



Digital Storytelling in India and France's Literary Space: A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This comparative study lights up the metamorphosis of the art of storytelling as it presents itself in the pixel realms of India and France. In this paper we will understand the tapestry of both of these nations as they have profoundly distinct yet equally old and rich literary lineages. In India digital storytelling is an art of living tradition, folklore and dying rituals, etc. Which gets a new life, along all digital landscapes. France, on the other hand has quite a sophisticated and rather cultivated institutional approach. Steeped in rich literary tradition and philosophical depth, when conveyed from pages to pixel, is done so with a certain level of gravitas.

The work in digital realms is most often supported by various institutions and frameworks. It is more like the digital screen is seen as an extension of the real written folios, so that each digital vignette sculpts a narrative that upholds the nation's rich cultural standards and promotes intellectual engagement.

This study shows how each of these countries have divergent yet compelling pathways in terms of digital storytelling. India's storytelling is organic, a community-born evolution while France is a refined sculpting of artistic past to polish the future. Together, both of these affirm that digital storytelling is just not merely a vessel but a living palimpsest, while having the capacity to evolve while sitting deep in people's soul.

Keywords: Digital Storytelling, Comparative Studies, Indian Storytelling, French Literature, New Media Narratives.

Introduction

A digital story is a modern method of narrative sharing that employs multimedia elements, including voiceover, music, images, and special effects, in brief films that are typically three to five minutes in length. The experience is immersive and participatory, and it is crafted using modern technological tools in conjunction with time-honored oral storytelling techniques. Recently, the emergence of digital storytelling has opened up new opportunities for the creation and analysis of stories in various fields, such as academia, popular culture, and literature. The idea of digital storytelling started to take form in the late 20th century, when personal computers and the internet were more widely available. At first, specific expertise and tools were required. The proliferation of online story-sharing communities in the late aughts and early 2000s was, however, made possible by sites like WordPress, YouTube, Myspace, Tumblr, and Instagram. Prior to the development of smartphones and intuitive applications, storytelling was already accessible to a large audience. Interactive stories, digital poetry, and online fiction are all outcomes of this change in literary practice.

This research paper affirms the educational framework, the various cultural values, and the different narratives that each of these countries has. It also embraces the various advancements, be they in the field of technology or various

digital spaces. Digital storytelling was popular and was gaining traction even before the pandemic hit. But after COVID-19, when everyone was blocked in their rooms, it became a way to socialize and express and share their thoughts and narratives on different topics. This led to an increase in various digital social groups, like groups based on poetry, narratives, etc. Digital storytelling helped people be more creative and to speak openly on various topics. It provided the public with a platform to express themselves while everyone was confined to their homes. One of the most powerful aspects of digital storytelling is that it gives everyone a chance to share their voice. People no longer need to go through publishers or media houses—they can simply use their phones or laptops to tell their stories. It also allows for interactive experiences where the audience can explore or even choose how the story goes, using tools like virtual or augmented reality. Digital storytelling offers a very engaging way of expressing human emotions and narratives. Documentaries like *The Civil War*, produced by Ken Burns, who's also considered a very important figure in digital storytelling, used historical context and sources to give a very unique narrative. A mixture of video with personal records and stories was started in the 1970s. Dana Atchley was one of the first to do it. She later co-founded the Centre for Digital Storytelling with Joe Lambert, which is still in California.

Even though digital storytelling is growing, there hasn't been much research comparing how it works in different literary cultures.

This study aims to fill that gap by exploring how India and France are using digital storytelling in their literary spaces. It will look at the similarities and differences, the challenges and opportunities, and the role of storytelling in education, culture, and personal expression. Through this, the research hopes to support future efforts in literature, education, and cultural preservation in the digital age.

Evolution in Literary and Educational Spaces

Digital storytelling has revolutionized various fields such as literature, education, and the preservation of cultural traditions and creative expression. Instead of passively consuming stories through reading or watching, people can now actively participate in creating them. Thanks to innovations in technology, anyone with a smartphone or computer can now tell stories. This shift has made it possible to hear more diverse viewpoints and fresh approaches to storytelling. Digital storytelling in the classroom is becoming increasingly popular in educational institutions around the world. It is an effective way to improve students' learning while also being a fun activity. It allows them to combine digital tools like video editing, voice recording, and image selection with traditional storytelling skills like character development and strong plot writing. Educators also use it to assess students in a more dynamic and engaging manner. Digital storytelling has many applications in the classroom, but one of the most important is to help students develop critical thinking skills. When writing their stories, they must collect information, prioritize it, and think about how to keep their readers' interest.

