

Storycasting on Telradio: A discussion paper

IKM Background Paper
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M.J.R. David

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The objective of the programme is to improve development practice by promoting change in the way the development sector approaches the selection, management and use of knowledge in the formation and implementation of its policies and programmes. It aims to achieve this by:

- raising awareness of the importance of knowledge to development work and its contested nature;
- promoting investment in and use of Southern knowledge production of all types and origins;
- creating an environment for innovation, supported by research on existing and emergent practice, for people working in the development sector to raise and discuss means of addressing these issues; and
- finding, creating, testing and documenting ideas for processes and tools which will illustrate the range of issues which affect how knowledge is used in development work and stimulate thought around possible solutions.

Colophon

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About the author

M.J.R. David is a researcher associated with IKM and has a strong interest in local communication networks and knowledge management. He is engaged with communities in Sri Lanka that use digital storytelling and community radio as a means of expression. M.R.R. David works with the programme for strengthening Information Communication and Development Research Capacity in Asia at the Nanyang Technological University in Singapore. He has managed and set up several development communication projects in Asia and served as project manager of the Kotmale Internet Radio, Director of the Sri Lanka Press council, and Senior lecturer in journalism at the University of Colombo.

M.J.R. David holds a Master of Science degree in Development Communication from the University of Philippines from Los Banos. Email: mjrdavid@gmail.com

Resources referred to in this discussion paper

Google maps: <http://maps.google.com>

Wikipedia: <http://www.wikipedia.org>

Facebook: <http://www.facebook.com>

You Tube: <http://www.youtube.com>

Skype: <http://www.skype.com>

Collaborative video: [http://wikieducator.org/Collaborative Video - Help and Sandbox](http://wikieducator.org/Collaborative_Video_-_Help_and_Sandbox)

Telradio: <http://www.telradio.org>

Introduction

Storycasting is a way of broadcasting Digital Stories over the internet and telradio is an interactive internet radio application. This is a discussion paper about a proposal to implement a telradio initiative with the Sinhala-speaking communities in Sri Lanka and elsewhere. The primary focus will be on sharing knowledge and exploring how knowledge helps human development. The goal of the paper is to explain the thinking process and plan of action to set up telradio.

Key words: Sri Lanka, knowledge, Web 2.0, development, internet, radio

Digital platforms

Digital Platforms are a great place for people to meet, chat, talk, and have fun. If we look at the internet not merely as a 'network of networks' connected by computers and telecommunications but as a connection of people bubbling with ideas and emotions we would see it differently.



It is not merely a technical interface. It could be a huge table where people are chatting after a nice meal. It could be a football ground where thousands of fans are all dressed up in their club colours and cheering endlessly. It could be a theatre where the audience is waiting for the heroine to make the next move in pin-drop silence. Or it may be that this is how telradio sees the internet and other web-based applications: a busy market place where people push, laugh, shout and buy things.

Using telradio for storycasting looks at digital platforms and the interconnections as an extended educational environment where it is fun to be and iterative; an open space without the headmasters looking over your shoulder. In fact, there is nothing new in this approach as most social media have emphasized the fun and interactive aspect of the world wide web. In this instance, however, pictures and sound will be combined to create a new application: the Telradio.

Telradio

Telradio is an internet radio service that will broadcast digital stories and discuss them live from different geographical locations. The digital stories and the audio content will be systematically collected and deposited in a knowledge bank. The strengths of streaming radio and digital storytelling will be combined into a single application that will be interactive and live. The focus will be on the social interactions. The possibility for different groups to interact with each other to build a common body of knowledge will be the prime objective of this exercise.

Components of Telradio

The Telradio experiment will comprise of the following components.

- (1) Geographically dispersed organized groups to create and upload content.
- (2) An audience to listen, view and interact.
- (3) An internet audio stream that will be hosted live.
- (4) Digital stories that will be broadcasted on the web.
- (5) A Knowledge Bank that would act as a depository for content.
- (6) A combination of several feedback mechanisms.

