their stories, actually keeping their interest bubbling, is quite challenging. I'm not sure that is my favourite way of doing it, but what do you do? If someone turns up and says I want to make a digital story, you can't tell them to come back on the third Tuesday of the month for a story circle and you can start from scratch. For people who have difficulty remembering which day of the week it is, you sometimes feel you have to work with what you've got, while you've got it. (Strudwick, 2003a)

Work is carried out at the Miners' Institute with members of the *Inside Out* mental health group. Sherrall Morris, volunteer with the group and facilitator of Digital Story talked at the International Digital Storytelling Conference in Cardiff about the impact of the work on the group:

> Over recent months I have seen feelings of exclusion and isolation change into feelings of self worth, self-expression and a sense of belonging. (Morris, 2003)

Digital Storytelling, according to both Morris and Strudwick, with its emphasis away from writing, and its flexibility as a medium, is perfect for helping those with mental health problems voice their own stories; "Digital Storytelling and mental health really do go hand in hand and work together very well" (Strudwick, 2003a). They are also of the belief that the form could work equally well for those with disabilities, and now carry out work with the disability group *Chair*. Strudwick has been tackling the issue of achieving inclusion in the project for those who have difficulty operating computers:

> People might not be able to see the screen or operate a mouse. Obviously I am looking at ways of making it as inclusive as possible, buying computer packages that make detail large on screen, things like a special mouse with a ball that people with disabilities can use easier. (Strudwick, 2003a)

She is of the belief that community groups can do more for people with disabilities than the BBC could. In her experience:

> The BBC bends over backwards to be inclusive but when you introduce them to someone with disabilities, its like 'hmm, here's a real one! What do we do with this. Have we got a policy? [laughs]. (Strudwick, 2003a)

Work towards inclusion is ongoing, both within communities, and within educational environments. As with any arts project, and similarly to the experiences of the BBC, quantifying success of any action is a near impossibility. When it comes to applying for funding, or justifying resources, this can prove problematic (again as the BBC have seen). As Newman et al point out in their evaluation of community arts projects:

> Over zealous pursuit of scientific objectivity and the internal validity of evaluation programmes are inappropriate and unhelpful approaches to the evaluation of social programmes and especially arts projects (Matarasso, 1996a: 24). (Newman et al, 2001: 4)

Achieving backing in the form of resources is a slow and difficult task – as it is for any project initiated in the arts:

> Few people object to some promotion of community arts by regeneration projects. Residents come together, enjoy the process and some are remarkably transformed. Clearly this is a good thing. But how many of us would argue that investment in a community's creativity should be an essential component of the fight against social exclusion? ... But they are intangible and notoriously difficult to measure systematically – a big problem in the era of best value. (McDonagh, T. in Dwelly, 2001: 2)

Digital Storytelling however is seen as being particularly rewarding for those who I have discussed in this chapter.

Individual use

Beyond Digital Storytelling initiatives with partners and local organisations, the best bet for survival has to be in people taking the initiative, buying software themselves and continuing to make stories - either on their own or as part of a group. Support does exist in the form of Daniel Meadows' online tutorial at www.photobus.co.uk, which currently receives about 150 visits per day. However, in order to carry out individual work using this, or other tutorials, it is necessary to purchase, or to have access to; software and hardware that meets higher standards than most people are used to working with, and certainly higher spec computers than they would necessarily buy for use at home. As has been seen in the previous chapter, this is seldom the case in actuality.

One way of achieving access for those interested individuals is through the use of BBC Community Studios and the like as hubs for Digital Storytelling activity. Also appropriate might be a physical Centre for Digital Storytelling whereby people can drop in and use computers as and when they wish to. This would enable access for more to the appropriate technology, and could alter results gleaned through this research if carried out again. Perhaps given the opportunity, more would continue to make stories. However, this 'hub'

model could also prove to isolate those living in more rural areas of the country.

Thus, despite there being no responsibility for those who take part in workshops to carry on and make more stories, if they wish to do so, there is at this moment in time little room for this interest to flourish. Partnerships are critical but beyond this, the desire has to be present. Daniel Meadows is of the opinion that:

> If enough people learn to do this thing, we can change the world, in spite of pusillanimous software manufacturers, war-mongering politicians and flaky media producers. (Meadows, 2004b)

Making one digital story as part of *Capture Wales* does not make a person a media producer and distributor in their own right until they have the means and the desire to go forth and make media independently. As Tambini says in *New Media and Society* "As long as access to the new media is restricted ... it will be impossible to realise their democratic potential" (Tambini, 1999: 306). Building this type of democratic scenario realistically requires continued interest and investment from the BBC in the name of public service, until sustainable partnerships can be built. Kate Strudwick who we heard from above, is not convinced that the BBC will have the foresight to carry this through:

> I think the BBC would be mad to drop this as a project. Quite honestly, it is doing them so much good. They would be absolutely bonkers to drop it. But some bad decisions have been made in the past. (Strudwick, 2003a)

The long-term impact on traditional media of projects such as *Capture Wales* undoubtedly raises discussion along the lines of access and democracy. This long term legacy of the project is one of the most interesting and insightful conversations arising out of Digital Storytelling that will carry on long after the completion of this thesis, but is started in the concluding chapter.

Chapter Eight

Conclusions and Implications

The principal aims of this study as identified in part one were to:

1 Trace the background of Digital Storytelling
2 Establish the reasoning behind the BBC *Capture Wales* project
3 Measure the extent to which *Capture Wales* affects the public, and their reaction to it
4 Assess the sustainability of the project and the future of digital storytelling as a whole

These aims have underlined the discussion from chapters two through seven. What remains is to discuss the conclusions reached through that analysis in relation to wider arguments about the media. This is attempted in this concluding chapter, culminating in a revisitation of some of those theories outlined in chapter one's review of literature in light of what has been discovered about Digital Storytelling.