Students improve their communication and teamwork skills by collaborating on storyboarding, recording, and editing projects in groups. Various disciplines, including healthcare education, literature, and the arts, employ digital storytelling. Take mental health and therapy as an example; they have facilitated the exchange of personal stories, research, and other information between students and professionals. This article demonstrates the versatility and practicality of digital storytelling in various fields. The rise of digital storytelling has fundamentally changed the nature of literature. Nowadays, stories are told in more than just books. The story's essential components, such as plot, characters, and themes, can now be saved alongside audio, video, and visual elements.

As a result, authors of all languages and backgrounds have more opportunities than ever before to reach readers all over the world. Subtitles, translations, and notes make the stories more accessible to audiences all over the world. Digital storytelling has also entered classrooms as a way to improve students' understanding of cultural history and literature. The use of digital projects, interactive tales, and films has opened up new avenues for student engagement with literature and historical events. The learning process becomes more interesting, and students are able to establish deeper connections to the content. On top of that, it gives them the technical knowledge that is crucial in today's world.

India through the Eyes of the Screen

i). **Historical Context and Literary Tradition:** India has a long and distinguished history of storytelling. Storytelling, in all its forms (verbal, visual, and performed), has always been an important part of human

culture. The stories here reflect the country's rich cultural diversity and are frequently updated to fit current events. The Ramayana is a famous story that has spread beyond India to countries such as Thailand. From Valmiki's Sanskrit epic to Tamil and Thai retellings, each version incorporates local and cultural elements. As digital media has become more popular, new ways to record and share traditional stories have come up. Digital humanities projects have made it possible to record and share history in ways that were not possible before. The Indian National Trust for Art and Cultural Heritage (INTACH) has hired seventeen short films for the Ramayana Project, which is one of these projects. These movies show carvings in temples, folk performances, and different ways that people in different parts of the world tell the Ramayana story. These digital projects make sure that traditional ways of telling stories will not only survive but also do well in today's world.

ii). **Digital Storytelling in Indian Literature:** Digital storytelling in India is different from other types of storytelling because it focuses on community. Many unknown storytellers became famous through online platforms, even though they didn't have big budgets or organized support. These stories shared on Zoom, Instagram, and YouTube during a tough time changed people's lives, taught them things, and brought people together. This grassroots movement gave a voice to people who weren't heard in traditional publishing.

iii). **Educational Applications:** Schools discovered new and interesting ways to apply digital storytelling, particularly during the pandemic. Children in schools participated in online theatrical performances and virtual storytelling sessions, employing new technology to narrate old stories. For instance, Rituparna Ghosh initiated "Your Story Bag" in 2015. The group collaborated with "The Delhi Storytellers Tribe" to narrate stories that would assist in raising funds for COVID-19 relief and preserve cultural heritage. They took classic authors' work, such as Satyajit Ray's, and placed it online so children from all around India and even outside countries could view them together. "Story Circle" by Yogita Bansal Ahuja is another. It provides certificate courses in the art of storytelling. These are all examples of how digital storytelling is no longer a mere hobby but a useful skill.

iv). **Empowerment and Social Impact:** Digital storytelling is also gaining ground in India, both as an awareness-raising tool for social issues as well as a way to celebrate diversity. Freedom of oppressed communities and documentation of local languages and customs are two objectives that have given birth to new initiatives. Individuals who reside in rural communities or are Native Americans have realized that digital storytelling is an excellent method through which they can express their stories and relate with other people, thereby having greater freedom to narrate their stories. Their stories enable individuals from various backgrounds to place their prejudices aside and imagine from another person's view. Indian cultural groups and schools have sponsored storytelling projects focusing on topics such as discrimination against caste, gender equity, and conserving the environment. Participatory story-telling enables communities to examine their history and how it connects to social change. India has a rich tradition of employing stories, literature, and oral history to engage people in their societies and sensitize them to social

concerns. This approach is in keeping with India's tradition of employing the arts, literature, and media to unite citizens to debate and reconcile social and political problems.

- v). **Opportunities and Challenges:** Even though it is in vogue now, Indian digital storytelling still has a way to go. One of the main issues is that not everyone is well-equipped with good internet or hardware, particularly in rural or underdeveloped regions. Digital media is purportedly not as emotionally charged as live oral telling by certain traditional storytellers, and any online tool simply cannot capture the full richness of folk and local culture. But the majority of individuals think that digital storytelling is an addition, not a substitute, for the old ways. With new media, storytellers can utilize pictures, voice, and text to create stories that are accessible to individuals. The merging of tradition and technology has created new outlets for artists to convey their messages.