Groups

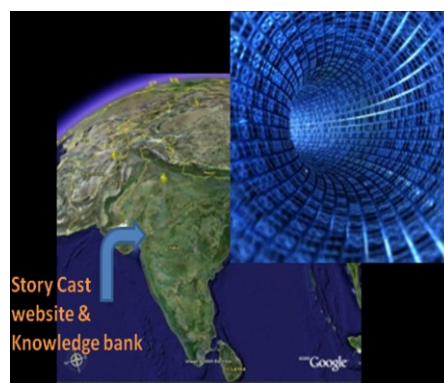
The telradio will be organized around several groups, all of which are dispersed over a wide geographical area. These groups will be sensitized to the need to develop a body of knowledge that



would generate an open and vibrant society which respects the diversity of knowledge. The lack of such open knowledge sources in the vernacular and the possibility of telradio filling this void by drawing in groups from across the globe will be the prime motivator to encourage groups to get involved in telradio.

Similar open knowledge sources such as wikipedia, collaborative video and Google maps will be used as

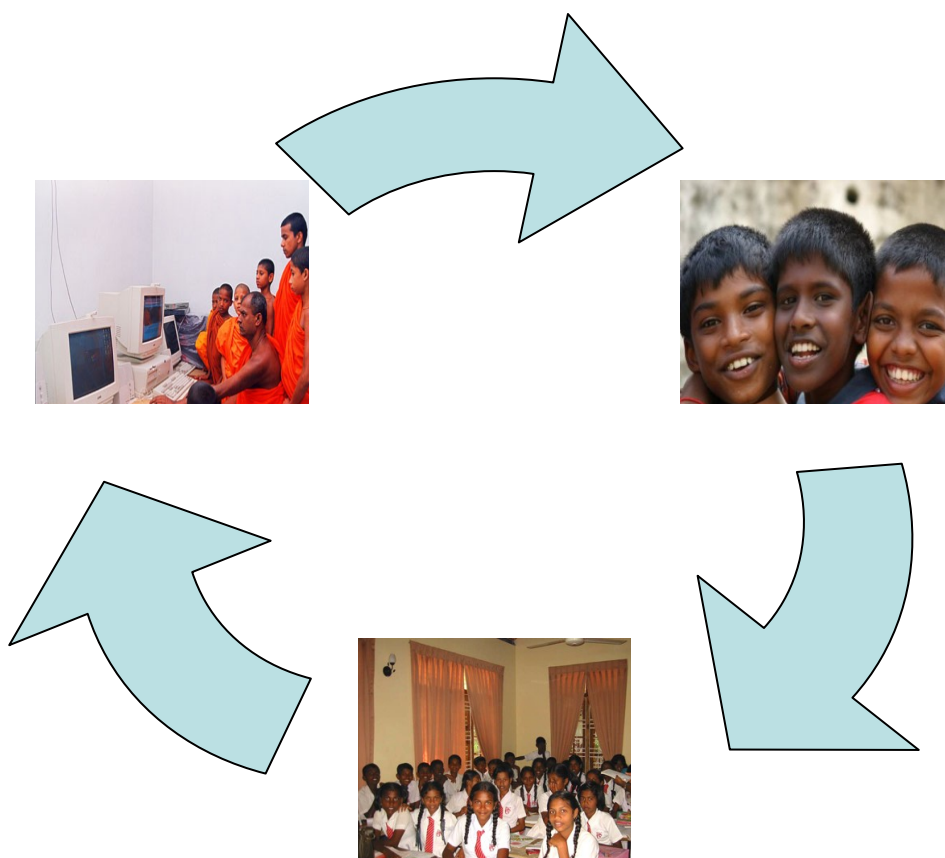
demonstrative efforts. The possibility of individuals making a difference in collective knowledge and the importance of discussing themes such as development with a wide-reaching forum will be presented as a key benefit of this exercise. It can be argued that an online community with a commitment to sharing knowledge and learning in a language in which they are totally comfortable and at ease could make a huge difference to the lives of others as well as themselves. It will be pointed out that such an online community, along with its products and off-line activities, could bring about a radical change to the learning process. These groups will be encouraged to send in digital stories, host internet radio slots, and identify knowledge resources for sharing.



