



Story'Hood

Session 2 - Intro to Taleblazer interface and theme

Overview

In this session, participants will be introduced to the Taleblazer interface and create a simple game. In particular, they will navigate the Taleblazer creation interface, generate and place agents on the game map. Participants will also be introduced to theme and utilize mind mapping to explore the theme for their game.

Learning Objectives

After completing these workshops, participants will be able to:

1. Identify elements of a Taleblazer game including maps, agents, bumping, images, and descriptions
2. Generate simple games using Taleblazer which include multiple agents with individual images, descriptions, and locations a game map
3. Locate and copy URLs for web images and add them to Taleblazer agents
4. Identify the theme within a story
5. Utilize brainstorming techniques to develop theme for a game within a group setting

Materials

Games can be played in 'tap to visit' mode if there is no GPS, or without tablets via emulation on the Taleblazer site, but this sacrifices the experience of playing the games on location.

- Whiteboard
- Computers with internet connection for each participants to build Taleblazer games
- Tablets to test the games
- Instructor computer and projector

Time / 90 Minutes / 1 Hour & 30 Minutes

Agenda

The agenda of this workshops should be outlined as follows:

1. Icebreaker (**10 minutes**) 2:00 - 2:10
2. Guidelines & Review (**5 minutes**) 2:10 - 2:15
3. Chromebook Setup (**5 minutes**) 2:15 - 2:20
4. Generation of Game Maps (**5 mins**) 2:20 - 2:25
5. Modify the First Agent (**10 mins**) 2:25 - 2:35
6. Adding Additional Agent (**10 mins**) 2:35 - 2:45
7. Play the Game (**5 mins**) 2:45 - 2:50
8. Game Prototype Demo (**20 mins**) 2:50 - 3:10
9. Introduction to Theme (**10 mins**) 3:10 - 3:20

The total time resulting from the suggested minute count for each section is approx. **1.5 hours**.

Icebreaker / 10 Minutes / 2:00 - 2:10

Question of the day: What is a game you play that has easy controls?

Guidelines & Review / 5 Minutes / 2:10 - 2:15

Briefly discuss with the participants what they remember from the previous session, in particular:

- What makes Taleblazer games different from other games?

Elicit: They are geo-locative, they use a shared platform to make the games

Generation of Game Maps / 5 Minutes / 2:20 - 2:25

Explain to the participants that by default the map in Taleblazer defaults to the MIT campus. The participants will:

1. Under the 'games' tab on the Taleblazer website, click 'create game'
2. This puts us in the map of a new Taleblazer game. Enter the address for the High Point Branch: 3411 S.W.Raymond St. Seattle, WA
3. Click on 'Move Game to Here' to make the new location your game default, and then click on 'lock map' to fix the dimensions of the map

Modify the First Agent / 10 Minutes / 2:25 - 2:30

Point out to the participants that the first agent in the game is already on the game map, marked by a red circle. Let them know that 'agents' are the characters and situations that players encounter in Taleblazer games. They are combinations of pictures and text that can be 'bumped' by players as they move around the physical space. In other words, agents are the people/situations/things that the player may encounter as they walk from place to place in the game area.

Ask:

1. What were the agents in the games we played last time?

Elicit:

- Space Traveler: Physical objects in such as rocks, leaves, and logs
- It Happened @ SPL: Characters in the story
- Life as the First in the Field: Bases on the diamond/situations encountered by Jackie Robinson

Now, the participants will take the following steps to modify the first agent:

1. Change its location on the map by clicking and dragging
2. Open a new chrome tab
3. Search for 'cat'
4. Click 'images'
5. Click a cat image, right-click, and select 'Save images as...'
6. Name the file
7. Click 'save'
8. Return to the Taleblazer tab and click the 'agents' tab
9. Click the question mark for the agent picture. This will bring up the 'upload image' tab.
10. Click 'upload image' and double click the image from the download list
11. Select the name 'cat' and enter the description: 'meow'

Adding Additional Agent / 10 Minutes / 2:35 - 2:45

The participants will create one more agent, by taking the following actions:

1. Click the '+ new agent' button
2. Click the red circle and pick the orange square. The orange square will now represent the new agent on the map
3. Follow the steps from above, to modify the agent. The second, it will be a 'dog' with the description 'bark.' Click the Map tab and move the agent to a new location

Play the Game / 5 Minutes / 2:45 - 2:50

Participants take the following steps to play their game on the tablet:

1. Name the game 'test game' in the text box on the top right of the Taleblazer page
2. Click 'save' on the top part of the Taleblazer page
3. Click the triangle on the top right of the Taleblazer page. A menu opens which displays the code that allows us to play the game on a tablet

Then, on the tablet:

1. Open Taleblazer
2. Tap the stack of the rectangles on the top right of the screen
3. Click 'Game Code' on the hamburger menu
4. Enter the code for the game and tap 'Submit'
5. From then within the game, tap 'Settings' and 'Tap to Visit'

If there is excess time here, have the participants try each other's games.

More Taleblazer Options Demo / 20 mins / 2:50 - 3:10

Provide further instruction on the creation of Taleblazer scripts using the computer hooked up to the projector. In particular, demonstrate:

- Adding and removing agents from the world with a script (include & exclude)
- Adding and removing agents from inventory with a script (pickup & drop)
- Bumping agents one after the other with a script (bump next command)
- Switching tabs automatically
- Scoring points (change variable)

You can show these principles within the existing game code, but even better will be to create simple dummy agents that do these things and demonstrate their function in the Taleblazer emulator.

Introduction to Theme / 10 mins / 3:10 - 3:20

Present the theme slideshow to the class:

https://www.spl.org/Seattle-Public-Library/documents/programs-services/learning/StoryHood/TaleBlazer_theme.pptx

This section instructs the participants to think of a story in terms of theme, in contrast to thinking about story in terms of plot. Familiar stories from folklore and film are used to illustrate examples of theme. Assist the participants to relate what they are learning about theme with the games we played in the previous session: Space Invader, It Happened @ SPL, and Jackie Robinson. Ask questions such as:

- What is the theme of each game?
- How are they different?
- How are they similar?