Is there anything new to be found in the Capture Wales Digital Storytelling project?

I begin by discussing whether what is represented by *Capture Wales* is necessarily new to debates about media, specifically those debates around representation, training and technology, therapy and storytelling.

Representation

Chapter six's analysis of the participants in *Capture Wales* workshops showed that there is a fairly accurate representation of Wales in terms of demographics. In gender terms, representation is more or less equal (unlike in other areas of the media where legitimacy is often equated with masculinity, see Allan, 2004), and in terms of ethnicity and stories in the Welsh language, the project is actually over-representing minorities (a positive step in light of ongoing findings about the overrepresentation of 'official' (ie. White) voices in the media (Article 19). A wide representation in terms of age and geography is

also visible, although biases in line with overall population trends are apparent.

In terms of representation, it can thus be seen that something new is exemplified through *Capture Wales*. Those voices that are heard through the project leave a more varied and 'real' archive than exists elsewhere in the media. However, it must be remembered that representations, whether constructed by the media or 'ordinary' people are just that, constructions. They are also, by the nature of the project, the voices of those people who wish to step forward and talk about their experiences. As Valerie Yow says of the practice of recording oral history, 'it is the articulate who come forward to be participants' (Yow 1994:17). They volunteer not only a story and their voice, but their time, energy and commitment to the project. This requires a certain type of temperament and level of interest. We have seen that those participants I have been in contact with are often, although not exclusively, already involved in the arts. This raises questions about the true public service'ness' of the project that will be looked at later in this chapter.

Training and technology

In contrast to previous BBC projects that were concerned with connecting with communities, participants really do have complete technical control over their representation in *Capture Wales*. Unlike other projects such as *The Radio Ballads*, *Video Nation* or *The Century Speaks*, participants not only provide the raw materials, but construct and edit the final piece. In this respect, the BBC Wales *Capture Wales* project does represent something new for media.

Continuing use of that technology post workshop varies dramatically, but for some, a familiarity with software and hardware is initiated which could enable the creation of media outside of the mainstream with little or no involvement from the BBC. This media they can use to any end they deem appropriate.

Digital Storytelling shows the possibilities for learning when technology is embraced creatively in both formal and informal educational settings. Storytellers become proficient not only at using the technology, but in

vocalising experiences, expressing 'self' and documenting their personal histories. Ivan Illich, commentator and inspiration to much of Meadows' work had the following to say about technology in 1973; "Technology is available to develop either independence and learning or bureaucracy and teaching (Illich 1973: 80)" (quoted in Abbott 2001: 32). His thoughts still ring true. Technology can continue to be used to feed bureaucratic needs of educational establishments, or can be proposed as a means for learning that nurtures creativity and individual difference. As we have seen, the latter has been trialled by individuals using Digital Storytelling both within and outside of those establishments with a variety of different people.

Another area of 'learning' entered in the process of a Digital Storytelling workshop is that of media literacy. By teaching members of the public not only to participate in the creation of media, but to create that media themselves, the BBC are involved in a genuine form of media literacy:

> There are many reasons why *creation* is a central component of media literacy. Most obviously, just as print literacy encompasses writing as well as reading; media literacy should involve creating as well as receiving, especially as the tools to create and disseminate media are ever more widely accessible. (Livingstone et al, 2005: 45)

Alongside this, another component of media literacy is the learning of skills necessary for analysing media. For a few participants, the outcome of the workshop is an inability to watch television in the same way again. They see not only 'cuts' and 'transitions', but the messages that are coming through, the voices being heard and the ways in which they are being presented. The majority of participants however, although experiencing an increased understanding of media production processes, do not volunteer to having an increased *critical* understanding of those processes as a result. This is seen as being crucial to media literacy, and a clear priority for further research (Livingstone et al, 2005: 60).

Therapy

One finding from this research that was perhaps unanticipated in its strength is the use that many have made of the experience of *Capture Wales* as a

means of therapy or 'catharsis'. This self-selected outcome of the workshop process was of great importance to many involved. It appears that the process of taking time out to order experiences, look through family memorabilia and commemorate events is a life altering experience for many. This is a virtually impossible outcome to quantify, the self not being available to analyse and measure in the same way as other objects.

This is however not 'new' in any real sense (other than that it is perhaps new for the BBC to be involved in such ventures). 'Therapy' is a common outcome for many projects of this nature, and as such, *Capture Wales* continues a body of work that is well established in the arts. Chapter five discussed these issues in relation to the BBC, the appropriateness of such involvement being called into question. This is an argument that will be continued later in this chapter.

Storytelling

The rise of Digital Storytelling represents a new way of telling those stories that make us who we are, whether they be supposedly universal narratives, or those intensely personal stories that make up *Capture Wales*. This form is just one of a number enabled by the advent of new technologies and the Internet. It is thus part of a wider change within the history of storytelling as opposed to its last port of call. This is indicative of Neil Chenoweth's views on the constancy of our desire for change and propulsion forwards:

> The waves of scientific innovation that have shaped and reshaped the world in the last three decades have been profoundly unsettling. They have created a deep expectation of impermanence. The basic response to the unknown has switched from 'What's this?' to 'What's next?' We live in the eternal penultimate moment. (Chenoweth, 2001: xiv)

Storytelling and technology will continue to influence each other's form and content simultaneously well into the future. Digital Storytelling as a form thus becomes an invisible facilitator of story:

> Eventually all successful storytelling techniques become "transparent", we lose consciousness of the medium and see neither print nor film but only the power of the story itself. (Murray, 1999: 26)

Digital Storytelling is not so much a revolutionary new form for story then, it has been anticipated by researchers and practitioners for some time. But it is perhaps the start of something new for media in terms of democracy. This is a much greater question, and one that is in accordance with the research aims stated above.

