

Motivation

I chose the design and theme for my story for three reasons:

1. Learning Styles - My digital story promotes imitation and experiential learning, ultimately enhancing the instruction by providing an example of the expected learning outcome. Additionally, by including a digital story, I am targeting visual and auditory methods of learning. Given the nature of my job and the type of instruction that I typically produce – job training for the financial industry – I am always looking for interesting and compelling methods of spicing up what is often a very bland environment.
2. I love music - I could stop after those three words but I feel like I should reveal more. Music is my passion and because I am a terrible musician, I spend my time consuming music. I consume music like modern society consumes houses, cars and clothing – broadly, aggressively and with no remorse. We know that learning is enhanced if the learner is interested in the subject. Music interests me far more than escrow accounts, so I thought it would be nice to combine the two.
3. Aesthetics - Given the dry nature of the subject matter, I believe the use of the rock band metaphor is an effective way of adding a more interesting element to the course. I have written this before, but, it beats pictures of people in cubicles.

Multimedia Choices

The images should enhance and move the story forward. In keeping with my theme of using a metaphor to provide a more interesting subject than escrow for mortgages, I contacted my friend Eric and arranged to photograph his band performing at a sidewalk sale for the Cheapo's Discs on Colorado Boulevard in Denver. Certainly, shooting the band in a nightclub might have been more "cool" and band-like, but I decided that the sidewalk performance would provide better lighting and easier access to the band, while still providing the images that I needed to enhance the story.

The sound was an easy choice. I wanted to use something dynamic to enliven the story. The story is really about the sound – the music – so what better than to make the sound an integral part of the story?

The transitions should match the content of the story and serve to separate or join elements of the story. For example, the story's title appears over a green background. To separate it from the essential and unit questions, I transitioned to a gray background. To separate the questions from the "rock band" I used two strategies:

1. The questions have only a simple drum beat for background music. When I transition to the rock band, I also transition to the full song.

2. The actual transition between the questions and the rock band is a wipe. As the song fades in, I wipe away the simple text used for the questions and insert the more interesting images of the rock band. This is synchronized with the sound transition.

Another example of how the auditory and visual elements match the dialog is how I matched the sound and images to what is being said. If I talk about the bass, then I show an image of a bass and use the isolated bass track from the song as the accompanying soundtrack. Likewise, when I describe how the bass, drums, guitar and vocals come together to form a whole song, I bring images of each, synchronized with the dialog, into the frame to form a whole image.

Application

I designed my digital story in Storyboard Solution and developed it in Windows Movie Maker and Audacity. My primary reason for choosing each was simplicity. Each is very intuitive and presented a minimal learning curve as I cobbled together my story. I found Storyboard Solution to be a little limited because you cannot upload your images into your storyboard. Still, you can describe them, so it was a helpful tool. Windows Movie Maker is free and came pre-installed on my PC and I found it to be convenient, easy to use and available at the right price. Audacity is a free download. I was able to overcome Windows Movie Maker's shortcomings by using Audacity. I needed to mix multiple audio tracks throughout my digital story, which is not possible in Windows Movie Maker. To get around this, I mixed the tracks in Audacity, exported them as a single .mp3 file and then imported the mixed .mp3 file into Windows Movie Maker.

Access

I will post my story on my portfolio web site that I created for the UCD Masters program in the IT5600 class. This is a Wordpress site featuring the Podpress plug-in that allows the hosting and display of video content. Though my digital story is not currently available, my web site, which is a work-in-progress, can be viewed at the following URL: <http://gregorylea.evitae.org/>

Audience

My audience is very diverse, ranging widely in age, level of education and experience. Though musical tastes will vary, I believe that nearly everyone can relate to music and will understand the metaphor that I present – comparing teamwork on the job to the teamwork required in a band. The concept of a band is something familiar to all. Though all participants may not favor rock 'n' roll, most people at least understand the roles of the drummer, vocalist and guitarist and how they contribute to the whole.