



# Documentary Storytelling in a Multimedia, Online Medium

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## Documentary Definitions

- Merriam Webster: “of, relating to, or employing documentation in literature or art; *broadly* : FACTUAL, OBJECTIVE”
- Wikipedia: A documentary is a creative work of non-fiction, including:
  - Documentary film, including television
  - Radio documentary
  - Documentary photography
- What about online/Web documentary?....



## Online Documentary Definition

- **Google <define:Online documentary>**  
“An online documentary is a form of documentary developed for online media and delivered online, usually via the web...”  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online\\_documentary](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Online_documentary)
  - But the link forwards you to Documentary Film



## Working Towards A Definition

- **Online Multimedia Storytelling**
  - Journalism
  - Documentary



## Online Documentary is...

- **Multimedia Storytelling**
  - **Multiple media used to tell story**
    - Text, audio, video, photos, graphics, animation, slide show
  - **Hyperlinked**
    - Links between content elements facilitate multiple exploration paths
    - Links to external Web site information resources
  - **Audience interacts with content**
    - Chooses which links to explore, when and how long
- **Not constrained by space or time**
  - **Context**
    - Accommodates in-depth coverage of subject matter
  - **Continuity**
    - Allows for updates and additions





## Film/Video Documentary is ...

- **Linear Storytelling**
  - **Sound and visuals tell story across time**
    - Beginning, middle, end
  - **Audience is observer**
    - Minimal audience control
    - Expected to view without interruption, in one sitting
- **Constrained by time**
  - **Audience attention span**
  - **Traditional distribution lengths**
    - Theatrical, broadcast, educational



## Online and Film/Video Similarities

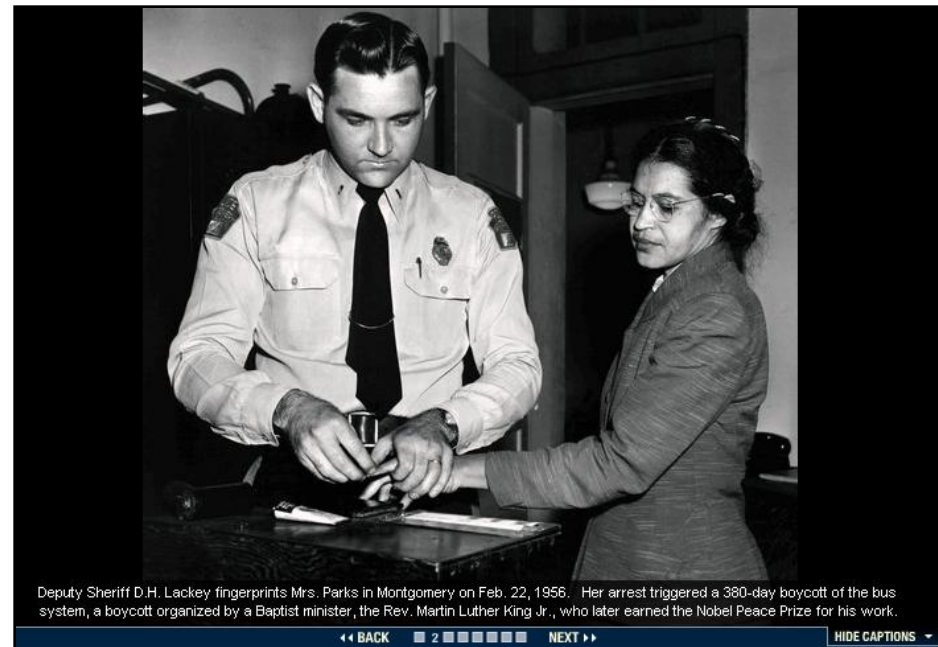
- **Shared documentary characteristics**
  - **Subject**
  - **Story Objective**
  - **Author's Voice**
  - **Storytelling**
  - **Design**

An evolution of the online documentary analysis framework created by: Melahat Hosseini and Ron Wakkary, based on the work of film theorist Bill Nichols.  
<http://www.archimuse.com/mw2004/papers/hosseini/hosseini.html>



## Subject

- Reflects historical world
  - Captures real people, events, places



The Washington Post: *A Salute to Rosa Parks*. Slide Show: *Civil rights icon dies at age 92*.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/wp-dyn/content/linkset/2005/10/31/LI2005103100257.html>





## Story Objective

### ■ Communication goals

- Inform
- Instruct
- Persuade
- Promote

heraldsun.com **TOUCHING HEARTS** MISSION STORIES PEOPLE MAIN

This nation of 4 million has a third-world economy and medical system, with thousands of children dying of problems that are routinely treated in the United States and other developed countries.

A comparison: the Duke University endowment stood at \$2.66 billion in June, 2000. The World Bank's most recent estimate puts Nicaragua's gross national product at \$1.9 billion for 1997.

