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ABSTRACT

Digital storytelling (DST), broadly defined, is a storytelling method that is interwoven with digitised images, texts, sounds, and other interactive elements, and it has been increasingly used for social work and healthcare interventions. While the term DST has become more popular, its role in actual social work interventions is not clear. The ambiguity of DST presents a hurdle to further theorisation for social work practice and research. This article aims to provide a narrative review and derive a conceptualisation that is in line with social work's psychotherapeutic and systems orientation. The review has derived a two-layer conceptualisation. In a broad sense, DST can be seen as an umbrella term covering different sorts of storytelling activities that use digital communication media. Practitioners and researchers can adopt a set of parameters for describing and comparing different practice designs. More specifically, DST can be seen as a kind of narrative practice utilising digital communication media. This definition offers a conceptual base for DST, which helps further theorisation and research in social work practice.

Along with the popularisation of digital production technologies, social work and healthcare practitioners have increasingly adopted digital production tools in their front-line practices (De Vecchi, Kenny, Dickson-Swift, & Kidd, 2016). Digital storytelling (DST), broadly defined, is a storytelling method that is interwoven with digitised images, texts, sounds and/or other digital elements, and it is frequently referred to as a practice method used in therapeutic or community settings (Chan & Yau, 2019; Sage, Singer, LaMarre, & Rice, 2018). We set out to explore contributions related to the theory and utility of DST when applied to social work practice.

Although DST is widely discussed in the literature, its role in actual social work interventions is not clear. Some researchers have specifically reviewed the use of DST in human services (Botfield, Newman, Lenette, Albury, & Zwi, 2017; de Jager, Fogarty, Tewson, Lenette, & Boydell, 2017; De Vecchi et al., 2016), and these reviews eventually covered an extremely diverse range of genres and methods that do not reasonably present a coherent set of practices. For example, some practices are purely led by users, some are facilitated by artists, some productions are not moving images (e.g., photographs with texts were used in Walsh,

Rutherford, & Kuzmak, 2010), and some defined DST as two to five minute short media clips, but others included long video documentaries (e.g., videotaped oral histories were used in Burgess, Klaebe, & McWilliam, 2010). Without naming the core components of a DST intervention, it is difficult to assess what entails a DST and whether DSTs offer promising evidence in efficacy towards social work's goals of wellness and social justice.

To our knowledge, no structured literature review has explored the utility and theoretical orientation of DST as a practice for social work. We located three structured reviews that focus on the intersection of DST and mental health. De Vecchi et al. (2016) reviewed 15 articles, Botfield et al. (2017) reviewed 28, and de Jager et al. (2017) reviewed 25 articles. There are 11 studies repeatedly covered by more than one of these three reviews, and therefore they altogether covered 57 studies. All these three reviews covered both qualitative and quantitative studies; de Jager et al. (2017) even covered articles about using DST as research methods. Among these 57 non-repeating studies covered by these three recently published reviews, there are only 2 quasi-experimental design studies (Coleman, Ramm, & Cooke, 2010; R. Goodman & Newman, 2014), and there is no randomised controlled trial (RCT). In general, these reviews offer thematic benefits (e.g., empowerment) and risks of using DST (e.g., revisiting experiences may traumatise the participants, as noted in de Jager et al., 2017). These themes are consistent with goals and risk considerations in direct social work practice. However, these reviews are not able to speak to the efficacy of DSTs due to the lack of coherent approaches between studies or clear theoretical bases.

Moreover, it is important to be aware that some researchers do not specifically use the term 'digital storytelling', but that the media productions they mentioned are definitely in digital formats, and those practices are storytelling activities. For example, researchers have reviewed phototherapy (DeCoster & Dickerson, 2014), photovoice (Catalani & Minkler, 2010), and youth media practice (Johnston-Goodstar, Richards-Schuster, & Sethi, 2014), and all these media practices have gone digital since the 90s. Structured literature reviews may have omitted DST practices because of terminology differences. These specific media practices have coherent skillsets and theories, and on many occasions, they are referenced as core elements of DST practices (e.g., cited as core methodological components in Gubrium, 2009; Lenette, Cox, & Brough, 2015). For our review, practices addressed by these publications are also considered as DSTs.

In short, there are various media practice traditions in social work, these traditions coexist, and as they go digital, their forms and scopes largely overlap. The idea of DST is much more ambivalent than the term suggests. Against this background, this article aims to provide a narrative review of DST for social work practice and proposes a definition that can offer clarity for further practice, theorisation, and research.

