

# MODULE 3

## S.U.3.3.3. – User engagement and storytelling



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## Aim & objectives

In this sub-unit the storytelling concept is established as a key competence of e-marketing.

The process to build a story, as well as the elements that make a good story are also presented.

Storytelling helps build up and maintain e-communities for cultural heritage sites. This sub-unit also explores the concepts of online communities and their different models.



## What will you learn (Learning outcomes)

- To analyze the role and characteristics of storytelling as key competence of e-marketing
- To learn about the process and resources to develop your storytelling
- To understand the benefits on online communities
- To reflect on membership possibilities and factors to be considered to implement a membership model



# Keywords & terms

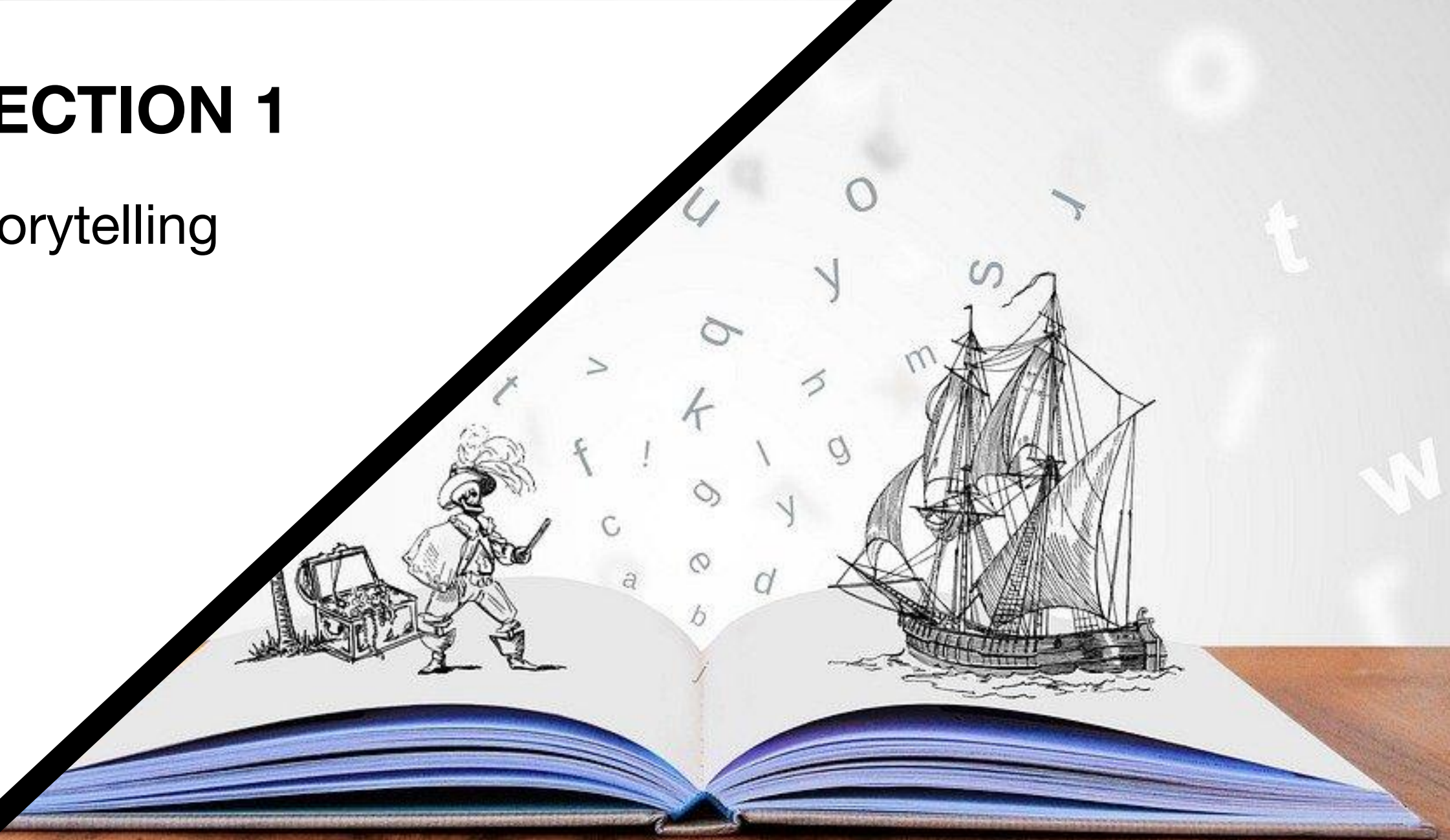
## Storytelling

“is the process of using fact and narrative to communicate something to your audience. Some stories are factual, and some are embellished or improvised in order to better explain the core message”  
(Decker, 2020).