CONTINUE ►►

Herald Sun: *Touching Hearts: Oscars Story*  
Documents team of American heart surgeons' trip to Nicaragua to treat children.



## Author's Voice

- Reflects social, ethical, political position of authors (i.e. opinion)
- Occurs through
  - What content is featured
  - How it's treated
    - Range and depth covered
  - How it's arranged in the site
  - Treatment of subject in media
  - Visual design of site
    - Logo/banner
    - Layout
    - Colors
    - Font styles



*Valley Melodies*

<http://valleymelodies.csufresno.edu>



## Storytelling

### ■ Communicated through

- Text

- Reportage
  - Interviews
- Commentary
  - Diaries (Blog)
  - Essays
- Headings
- Featured quotes
- Captions



Herald Sun: *Touching Hearts: Oscars Story*

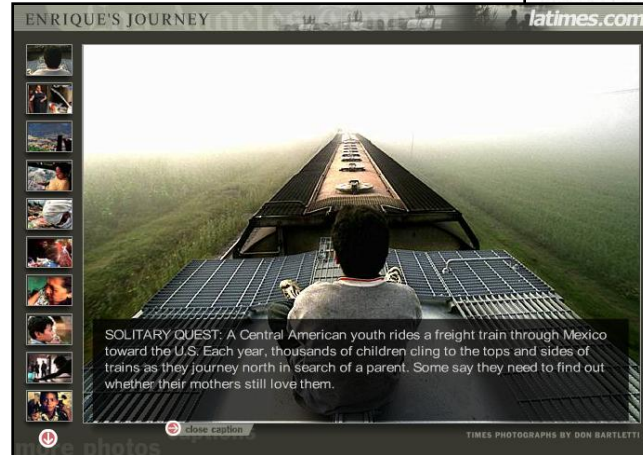




## Storytelling

### ■ Communicated through

- Photos
  - Within text
  - Galleries
  - Slide shows



### Music Background

Bill's love for music all began when he started listening to different music on a small transistor radio. He listened to the radio daily and his passion for music began to grow.

In school Bill had many friends and bands who played music. He always wanted to play music. Bill continued to explore different kinds of music and it was not until he graduated high school and joined



Valley Melodies: *Bill Clifton Profile*

latimes.com: *Enrique's Story: 'I'm Leaving. I'm Going to Find My Mom'*

<http://www.latimes.com/news/specials/enrique/la-fg-firstsoniasep29,0,5050178.story#>



## Storytelling

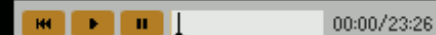
- **Communicated through**
  - **Video clips**
    - Short documentary package
    - Performance/event excerpt
    - Interview
    - Author commentary
  - **Audio clips**
    - Audio documentary
    - Performance/event excerpt
    - Interview

LATimes.com:  
*Enrique's Story,*



### Related Audio

Monday, Nov. 14: Listen as Bee reporter Tom Knudson and photographer Hector Amezcua speak about this project on "Insight," a program on Sacramento's KXJZ 88.9 FM