The future of media

Democratisation

> What was by design and necessity to have been *our media* – a brilliant blossoming of divergent, disagreeing and desagreeable voices, organised with the purpose of informing and convincing the electorate, arranged in the service of that electorate and the democracy they would forge – has become *their media*. (McChesney & Nichols, 2002: 25)

In the above quote McChesney and Nichols outline both the intended (perhaps utopian) form and use of media, and the reality of what has become of that media. A system that was supposed to work with the freedoms and desires of the public in mind has given way to one whereby power is very much out of the hands of that public. All that are offered by the media system are feeble attempts at gratification:

> We still must face up to the fact that mainstream media make no pretense of offering themselves up to any form of public control, short of consumers' letters or consumers' refusal to buy there or switch them on. As means of public leverage or democratic influence, these various responses are either feeble or indiscriminately blunt. (Downing et al, 2001: 43)

As was outlined in the review of the literature, the coming of new Internet and multimedia technologies was heralded as the dawn of a more democratic media system where control was everywhere and the public would become 'empowered'. This is however, a grossly simplified scenario, and one that is not supported by the findings of this research. To assert that a public is empowered (in terms of media) is to assume not only that they have access to the means of making and distributing media, but that they are actively

engaged in seeking that empowerment (not just using those avenues opened up to them). As Hamelink asserts:

> Human rights imply both entitlements and responsibilities. This means that empowerment cannot be passively enjoyed, but has to be actively achieved and guarded. (Hamelink, 1995: 12)

If we wish to enter, and ultimately control, the debates that affect our lives, we must fight for that empowerment. It thus becomes not something we are handed, but a self-empowerment. *Capture Wales* is part of a much wider bid to empower audiences, to hear the voices of all people, but it works within the confines of a strict form dictated by Daniel Meadows and the BBC. This complicates the discussion, for there have to be limits in order to ensure that the BBC can let those voices be heard (they operate within a regulated public service framework), at the same time as the ethos of *Capture Wales* asserts that everyone has a different story to tell, and should be able to tell it in their own distinct way. There are also difficulties with the assumption that more voices being heard within the media would naturally lead to a more democratic system of representation. Structuring changes at the very core of ideology and society would be necessary in order to make such an assertion.

However, those voices heard as part of *Capture Wales*, and the participants who provide them, certainly represent a wider spectrum of viewpoint than has previously been available in the media in Wales (although it is debatable how much these stories have penetrated the media in actuality). Osmond (1995) and Cameron (1999) both agree that historically, representations of the Welsh within the media have been either stereotypical or entirely absent.

Perhaps *Capture Wales* is indicative of the dialogue Ananda Mitra envisioned in his 2001 article 'Marginal Voices in Cyberspace'. That is we cannot presume to say that all will become equal between distributors and producers of media, but we can enter a dialogue where it becomes harder for those marginalised or silenced voices to be drowned out (Mitra 2001: 43).

The voice of the 'ordinary'

The growth of reality television in the closing years of the twentieth century was the source of much discussion, controversy and enquiry. This growth showed that industry thinking was being dominated by numbers, audience figures and copy-cat one-upmanship in a race to find the ultimate in 'real life performances' (Kilborn, 2003); unscripted performances in constructed spaces. As Ellie Rennie says:

> ...the rise of reality television and interactivity demonstrate a growing interest in programs focused on the self and that enable audience involvement. But such developments in the professional media rarely show the complexity of what it is to be an 'ordinary person'. As one commentator expressed it, reality TV 'makes us all arseholes'. (Rennie 2004: 2)

In the new century there is an even more worrying trend; the move toward un-reality TV, experiments in falsity. This is a scenario that was predicted in the 1970s by Umberto Eco in his work *Travels in Hyperreality*:

> To speak of things that one wants to connote as real, these things must seem real. The "completely real" becomes identified with the "completely fake." Absolute unreality is offered as real presence. (Eco 1975: 7)

Eco envisioned a duplication of people and places that renders them 'un-real'. Thus, the balance between what is reality and what is falsity becomes blurred. Increasingly now it is assumed that the public are bored with the real, and so we see reality television over-run with 'celebrities', and the hunt for the most extreme makeover shows. In keeping with Eco's predictions, we no longer see 'reality', but its 'plaster cast' (Eco, 1975: 7).

Capture Wales goes against this trend, and back to the original tenet behind this history – that ordinary life is interesting in itself (Hoggart, 1957). It also links in another trend; the race for interactivity. The Internet prides itself on being the ultimate interactive medium, but increasingly, television and radio also try to offer some level of interactivity to their audiences, enabling people to get their voices heard (should they be 'chosen' for air time). This again is the problem with interactivity, it works within somebody else's boundaries:

> There is a distinction between playing a creative role within an authored environment and having authorship of the environment itself. (Murray, 1999: 152)

> Interactivity is actually about power. It is about persuading users that they are powerful when in fact they are powerless. (Hockley 1996: 10)

Interactivity as we currently know it relies on 'users' working within somebody else's models of choice, they assert no power over what choices can be made. In this respect we have moved forward very little from Raymond Williams' view of interactivity voiced in 1974:

> ... we have to distinguish between reactive and interactive technology. Nearly all equipment that is being currently developed is reactive; the range of choices, both in detail and in scope, is pre-set. (Williams, 1974: 139)

There is every reason to suggest that the future of the BBC hinges on how they deal with this issue, how they involve their licence payers, and the extent to which they encourage those licence payers to push the boundaries of activity.

