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# Story City – Social Impact Project Application

**Call for Expressions of Interest**

**ABOUT STORY CITY**

Story City is a digital storytelling experience that puts you inthe story. It combines fiction or (non-fiction) stories with physical locations, putting the user in the shoes of your lead character, making the story ‘real’ to the user. The Story City GPS app allows us to deliver a story in the location it is set giving you a tour through the city and of its people that you would never get in a guidebook.

Through the Story City locative app, the public are guided on a trail to unravel and explore a story of their own choosing. These stories can appeal to both locals and visitors, sometimes combining fiction, documentary, historical fact or personal choice to illuminate a cause, and the people you serve in a city or town.

As part of our social impact projects program, Story City works with activists, not-for-profits, academics, or other social enterprises to bring their stories to the streets and have the public interactively engage with their stories. We want to bring stories into the world that help bridge cultural divides, and shine a light on issues many groups within our society face in a way that gets people to engage and empathise firsthand. At Story City we want to empower local people to tell stories that will change another’s world view, to redefine stories so they’re something you’re a part of, rather than something you’re told.

**CAN YOU GIVE US AN EXAMPLE?**

We’ve been approached by dozens of not-for-profits and academics who want to use interactive stories for good.

Such as an academic who was based in Cyprus, an Island in the Mediterranean, where Greek and Turkish populations are constantly in upheaval and dispute over differences. He wants to use narrative mapping and locative story as a way to bridge the cultural divide between the two groups.

Another wants to give women in Mumbai who have suffered at the hands of domestic violence a chance to have their voices heard during an arts festival.

One hopes to tell the stories of locals from bush fire affected areas in Australia and to draw visitors back into the region.

Another wants to make a mini-documentary following a life in the day of a homeless veteran through the streets of a major US city.

Or a mini-documentary showing how people of colour are singled out as they walk through the streets thanks to a body-cam, putting the user in the shoes of a person of colour.

As long as your proposed project aims to give marginalized people a voice, or bridge cultural divides via empathy, we’d like to hear from you.

**HOW DOES THIS WORK?**

We launched this project because we were heart-broken by the number of stories that couldn’t be included in our platform because the organisations or academics were unable to either a) afford the regular cost of production with us, or b) it would take them anywhere between 2-3 years to get grant funding to work with us (if they were ever that lucky). Being a small company, we just didn’t have the capacity for a long time to volunteer our time for these types of projects.

But thanks to some stellar Story City Community Mentors volunteering their production time we will be taking applications on a rolling basis during the year to make sure these stories are heard in this new, interactive, format.

All projects selected by the Story City team will receive full, in-kind (read – free), production and editorial support from our Story City Community Mentors worth over $7000, and 50+hrs, including: helping your creative team outline the story and select locations, provide training materials, editorial feedback of the story script, audio, and/or video, co-ordinating the creative team members deadline and delivery, and loading the story content into the Story City platform for access by the public for 2 years.

We’re hoping we can use our award-winning platform and team, and the ability to literally put the public in the shoes of your cause, to connect people to what you do and the people you help.

One thing we should be clear about is that the Community Mentors working on your project will be providing production and editorial support to guide a creative team *you* put together, they will *not* be creating the content for you as we unfortunately just don’t have the bodies/capacity for that. You, as the organisation/group pitching the project, will need to have a proposed story pulled together, and will need to bring your own creators to the table. This team could potentially include creative talents such as writers, visual artists, filmmakers, musicians, narrators or actors, depending on what type of story you’re hoping to work with our volunteers on. Our producers will then work with, and train your team, to bring your proposed story to life on the Story City platform – giving you the skills to then create even more stories beyond the first.

After you pitch your proposed story and team as part of the simple EOI, the EOI will be put in a folder shared by all the community mentors, who check the applications monthly and select projects that speak to them the most. If you’re shortlisted, they may ask for a short, virtual conversation with your liaison to answer any additional questions they might have, or request changes to a story pitch if the idea requires tweaking to work as a locative story. Short-listed organisations will have one week to submit any requested changes and then will be notified if they are selected at the end of that week. From there the organisational liaison is only needed to attend initial outline meetings, and to give approvals for any final files, Story City handles the rest of the production and creation with your team for you!

**FAQ**

***So it’s free?***

Almost. We also recommend you set aside some money to pay the creative team/storytellers you select for the creation of the story. While we understand that many projects with not-for-profits, for example, are only possible because you are able to get people to volunteer for project, please keep in mind that many creatives are regularly asked to do things for free or ‘exposure’. So even with a small payment to each of your creative team you are showing more respect to your volunteers than 90% of the organisations out there.