# SECTION 1

## Storytelling





“An art. Not a process, method, or technique. Storytelling is described as an *art* ... the “art” of storytelling. And – like art – it requires **creativity, vision, skill, and practice**. Storytelling isn’t something you can grasp in one sitting, after one course. It’s a trial-and-error process of mastery. Sounds like a lot of work, right? It is, and rightfully so because storytelling has become a **crucial component of the most successful marketing campaigns**. It sets apart vibrant brands from simple businesses and loyal consumers from one-time, stop-in shoppers. It’s also the heart of inbound marketing. Storytelling is an incredibly valuable tool for you to add to your proverbial marketing tool belt” (Decker, 2020).

**Storytelling is:**

- Useful Info in a Narrative
- What Motivates Your Team
- What Your Brand Stands For
- About Your Customers
- Emotional & Engaging
- A Beginning, A Crisis & A Resolution
- An Interaction Between Your Customers And Your Brand

**Storytelling isn't:**

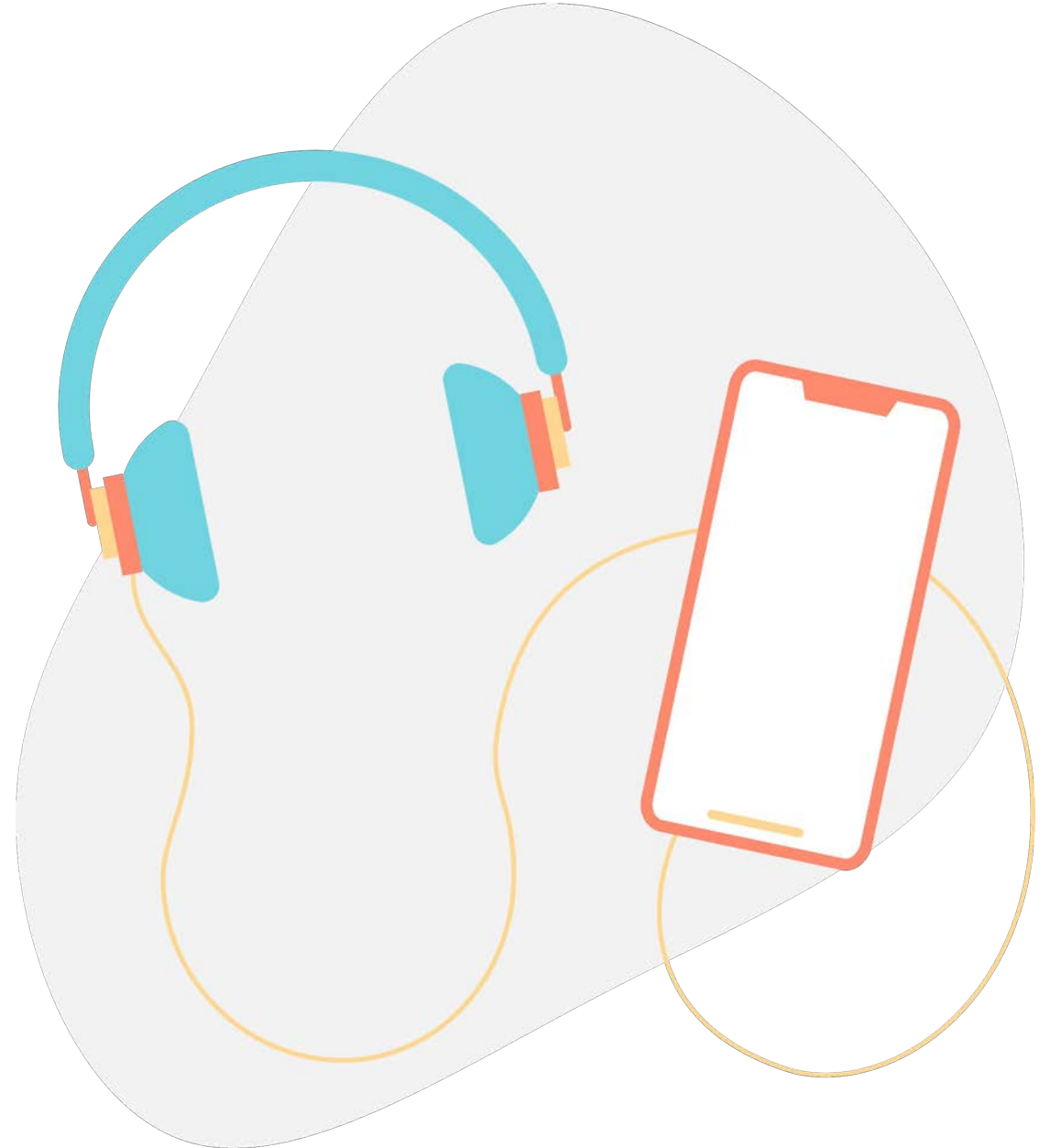
- Any 10,000 Word Article
- Your Sales Goals
- An Advertisement
- About Your Brand
- Boring
- Something “Cool” That Happened
- A Sales Pitch

Source: Tan (2021).