A narrative review informed by a heuristic lens

This narrative review has adopted a heuristic lens, which is informed by three conceptual blocks:

First, social work is about change-making with an aspiration towards wellness and social justice in individual, community, and global domains (Council on Social Work Education, 2015). In social work, we need to answer a question about in what ways DST

can offer a model that can contribute to change-making strategies, and how the digital component of storytelling contributes to the mission of the profession.

Second, it is worthwhile to pay attention to change-making strategies that might not have been possible without digital technologies. That means we should give special attention to how technology's latent utility and users' experiences can interact and generate unique possibilities. This idea, sometimes referred to as technology affordance, has been widely applied in a range of studies examining the interaction between humans and technology (Hammond, 2010), and recently in social work (Chan & Holosko, 2017; Chan & Ngai, 2019).

Third, when we identify practice insights from media practices, the change theory behind the use of the named media tools may be more pivotal than the tools themselves; terms like digital, cyber, photos, videos, and media are highly synonymous. The trend of media convergence in the past few decades has made boundaries between different media production practices less clear-cut, and audio-visual broadcast systems, telephones, and various forms of computer productions have converged (Chan & Holosko, 2016; Siapera & Veglis, 2012).

In short, this heuristic lens supports us to advance our discussion about the ways DST can serve as an intervention strategy in social work practice, and how it can be further defined and researched. The strategies and theories covered by this paper only represent a selective snapshot of the body of literature concerning media practices in human services. They are selected and listed here for discussion purposes.

Diverse terminologies, similar methodologies

Phototherapy and personal insights

Phototherapy is perhaps the oldest media practice that has gone digital. It refers to therapy techniques that use clients' snapshots and family photos as catalysts for therapeutic conversations and healing. The history of photo-based methods dates back to the pre-digital age in the 1970s, in which therapists used Polaroid instant photos to facilitate the therapeutic process (Combs & Ziller, 1977; Nelson-Gee, 1975). DeCoster and Dickerson (2014) reviewed 23 articles that reported on photo-based psychosocial interventions (phototherapy) in mental health practice, including qualitative case studies and pre/post-test experimental studies. Among these reviewed practices, many of them significantly utilised digital tools and digital images (Brinkman, Vermetten, van den Steen, & Neerincx, 2011; DeCoster & Lewis, 2013; Levin et al., 2007; Weiser, 2004).

One of the key texts referenced by the review conducted by DeCoster and Dickerson (2014) is Weiser's (1993) *Phototherapy techniques*. Weiser began her phototherapy practice in the 80s, and has theorised that ordinary personal snapshots and family photos are catalysts for therapeutic communication, reaching areas inside a person that words alone cannot access. For Weiser, making photos, or bringing photos along to the therapy session, is just the start. As Weiser (2004) noted, 'what for photographers is usually an end-point (the finished photo) is, for PhotoTherapy purposes, just the beginning' (p.36).

In short, phototherapy makes a unique contribution by providing a strategy that uses visual cues to enable individuals to develop insights related to personal matters. Diverse meanings can be derived from reinterpreting and reframing experiences. It is presumed

that such expression and reflection processes can help individuals develop insights or unique outcomes concerning their problems. Phototherapy offers a unique therapeutic approach that may not have been possible without using photos, and primarily relies on digital processes. In this way, phototherapy serves as a DST that aligns with social work's goal of meeting clients where they are, supporting personal insight and self-expression, and improving mental health outcomes.

Photovoice and collective action

Photovoice is a process by which people can identify, represent, and enhance their community through a specific photographic technique (Wang & Burris, 1994; Wang, Yi, Tao, & Carovano, 1998). Photovoice has been extensively referenced as a key theoretical framework in some DST studies (Gubrium, 2009; Lenette & Boddy, 2013). Catalani and Minkler (2010) reviewed 37 articles on the use of photovoice in public health and related disciplines. Some specifically mentioned that they used digital tools and the Internet (Bader, Wanono, Hamden, & Skinner, 2007; Mamary, Mccright, & Roe, 2007).

One of the key texts referenced in this review is Wang and Burris (1997) article titled 'Photovoice: Concept, methodology, and use for participatory needs assessment.' Wang and Burris (1997) specify three main goals of Photovoice: i) to enable people to record and reflect their community's strengths and concerns, ii) to promote critical dialogue and knowledge about important issues through large and small group discussion of photographs, and iii) to reach policymakers. Wang et al. (1998) further illustrate how the use of photos can facilitate participatory needs assessment, evaluation, and advocacy. For example, they suggest steps such as using the photos taken to facilitate group discussion, critical reflection and dialogue, selecting photos for discussion, storytelling using the photos, codifying themes based on the photo contents, and writing stories.