Our Community Mentors are creatives who have previously worked for Story City and have stepped-up to volunteer their experience and skills because they want to help bring these kinds of stories into the world. They answered the call when we asked our community what we should do to make sure more of these social impact stories reached the world, and for that we are eternally grateful and hope this encourages more volunteers to join in to spread the impact.

If we find that in this program organisations are not being reliable and respectful with providing timely content, meetings or approvals (no volunteer wants a 1-3 month project to go for 12months because an org is ‘too busy’), we may introduce an honorarium charged to the organisations accepted which would be paid to the volunteers to ensure that only organisations who are serious about making an impact with their stories end up applying. Please don’t be the reason why we would have to introduce a policy barrier like this. Be respectful of your volunteer’s time and they will help you change the world.

***So I need to already have a creative team when I apply?***

Yes.

***What type of creatives do I need?***

As a bare minimum you will need the first three below in some shape or form, and then a potential mix of the last four depending on your project:

* *Writers/Head Storyteller:* Someone who will write the text that appears on the screen, and the script that a narrator will use to create the audio, or actors will use to create the video, or documentary markers will use to storyboard their documentary. They are the story architect who will put your cause into a fictional context with emotional punch, or will create a story arc for a podcast/documentary style non-fiction narrative.
* *Narrator:* Will provide emotion-filled audio that adds drama and humanness to the project. 90% of our users prefer to do the experience via audio/video rather than reading text.
* *Visual Artist:* A visual artist merges the fantasy with the location, making the fiction ‘real’ to a user. In the case of non-fiction trails they can create visually striking images that will add something visually to the story apart from the location where the user is standing, whether it be photographs of the people in your story, historical images, or arresting statistics made visual.
* *Musician (Optional):* A musician will add emotion, mood, and depth to your story. You watch any movie, any documentary, you’ll notice that there is always a soundtrack behind it. It foreshadows upcoming scenes, brings tears to our eyes, and can convey emotion in a more visceral way than words. Almost all of our Story City adventures are scored by a musician/composer for this reason, you should seriously consider them an essential part of your team.
* *Filmmaker (Optional):* You may choose to do a mini-documentary, record interviews, or have pre-recorded videos as part of your locative and interactive story. Maybe you already have archival footage you need to stitch together to go with an audio narration overlay. For that you will need a competent film-maker with recording equipment, and/or skills in the editing of video.
* *Actors (Optional):* If you are doing a video re-creation, or a ‘fictional’ story via film, you will need actors to bring your story and script to life.
* *Translator (Optional):* If the main voices in your story are immigrants, or you are in a country where English is not the first language, you may need a translator to translate your story into multiple languages from English, or from a foreign language to English. In this case you will also need to have narration in multiple languages, and if you have a video of a person speaking in another language (and you wish your story to be say available to English speakers) you will need a translator to caption the video, or a narrator to dub in a translation. Please note that at this time our Story City Community Mentors are only able to provide production support in English, so if you serve a community who speaks another language, a translation will be required for us to properly work on a project.

Creative people who write, compose music, act, or can film and edit video are hiding in most people’s current networks, and if they are on your newsletter or social media, they are probably sympathetic to your cause. We recommend that be the first place you reach out to, to find your creative team. Another good place if you don’t have a lot of money includes 3rd or 4th year University students or recent graduates. Also consider reaching out to your local creative organisations, such as writers or artist centres, amateur theatre, or film clubs for interested creatives.

***What type of story do you recommend?***

It is entirely up to you! Your story can be non-fiction or fictional. Many times we find fictional stories weaving in aspects of your message and the lives of those you serve can be very powerful because you can literally put the public in the shoes of the story’s main character in a way you can’t just watching interviews. If you give your creative team an idea of what you want to achieve with the story, and who you want to feature, and then show them this list, chances are they will help you brainstorm something you would never have imagined on your own. Below are the different ways people have pitched us before with stories, hopefully these suggestions get your creative juices flowing:

* Interactive fictional adventures (choose your adventures, getting people into the shoes of the main character).
* Local mythology/cultural stories
* Interactive puzzle trails (solve clues, puzzles, mysteries)
* Historical fiction trails
* Short story trails
* 360 video
* Dance/performative trails (video)
* Interactive theatre pieces (video)
* Music scapes/video trails
* Oral/local history stories
* Recording of events for experience outside festival times
* Documentary
* Poetry trail
* Behind the scenes (of first responders, of care workers, of a day in the life)
* Self-guided tours (statues, street art, gardens, driving trails, literary tours)

***What is the time length for the project?***

If you send in an application your organisation and creative team will need to commit to a firm, 3-4-month deadline to complete the project and launch it. Because we run a rolling application intake for our social impact projects, the previous projects must be completed on time so that we can turn our skills to a new organisation who needs our help in engaging the public in their cause as much as you do. Please be respectful to these future projects, and the time of your community mentor, by only submitting an application if you can commit to the 3-4-month process.