## Good stories are ...

- **Entertaining:** Good stories keep the reader engaged and interested in what's coming next.
- **Educational:** Good stories spark curiosity and add to the reader's knowledge bank.
- **Universal:** Good stories are relatable to all readers and tap into emotions and experiences that most people undergo.
- **Organized:** Good stories follow a succinct organization that helps convey the core message and helps readers absorb it.
- **Memorable:** Whether through inspiration, scandal, or humor, good stories stick in the reader's mind.

Source: Decker (2020).





## What makes a good story?

There are 4 components that make up a good story – regardless of the story you are trying to tell (Decker, 2020; van Blerk, 2019):



### CHARACTERS

at least one, that will be the key to relating your audience back to the story. Is the bridge between you and the audience.



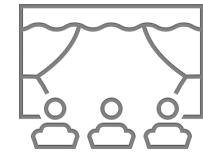
### SPACE

or environment where the story develops.



### CONFLICT

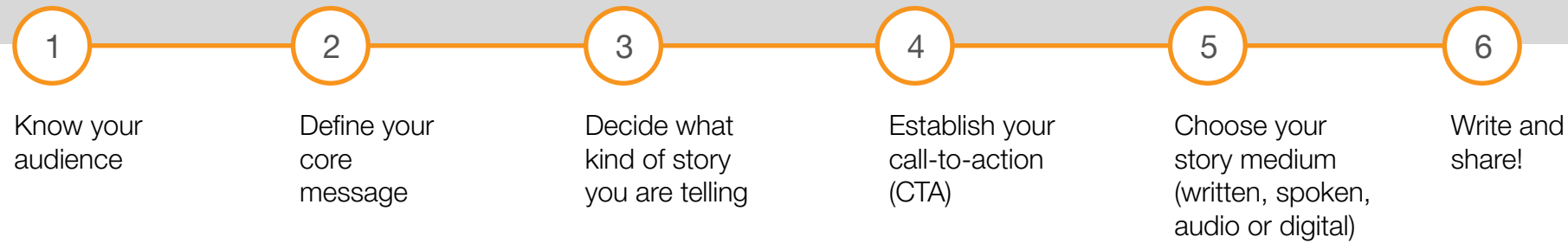
the lesson of how the character overcomes a challenge. The power lies in what you are conveying and teaching.



### RESOLUTION

the story's resolution should wrap up the story, provide a context around the characters and conflict(s), and leave your audience with a call-to-action (CTA).

# What's the process?



Source: Decker (2020).



