



free-range THINKING™

free-range thinking™ is a monthly journal of best practices, resources and generally useful stuff for public interest communicators who want to reach more people with more impact



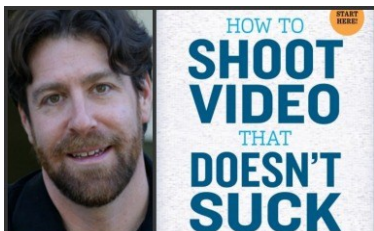
Sneak Preview: Best Storytelling on the Web

If there's one question we hear more than any other during our storytelling workshops and webinars, it's this: "Who does it best?" My default answer, which never fails to disappoint, is "It depends." There are so many different kinds of stories to tell and so many different ways to tell them that it's impossible to give a concise answer. But since this question has arisen so consistently over the years, we finally decided to spend a few months scouring the web to identify some of the best storytellers in the public interest community.

In December (exact date coming soon), we will offer a one-hour webinar showcasing these exemplars, but for this month's issue, we present a sneak preview of a category we're calling "visual storytelling" where we found some of the most creative and inspiring work. [Full story.](#) (Apple mail users may need to scroll down manually.)

Don't Let Bad Video Happen to Your Good Cause

It's easy to find nonprofit websites that use video to tell their story. It's much harder to find many that do it well. Steve Stockman has identified ten reasons why bad video keeps happening to good causes, and many will surprise you. (Did you know some of the most critical mistakes happen before you turn on the camera?) He'll be my special guest on our newest webcast, "Why Bad Video Happens to Good Causes," on September 22nd from 11a-12n Pacific (2-3p Eastern).



Steve Stockman

Steve is author of the bestseller, "How to Shoot Video That Doesn't Suck," and has written, directed and produced award-winning commercials, reality TV shows, and a feature film. He'll explain how to avoid these common mistakes, produce video your audience will want to watch, and do so on a nonprofit's budget. Please set aside an hour and join our live class in September. Tuition is just \$49.50 per person, group discounts are available, and you can reserve your space [here.](#)

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Photography - Heartland Alliance

Heartland Alliance is an anti-poverty organization working in the US and eleven other nations around the world. The nonprofit maintains a [site](#) exclusively devoted to telling the stories of fifteen different people whose lives were changed by the organization's work. "Eye on the Prize" tells the story of Dominique, a young mother who faced homelessness after aging out of foster care.

Dominique's story is told through a series of stunning black and white portraits (by Allyson Stewart) that are connected by short paragraphs, section headings, and pull-quotes (written by Melissa Spear). The text is lean, letting the images do most of the talking, but as you scroll through the story, there is just enough there to make you feel something for Dominique and appreciate how Heartland Alliance has changed the trajectory of her life and the lives of her children.

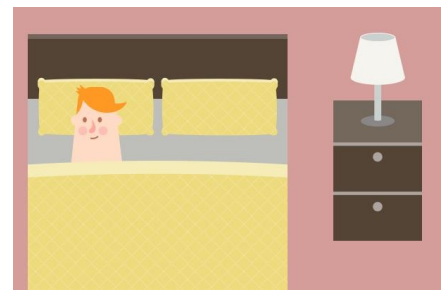
(And I'm sure it's no accident that the story leads directly to a donate button, giving visitors a chance to respond to the feelings the story will inevitably stir.)



Animation - Waterwise

Waterwise is a London-based nonprofit that promotes water efficiency in the UK and Europe. To help their target audience understand exactly how much water they consume, Waterwise (with the help of the agency Nice and Serious) created a [website](#), "Every Last Drop," that follows one man through a typical day.

The site conveys a good deal of data - it takes over 1,200 gallons of water to produce all the things an individual consumes in an average day - but clever spoonfuls of animation help the numbers go down as you proceed through the day. The final bit of animation delivers you to a 90-second video filled with simple, actionable tips on how to reduce your water consumption.



Multimedia - Welcome to Pine Point (The Goggles)

It's hard to categorize "[Welcome to Pine Point](#)" because it's unlike just about any website I've ever visited - in fact, its creators identify it as "an interactive documentary" - but it may be my favorite example of storytelling on the web.

Created by Paul Shoebridge and Michael Simons (whose company, The Goggles, produces "Stories about interesting things, told in interesting ways"), "Welcome to Pine Point" tells the story of a town Simons visited as a child - a small mining community in northwestern Canada that was built, occupied for just one generation, and then abandoned when the mine was exhausted.

The site is a multimedia scrapbook - the project was initially envisioned as a book - and it's filled with vintage pictures, scratchy video, text that looks like it was hand-pasted onto each page, and all backed by a sound track that is beautiful and haunting and soul-stirring. There is also a cast of characters who tell personal stories full of humor and pathos and provide a narrative spine for the larger story of the short-lived town.



Like all true works of art, "Welcome to Pine Point" is about more than a town that's no longer there. It will make you think about your hometown, the people who made you who you are today, the nature of memory, and the role of place in our lives. Kudos to Shoebridge, Simons and the National Film Board of Canada for creating such a moving and inspiring work, and for showing us what's possible when it comes to storytelling on the web.

[^back to top](#)



Upcoming online classes at The Goodman Center

RUN BETTER WEBINARS	TELL BETTER STORIES	DESIGN BETTER CAMPAIGNS
The Webinar on Webinars	Storytelling: Tapping the Power of Narrative	Strategic Communications: Cutting Through
September 19 11am - 12pm PT	Sept. 20 & 27, Oct. 4 & 11 9am - 10am PT	September 20 & 27 11am - 12pm PT

About Us

free-range thinking is written by Andy Goodman and Celia Hoffman. To read back issues, download free publications, and to learn more about our work, please visit www.thegoodmancenter.com.

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