

# The evolution of storytelling

## Site combines words and images to tell tales

**S**torytelling is probably as old as language itself. Long ago, before printing and electricity, people shared stories verbally, or through images painted on cave walls.

A good storyteller carefully chooses words and images that compliment the mood of the tale being told. As technology progressed, so did the manner in which words and images were combined.

The invention of writing allowed stories to be preserved intact, instead of evolving with each retelling. Imagery to accompany stories could be drawn, painted or carved in wood or stone. Printing, photography, audio recording and motion pictures all had major impacts on the way stories could be shared. The multimedia world we live in now provides tools that allow for rich, immersive storytelling.

**Primerstories.com** is a website that combines words, illustrations, photos, videos and animation to tell stories. Its tagline is “complex ideas, beautifully explained.” The stories on the site are not fables or fairytales, but essays on science, politics, history, culture and more.

The featured stories are grouped in seasons, with 2018 being the site’s fifth season. Each season has an overall theme, and this year’s is failure. Currently there are four stories featured in

this season: a look at survivors living in areas affected by nuclear bomb tests, how gerrymandering affects democracy, a malfunctioning NASA satellite, and a city dump. Past seasons can be viewed in the site’s archives.

Primer Stories accepts submissions from authors. When a piece is accepted, the design team goes to work. It integrates appropriate visuals to craft an engaging story experience.

Each story is presented in a vertically scrolling format. The type is arranged in blocks with different sizes, fonts, positions and colors designed to emphasize the content. As you scroll down through the story, different visual elements appear that coincide with the writing. The elements enter from and move in different directions and at different speeds, passing in front of and behind each other. The overall effect is lively and engaging.

The team at Primer Stories also does commissioned work. It will create the same type of engaging narratives featured on the site for other organizations, for a fee.

The stories are visually interesting, but not every story will resonate with everyone. They are not too long and not too short, good if you’re looking for more than a tweet but less than most articles. The navigation could use a little work (a home button on every page would be nice). It’s a good site to visit if you want a quick read embellished with a little eye candy.

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