Case Study: Digital Storytelling and the Ramayana in India

Introduction: India's storytelling has changed over the years, shifting from oral to visual to performance. Its most revered epic, Ramayana, has been translated and retold many times. Digital media has boosted the popularity of storytelling by integrating conventional and novel ways of telling stories to connect with wider audiences and conserve cultural heritage. Context and Procedures Digital platforms were essential to sustaining cultural practices during the time of the COVID-19 pandemic. Storytellers and teachers employed video-sharing sites such as Zoom, YouTube, and Instagram so they could keep folks engaged although they were distant. Due to this shift, storytelling was more accessible, allowing new and older voices to develop.

How to Use It and What It Does- Digital Ramayana Projects: INTACH's Ramayana Project utilized short films to record local storytelling forms, folk performances, and temple carvings. These were used to keep the epic going in the digital age. The Ramayana mobile app, created by a team of college students, operates as a virtual museum that has more than 350 audio and text short stories, along with interactive quizzes and perspective polls that are offered in several different languages. The visual depictions, character effects, and interactive guides of the app provide access to the epic story for various people.

Educational Initiatives: The course combined web performances and online lectures, compelling students to report their experiences on the Internet. Educational courses utilizing digital media, including "Your Story Bag" and "Story Circle," sought to educate children on the significance of storytelling as well as cultural heritage preservation.

Findings and Impacts- Sustaining Cultural Traditions: Multimedia, VR, and interactive apps have ensured that Ramayana will be accessible to generations to come.- **Community Involvement:** Virtual meeting spaces have empowered the voiceless and united people across the globe, giving Indians and others a sense of belonging.- As a competency, digital storytelling is gaining popularity, and certified courses and webinars are enabling the development of a lifelong passion for learning and appreciation of cultures. **Issues to be Resolved:** Though digital storytelling has come a long way, it is not perfect.- **Digital Divide:** Because of the unavailability of suitable hardware and internet connectivity, individuals residing in impoverished or rural settings do not have similar access to the internet. Others argue that digital

media lacks the emotional richness of live oral telling. Maintenance of spiritual and cultural purity of tales such as the Ramayana requires a fine balance of tradition and innovation. In conclusion. The Ramayana projects, which are cases of digital storytelling in India, are just one such way technology can bring new life to old tales. Due to advancements in technology, individuals in India have more ways than ever to engage, learn, and keep their cultural heritage alive. Through this means, the Indian tradition of storytelling continues on into the current time.

France through the Eyes of the Screen

- i). **Historical Context and Literary Tradition:** France has a rich literary past and a strong institutional system for the development and cultivation of cultural heritage, and these are the pillars on which the national digital storytelling is built. French literature is greatly valued for its cultural awareness, strong theoretical base, and accurate use of words. These have been pivotal in the spread of digital storytelling across the country's cultural and learning institutions. French education has traditionally shared strong affinities among literature, philosophy, and cultural critique, and aesthetic density and intellectual sophistication have been at the heart of digital storytelling efforts. The Académie française and the Ministry of Culture are two institutional models that underpin France's intervention in maintaining language levels and cultural integrity. These institutions have facilitated highly structured, integrated digital storytelling programs that are consistent with national values and cultural objectives. This institution-based, top-down approach is distinctive in its systematic and long-term nature.

- ii). **Digital Storytelling in French Literature:** French literary institutions have begun exploring digital narrative to reignite the interest of contemporary readers in those pieces of earlier times and introduce them to novel ways of storytelling. Fortunately, the new editions preserve profound philosophical concepts behind French literature. Literary education encourages learners to think creatively and critically by introducing multimedia characteristics such as video, audio, interactivity, and hypertext. To boost the readership of French literature, especially among English readers abroad, publishers and literary associations have used digital storytelling. They made readers worldwide access French literary treasures by designing interactive, multilingual editions that maintained the original cultural and linguistic information. This approach has been particularly helpful in academic environments, where students are able to learn various cultures through digital storytelling.

