

ABSTRACT: SILVER STORIES INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE

On the Edge of a digital society – Using digital storytelling for empowering digitally excluded groups

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Abstract

The present paper will address how refugees and asylum seekers, who moved to Denmark leaving their home without belongings, used digital technologies to connect with Danish society, and how digital storytelling has been applied as a narrative therapeutic approach for self-reflection and empowerment.

This paper is based on several Danish and international projects and workshops using digital storytelling to give marginalized target groups a voice in society. The projects indicate that marginalized groups are often excluded from society caused by the lack of IT skills and digital expression. The main aspect in this research is on the digital divide and marginalized groups. Access to a computer, Internet and a mobile phone become crucial in the lives of refugees and asylum seekers who are socially, culturally or economically marginalized. This paper elucidates the significance of digital technologies in relation to inclusion and participation in the communication systems of an increasingly digitalized society.

It is our experience that Digital Storytelling can provide marginalized people with important opportunities to become digital-literate, confident, and influential communicators by providing new digital-literate spaces and tools for learning. Through Digital Storytelling marginalized groups such as refugees and asylum seekers can produce powerful forms of self-representation. The self-presentation comes along with the narrative as a primary genre for identity construction. By telling others who you are, can construction an agentive self.

Drawing on examples from the EU lifelong learning program; Silver Stories, The Danish Amnesty International campaign 'SHOUT OUT!', and workshops with asylum seekers and volunteers at the Asylum Festival 2015. This paper investigates how digital stories produced through these projects, provided digitally excluded groups a voice in society and most importantly a space for self-reflection and empowerment.

Keywords: Digital divide, marginalized groups, inclusion, self-reflection, migration, human rights, freedom of speech, digital empowerment.



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