Commercialism and centralisation

Such formats as reality TV and makeover shows are indicators of a growing need for broadcasters to find popular saleable genres and formats:

> All those who operate in today's broadcasting world have been forced to recognize the growing importance of the commercial imperative. (Kilborn, 2003: 8)

This is true not only of those operating within a commercial framework, but also public service broadcasters like the BBC:

> The truth is that the BBC is now a part of the global media market fighting its corner with Rupert Murdoch, CNN and anybody else in that gangway. (Goodman 1998: 5)

The scenario dealt with in this thesis assumes that the 'ordinary' cannot be dealt with effectively within a commercial media framework. However, there are those that disagree, feeling that commercial models provide a more realistic proposition for exploration of the 'everyday'. This view, highlighted by Chaney (2002), holds that public service broadcasters cannot deal with the everyday as they are elitist and 'closed'. Chaney equates populism and the everyday with a commercial framework, and would no doubt see a project such as *Capture Wales* as an anomaly. This is a discussion that will be

continued into and beyond the switch to digital anticipated in 2010, and is certainly an interesting area for further research; what are the barriers that face those that wish to produce alternative media for mainstream 'consumption' through commercial media? Can they be overcome? And what are the implications of this for both the future of public service broadcasting and the media spectrum as a whole?

This trend toward commercialisation is somewhat at odds with the previously discussed notion of democratic media, but is, according to the MacBride report in 1980, less of a threat to democratisation than the trend toward centralisation:

> Concentration of resources and infrastructures is not only a growing trend, but also a worrying phenomenon which may adversely affect the freedom and democratization of communication ... the trends have their counterparts in many industries; but communications is not an industry like any other. (MacBride Report quoted in Trabers & Nordenstreng, 1992: 4)

The report encouraged a growth in 'decentralised and diversified media' in the future (MacBride Report quoted in Trabers & Nordenstreng, 1992: 62), a growth which we have seen little evidence of. Ownership of the media continues to centralise, and in this country we have seen a geographical orientation of resources and output to London in direct contrast to those aims of public service broadcasting outlined in chapter four:

> One of the progressive aims of public service broadcasting was to ensure provision for the regions, but for the London-centred British audio-visual media such regional bases are often considered to be 'backwaters', nightmare postings to be endured rather than learned from. (Curran 1999: 116)

This attitude within the BBC has recently come under criticism and resulted in many job losses in the capital (Byrne, 2004: 6). Decentralisation and diversification however must continue to be a desired state for the communications industries, and *Capture Wales* represents a willingness to experiment with these prospects within the BBC, although by no means a paradigm shift. Current speculation about job losses within BBC Wales itself, and possibly even within the *Capture Wales* team, reminds us that nowhere

within public service media provision is there a 'safe house' (BBC Wales, 2005).

The reality is that it is increasingly hard to predict the future of media. This involves making speculations about government policy and regulation, technology, and audience responses that are virtually impossible. Conclusions can be drawn however about our current climate; that barriers to entry are still very much an issue, that democratisation and true interactivity are a long way off, and that for these to happen to their fullest will contradict the current trend within the media toward commercialism and the battle for audiences.

Capture Wales: tensions

There are a number of tensions that have arisen during this research between the ethos of the Digital Storytelling 'movement', and the actuality of using the form within the BBC. These have been highlighted in full in chapter five, but are restated here.

Capture Wales has operated out of a very transitory time in the BBC's history. Events over the last few years have sparked enquiry about the future relevance, governance and funding structure of the corporation that have run alongside this study. The project is attributable to the specific people and events that led to its inception, but, having arisen in this period, was part of a definite intent to get closer to audiences. If Ian Hargreaves had not been in place at the University there would no doubt have been another project to take its place in a bid to connect with communities.

As we have seen, *Capture Wales* hit all the right buttons at BBC Wales. It has also hit buttons within the community of storytellers it has created. These storytellers, often themselves of a creative background, have taken a variety of 'benefits' from the project. The one 'benefit' that causes concern to members of the team and has arisen in this project as a tension is 'therapy':

> Yes it's great to be connecting with communities, but we should be connecting as the BBC and what the BBC is distinct for. As you say, we are not therapists, we are not counsellors. Also, we

> have a strong team, and we have a robust project that is very clear about what it is doing and why it does it. Otherwise it is too touchy feely and you are not sure why you are doing it. (Lewis, 2003)

There are very real questions to be asked about the place of this type of work within a corporation like the BBC. Nowhere within the literature about public service broadcasting and the BBC is there a recommendation to carry out work that insights a response akin to therapy. Being very much outside of the BBC's remit in these terms, the project's existence is legitimised by the creation of content, and the fact that a storyteller has voluntarily told a story. Members of the team thus have regular meetings about these issues, and a number of them have undergone some counseling training (either before working as part of *Capture Wales*, or since their positioning on the team). As has been stated however, this is a natural by-product of any creative endeavour whereby people are encouraged to think about events in their lives in such a way (Kamler, 2001; Dwelly, 2001; Crossley, 2003; Lambert, 2004).

We have seen that *Capture Wales* is about different things to different people. The project is succeeding in being absolutely about those things that were at the forefront of its inception. We saw in chapter five that the aims of *Capture Wales* as outlined at the outset were; 'connecting with communities', digital literacy, creating content and building an archive. It was also, no doubt, about public relations. But, by accident, it also encompasses a number of other themes, not least therapy and achievement on a personal level. In this respect, BBC executives have very little realisation of what *Capture Wales* means in actuality, on the ground it can be (but is not universally) life-altering stuff. Most of the people I have questioned and talked to do not tend to go on and make stories of their own, but they do feel differently about the technology, their limitations and abilities, and the BBC. In the most positive of senses, the BBC are receiving phenomenal word of mouth publicity and must maximise on this giving more people the opportunity to take part, following up on those that do, and displaying stories more widely. It is questionable, however, whether the BBC should be so involved with personal 'improvement' on this level with a relatively small group of license payers, at the expense of

a publicly funded corporation. Digital Stories' current audience online and on Welsh television (mostly BBC 2W) is both hard to measure, and dependent on access to resources unavailable to much of the Welsh population. At the present time, below 50 per cent of Welsh adults use the Internet regularly (National Statistics, 2004), and digital take-up across the UK remains just under 60 per cent (OFCOM, 2005). A large portion of the population thus has little or no access to the primary means for output of *Capture Wales* stories.

