FHV
Vorarlberg University
of Applied Sciences

Beyond the Story:

Digital Marketing, Interactive Storytelling and Immersive Experiences

(Dr. Peter Hoffmann, November 2026,
Workshop 5 (ISC, CSI))

1 - Introduction

Have you ever not just listened to a story, …

… but actually become part of the story?



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A bag costs 20 dollars.

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You are standing on the beach where lots of discarded fishing nets are collected.
You meet one of the people who gathered them and ...
… you ask him what happens to the material next ?

→ ?

In terms of suspense, this is …

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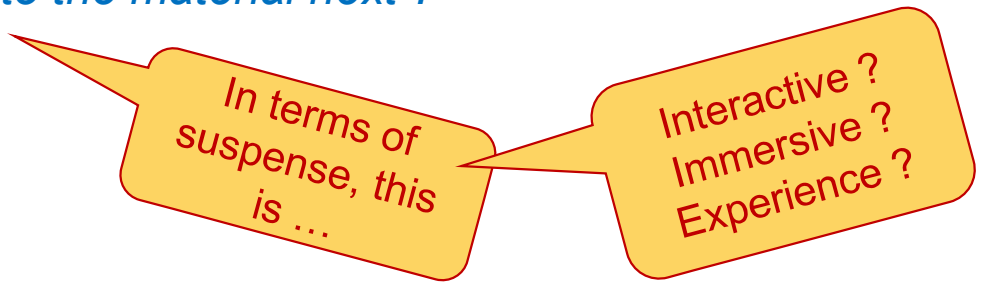
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2 - From Marketing to Storytelling ?

Classic marketing asks:

→ What should people know ?

Storytelling asks:

→ What should people feel, and what should they remember ?

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Interactive storytelling adds:

→ What should people do ?

And finally, immersive storytelling:

→ What should people experience ?

→ knowing
→ feeling and remembering
→ doing
→ **experiencing**

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→ intervene and change !

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3 - What makes a Story?

→ Who … ?

→ … is at the center

→ What …

… does this person (or group) desire ?

→ What …

... obstacles stand in the way ?

→ What changes …

… once the problems are solved ?

→ Why …

… should "we" care ?

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A social enterprise tells the story of a local community ...

→ But: Is the enterprise tell something …
… about these people, …
… or are the people telling their own story?

Who should (or: is permitted to) tell whose story?

4 - Stories from various … !

Build a Story

A young woman …

Tell this story as …

…

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5 - From Story to Interactive Story

Traditional/ classical story: Geschichte:



Interactive story:



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5 - From Story to Interactive Story

A man arrives in a small, idyllic village.
But then he looks around.
Everywhere he turns, he finds plastic waste.
He realizes that the trash is a serious problem here.
Yet, no one in the village seems to care.
The man becomes sad.
The End !

"Classical" dramaturgy
according to Aristotle
(or at least its beginning)

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Now: Make a decision - What do you want the man to do ?

- → A: Organize a cleanup event
- → B: Talk to local businesses
- → C: Start a recycling company
- → D: Launch a social media campaign

Every decision changes
the further course
of the story!

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The listeners are no longer just passive!
They become **storytellers** themselves …
… and make their own decisions about how the story continues.

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Any limitations ?

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6 - Beyond the Screen: Immersive Storytelling

Immersive ?

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→ Does "immersive storytelling" require VR ?

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→ Does "immersive storytelling" require VR ?

→ Immersion can be achieved in various ways:

→ sensory
→ interactive
→ spatial

→ ?

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→ Observing the village.
→ Being present in the village.
→ Participating actively in the village.

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Agency:
the capacity to make **meaningful** decisions and to exert influence over what occurs within an interactive environment.

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Interaction vs. Agency

Interaction	Agency
I can click on something.	I can influence something.
I choose between options.	My choice has consequences.
The system reacts to me.	**My actions change the course** (and the outcome).
I navigate through a story.	I help shape aspects of the story.

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Narrative Agency: Participants can influence the course of a story being told..

Soziale Agency: People are given a "genuine" opportunity to contribute to societal change.

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8 - Finale Grande: Beyond the Story

→ Eine gute Geschichte regt die Menschen dazu an, zuzuhören.

→ Eine interaktive Geschichte bringt Menschen zum Handeln.

→ Eine immersive Geschichte gibt den Menschen das Gefühl, präsent und dabei zu sein.

→ Erzeugt mehr Immersion mehr Wirkung ?

\+ Mehr Immersion kann emotionale Nähe, Erinnerung und Engagement unterstützen.

\- Mehr Immersion kann aber auch manipulativ, überwältigend, kulturell unangemessen oder einfach technisch unnötig sein !

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8 - Finale Grande: Beyond the Story

→ A good story encourages people to listen.

→ An interactive story prompts people to take action.

→ An immersive story gives people the feeling of being present and truly "there."

→ Does greater immersion lead to a greater impact ?

\+ Greater immersion can foster emotional closeness, improve recall, and boost engagement.

\- However, greater immersion can also be manipulative, overwhelming, culturally inappropriate, or simply technically unnecessary !

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8 - Finale Grande: Beyond the Story

Don’t just ask:

What story do we want to tell ?

Better to ask:

What experience do we want to create - and for whom ?

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That‘s IT

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