



Story Studio

Story Catching Concept Summary

We are currently experiencing a confusing cultural paradox about the stories we are telling about the now and future. In spite of the innovative work going on around the world that involves a more generative approach to living and conducting business, the stories we tell in our films, television, video games and social media are mostly dark and dystopian. It seems like it is easier to imagine a sort of corporate “feudalism” where there are extremes between the haves and have nots. Certainly the current consolidation of wealth into the top 1% of the global population and the denial of climate change are two indicators of such a potential future.

At the Story Studio we are co-creating an alternative narrative to this current dystopian one we seem so attached to. It would for the first time map out how we get from our current extractive culture to the more generative world we keep talking about and working towards. The narrative would take the form of a dramatic television series that would take its inspiration from the innovative work going on around the globe, mapped into a new alternative integrated narrative. It would mirror the personalities and generative work going on in the world told as a dramatic tale. This narrative explores and promotes not just the innovation that is arising, but also the resistance we are experiencing in the mainstream culture to begin making the necessary changes. It would suggest a “believable” path for activating this alternative narrative in all of us.

Normally, when I develop a dramatic narrative with all its situations and characters our team does elaborate research to get the information that makes the narrative believable. Facilitating global thought leaders during the last five years, I have expanded this “research” process using a method I call

“storycatching.” This has led us to the establishment of our Story Studio that will help all of us co-create this alternative narrative together.

Story Studio

At the Story Studio we map current economic, technological and cultural innovations through our unique “Story Catching” process. We then use this continually evolving mapping process to create integrated narratives for television and cultural media campaigns. The subject of these narratives is how we are going to get from our current extractive culture to one that shares the value of what is being created with more of the inhabitants on this planet.

We design these narratives to promote these generative qualities and the individual innovations it includes not just because it is the right thing to do, but because it is the smart thing to do. We believe if we continue to slide into our dystopian stories of our now and future, it does not turn out well for anyone. The Story Catching process also predicts which innovations will be successful in the new generative cultural marketplace.

The question we sit with is:

If there are so many generative innovations emerging around the world, why are they not having more impact on how we make political, economic and cultural decisions?

When we look at the future we are imagining in our television, films and social media, for the most part the stories are still dystopian in nature. If this is all we can imagine, are we destined to live into this dark worlds of haves and have nots? At the Story Studio we believe we are better than that. We are co-creating the integrative narratives that are an alternative to the dystopian view.

During major transitions like the one we are currently experiencing, there are many versions of a “new story” that attempts to describe the more generative world we eventually want to live and work in. These perspectives usually suggest revolutionary changes to our economic, political and cultural systems that include inspiring stories being told about innovations in wealth distribution, technology,

energy, food production, leadership, corporate governance, and legal frameworks.

What we believe is currently missing is an integrated narrative that locates these individual innovations on a story map timeline that illuminates how we are going to move from where we currently are to a more generative future. For this integrated narrative to be successful it must be *believable* to a significant percentage of our population otherwise any future vision no matter how innovative gets dismissed as naively utopian.

This kind of transitional change is challenging in so many ways and on some days seems impossible. Yet in the last cultural transition in the late sixties and seventies the status quo was equally entrenched. Against all odds, environmental science, civil rights, computing technologies, women's rights and inclusion of a much wider diversity of race and gender emerged from our collective intelligence. This New Age, Postmodern integrated narrative, as it would be called later, changed the world as we knew it.

All of us at the Story Studio are committed to continuing this work as our current challenges overwhelm our old ways of doing things....

The Power of Individual Stories Coalescing into a Movement

Our individual meaning making systems are shaped by the stories we tell. Our stories explain our past, influence our present and help us envision the future. Our stories shape our economic, political, social, technological and spiritual choices. They communicate our thoughts, feelings and actions to others. They shape what's next for us individually.

We are also part of a larger cultural narrative that defines the values of the communities we live in. Without our individual and collective stories we would be unable to make meaning of anything. The good news if we don't like our current situation, we can change the stories that define it.

This is particularly true in periods of cultural transition like we are in now. In these periods, as the old stories fall away, unable to address the new challenges the

culture faces, and the new ones have just begin to show themselves, there are unlimited opportunities to completely re-imagine how we do things.

Currently, we face weighty global challenges like income disparity, climate change, disruptive technological advancements, inadequate education systems and unprecedented immigration. We also see innovative work in economics, technology, education, energy, food production, water purification and leadership as potential predictors of what could come in this new Integral age. Documenting these new innovations, mapping their current status and integrating them into a new integrated cultural narrative through our *Story Catching process*, allows us to maximize their potential as our individual inspirations coalesce into a new cultural movement.

The Story Catching Process

Exploring the stories we are telling about the now and the future begins by capturing the stories of innovation that are attracting our attention. This inquiry is at the core of the Story Catching process. We want to know what participants are being drawn to concerning innovative approaches and projects in leadership, economics, technology, creativity, politics, cultural memes, spiritual matters etc.

The Story Catching process is the first step toward incubating a fully realized generative integrative narrative. It identifies and maps the stories that are driving the participant's individual and collective imaginations concerning our now and future. It illuminates what common themes are common to the individual story nodes. It also predicts the likelihood that once identified, these narratives will find acceptance in a meaningful percentage of the global population and marketplace.

Story Catching Process History

1994 – Time Warner Interactive. An early version of the story catching process was utilized to map and strategize about the emergence of the Internet. The deliverable was the first visual chat application called “The Palace.”

1995: Beaver Creek Symposium – A gathering of Hollywood and New York media executives and artists. The Symposium explored the emergence of the Internet

and interactive technologies. The Beaver Creek Symposium was funded by Eagle Interactive, Colorado.

1996- Disney Interactive – An early version of the story catching process was used to develop Disney’s first internet game “The Hunt for the Lost Toy” based on the Pixar’s first Toy Story movie.

2006: Story Catching on the Colorado Plateau. This project used the Story Catching process to facilitate key stakeholders in White, Latino and Native American communities in the Colorado Plateau eco-system concerning their future together. The Colorado Plateau project was funded by The Christensen Fund

2008 – Google Ocean- A more developed version of the Story Catching process was utilized to define the design of Google Ocean on Google Earth. Deliverable was the Google Ocean layer that included stories and media assets illuminating both the challenges to the health of our oceans and the innovative work being developed to address these challenges.

2008 – Obama Election Campaign – Two Voters.com – The Two Voters campaign consisted of a series of television spots addressing a variety of topics of the 2008 Presidential campaign. The spots were designed for Obama supporters to send to friends who were undecided on who to vote for. The campaign was covered in the New York Times, USA Today and other major publications. One spot in particular was pulled from network television during the 2008 Republican convention. We considered that to be an honor.

2007-2018 – Return to the Heart of Christ Consciousness – RHCC was a multi-year exploration into progressive Christianity. It included the documentary film “The Future of Christianity,” The RHCC Conference, interviews with progressive Christian leaders and the Vote Common Good 2018 Election Bus Tour.

2012 & 2017: The “What Are We Imagining” Story Catching inquiries were part of the What Next and What Now Conferences funded by Integral Life.