In short, photovoice aligns with social work practice strategies to support collective individuals to advocate for their agendas in broader contexts. Photovoice offers a unique intervention approach that may not have been possible without using photos. A key difference between photovoice and other media practices, relevant to social work, is its emphasis on using images and groups to magnify marginalised voices, and hence support social change. This approach aligns with social work practice goals related to empowerment, self-determination, and fostering social justice.

Youth media practice and reflective scaffolding

Youth Media Practice refers to a field of practice in which young people use media production as a vehicle for youth development, youth leadership, and community change (Buckingham, 2003). Johnston-Goodstar et al. (2014) conducted a content analysis of media production programmes from 49 youth media groups in the USA. They noted that the forms of production included digital video, radio, web-based media, and print formats.

One of the key texts referenced in Johnston-Goodstar et al. (2014) is Goodman's (2003) *Teaching youth media: A critical guide to literacy, video production and social change*. Goodman (2003) reported the method he has used in the Educational Video Centre in New York since the 1980s. Goodman sees that self-expression is not enough

and that teachers must also grow their students' intellectual capacities by developing their knowledge base and their critical thinking skills. He suggests that the teacher ought to 'arrange for the child to do with her what he could not do without her' (p. 55). He has associated this process with the concept of the zone of proximal development (ZPD) in educational studies, which means there is a difference between what a person can learn unaided, and what they can learn with support from another person (Buckingham, 2003). Identifying and utilising such ZDP can facilitate scaffolding, and hence personal growth.

In sum, youth media practice makes a unique contribution by offering a pedagogy that enables individuals to develop critical reflection about dominant social discourse. Different from the phototherapy tradition, the media literacy education tradition emphasises social topics rather than personal issues, and different from the photovoice tradition, moderators take a more proactive role in teaching participants to go beyond what they have learned. The media and leadership skill development, insight-centred critical reflection, and encouragement to contribute to stories that exist in dominant culture support social work goals related to empowerment, self-determination, and social justice.

Practices that specifically use the term 'Digital Storytelling'

Some writers and researchers specifically use the term 'digital storytelling' (DST). Compared with discussions about photovoice, phototherapy, and youth media practice, researchers that have specifically adopted the term DST are much less organised and less theoretical; and, in fact, DST has a much shorter history. There are many publications introducing how to create digital productions (e.g., Alexander, 2017; Ohler, 2013), and edited books showing anecdotal application examples (e.g., Hartley & McWilliam, 2009), but there is no publication to our awareness that has systematically theorised the use of DST in social work or other human services. One of the earliest and most widely cited references to DST is Lambert's *Digital Storytelling Cookbook*, which represents a typical understanding of DST as it might be applied to social work, and therefore it is discussed here.

Lambert is a co-founder of the Centre for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley California. The centre has worked with organisations and communities to create story-based programs around the world since the 90s. Lambert first published his *Digital Storytelling Cookbook* in 2006, the latest edition (the 4th Edition) was published in 2010 (Lambert, 2010), and the method has been recapitulated in a 2018 publication (Lambert & Hessler, 2018). This *Cookbook* has been widely cited by subsequent publications related to DST, and it has helped popularise the definition that DST is about producing three to five minutes personal stories, with images and sound. It is worthwhile to note that The Centre for Digital Storytelling was renamed StoryCenter in 2015, which partly signifies that the term 'digital' has occupied a less strategic value in the organisation's branding.

Lambert's publications (and also other similar manual-type publications) have helped popularise an idea that DST is about using short multimedia clips (two to five minutes) to produce personal stories. The *Cookbook* suggests a 7-step approach – i) owning insights, ii) owning emotions, ii) finding the moment, iv) seeing the story, v) hearing it, vi) assembling it, and vii) sharing it. The focus is more on elements of storytelling, and Lambert has not clearly explained in what ways a change-making strategy is supported by

this genre and these steps. Therefore, when it comes to actual programme implementations, practitioners need to rely on other concepts or skills to fill this gap.

