

# Fundamentals of Online Storytelling



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## Agenda



- What's your story?
- The Elements of ALL great stories
- Storytelling Where They'll Least Expect It
- OpenSourcing Your Story
- Workshopping a Story
- Questions

# What's Your Story?

- What are you here to learn?
- If you could get one question answered here what would it be?

# The Elements of All Great Stories

“Myths are public dreams, dreams are private myths.”

– Joseph Campbell

# The Elements of All Great Stories

## The Story of Star Wars



HERO



NEMESIS



MENTOR



ORACLE



ANIMAL FAMILIAR

# The Elements of All Great Stories

## The Story of Store Wars



HERO  
(Cuke Skywalker)



NEMESIS  
(Darth Tater)



MENTOR  
(Obi Wan Canoli)



ORACLE



ANIMAL FAMILIAR

## The Elements of All Great Stories

# The Story of Store Wars

The result:

- 12 million views
- 15 major press hits including front page *USA Today* Life Section
- 6 film festivals
- Reached out well-beyond the choir, especially to children

## The Elements of All Great Stories

# Speak the Way People Think

People don't think in terms facts and statistics.  
They think in terms of...

The Elements of All Great Stories  
Speak the Way People Think

...CONFLICTS



(Electoral Politics)

The Elements of All Great Stories  
Speak the Way People Think

...HEROES



(Unionizing at WalMart)

# The Elements of All Great Stories Speak the Way People Think

...HEROES



(Environmentalism)

# The Elements of All Great Stories Speak the Way People Think

...VILLAINS



(Corporate Accountability)

# The Elements of All Great Stories Speak the Way People Think

...VILLAINS



(Gun Control)

# The Elements of All Great Stories Speak the Way People Think

Explain problems and solutions in a simplified way  
people can understand *emotionally*.



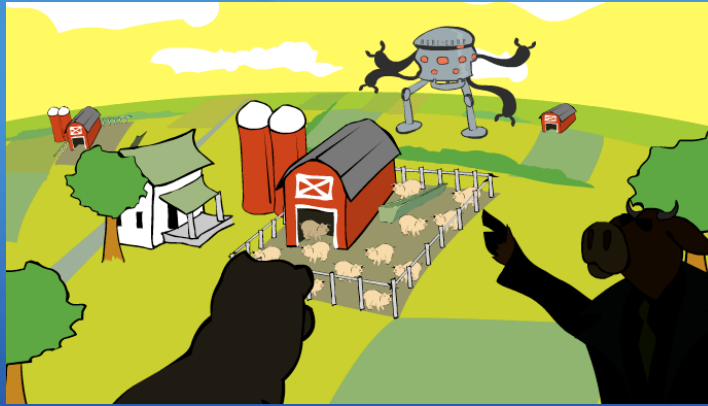
(Threats to Civil Liberties)



(Save Tenzin Delek)

## The Elements of All Great Stories Speak the Way People Think

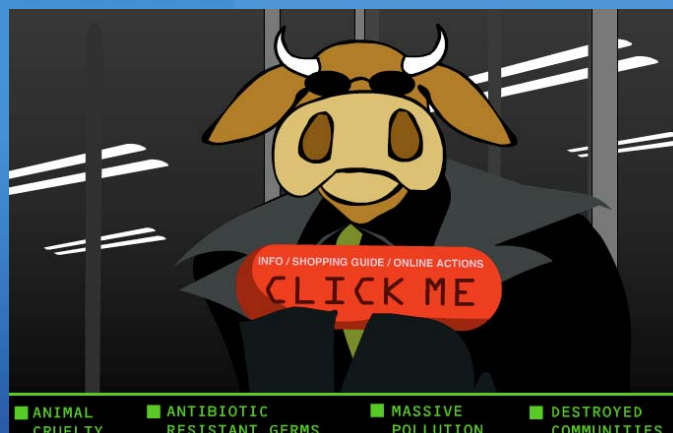
And if you can't do it in our world...  
Invent a world where you can.



(Factory Farming)

## The Elements of All Great Stories Speak the Way People Think

Every story involves a catalyst that makes transformation  
possible.



Why not let your audience be  
the catalyst?

# Storytelling Where They'll Least Expect It

How do you tell a story without telling a whole story?

# Storytelling Where They'll Least Expect It

As the primary element of a website...



# Storytelling Where They'll Least Expect It

As site features...



**What if We Ended World Hunger?**  
Your gift could feed a family, their children, and their children's children!

[Discover More ▶](#)



**Help Hungry Families Feed Themselves**  
"Teach a man to fish" has been the philosophy behind Heifer since 1944. Learn how it works.

[Discover More ▶](#)



**The Sanctuary at Ol Lentille**  
Can a safari lodge give back to local people and conserve wildlife? See what happens when AWF gets down to business.

[GO ▶](#)

# Storytelling Where They'll Least Expect It

As off-site banner and box ads...



**John Kerry**  
Paid for by John Kerry for President, Inc. [GIVE NOW](#)



**We're running a "Never Back Down" campaign.**

**John Kerry**  
Paid for by John Kerry for President, Inc. [GIVE NOW](#)



**Your \$50 gift now can put us over the top and help topple Bush!**

**John Kerry**  
Paid for by John Kerry for President, Inc. [GIVE NOW](#)

# Storytelling Where They'll Least Expect It

As copy...

## TORTURERS, WELCOME TO THE INFORMATION AGE.

Torturers thrive when they can act in secrecy. When it seems that no one is watching, torture is used to intimidate, coerce and silence men, women and children around the world.