# Resources for storytelling

For written stories: OEDb's writing resources

HubSpot's list of writing tools

TEDx Speaker guide

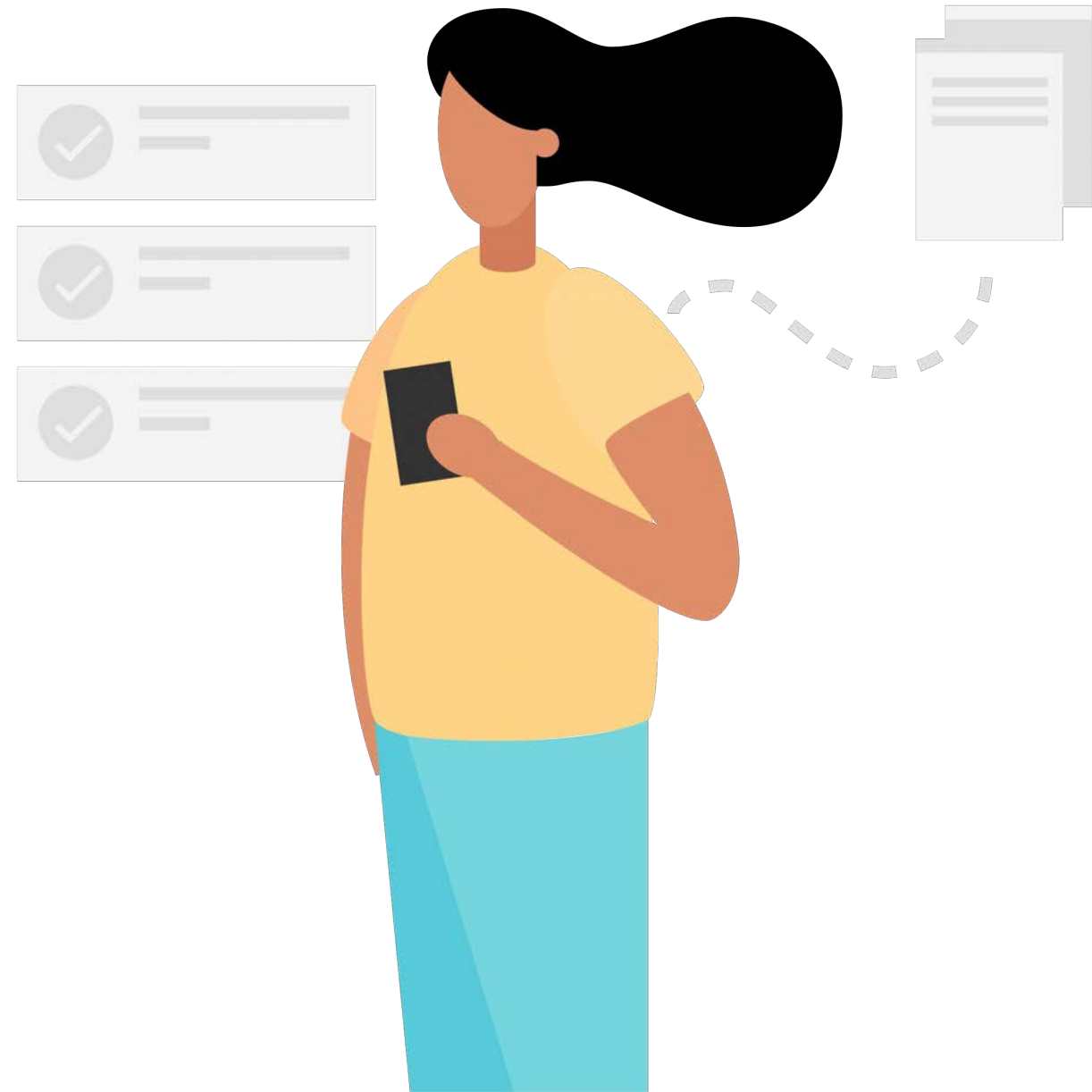
HubSpot's guide on how to start a Podcast

Vimeo's Video School

Animoto

ArcGIS StoryMaps – for cultural heritage

Research article: *Storytelling on mobile devices for cultural heritage*





# SECTION 2

## Storytelling in Cultural Heritage



“Heritage may have different interpretations and meanings to various people however, at its core it represents **a thread that runs from the past to the present. It provides a sense of belonging and continuity through the continuing development of historical items and stories.** Heritage management secures the significance and development of cultural wealth for future generations. Most cultures around the world have historically made use of oral storytelling to retain, accumulate and transmit information and cultural wealth. Beyond the pure entertainment factor, this mode can be used to convey important information and even for education purposes.

The narrative surrounding heritage sites or items is often interpreted narrowly with a strong adherence to scientific research structure. This approach usually only caters to the single user and lacks emotion which in turn fails to resonate and create impact with intended audiences. Adopting a storytelling approach which employs **dramatic and emotive communication methods** provides **an opportunity to deepen interaction and knowledge transfer”** (van Blerk, 2019).



## Why choose storytelling for heritage preservation?

“Storytelling is a useful tool for the preservation and dissemination of cultural heritage because it is a **universal aspect of human communication**. Along with stories, storytelling has been used to bridge the gap between people over time and across cultures. **Stories themselves are artefacts which can be stores in people’s memories and shared** over and over again. Now with the wide availability of digital technology and platforms, stories can be recorded and disseminated through a multitude of immersive techniques.

(...) The act of storytelling is also **adaptable** and can be implemented in various ways including workshops, performances as well as cultural activities. Storytelling within the museum space is particularly useful as it helps people **read and more deeply understand heritage object clearly by giving them purpose and context**. Attaching those objects or spaces to emotions increases the likelihood of **connecting with audiences and creating an impact**. Storytelling also allows for museums to become an **informal space for learning** and thus less intimidating to those less exposed to culture”

(van Blerk, 2019).