For example, Gubrium (2009) is one of the earliest proponents of applying DST in social work. Gubrium referenced Lambert's works, but her version of DST has mainly been informed by Caroline Wang's photovoice method. In Gubrium's account, DST refers more to a production genre (short visual narratives that synthesise different media modalities) than a change-making strategy. She sees that DST can bolster community building because the process is linked to Freirian model, in which participants construct stories as they construct change. Such intervention design has obviously referenced a methodology framework that is beyond the scope of Lambert's *Cookbook*.

Likewise, Lenette and Boddy (2013) also referenced Lambert's work as part of a DST project. They recognised photovoice as a theoretical framework informing that project. The participants in this study explored complex circumstances using visual ethnographic means, discussed photos, and created movies. Lenette et al. (2015) also reported a DST programme that could provide a critical lens to reveal enabling processes overlooked in dominant discourses and challenge dominant societal narratives. This time they extensively referenced a narrative approach to theorise that DST program.

Similarly, Sehrawat, Jones, Orlando, Bowers, and Rubins (2017) referenced to Lambert's works and reported a DST project that recruited college students to produce digital stories for older adults. After basic training in DST, intergenerational teams were formed, consisting of students and older adults. These teams met before an intensive daylong workshop. The workshop allowed each team to co-create the older adult's digital story, which focused on a moment in their life. The final productions allowed older adults to share their stories with others. Much of the program was based on an intergenerational intervention model, and the workshops were about producing DST for (and with) another group rather than having protagonists producing their own stories.

In a nutshell, compared with terms like youth media practice, photovoice, or phototherapy, the term 'digital storytelling' (DST) has gained increasing popularity and maybe more inclusive than these more specific terms. This popularity is partly because most media productions are now 'digital' in one way or another, and the term 'storytelling' is broad enough to cover a wide range of production genres. However, practitioners claiming to use DST are typically relying on other established theories and strategies to inform the change-making process. In fact, DST has apparently functioned more as a production genre than an intervention model, and that production genre has not been tightly linked with those change-making strategies, such as crafting a preferred story that can be shared, understanding a story better through the process of story-creation, or promoting critical reflection.

A proactive interpretation: DST as an umbrella term and narrative practice

Our review demonstrates that there is room to rationalise further the theoretical base of DST. We suggest a two-layer-conceptualisation for social work practice, which may inform further discussion, research, and theorisation in our field.

DST as an umbrella term covering diverse media production based practices

In a broad sense, we can see DST as an umbrella term covering different sorts of storytelling activities that use digital media, including relevant digital practices which may be termed as phototherapy, photovoice, or youth media practice. Practitioners and researchers can adopt a set of parameters for describing and comparing different DST practices. The use of DST in a social work tradition should include a change-making orientation and clearly define the role of participant and practitioner, alongside the choices of tools and products. The inclusion of digital tools in social work direct practice should help facilitate outcome goals, and consider therapeutic benefits and risk especially when the process includes public sharing that may identify participants. Components of DST in social work can include:

(a) Goal: Therapeutic, learning, collective action and advocacy;
(b) Roles of service users: As protagonists or co-authors;
(c) Roles of facilitators: Enabler, teacher, co-author;
(d) Expected Outcomes: Critical reflection, community awareness, preferred story, social action;
(e) Media forms and genres: Images, texts, sounds;
(f) Production tools: Editing tools, software, hardware, mobile apps;
(g) Program processes: Individual, group, online, offline, blended;
(h) Distribution and feedback networks: Private, websites, social media, offline exhibitions or screenings.

A comparison of different DST practice designs can enable us to select appropriate components for a given intervention meaningfully. Proper comparisons and integrations may help advance the use of media practice for social work interventions through the purposeful choice of objectives and DST intervention components. This definition offers some clarity for classification and further discussion, and it can accommodate a broad range of theoretical approaches. However, this broad definition does not indicate any theoretical orientation, therefore it only offers limited value for further theorisation and research.

DST as narrative practice utilising digital communication media

More specifically, we can see that DST is arguably a kind of narrative practice (NP) utilising digital communication media. We note, in the context of articles reviewed for this paper, those theories of change significantly rely on components of NP (Lenette et al., 2015; Willis et al., 2014; Wood, Fredericks, Neate, & Unghango, 2015).