*GETTING AWAY WITH TORTURE JUST GOT A LOT HARDER.*

Introducing Amnesty International's Internet-based FAST system. Whenever anyone is threatened with torture, FAST instantly sends out an alarm to a network of activists around the globe. Activists respond via email, and suddenly, the whole world is watching. Torturers, meet the information age. Activists, meet *FAST*.



AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL

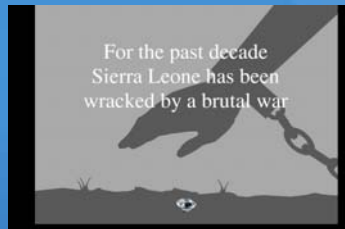
# Storytelling Where They'll Least Expect It

As interactive games...



# Storytelling Where They'll Least Expect It

As tools for influencing decision makers...



## Open Sourcing Your Story

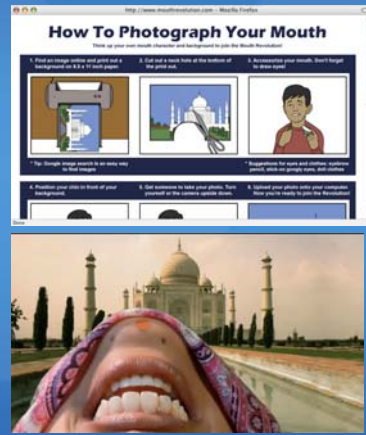
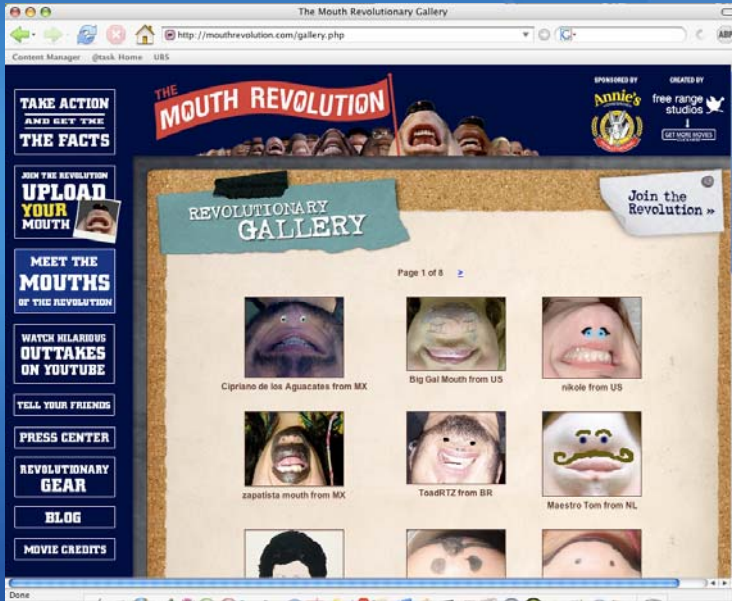
### WHAT WORKS:

- Clear directives: *You* choose the landscape
- Total Freedom: *They* tell *their* stories
- Meritocracy: *They* decide what's working
- Listen: Adjust your story to incorporate the best of theirs

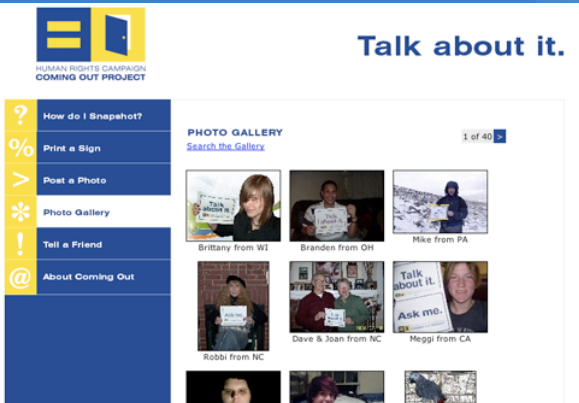
### WHAT DOESN'T:

- Free for All: Your campaign is not MySpace
- Tight Control: Stories are theirs not yours
- Phony Posts: Be patient, the right stories will come

# Open Sourcing Your Story



# Open Sourcing Your Story



# Workshopping a Story



## **STEP 1: Identify Your Audience**

- Instantly reflect what they desire to see told.

# Workshopping a Story



## STEP 1: Identify Your Audience

## **STEP 2: Identify Emotionally Resonant Themes**

- Come to your issue as if for the first time.
- Know that full understanding will take time.

# Workshopping a Story



STEP 1: Identify Your Audience

STEP 2: Identify Emotionally Resonant Themes

**STEP 3: Set Your Stage**

- Who are the heroes?
- The villains (human or otherwise)?
- How can your audiences join the story?

# Workshopping a Story



STEP 1: Identify Your Audience

STEP 2: Identify Emotionally Resonant Themes

STEP 3: Set Your Stage

**STEP 4: Choose your mysteries/metaphors**

# Workshopping a Story

STEP 1: Identify Your Audience

STEP 2: Identify Emotionally Resonant Themes

STEP 3: Set Your Stage

STEP 4: Choose your mysteries/metaphors

**STEP 5: Choose your medium**

# Workshopping a Story

Where can a strong story be helpful?

## **ONLINE:**

- On your website
- On your Listserv
- On Social networking sites

## **OFFLINE:**

- At Speaking Engagements
- In your Annual Report
- When Writing a grant proposal
- In brochures

# Workshopping a Story



What assets do you have that will help you tell your story?

- Case studies
- Shocking stats
- Testimonials
- Photos
- Feedback

# Workshopping a Story



Potential Hurdles

- Lack of spokespeople
- Lack of imagery
- Getting buy in to tell our story differently

# Questions