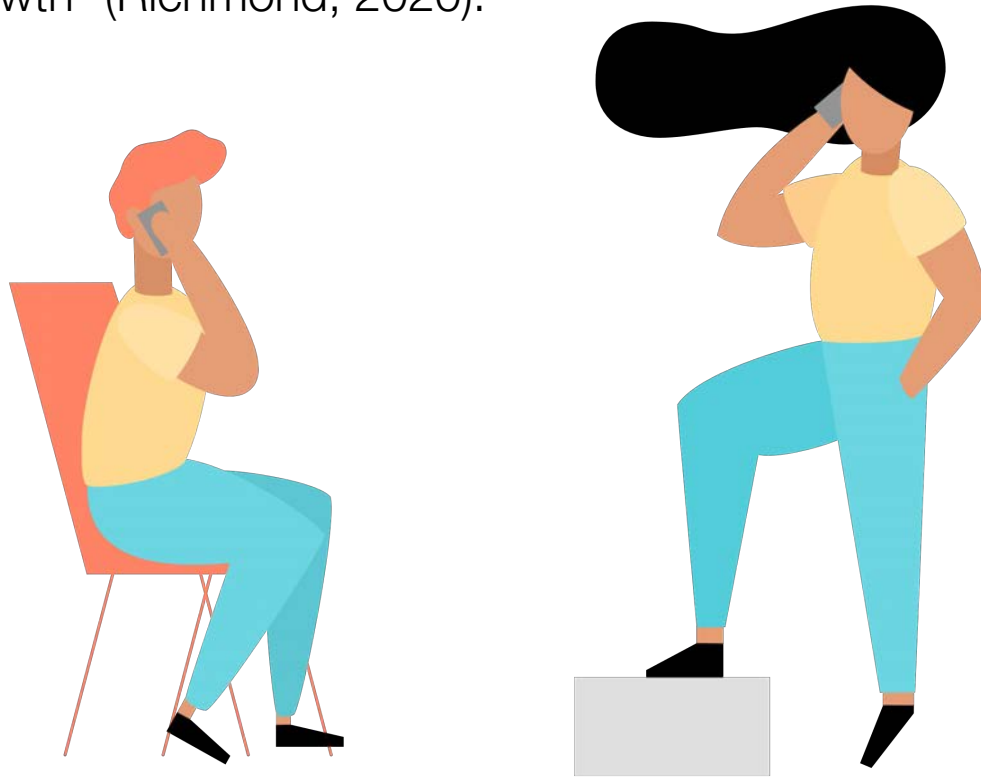


# SECTION 3

Building  
e-communities



“[Online] Communities are built **to listen to what people want** and let them drive the evolution of what it is. The idea is to listen to what they are looking for and provide them the tools they need and facilitate the change. Listening is the best thing you can do. Organizations often create online communities as a way to bring people together around a shared common purpose for expansive online collaboration and growth” (Richmond, 2020).



“If you're launching a new community or refreshing an existing one, **taking time to prepare** a plan is crucial for ensuring success. The best way to start is to determine **why you are building the community** to begin with. Reasons may range from you are trying to support your existing business or marketing efforts to wanting to counteract negative reviews and identify passionate fans. Either way, there are two questions you should consider when creating an online community:

- Why should I engage with my customers online?
- What's the best platform to do it with?”

(Chowdhury, 2019).

# Free vs. Owned Community Platforms

"FREE" PLATFORMS LIKE FACEBOOK AND TWITTER		OWNED PLATFORMS LIKE A COMMUNITY FORUM	
PRO	CON	PRO	CON
It's free for users and comes with a built-in audience.	You don't truly "own" your community and are therefore beholden to the decisions these companies make for how the platform serves your content to others. Right when you've mastered the platform your community lives on, the content algorithm changes, and you're forced to pivot your content strategy to retain your users' attention.	They give you tighter controls over your branding and messaging.	From an audience perspective, you're starting from scratch. Owned communities give you more freedom over your brand's messaging, but until your customers find out about your community, you have way more promoting to do to grow that community than you might have on a free platform.

Source: Chowdhury (2019).