Narrative practice has been increasingly recognised and valued in social work (Freeman, 2011; Lenette et al., 2015; Riessman & Quinney, 2005; Roscoe, Carson, & Madoc-Jones, 2011). There are various narrative practice traditions: some focus more on how narrative styles can make a difference (Borden, 1992), some point out how a community-based narrative such as a three-act play structure can inform change-making processes (Duvall & Béres, 2011), some focus more on therapeutic conversations (White, 2007), some see that NP can be a platform integrating theories and practices

(Roscoe et al., 2011), and some focus more on community narratives as social action (Freeman, 2011). A core feature shared by these various NPs is that they are concerned with how stories are storied rather than how 'facts' are unearthed. Riessman and Quinney (2005) see that NP is 'sequence and consequence' that distinguishes narrative from other forms of discourse, because 'events are selected, organised, connected, and evaluated as meaningful for a particular audience' (p. 394).

Change-making strategies in NP are highly developed and theorised. The DST change-making strategies identified in our review, such as reflective scaffolding (e.g., youth media practice), personal insights (e.g., phototherapy), collective action (e.g., photovoice), and inter-group communications (e.g., Centre for Digital Storytelling), have already been discussed in the body of literature of NP in one way or another. While the social work literature has increasingly recognised that digital technology can significantly influence communication and social relationships (Castillo De Mesa, Gómez Jacinto, López Peláez, & Palma García, 2019; Kirwan, 2019), it has not yet discussed the role of digital technology in NP.

Digital media and communication modalities

Digital communication media offers some practical convenience that cannot be achieved by face-to-face verbal conversations. Among the DST studies reviewed by Botfield et al. (2017), de Jager et al. (2017), and De Vecchi et al. (2016), quite a number of them have illustrated the use of the Internet to facilitate an intervention process. For example, the Internet was used for gathering information to support production of stories (Kent, 2016; Nicole & Naomi, 2017), sharing resources among production teammates (Lally & Sclater, 2012; Paiewonsky, 2011), downloading media materials (e.g., images, sounds, texts) to support production (Emert, 2014; Mnisi, 2015), distributing final productions and collecting feedback (Davis, 2011; O'Mara & Harris, 2016).

However, the impact of digital communication media may be far more subtle than a practical convenience. Some NP founders have long pointed out the value of mediated communication (e.g., letter). White and Epston (1990) see that therapeutic documents assist short-term memory and enable people to be 'more active in determining the arrangement of information and experience, and in the production of different accounts of events and experience' (p. 37), and there are diverse forms of therapeutic documentation (Payne, 2006; White & Denborough, 2011).

Digital media contents are editable, and they can enable participants to continually revise, elaborate, and prioritise their expressions during the intervention process. Some DST practices have demonstrated that allowing participants to edit and re-edit their messages can enable them to make better-informed judgements, because this conveys an important message to participants – all stories are allowed to be changed, until the last moment of creation (Chan & Holosko, 2019). Digital communication media supports participants to externalise their thinking and allows them to have opportunities to affirm, reject, or modify defining stories in their lives.

In addition, the spatial affordance of visual communication can support cognitive processes that may not be easily achieved in textual communication (Burn & Parker, 2003; Kress, 2009; Kress & Van Leeuwen, 1996), for example, comparing importance, size, or centrality. Some NPs show that asking reflective questions based on images shared by clients can enable them to distance themselves from their expressions, compare their views, and make informed judgements (Chan, 2012; Chan, Ngai, & Wong, 2012).

Further, recent DST practices have exploited the effects of asynchronous communication in a social media environment. For example, social media allow partitioned but continual feedback loops which create a sense of continuity and continual engagement (Chan & Holosko, 2017), online communication can induce a social disinhibition effect which makes service users more easily open themselves (Chan & Ngai, 2019), and practitioners can make use of asynchronous gaps to buy time to provide participants with supplementary or contrasting information (Chan & Holosko, 2019).

Digital communication media helps bridge the micro-macro practice gap

Throughout its history, individuals' psychosocial wellbeing and macro-level social change have been the fundamental hallmarks of social work (Dulmus & Sowers, 2012). This dual-focus orientation represents a core essence of social work (Weick, 1999), as it is important in making social work different from other intervention-oriented disciplines, which either focus on social functioning (e.g., counselling) or social change (e.g., social activism). Unfortunately, there has been considerable debate about whether this dual-focus approach is sufficiently applied in our field (Bloom & Klein, 1997). Critics suggest that the social work knowledge base is too individually focused (Mulroy & Austin, 2005) or too environmentally-focused (Han, 2010; Julia & Kondrat, 2005).