- iii). **Educational Applications:** With the use of digital storytelling in French schools, the process and outcome are emphasized. French teachers apply digital tools in a manner that is commensurate with traditional teaching methods, and not merely due to their novelty. Digital storytelling has the potential to help students better understand literary works, enhance their interpretive capabilities, and take their accounts and reflections of their lives under the strict analytical parameters. Teacher education programme graduates should be familiar with both educational theory and practice and technical skills. The main focus in such programs is cultural consciousness of digital storytelling, literary theory, and curriculum goals. Students are taught digital media skills

while they are provided with an enhanced appreciation of literature and its social context.

iv). Empowerment and Social Impact: The French have also witnessed the evolution of digital storytelling as a tool for social awareness and the promotion of cultural awareness. Initiatives were initiated with the sole aim of empowering marginalized groups and preserving regional and minority languages. Immigrant groups have used digital storytelling as an effective tool of cultural integration, making it possible for them to narrate their stories in their own words. These stories unite people in a more diverse society, making it possible for them to know and understand one another. French cultural institutions started on their way with storytelling initiatives that speak to central issues in society like global warming, discrimination, and civic duty. Participatory storytelling initiatives engage community members in reflecting on their lives and the impact they have on others. France has a long tradition of using art and literature to engage people in politics and society. All of these actions are in line with France's past practice of employing art and literature to involve people in politics and society.

v). Challenges and Opportunities: There have been problems with using digital storytelling in France. Keeping up with changing technology while still keeping up with language and literary standards has been a major concern. Policymakers and teachers often argue about how to protect the French language and its literary canon while also accepting new digital forms. Still, these problems have led to new ideas. French institutions have responded by creating digital storytelling models that combine old and new ways of doing things to make sure that students have high-quality cultural and educational experiences. These programs are seen as models in the international education system because they put a lot of emphasis on theoretical consistency and systematic evaluation.

Case Study: Digital Storytelling in France

Introduction: France boasts a rich and varied literary and cultural heritage. The government has encouraged digital storytelling, with the Ministry of Culture and the Académie française playing the leading roles. The long-term aim is to employ technology responsibly so that the French language, history, and culture can be preserved.

Context and Procedures: French schools emphasize critical thinking, literature, and philosophy. The schools are adding digital storytelling to their curriculum at an accelerated pace. Audio, video, and other forms of media are utilized to capture students' interest and enhance their learning process. Teachers and students must utilize the internet innovatively appreciating the richness of classic literature.

Functionality and Execution: Courses are designed jointly with literary and cultural organizations to ensure the realization of national educational objectives in a well-balanced manner. French students and teachers are employing multimedia narratives to reinterpret traditional and new French narratives in audio, video, and interactive forms with an aim to popularize them among a greater number of people. To facilitate French literature for a worldwide audience, there are interactive books in various languages and multicultural editions produced by the publishers. There are various positive social impacts of digital storytelling. It tends to preserve languages, makes marginalized groups heard, and

provides awareness of urgency-based societal issues such as climate change and prejudice. They unite communities. What this means, and the consequences the availability of the internet has inspired greater interest in French literature and the resultant appreciation for it in France and globally. Teachers are advantaged as their pupils enhance their technical, interpretive, and analytical skills, as well as literacy skills in literature and everyday life. Incorporating newcomers into digital stories that preserve minority cultures leads to a more cohesive society. Worldwide Respect: Other countries envy France's cautious and calm reaction. Problems to solve Implementing new technology without taking a cut in linguistic and literary quality is a difficult task. Software problems with the software needed: In certain situations, both students and teachers may find that the required software is not readily available.

In conclusion France has demonstrated that digital storytelling can improve classroom instruction, foster community, and preserve literary traditions. Tradition and innovation can coexist peacefully, demonstrated by France's strong institutions and cutting-edge technology.

Digital Storytelling: Tradition vs Sophistication

i). Cultural Context and Literary Tradition: A contrast of Indian and French e-storytelling shows that there is a wide difference in how literary heritage and cultural background affect the dissemination and adoption of digital narrative practice. Cultural diversity, oral tradition of storytelling, and community engagement are the key ideas that dictate India's methodology. Indian storytelling has been an art that has involved a wide cross-section of society in its participation. Digital stories comfortably slot into the contemporary while remaining culturally relevant. This approach is in keeping with centuries-long transmission and reinterpretation of Indian narratives. In French digital storytelling, cultural preservation, literary sophistication, and institutional backing are priorities. Due to their origins within a rich literary culture emphasizing clear expression and deep reflection, French digital storytelling projects are generally well-planned and institutionally funded. Here, France's need to preserve such indicators of culture while adopting new technology is evident. The democratization of online storytelling has had mixed impacts in nations. India's bottom-up approach has empowered the voiceless communities. France's institutional approach, by contrast, dominates online stories under France's literary heritage by favoring preservation over participatory freedom.