# Benefits of establishing an online community

1

It eliminates the need of spending hours doing a Google search

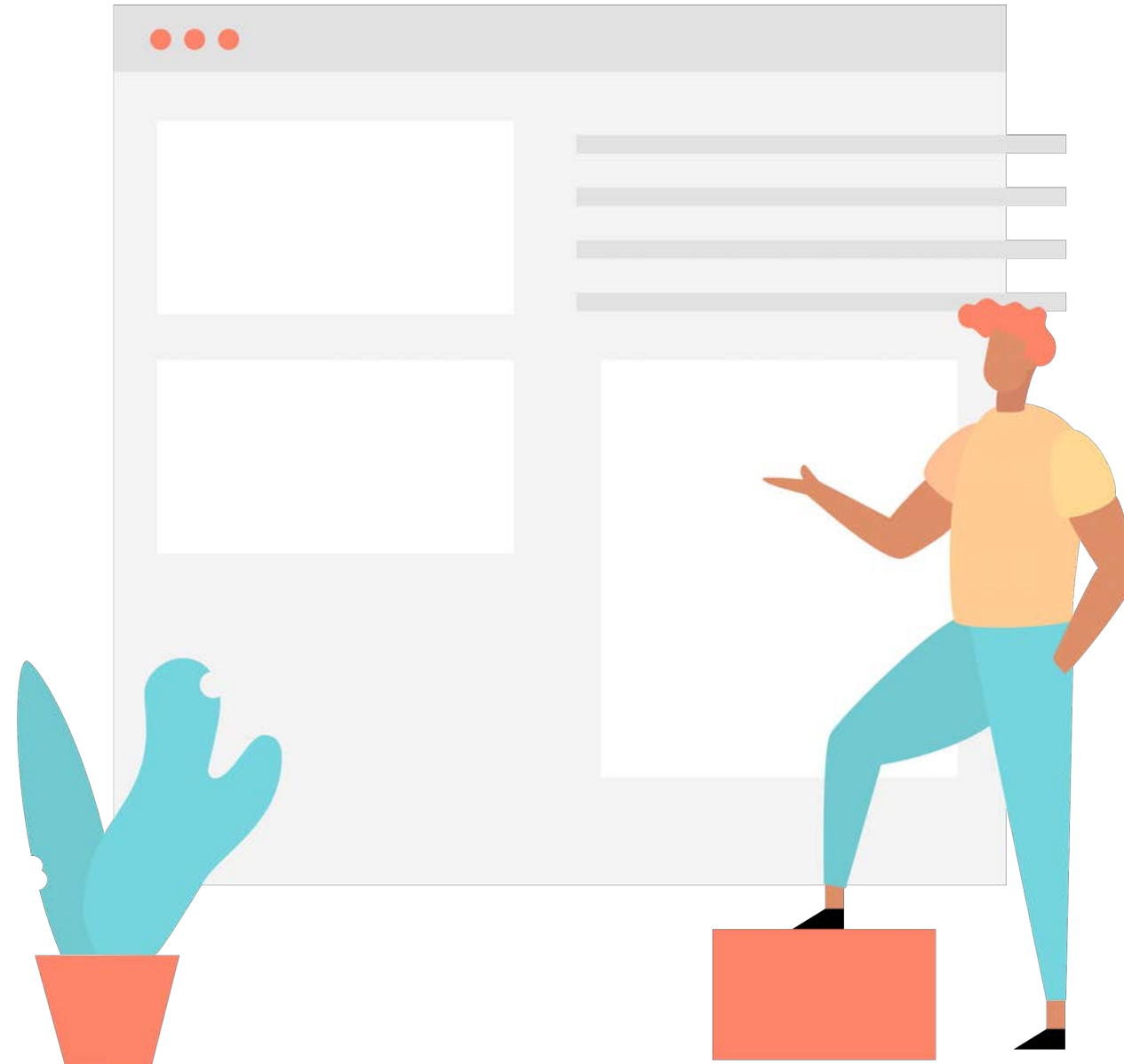
2

Communities come with a support, which means that one can get help if they need it

3

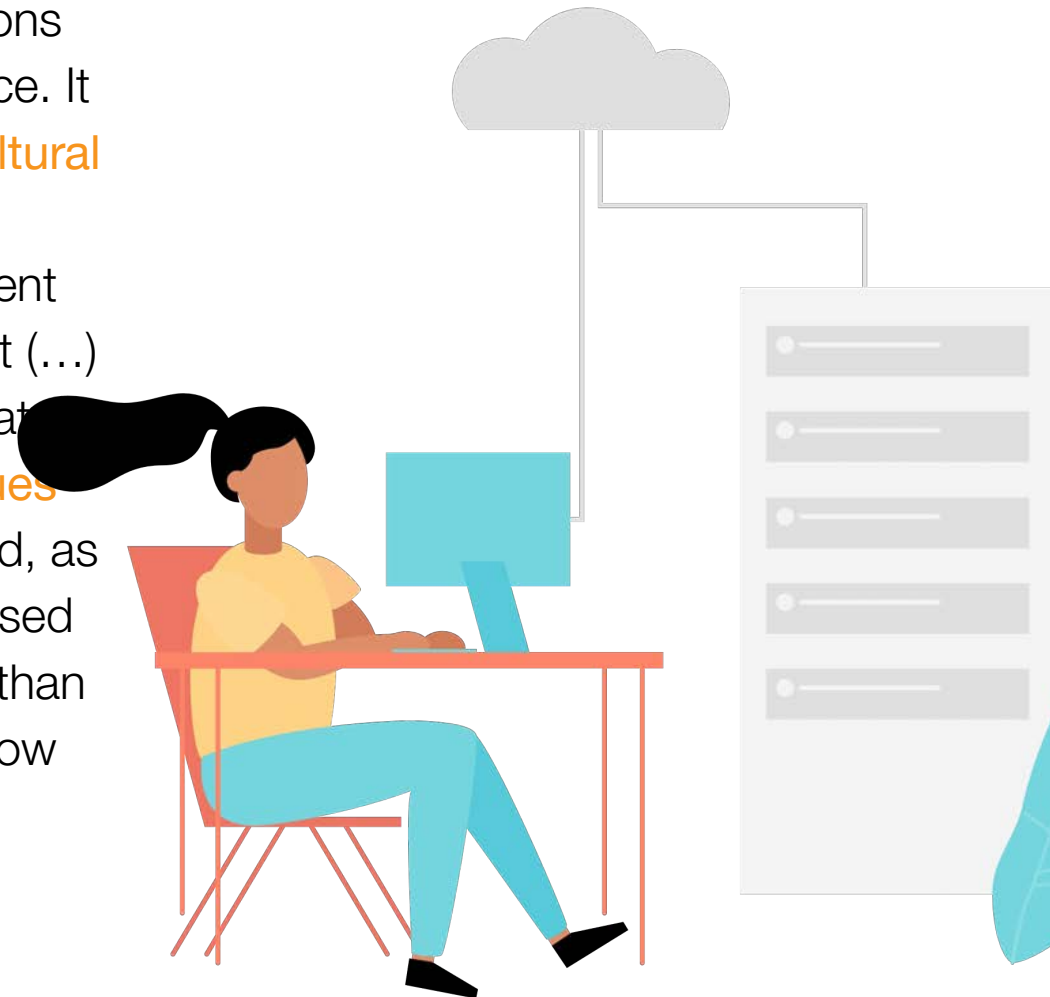
It provides a platform where people are able to exchange information, giving everyone who participates a voice