Narrative Practice has the potential to bridge the micro-macro practice divide in social work practice, as it produces counter-narratives, both at the individual and broader community levels (Mattaini & Huffman-Gottschling, 2012; Roscoe et al., 2011; Vodde & Gallant, 2002). However, without effective narrative distribution networks, counter-narratives generated with individuals remain in the minds of individuals.

In this regard, the use of digital communication media may further actualise NP's 'dual-focus' potential. In some ways, the Internet has already blurred the micro-macro boundary (Livingstone, 2005; West, Lewis, & Currie, 2009). For example, expressing personal voices on one's social media account also implies expressing voices in public spaces. Also, individual Internet service who have a critical mass of friends online could find that their online communications enhance their face-to-face communications.

Some NP researchers have already suggested that using social networks to reach a broader audience could enhance the goals of NP. For example, in White's narrative therapy (White, 2007), outsider witnesses are sometimes invited to join a therapy conversation in order to affirm the story and broaden the audience of people who are invited to hear a preferred narrative, thereby reinforcing the new story. Outsider witnesses may be a person's family members or friends, or they may be invited from outside these networks such as other professionals. White (2007) sees that the Internet can support outsider witnesses to participate via distance (e.g., video conference, chatbox, forum), and this can enhance the flexibility of outsider arrangements. Alternatively, clients and outsiders can use audio recordings (or merely voice communication) to communicate anonymously, and this may help protect both clients' and outsiders' privacy (White, 2007, pp. 216–218), but still allow for outsider acknowledgement of stories.

In our review, we have identified several examples showing how digital communication media has been used to bridge the micro-macro practice gap. Lenette et al. (2015) have demonstrated this dual-focus potential in a DST project with a small group of lone

mothers with refugee backgrounds. Outcomes for both storytellers and story listeners have been assessed and discussed. The use of DST enhanced participants' capacities for self-representation and agency (micro-level outcomes), and it produced counter-narratives at a broader community level (macro-level outcomes).

Also, Harmouche (2017) showed that a digital narrative could help normalise one's storied experience while also educating the community. In the case of a DST project in Lebanon, gay and HIV+ youth shared their lived experiences in order to build empathy and bridge shared experiences in their communities.

Likewise, Beltrán and Begun (2014) reported a DST project related to the cultural strengths of Māori women. This project has the dual focus of therapeutic healing through the development of individual stories of resilience, and building community strength through sharing the digital stories.

Similarly, some community-based DST projects strive to use the narrative experience of a person who has survived adversity such as a disease, mental health struggle, or chronic illness as a way to promote health-seeking activities (Cueva, Kuhnley, Revels, Schoenberg, & Dignan, 2015; Mulder & Dull, 2014; Park, Kulbok, Keim-Malpass, Drake, & Kennedy, 2017; Wilson, Hutson, & Wyatt, 2015). These types of DST narrative projects are often linked to theoretical concepts of critical reflection and participatory action and serve both the individual and community simultaneously.

Concluding remarks

Since the dawn of the social work profession, technology has facilitated social work practice – from telephones to telehealth. We have adapted technologies into our practice settings as they emerge, often with limited consideration of the theories that inform our use or careful consideration about how to deconstruct the core components of digitally-facilitated interventions for purposes of assessment. The existing body of literature about DST has not rationalised a unique change-making strategy, and in this paper, we offer a social-work-specific rationale for how these techniques fit within our practice priorities.

Based on our narrative review, we have developed a two-layer conceptualisation that may help rationalise how the use of DST is situated in the context of social work. In a broad sense, we suggest that DST can be seen as an umbrella term covering storytelling activities that use digital media. This definition offers clarity for classification and further discussion, and it can accommodate a broad range of theoretical orientations, but encourages social work practitioners to be thoughtful about the theory of change and the key components beyond DST that shape their practice.

In a specific sense, we suggest that social workers who harness DST are often using digital tools to extend interventions that exist at the heart of NP. First, digital communication media offers new communication modalities, which are not possible in face-to-face verbal conversations. Second, digital communication media can further actualise NP's 'dual-focus' potential. The Internet can enable a story to reach a broader audience. Therefore, digital narratives can be used to change community perceptions, make the personal political, normalise adversity, and promote wellness.

This NP-based DST approach is in line with an existing body of literature in social work as a change-making strategy, and it offers a direction for further theorisation and research. As such, this review offers a starting point for identifying the goal of DST as a way to

extend the benefits of narrative practice, thereby standing on the shoulder of giants. The history of narrative practice in social work may also turn a new page in the digital age.

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