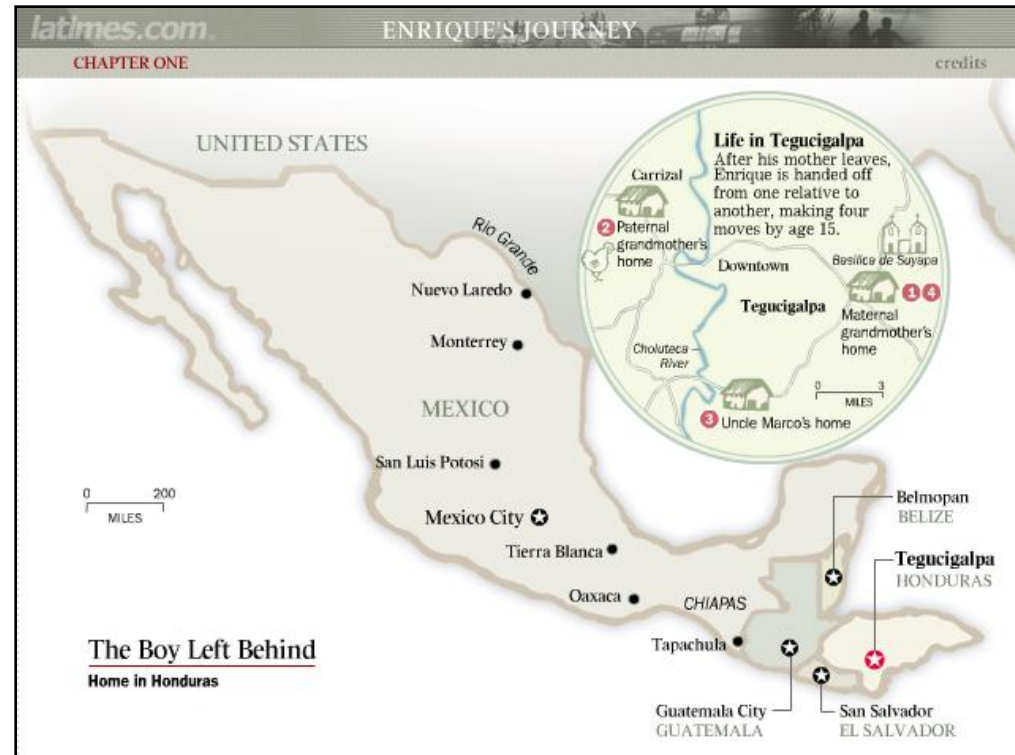
SacBee.com: *The Pineros*





## Storytelling

- Communicated through
  - Graphics
  - Animation



latimes.com: *Enrique's Story*



## Design

- Reflects the purpose, attitude, and aesthetic of the subject
  - Look and feel
    - Graphics/images
    - Layout
    - Colors
  - Information architecture
    - Information categories & hierarchy
    - Navigation menus

**THE PINEROS** Men of the Pines  
Life, Covered Daily  
The Sacramento Bee  
sacbee.com

**PART 1**  
*Guest Workers*

**PART 2**  
*Injuries*

**PART 3**  
*Van Accidents*

**VEA ESTAS NOTAS EN ESPAÑOL?**

**Updates:**

**Friday, August 11, 2006**  
[Bee's Pineros series wins awards](#)

**Saturday, May 27, 2006**  
[Protesters for pineros pushed into immigration reform bill](#)

**Friday, May 26, 2006**  
['Pineros' report wins photojournalism award](#)

**Friday, May 19, 2006**  
[Forest guest workers tell of abuses](#)

**Sunday, May 7, 2006**  
[Untrained migrants fight fires](#)

**A**cross vast tracts of rugged ground from Maine to California, Latinos do the dirty work in America's woods. They plant trees by the millions, thin out snarls of vegetation that stunt the growth of commercial timber and slash away the dense mats of brush and spindly trees that stoke forest fires.

They are pineros, the men who work in the pines. They are the major source of manual labor in America's forest industry, the muscle behind the Healthy Forest Initiative - often paid in tax dollars to work on public lands. And they are being misused and abused under the noses of government officials.

Even frequent visitors to America's forests may never see them. They live in motels and campgrounds on the fringes of society, traveling through resort towns long before dawn on their hours'-long commutes to deep backwoods areas.

In this three-part investigation, The Bee takes you

<http://dwb.sacbee.com/content/news/projects/pineros/>



## Design: Story Approaches

### ■ Interactive story module (Flash)

- [The Weight](#)

<http://www.sacbee.com/static/live/news/projects/theweight/flash/main.html>

- [Becoming Human](#)

<http://www.becominghuman.org/>

Sacramento Bee Special Report  
**THE WEIGHT** Photography, Video and Story by Manny Crisostomo

Home [Jahcobie's profile](#)

JAHCOBIE COSUM was walking with friends when pain shot through his chest. His head spun; he couldn't breathe. He stopped, sat down and lit up a cigarette. His friends had to take him to the hospital on a city bus.

Gasping for air, Jahcobie remembered thinking, "This is the end of my life. I am going to die. Finally, what I have been waiting for."

A Boston Children's Hospital psychiatrist, who was trying to help Jahcobie get a handle on his anger and thoughts of suicide, heard about a new therapeutic weight loss boarding school in California and persuaded Jahcobie to give it a try – if he could find a way to pay for it.

In October 2005, he arrived as the school's largest student, weighing 483 pounds.

PHOTOS: [Slideshow](#) VIDEO: [High](#) | [Low](#)





## Design: Story Approaches

### ■ Web page story shell

- Enrique's Story

<http://www.latimes.com/news/specials/enrique/la-fg-firstsoniasep29,0,5050178.story>

- Valley Melodies

<http://valleymelodies.csufresno.edu/>

Valley Melodies

Home | Musicians | Project Info |

Blues

### William "Bill" Clifton

By Tammy Krivis  
April 3, 2006

John Clifton (left) with Bill Clifton playing the guitar.

**Audio**

- [Blues and Trouble](#)
- [El Paso Boogaloo](#)
- [You're A Liar](#)

**Photos**

- [MOFO Galleries](#)

**Links**

- [MOFO Party Band Web Page](#)
- [MOFO Party Band Biography](#)
- [MOFO Sonoma Tunes Article](#)
- [San Francisco Blues Festival](#)

**MOFO Party Band**

The MOFO Party Band has produced four



## Online Documentary

- **Multimedia storytelling**
  - Multiple media
  - Hyperlinked
  - Audience interaction
  - No space/time constraints
    - Context and continuity
- **Documentary characteristics**
  - Subject
  - Story Objective
  - Author's Voice
  - Storytelling
  - Design
    - Interactive story module approach
    - Web page story shell approach