Source: Richmond (2020).



## How can online communities contribute to heritage knowledge?

A recent study by Manal and Teller (2020) showed that “digital communities can contribute to the current discourse on heritage by integrating different social media platforms and online applications in decision-making strategies as part of participatory governance. It can support **learning about different groups’ interests and cultural values**, therefore facilitate the development of cultural heritage management plans and policies that balance concern for different stakeholders and deliver inclusive and sustainable development (...) The significance of social media for heritage management is that it allows the **documentation of the construction process of values over time**. Social media is a unique source of data in this regard, as it is much more comprehensive than other sources that were used beforehand, such as press and media, and it is more dynamic than ex-post interviews where values and value registers are somehow stabilised and their importance may witness a rationalisation process”.



# SECTION 4

## Memberships







## Five tips to consider for your membership strategy:



Define what makes you different and focus your scheme around this (this should already sound familiar!)



Appreciate the bigger picture and measure its success across the museum



Create clear sub-brands that appeal across audiences and market accordingly



Give members a reason to visit time and time again



Tell members how they are helping your collection – communication is key!

“If positioned correctly, membership can provide a great tool for engaging multiple audiences, widening the appeal of other fundraising and income generating activity”

(Fuller, 2019).

Source: Fuller (2019).

“Furthermore, in a quick changing scenario, organisations need to determine how they fit into the transforming digital landscape and anticipate the changing expectations of their visitor and member base. Looking to the present and future, there are a few trends to take notice of to ensure the ongoing success of membership operations:

RISE IN COSTS OF MEMBERSHIP	RAPID SHIFTS IN CONSUMER EXPECTATIONS	INCREASING ECO-CONSCIOUS AUDIENCES	COMPETITION FOR LOYALTY
Museums need to be smarter with where they direct their money. Innovating membership by introducing digital membership cards is just one small step in efforts to save on staff labor, time, and money.	Mobile phones and social media are just some of the elements that need to be included into the equation. Users tend to consume more and more from their phones, so adapting our services to this new media is essential to keep your members. Digital membership cards can be downloaded and instantly added to the digital wallet, ensuring a no-hassle membership experience!	If you want to keep up, you have to go green!	When competing for loyalty, one of the greatest benefits you can offer in convenience. Simplifying logistics, creating memberships that adapt to your audience (family options, for example) can help you organisation stay ahead. Be user friendly!”

Source: Ciecko (2019).

# SECTION 5

## Case studies



## List of case studies

- Animal Crossing x The Met
- The Science of Spying: storytelling in an children exhibition
- Dallas Museum of Art Membership Program, DMA Friends





## Case study I – Animal Crossing x The Met

An amazing and really clever strategy of user engagement was the campaign that the MET organised for its 150 anniversary. Through the renowned Nintendo game “Animal Crossing”, the Met’s Digital Department made the Museum’s entire collection of more than 406.000 Open Access Images easy to transport into the user’s virtual homes and islands. Is there a best way to get your visitors to continue their knowledge trip at home?

More info on:

<https://www.metmuseum.org/blogs/collection-insights/2020/animal-crossing-new-horizons-qr-code>



Sources: bolavip.es / as.com

## Case study II – The Science of Spying: storytelling in an children exhibition



Source:

<https://www.museumnext.com/article/why-do-stories-matter-to-museums-and-how-can-museums-become-better-storytellers/>

Held in London, at the Science Museum, and in the US, at the Children's Museum of Indianapolis, the Science of Spying was an interactive exhibition devoted to modern espionage designed for children, where visitors were given the opportunity to play a role in the narrative. The physical layout of the exhibition guided visitors through a series of story events, taking them from complication to resolution. After being 'recruited' at the entrance – where they received a spy ID – they made their way through a set of training exercises and received their mission. The mission is effectively the obstacle they need to overcome. With their preparation complete, they were sent undercover, infiltrating an organisation to collect information and crack a code. The story ended with their escape and debrief (Faherty, 2019).