If the BBC cannot widen access in both senses (participants and audiences), the project fails to provide a public service except for those who take part in workshops. In the words of one respondent:

> It made me realise how much money it [the BBC] has to spend on things the majority of the population has no access to, or have no interest in.

If *Capture Wales* is going to be more than a tokenistic 'gift' from the BBC to a select few individuals, it needs time to develop sustainable partnerships. With these in place there is a chance that all who want to can learn the skills and start telling their own stories, a true public service proposition. Alongside this, a regular space needs to be cleared for their display.

Current display space outside of the website is primarily focused around BBC 2W, where stories exist in a stand-alone slot similar to that inhabited by *Video Nation*. Beyond that, they sit rather uncomfortably within the *Wales Today* local news bulletin. The stories are not news in any traditional sense, and thus their tone and purpose can be somewhat undermined or seem out of place within this context. There is little room however, outside of this context, and outside of the means afforded by red-button technology, for their display to a wider audience.

Hurdles hit by the Digital Storytelling team in Wales, but more especially in England, include the bureaucracy and traditional attitudes of some within the BBC itself. Their notions of 'value' and 'quality' render Digital Stories too unprofessional for network broadcast, and subsequently make 'user-generated content' only a tick-box for Charter Renewal. As such, there is a

reluctance to give Digital Storytelling the home it arguably deserves on network television, and content becomes buried online. The news in February 2005 that the *Telling Lives* project in England is to be discontinued, and the threat of redundancy that hangs over BBC Wales at the current time, give us a timely reminder that Digital Storytelling remains an example of alternative media, one struggling within the dictates of a corporation that is not yet willing to throw its weight behind the form, no matter what more senior executives might wish:

> If people like Menna Richards and I get our way, it [the power of Digital Storytelling] will be liberated a great deal more across the whole of the United Kingdom, because there is something wonderful about it. (Loughrey 2003b)

Who is making the decisions then? The demise of *Telling Lives* clearly contradicts the predictions of executives quoted in chapter five. Beyond the language of official discourse it appears, the impact of Digital Storytelling within the BBC outside of Wales remains minimal, a fact that will not aid *Capture Wales'* bid for network television presence.

The overriding tension has been that the project, which has worked precisely because it is so un-BBC (exemplified by the fact that the team is made up of people who are not 'career BBC'), has struggled within the confines of the BBC itself. It could never have existed without the input (and possibilities for output) that the BBC provides, but has struggled amidst bureaucracy, a lack of communication and an overriding approach that ultimately positions audiences as consumers. As a public service broadcaster the BBC, in theory, has the luxury of freedom from this type of approach that concerns itself with ratings and demographics. We have seen the corporation criticised however for exactly this type of behaviour. The current climate requires a rethinking of this attitude, as is recommended in the recent Green Paper, and if this takes place, there is every chance that we will see more projects like *Capture Wales* in the near future, and resultant changes in operation structures and priorities at the BBC.

As we enter an uncertain period in the history of the BBC; the lead up to Charter Review within the post-Hutton broadcast environment, the BBC must be in no doubt that showing a real connection with the public is vital if it is to work through what Richard Norton-Taylor calls the "greatest crisis of its history". (Norton-Taylor in Rogers 2004: 3)

Revisiting the theory

> The ultimate interactive nature of some video-related technologies will produce the dominant right-hemisphere social patterns of the next century ... Users will simultaneously become producers and consumers. (McLuhan, 1986: 83)

Debates surrounding interactivity, active audiences and the resultant 'death of the author' were detailed in chapter one, but need to be revisited after analysing the case study in order to see how the discussion can be enlightened.

Downing, Atton and Rodriguez allowed us a framework for thinking about alternative or citizens' media that (although perhaps not politically radical) allows us to think about Digital Stortyelling at the BBC. *Capture Wales* does challenge the hegemonic norm that producing and consuming are polarised activities which we can singularly identify with, in the same way that alternative or radical works of literature do. In opposition to this norm, Digital Storytelling in all its forms allows audiences to create content. The involvement of the BBC appears to complicate this scenario and could be seen to be a sinister act of containment – taking charge of an activity that has arisen outside of the media 'norm' in order to control its application. However, I propose that the BBC, as is in line with its history (outlined in chapter three) has been open to the thoughts and actions of a number of extraordinary individuals who saw the benefit of incorporating new technologies and applications into mainstream media (incorporation as opposed to containment). This is necessary in order to keep the corporation in a constant state of motion. In the same way that Fiske talks of the tearing of jeans as a counter public realm activity that was subsumed into the mainstream, so the same is true of Digital Stortyelling. This

will not mean the stagnation of the application however, individuals like Daniel Meadows or Dana Atchley will always be looking for new ways of liberating technologies and art forms:

> Despite nearly two centuries of capitalism ... people ... keep devising new ways of tearing their jeans (Fiske, 1989: 19)

It is this cyclical mode of activity which keeps a media system fresh and vibrant, ideas must keep coming through.

At the same time, the BBC is benefiting from the experience in the acquisition of content, the creation of a living archive, and the intangible profit that is the connection with participants. A positive, respectful exchange is occurring benefiting both the public (or those members of the public who are chosen to take part) and the BBC. Knowledge exchange is thus two-way, and perhaps indicative of changing trends within (multi) media that position 'users' or 'consumers' in a much more inspiring and creative role as producers and advisers.

To return to Birkerts' question (1997), 'What functions does storytelling have now ... and how will digital media serve these?' we can answer very positively that digital media enables the function of storytelling – the passing of knowledge – to remain the same, but that it will also perform a great service, through Digital Storytelling and other means, by championing the notion that we are all wise, all powerful and we all have something to say. Digital Storytelling does this in a way that arouses emotion, thought and action. In this respect, it not only speaks to what is left of the soul, but demands a response. The BBC in Wales should be able to facilitate that response and provide a platform for it to be seen.