**SELECTION**

The projects will be selected by our Community Mentors based on: the aims of your organisation and the impact they make in society, how excited the Mentors are about your proposed story, and the skill of your creative team (which is why samples of your team’s previous work is needed!).

# SUBMITTING YOUR EXPRESSION OF INTEREST

We take rolling applications which are generally looked at once a month by our volunteer groups. Submissions should be emailed to: ecraven@storycity.com.au with “Social Impact - EOI” in the Subject line. Please email your:

* Completed expression of interest application form (rename the file – [your organisation] EOI)
* Current CV/paragraph about your organisation/group/mission (feel free to include bios of team members if you wish to a maximum 150 words/ team member) (name the file - [your organisation] CV)
* Any supporting material, (for example a sample of writing for this potential story or of a previous story your writer has done, a sample of narration from your voiceover narrator, images from your chosen visual artist or filmographer etc).

Applicants will be told if their applications have been received within several days. From there, it is up to the volunteers to reach out to their chosen projects. We keep the projects in the shared volunteer folder for 6 months, so any new volunteers have the opportunity to select previously added applications. Any commercial or artistic information you have supplied for this application will be regarded as confidential**.**

**Expression of Interest FORM**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of Application: |  |
| Organisation/Group Name: |  |
| Contact Name: |  |
| City/Country of Org/group: |  |
| Phone: |  |
| Website: |  |
| Email:  |  |
| Your Team: Names & Roles (writer, artist, narration, musician etc). Please put Bios in a separate CV document. | *Attach your org’s CV (150 words max per person if including bios) to your email. Please name your attachment using the following syntax: [Not-For-Profit Name] – CV. This document can be a PDF or Word document. This just gives us an idea of your mission and teams’ background, just to understand who you are and where you come from (after all we connect to stories of people!). We’re not looking for fancy degrees or massive orgs, we don’t hold it against you if some of your creative team are emerging artists. This just helps our volunteers understand who they would be working with.* |
| Supporting Documentation: | *List any additional documents you are attaching in support of your Expression of Interest. You may include URLs and links to your mission statement, previous projects, and examples of your creative teams’ portfolio/work online (max 2 items or 1000 words per member of your team title each piece [Name of your Org] [type of role] – example [1 or 2]).*  |

The Proposed Project

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| --- | --- |
| *What is your organisations’ mission or mandate? Or the aim of your research? What is the social impact you are hoping to achieve in the world? (max 200 words)* |  |
| *Briefly describe how creating this particular interactive story with Story City will impact your organisation/research and provide benefit to the people you work with.**(max 500 words)**Consider:** *Why is this story important to you/your organisation?*
* *What is the main reason for telling your story?*
* *The social impact you what to achieve*
* *Who will benefit from your story?*
* *The type of audience you want to reach*
* *Why a locative story specifically would connect your audience to your cause*
* *The action you are hoping people will take (awareness, word of mouth, donate etc)*
 |  |
| *What is the story idea you would like to propose to create? (Max 700 words) In your proposal please consider:* * *What language will your story be told in?*
* *Key theme and potential featured characters/people*
* *The features of the city you have chosen and how they add to your key theme.*
* *Is it non-fiction, or fictional (will the public be a character in the story?)*
* *What do you want your audience to feel as a result of this story?*
* *End your proposal with a 25-word tag line summarising your story in a way that would entice an audience to participate in your story.*
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| *List the physical locations you would like to activate with your story if you have specific areas in mind. Sometimes the volunteers want to make sure they are familiar with a place to be able to provide you with the best support. Please keep in mind:** *Locations need to be more than random trees or street corners, there needs to be something of note in your location, a reason why the reader would visit other than to do the story*
* *If the story is fictional it needs to be completed in under 1km. If it’s non-fiction people will follow a trail for about 2-2.5km. So the locations need to be fairly close to each other and easy to walk between. You could do a driving tour, but again the tour would need to be only around an hour long.*
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