ii). Technological Infrastructure and Access: At the national level, access and digital infrastructure play a significant role in the evolution of digital storytelling. In India, unequal access to devices and the internet between socioeconomic classes faces digital storytellers, and the character of their innovative solutions reflects the character of technology in India today. While the digital storytelling efforts reached global levels, the digital divide kept it from completely engaging, highlighting the strengths and limitations of India's digital infrastructure. Due to its high-tech infrastructure, France has been able to create high-end digital storytelling projects with high-end multimedia and interactive features. This has a disadvantage in being contingent upon high production values and technical proficiency, which can be precluded from individuals who have no access to high-end technology or formal education. In the face of resource

shortages, India values flexibility and starting anew. These diverse strategies are similar to broader national approaches. Central planning, quality control, and orderly implementation are extremely significant areas of emphasis in France.

iii). Educational Approaches: French and Indian classes utilize digital storytelling in various ways based on pedagogical and education system variations. Digital storytelling caught on and thrived in India, particularly amid the pandemic. Thus, numerous organizations have improvised in a rush to accommodate online learning. Convergences of education, community service, and preservation of culture are prevalent. Some of the projects have conjoined storytelling and social action to assist in lessening the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic. Conversely, digital storytelling is now an official part of the curriculum in French schools. Educating the mind to think rigorously and critically is the counterpart of digital literacy. Systematic pedagogy and teacher education produce digital storytelling that is analytical and innovative yet also at academic levels. Such an approach provides convergence and completeness, but it can restrict the spontaneity and bottom-up experimentation that marks Indian models.

iv). Literary Innovation and Experimental: Digital storytelling imparts a unique effect on the literary scene of each nation. In India, the old norms are often blended with new digital technologies to produce creative ideas. This has seen new genres with reference to India's diversity of culture. Retelling and reinterpretation are the key points with a focus on linking the past and the present in a different manner. France, however, comes at literary innovation more slowly and systematically. In assessing digital storytelling projects, we look at the extent to which their ideas and aesthetics are in line with the literary tradition. No matter how technically and creatively sophisticated they are, the formal organization of these projects can undercut the improvisation and mixing of forms which characterize Indian digital experimentation.

v). Challenges and Future Direction: Maintaining and developing digital storytelling activities is a unique challenge for France and India. Bridging the digital divide, offering equal access to technology to all sections of society, and preserving traditional forms of storytelling in new media are the most essential among India's challenges. The fear is that the fast growth rate of digital storytelling post-pandemic will result in the loss of the richness of the culture of traditional forms of storytelling due to commercialization and a lack of quality checks. But France also has to contend with the issue of adjusting to new concepts and standards of culture and language. It still remains a challenge to ensure that all members can participate in and access digital storytelling programs. Only the wealthy with high-end digital technology and cultural awareness might be able to participate in such programs. Equal access, cultural inclusion, and digital literacy are future-defining policies in both countries. The pandemic has placed the potential and limits of digital storytelling in the spotlight, as a way to bring people together, educate, and enhance culture. What we learn today will be the key to constructing inclusive, sustainable, rich, and culturally sustainable storytelling ecosystems of the future.

Conclusion

Digital storytelling as reflected through the lenses of India and France, stands as a testament to the forever profound evolution in the narrative, culture and how technological advancement gives life to the dying voices, as exemplified by the Indian and French literary spaces. The convergence through digital storytelling of tradition and technology, has acted as a sanctuary for folklore, dying rituals, marginalized and sidelined voices, personal tales and different types of narratives. It has helped these stories that speak to the belonging, people's soul and identities to reach them in masses through digital platforms. In contrast, France, on the other hand brings contemplative sophistication. The nation's literary space displays a certain level of digital consciousness and gravitas, where every narrative, every thought is sculpted, like it is getting shaped by its rich literary heritage, centuries of philosophical depth and literature-rich culture.

Digital storytelling in terms of French literary space is not merely a vessel or a canvas with some paint scattered on it; through digital media, it becomes a beautiful painting, which can be explored, understood and talked about to form different opinions and narratives on the same. Though distinct, both of these nations embrace digital storytelling and affirm that digital storytelling is not merely a social trend or just a byproduct of technological advancements around the world, but it also acts as a vessel to carry the past and the present to sculpt the future. It shows grey between black and white, where science finds a voice to be heard again.

Thus, in this research we found that in this digital theatre, both of these nations embrace the art of digital storytelling in a very distinct yet graceful manner, it also shows that digital storytelling does not cause any harm to the literary culture but, in fact, embraces it. It becomes a bridge to what had been and what is, so that we can form opinions on the past and present to compose what will be the future.

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