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Appendix 1: Workshop Breakdown

Date	Workshop Location	Number of Stories Made	Comments
July 2001	Elan Valley	14	Pilot Bootcamp
October 2001	Wrexham	9	Pilot
November 2001	Blackwood	10	Pilot
April 2002	Denbigh	12	
May 2002	Port Talbot	10	
Ammanford	June 2002	11	Including my own story
July 2002	Blackwood/Cardiff Digilab	7	In collaboration with Kate Strudwick at Blackwood Miner's Institute
September 2002	Cardiff Digilab	4	Welsh language workshop
September 2002	Newport	10	
October 2002	Cardiff (Central)	9	Workshop held as part of Black History Month
November 2002	Bangor	8	Welsh language workshop
November 2002	Cardiff (Thornhill)	9	Training English *Telling Lives* team
January 2003	Swansea	10	
February 2003	Rhayader	10	
March 2003	Harlech	10	
April 2003	Porth	5	
May 2003	Caerffili	6	Workshop for librarians
May 2003	Blaenau Ffestiniog	10	Welsh language workshop
June 2003	Cardiff Digilab	6	
July 2003	Ystalyfera School, Swansea	10	
July 2003	Croesyceiliog School, Cwmbran	10	

September 2003	Tredegar	10	
October 2003	Machynlleth	10	Welsh Language workshop
November 2003	Rhyl	9	
December 2003	Carmarthen/Newport	9	Shoebox Stories
January 2004	Cardiff	6	
February 2004	Wrexham/Newport	8	Shoebox Stories
February 2004	Cardiff Digilab	6	
February 2004	Treorchy	8	Audio Stories
March 2004	Wrexham/Newport	6	Shoebox Stories
March 2004	Monmouth	11	
April 2004	Cwm Gwendraeth	10	Welsh language workshop
April 2004	Wrexham	3	Shoebox Stories
May / June 2004	Machynlleth	11	
June 2004	Cardiff Digilab	9	Workshop following education seminar
July 2004	Aberdare Boy's School	10	
September 2004	Milton Keynes	10	Stories made as part of *Who do you Think You Are* series for BBC1
October 2004	Cardiff (Butetown)	9	
November 2004	Cardiff (Central)	9	Workshop as part of BBC Talent
January 2005	Aberystwyth	9	
February 2005		19	Shoebox Stories
March 2005	Denbigh		Workshop as part of Community Strategies Unit

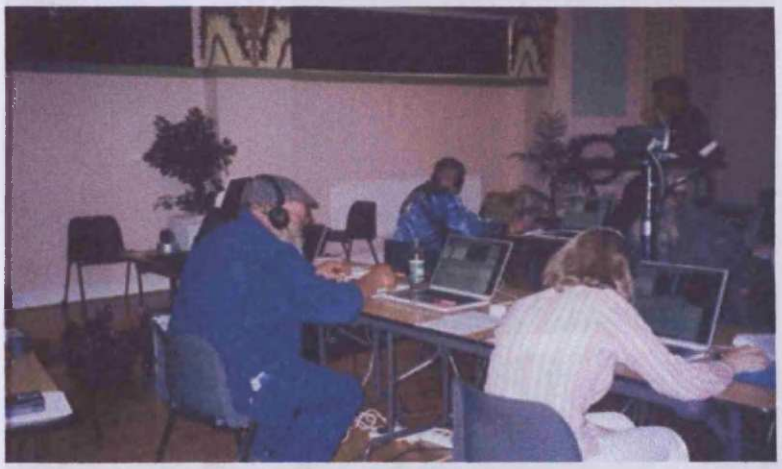
Appendix 2: *Capture Wales* story transmissions across platforms: 01 November 2002 - 31 October 2004

Date	Stories on BBC 2W	Stories on BBC1 *Wales Today*, BBC2,BBC3	BBCi	Radio
November 2002	5	-	-	-
December 2002	4	-	-	-
January 2003	-	-	-	-
February 2003	-	4	-	-
March 2003	1	2	-	-
April 2003	-	-	-	-
May 2003	3	-	-	-
June 2003	7	-	-	-
July 2003	5	-	-	-
August 2003	5	-	-	-
September 2003	5	-	-	-
October 2003	6	1	-	-
November 2003	4	2	-	-
December 2003	1	-	-	-
January 2004	3	-	-	-
February 2004	2	1	-	-
March 2004	7	8	-	3
April 2004	5	2	-	-
May 2004	4	-	-	-
June 2004	4	1	-	3
July 2004	4	-	-	6
August 2004	4	-	-	8
September 2004	7	1	2	7
October 2004	9	1	2	-

Appendix 3: Images



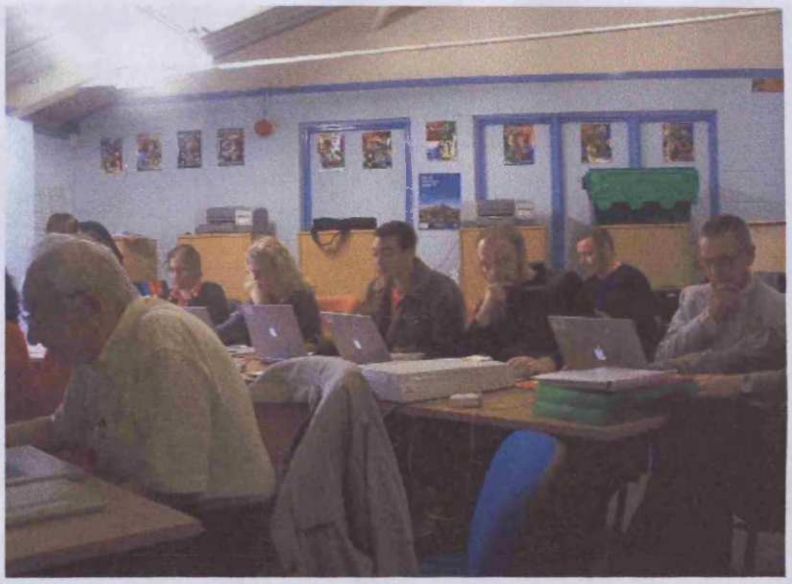
Left: Ammanford Workshop venue, Ammanford Miner's Theatre. June 2002.