The Audience

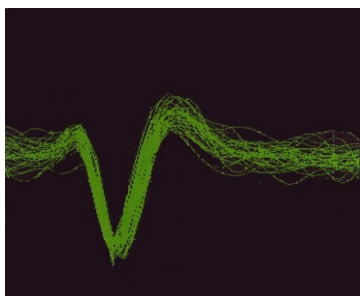
Audience interaction

The primary audience will be the Sinhala-speaking (and, where possible, Tamil-speaking) listeners who have access to the internet. However, as there are limitations to online access, community listening at information kiosks will be facilitated. In addition to this, the possibility of broadcasting selected parts over conventional terrestrial radio will be looked into. It is envisaged that the diaspora audience and the audience in Sri Lanka will use telradio as a platform to share knowledge and interact with each other.



Live internet stream

A live internet stream will make the radio part of telradio. The internet will be streamed from a single data centre but contributions would be made from several points. For example, the slot from 07.00-08.00 am GMT may be streamed by a group from London while the slot 08.00-09.00 am may be streamed from Kotmale in Sri Lanka, while there may be no group to host the slot from 10.00-11.00 am and archived material will therefore be broadcasted within this slot. Again, a listener from Canada may want to participate in the next hour. As the discourse on development and



knowledge takes a central place within this exercise, time slots will be allocated for listeners to define the essence of development, propose development agendas, discover the interplay between knowledge and development, etc . A week's programming may look as follows.

Time GMT	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
00.00-01.00	Country Music	The rappers	Pop sounds	Pop stars	Classical masters	Instrumentals	Folk music
01.00-02.00	Culture of the West	The silk road	Pyramids	The great walls	Bows and arrows	Babylon's	
02.00-03.00	Sinhala music	Sinhala music	Sinhala music	Sinhala music	Sinhala music	Sinhala music	Sinhala music
03.00-04.00	Development defined	Where are we?	Whose development?	International development in SI	International development profile	Development thinkers	Development indicators
05.00-06.00	The world in pictures	The world in pictures	Picture talk	Picture talk	Picture talk	Picture talk	Picture Talk
06.00-07.00	Development projects	Financial market	The Millennium Development Goals (MDGs)	Research Agendas	Health and development	Climate scope	Conflicts around the world
07.00-08.00	Web 2.0 kiosk	Free on the web	Fun on the web	Technomart	Politics and technology	Web pals	Reactions

Note: This is a hypothetical programme grid. The actual programme grid will be drawn up following a close consultation process with the stakeholders.

Digital stories

Picture stream

Storytelling has been an integral part of local communication and now technological innovations have made new tools possible: tools that enhance the power of storytelling in digital formats that cut across time and space.



Digital stories are small video clips, but they are often powerful forms of expression that put together images, narrations and music with easy-to-use software, and images.

Media spaces with real participation, emotion and diversity have always been popular. In this instance, digital stories produced by the groups and listeners will be broadcasted on the telradio platform. This platform will differ from platforms such as You Tube™ by way of interaction. There will be discussions about, and commentaries on, the digital stories that are presented. The digital stories will then be deposited in the knowledge bank for future reference.

A Knowledge Bank

The broadcasted audio content as well as the digital stories will be deposited in the knowledge bank with suitable labelling and a text reference. This will be an open source and uses will be encouraged to use and disseminate freely and modify if necessary. The conversion from one medium to the other will be encouraged i.e. developing a digital story based on a radio talk or writing a newspaper column based on a telradio production will be encouraged.



