you from personal experience, reading
the New York Times online is not the
same experience as reading it in print.)

The decline in newspaper sales is
not the only trouble. A steep decline
in the number of classified display
ads is also slamming newspapers
with a double whammy. Rupert
Murdoch, who owns a bunch of
newspapers including the New York
Post and the London Sunday Times,
once described classified ad revenue
as a “river of gold.” Now, even Mur-
doch is predicting the demise of clas-
sified ads.

“I don’t know anybody under 30
who has ever looked at a classified
advertisement in a newspaper,” Mur-
doch says today. He also thinks that
their editorial strategies are to blame
for the financial problems of U.S.
newspapers. “Outside of New York,”
he says, “it’s all monopoly newspa-
pers.” Some have good work in them,
but it tends to be overwritten, boring,
and elitist, not a reflection of the gen-
eral mood in the public.” Their circu-
lations will continue to fall. But Mur-
doch also criticized recent attempts to
boost circulation in the United King-
dom by giving away DVDs with each
copy, a practice he thinks must stop.
“I personally hate this DVD craze,”
he says.

Music, Video, and Film:
The Rise of Video Storytelling

MTV started in 1981, with almost
exclusively broadcasting music
videos at three minutes a pop. It was
a new TV entry that would change
our visual culture and exert excep-
tional influence on experimentation
and marketing. Remember “I want
my MTV.”

“MTV’s durability at the place
where the fickle music business and
the protean television trade interest
intersect can be attributed to a singu-
lar mind-set: its 24-year-long insis-
tence that the channel itself is the
star,” wrote Kate Arthur in the New
York Times. The talent can come and
go, but MTV endures.

MTV Networks now has 112 chan-
nels around the world, including Com-
edy Central and Nickelodeon, and
MTV can be held accountable for ad-
vancing the culture of design and
shortening the attention span of views.

MTV has since moved to broad-
ened programming, and “videos
have taken on an exciting if uncertain
life of their own, far away from the
mother ship that launched them,” re-
ported Jon Caramanica of the July 31,
The proliferation of videos on news
screens has been as quiet as it is pro-
found. To the global visual world,
videos energized visual marketing,
with Prince, Michael Jackson, and

Digital Storytelling
By Joe Lambert
How digital media help preserve cultures.

The Center for Digital Storytelling evolved out
of the mixture of community arts practices,
helping people make art for civic engagement,
and the new media explosion of the late 1980s and
1990s. We assist people in making short media
pieces that combine a spoken narrative, still images,
and design elements using digital photo manipulation
and digital video editing tools. The process is exemplified
by the pieces we helped produce for the BBC Web site,
Capture Wales (www.bbc.co.uk/digitalstorytelling),
one of many clients of our organization. We’ve helped
over 10,000 people make these stories in all 50 United
States and 26 other countries.

Clearly we are increasingly visual in our orientation
toward communications. Reading and writing litera-
cies are adversely affected, as each generation sees the
screen as a preferable expressive medium. However,
the inherent values of textual communication begin to
become stronger by contrast, just as the strength of
recitation and musical orality became stronger with
the dissemination of literacy.

In our work, we use the visual culture to bring
people back into language and the written word.
Many educators see our approach as a critical tool for
increasing the quality and thoughtfulness of writing. I
think writing into the screen is a natural place for
people to go, from Flickr image stories, to digital sto-
ries, to writing dialogue and narrations for fictional
and documentary films. People will see the way text
skills improve these modes of visual communication.

The notion of collaboration in creating narrative
becomes much more interesting with the ubiquity of
online networks. Undoubtedly, the way people share
stories and respond, either in text on a blog or in trad-
ing stories as videos on YouTube, creates enormously
fluid and generative mechanisms for story.

About the Author
Joe Lambert is the executive director of the Center for Digital
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