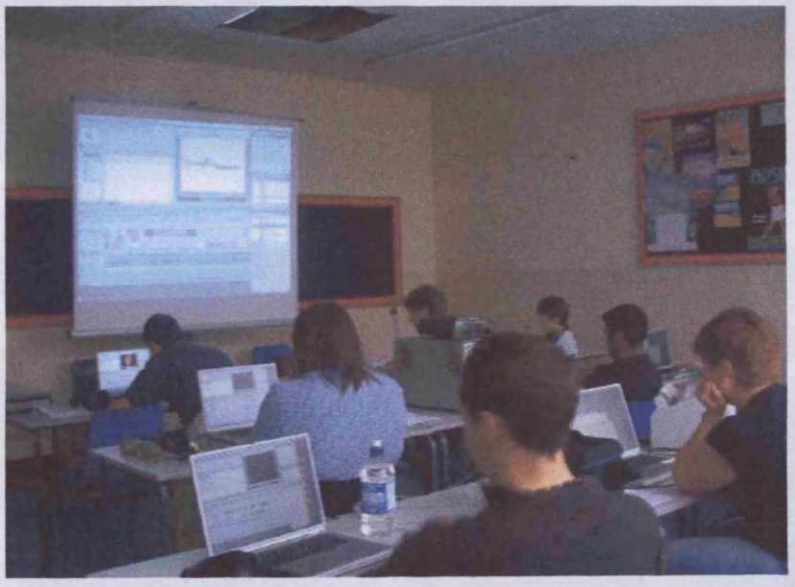
Left: Ammanford workshop in progress. June 2002.



Left: Ammanford workshop Final Presentation. June 2003.



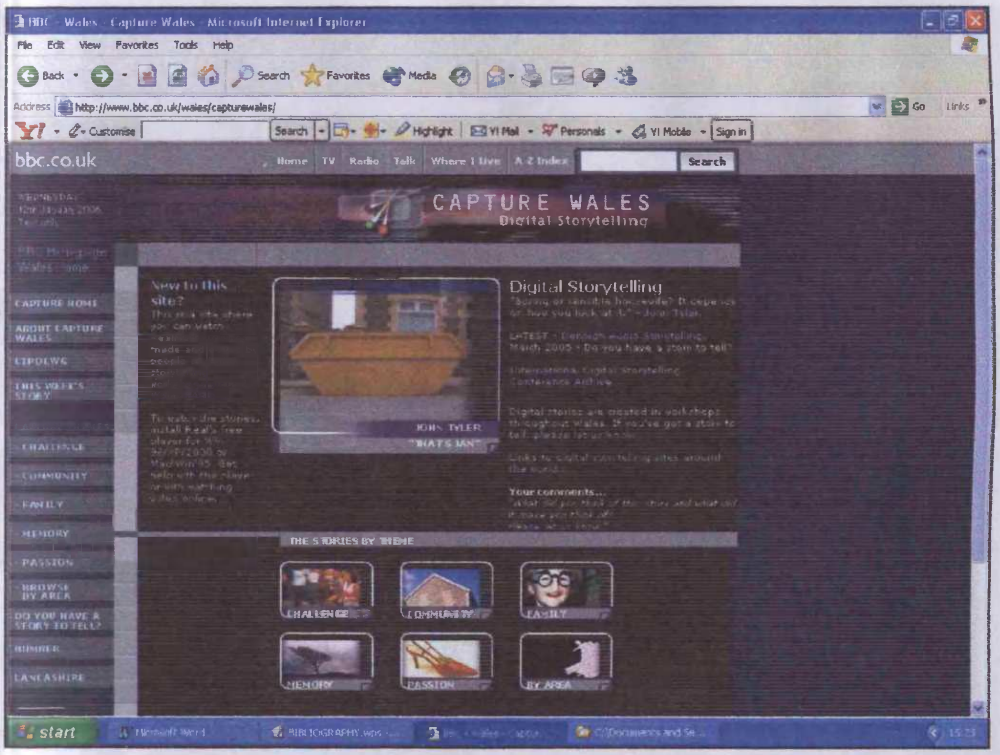
Left: Cardiff workshop, October 2004. Butetown Pavilion.



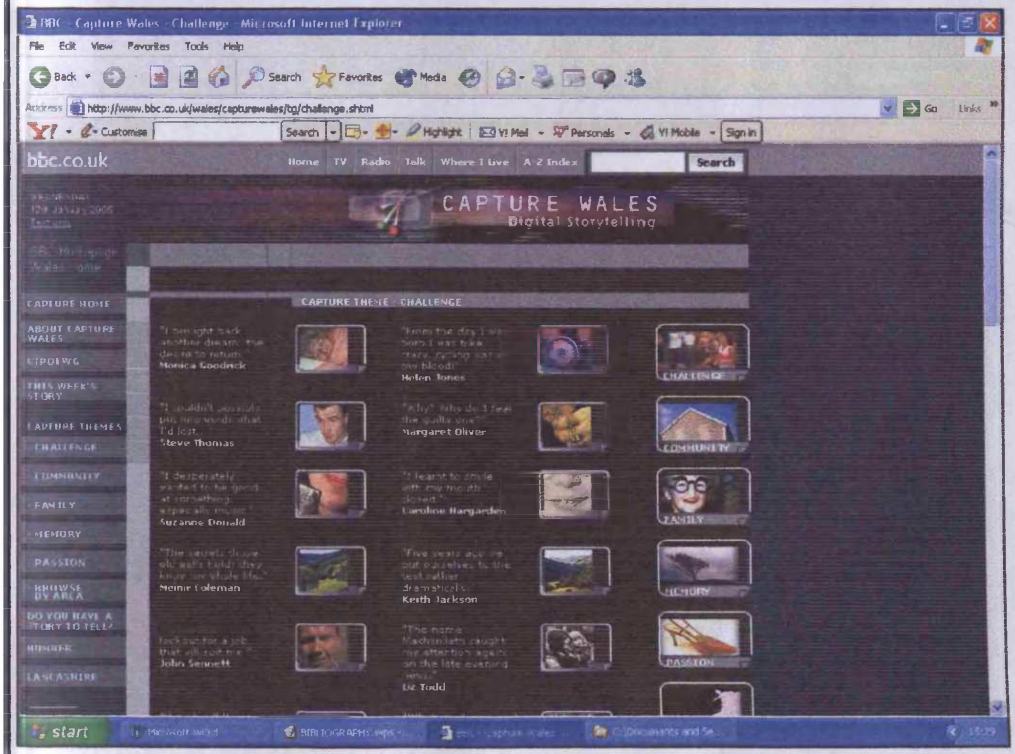
Left: Aberdare Boys School workshop, July 2004