## Case study III – Dallas Museum of Art Membership Program, DMA Friends



Back in 2013, Dallas Museum of Art was the first museum in USA to offer a free membership program. Why offer a strategy that can increase the revenue, for free? Because the museum was looking for another exchange: DMA Membership in exchange for visitor data. As the described it, it is a “free, optional program that encourages and recognised visitor and DMA Membership participation as an essential ingredient of the museum experience”. DMA Friends helped grow the museum’s membership numbers, with over 100.000 friends, making it the 4<sup>th</sup> largest membership base in the country (artdaily, 2015).

Source: <https://artdaily.cc/news/77944/Dallas-Museum-of-Art-s-DMA-Friends-Program-home-to-100-000-members#.YLSNCC3aOfA> / <https://cuseum.com/blog/2018/9/12/5-creative-innovative-experiments-in-museum-membership>

# SECTION 6

Open questions  
and hints





## Open questions and reflections

- What story can you tell about your cultural heritage project?
- Think about the 4 elements of a good story for your (real or hypothetical) cultural heritage project: characters, space, conflict and resolution
- Can you think of a successful storytelling experience for cultural heritage preservation?
- Could it be useful for your (real or hypothetical) cultural heritage project to build a (free or owned) online community?





## Tips

- If done well, storytelling can be a huge ally for your cultural institution: not only it will help you engage more customers, but also maintain them!
- Don't try to overdo it, good stories are made of the basics: a good plot, few characters and a happy ending.
- Always remember your audience: they are the key to your success, whatever strategy you follow.
- Paid is not always better: if used well, free channels can be more useful and help you reduce costs! (And you will probably get more users too)





**Closing section**



## To continue your learning

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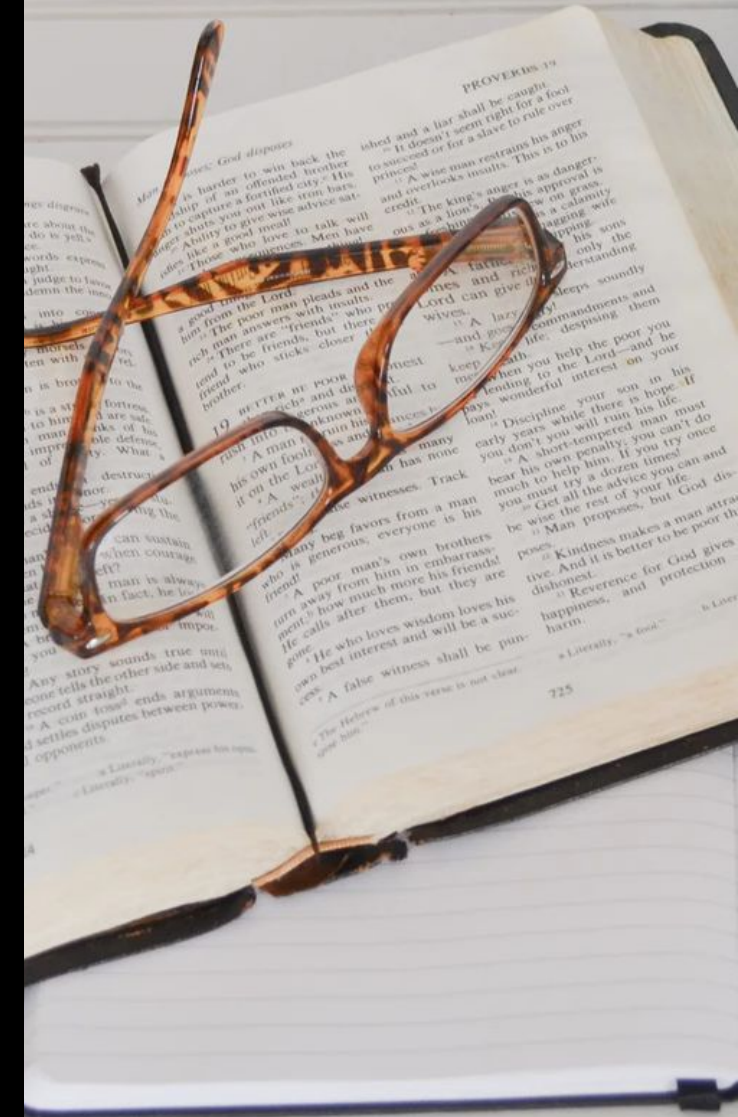
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