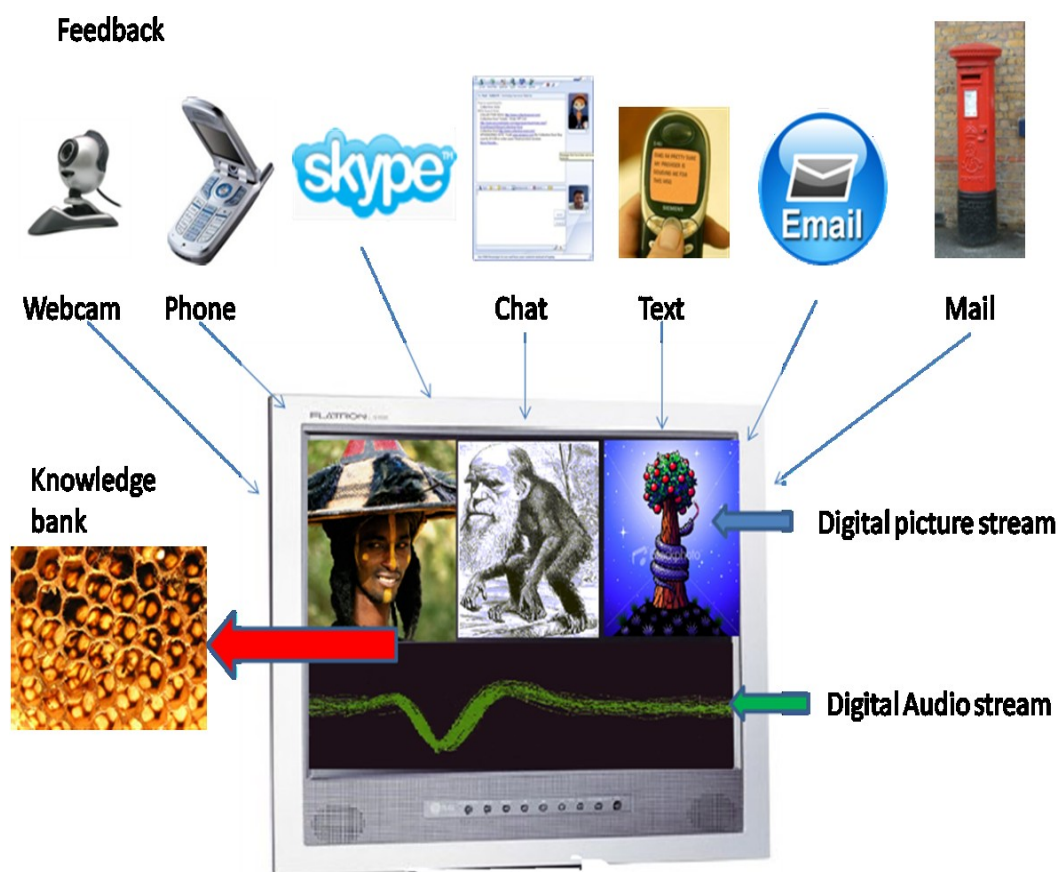
Feedback mechanisms

Interaction is at the very core of telradio. A combination of feedback mechanisms will be used to obtain user-generated content and feedback. Voice-over internet, e-mail, instant messaging, telephones, web-enabled telephony, as well as the more conventional snail-mail will be used. In addition to this, the possibility of toll-free telephone numbers will be explored.



Telradio Assembled

Telradio is more than one single media apparatus. It is a communication process that converges text, images, and audio on a single media platform, connecting several groups that are dispersed across different geographical areas but committed to sharing knowledge and learning from each other.



Storycasting on Telradio

The development and knowledge interplay

The experimental part of telradio in this instance would be how to develop online/off-line interaction that uses images, text, and audio narrative by a group of southerners to discuss development. The discourse will emerge at various points i.e. the grass roots level, urban centres, and the diaspora, and as it will be a genuine interaction: there would not be a directed flow of information.

International development will be discussed, debated and clarified at many different levels. The formats of discussion will be designed in a manner that would enable the participants to actively engage in the discussion. If the experiment is successful we could learn how this new application - i.e. telradio - could facilitate a discussion on a knowledge stream, i.e. Development

Sustainability

Once the technical structure has been set up it is envisaged that there would be enough interest from the participating groups to keep the telradio going. However, it will not happen on its own: a conscious effort as well as multiple working models, ranging from volunteerism to social-entrepreneurship, will have to be used.

Challenges

We live in a busy world and it may take a lot of time and effort to get several groups of people motivated to join in. It may also be challenging to put a set of ground rules and guidelines into place that all groups could agree to. Combining business models with non-profit models may be another challenge.

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Sarah Cummings, Communications Coordinator
IKM Emergent
Context International Cooperation
Cornelis Houtmanstraat 15
3572 LT Utrecht
The Netherlands
phone: + 31 30 2737508 - fax: + 31 30 2737509
email: sarah@ikmemergent.net

www.ikmemergent.net
<http://thegiraffe.wordpress.com>
www.developmenttraining.org