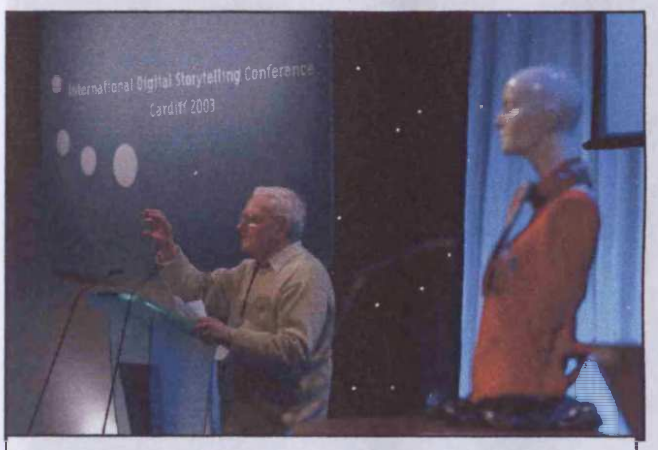
Left: Center for Digital Storytelling Workshop, Polverigi, Italy. February 2004.



Left: Still from *Capture Wales* website. The home page highlights one story, and provides links to the five options by theme: Challenge, Community, Family, Memory, Passion. Users can also click on a map and look at stories by area.



Left: Still from *Capture Wales* website 'Challenge' option [Accessed 12/01/05]. Users can click on an image to view a story, information about the storyteller, and a transcript of the voiceover. As of the above date, there are 42 stories on this page.



Dai Evans (workshop participant), speaking at the International Digital Storytelling Conference, Cardiff. November 2003



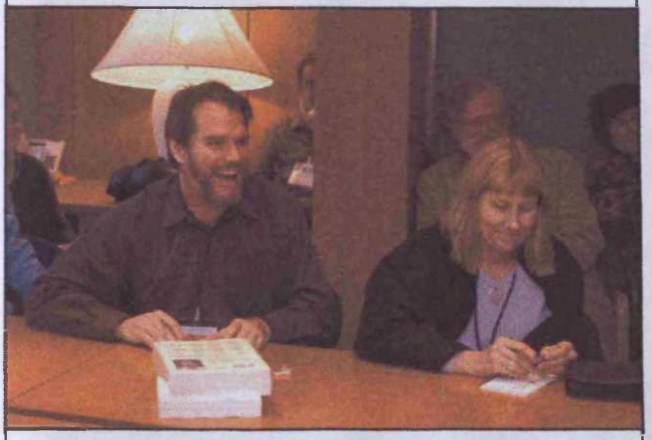
Daniel Meadows (Creative Director, *Capture Wales*), speaking at the International Digital Storytelling Conference, Cardiff. November 2003.



Education Panel, International Digital Storytelling Conference. From left, Ian Hargreaves, Tony Pugh, Chris Lovell, Sue Williams, Simon Collinge.



Menna Richards (Controller, BBC Wales), addressing the International Digital Storytelling Conference, Cardiff. November 2003.



Joe Lambert (Center for Digital Storytelling, Berkeley, California) and Denise Atchley (Digital Storytelling Festival), at the Digital Storytelling Association Meeting, Cardiff. November 2003.



The *Capture Wales* Team (and myself) at the International Digital Storytelling Conference. From left, Gareth Morlais, Karen Lewis, Daniel Meadows, Lisa Heledd, Carwyn Evans, Jenny Kidd, Huw Davies, Simon Turner (Freelance), Melanie Lindsell, Lisa Jones

Appendix 4: Guide to accompanying CD

To view stories, you must have QuickTime installed on your computer. If you do not, please visit http://www.apple.com/quicktime/products/qt/ for a free download.

A. Stories made as part of Capture Wales: samples

I.i Alys Lewis – History or Mystery
I.ii Ninad Thackare - Dear Daddy
I.iii Desider Golten - Prague Revisited
I.iv Jane Jones – A Year of Change

B. Stories made by the author on workshops

II.i Living with Bugman (Ammanford workshop, *Capture Wales*)
II.ii The Wise Delinquent (Polverigi, Italy workshop, Center for Digital Storytelling)

C. *Capture Wales* tutorial film, Scissors (courtesy of Daniel Meadows)

III.i Scissors

Main Links:

www.bbc.co.uk/wales/capturewales Capture Wales website, with links to English regions Digital Storytelling websites and a comprehensive list of relevant sites.
www.photobus.co.uk Daniel Meadows' website providing information about his Now and Then project, examples of Digital Stories and an online Digital Storytelling tutorial.
www.storycenter.org Center for Digital Storytelling website
www.nextexit.com Dana Atchley's Next Exit performance website
www.dstory.com Digital Storytelling Festival website, organised by Denise Atchley

CARDIFF UNIVERSITY