Portland State University

PDXScholar

5-15-2018

The Role of the Developmental Editor in Emerging Forms of Narrative

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Research Question

What is the role of the developmental editor in emerging forms of storytelling? What editorial guidance would help creators make more powerful, affecting stories? What new skills should developmental editors acquire to be better able to work with these new types of stories?

Abstract: This research paper looks at how developmental editing techniques and analytical processes can be applied to emerging forms of storytelling. By examining a sampling of projects that expand narrative beyond traditional approaches, and talking to people involved with those projects, this paper examines how developmental editing can be used in these new forms; the skills that editors might want to add to their toolkit; and the impact that developmental editors might be able to have on projects and on new storytelling forms themselves. The paper is meant as a roadmap for next steps for what editors might want to learn next.

Introduction

In recent decades, publishing has evolved to encompass many new ways for readers to experience stories. In the narrowest sense, publishers now offer new formats, such ebooks and digital audiobooks. But in this paper, I define "publishing" more broadly, as the act of cultivating a creative work, whatever that creative work may be, and connecting it to its audience. Stepping beyond a single traditional printed book into new and expanded forms of storytelling, publishers of my definition offer new forms such as book apps, web-based books, virtual reality experiments, stories that span multiple types of media, and more. With that broadened conception of publishing, who takes on the role of the developmental editor? Who offers guidance to authors and creators? What sorts of skills will the editors of the future need to learn to accommodate new forms of narrative?

I did research on current forms of non-traditional publishing, looking at projects and people pushing the boundaries of what we think of as storytelling. To get a range of insights on the type of the work being done, I interviewed five individuals from different areas of publishing. I'll start this paper by introducing my interview subjects and their areas of experience and expertise.

Next, I'll look at developmental editing in the context of the storytelling forms my interview subjects have worked in. What have been their experiences with developmental editing types of input? What guidance have they found valuable?

Third, I'll consider the developmental editor's evolving skillset. What traditional skills are still relevant when working with creators in emerging forms? What new skills and tools might editors want to acquire?

And finally, I'll look at the current state of emerging forms, and how might editors and publishers contribute to their growth and improvement.

Throughout this essay, I'll use the term "developmental editor" for the person who helps a creator improve their work, even though the title, the work under consideration, and the job itself may evolve.

What are "emerging forms of storytelling"?

One of the challenges in describing emerging forms of narrative is that by their very nature, they're still being developed. We live in an era of experimentation, and ground-breaking projects can define new forms of storytelling, or blur the lines between multiple forms. In journalism, projects like "Snowfall: The Avalanche at Tunnel Creek," created by John Branch for the *New York Times,* demonstrate the ways in which a linear text story can be enhanced with video, computer-generated animations and interactive maps (Branch 2012). In television, *Mosaic* from Steven Soderbergh was available as a free app for two months before being presented on HBO as a six-episode series (Soderbergh 2017). Multimedia novels, such as *Queerskins* by Illya Szilak, combine sound, text, and image in a form that readers can explore on their own.

Because there are limitless ways to conceive and use these new types of narrative, I looked for interview subjects who had very different backgrounds and experiences, and who could give me as wide a range of perspectives as possible. What have their various development processes been like, and what kind of guidance might have been valuable for them? Here are the five individuals with whom I spoke:

Greg Albers, digital publishing manager of the J.Paul Getty Trust: Getty Publications, which produces high-quality art books and catalogs to accompany exhibitions, discovered early

in the digital era that traditional e-books don't lend themselves to art publishing, particularly given the disparities between e-book platforms. In the Getty's publications, illustrations play a primary role, or a role equal to that of the text. To better support their style of publication, the digital publishing department of Getty created a tool called Quire. (Getty Publications n.d.). Quire uses plain text source files to create and output multiple formats, including traditional e-books, PDF files for print-on-demand, and most importantly, browser-based online editions that can be hosted on any web server. Getty's goal with Quire is to create a freely available set of tools that all cultural institutions can take advantage of for their own publishing (Albers 2018).

Mark Chiarello, senior vice president, art and design director, DC Comics and Warner Bros.: Chiarello has worked in the publications section of DC Comics for 25 years, always on the creation and production of graphic novels. In addition to being an art director, he's also an editor, working with writers to shape their stories in the broader context of the DC universe. (Chiarello 2018).

Liza Daly, staff engineer with the Democratic National Committee, member of the board of directors for the Interactive Fiction Technology Foundation, formerly chief technology officer at Safari. Daly began working at Safari in 2012, after they acquired her company ThreePress Consulting, which helped publishers understand the potential and limitations of the Kindle and other e-books. In her personal work, Daly creates interactive fiction such as her hypertext novel *Harmonia*, which won two XYZZY interactive fiction awards for Best Use of Innovation and Best Use of Multimedia (Daly 2018).

David Morin, president David Morin LLC: An independent consultant, Morin has worked with clients such as the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, Autodesk and Epic Games. He is the chairman of the ASC-ICG-VES-PGA joint committee on virtual reality, a combined effort by four Hollywood-based organizations: the American Society of Cinematographers (ASC), the International Cinematographers Guild (ICG), the Visual Effects Society (VES) and the Producers Guild of America (PGA), and he previously chaired joint committees on virtual production and previsualization. His work with his clients has given him experience with narrative experiments ranging from franchise movies and their associated media to experiments in virtual reality. (Morin 2018)

Russell Quinn, independent technology producer, False Vacuum; partner, Sudden Oak: Quinn co-created *The Silent History*, a digital novel for iOS, and *The Pickle Index*, a story told via a fictional recipe-sharing app. He was previously digital media director at McSweeney's, and he co-founded the digital agency Spoiled Milk (Quinn 2018).

While this list doesn't cover every type of non-traditional or expanded narrative currently in existence—let alone the new ones constantly developing—these examples demonstrate the vast range of opportunities available to creators and publishers willing to experiment with different ways of telling stories.

How does developmental editing apply to emerging forms of narrative?

What is developmental editing? In its most commonly understood form, it's a deep analysis of a manuscript, followed by a developmental note that outlines ways that the author can make their

work the best possible version of itself. Adam O'Connor Rodriguez, senior editor at Hawthorne Books, advocates an approach that divides the developmental note into three principal sections: structure, narrative, and language. Structure is the container that holds the story, including its length, order and pacing. Narrative is all of the story elements, such as characters, major scenes, continuity, and verisimilitude. Language includes dialogue, physical description, sensory information, and sentence structure (O'Connor Rodriguez 2018).

How can these three broad categories apply in the context of emerging forms of storytelling?

Structure: Parameters and Possibilities of Form

When contemplating emerging forms of narrative, structure takes on an especially critical role. Before the developmental editor can consider issues such as length, order, and pacing, they must first understand the form of the project. Is it a book? An app? A web-based publication? A mix of narrative forms? A new approach devised specifically for this particular project?

No matter what form a project takes, a major task for the developmental editor is to help its creator understand the parameters and possibilities of that form. "I work with authors where there's no precedent," says Quinn. "Creators are normally working in a medium that has very defined constraints. They know how a novel is going to look and feel." But when a creator experiments with a new form of storytelling, it can be hard for them to know what to do with it. Quinn finds he often needs to work with artists on non-story technology. "I think a lot of these sorts of projects have bells and whistles for the sake of it. You can do anything on a tech platform with a story, but people initially think of a choose-your-own-adventure, or adding on multimedia extras, like tap and read the map, or sound effects. Those to me always feel kind of

corny, like adding technology on for the sake of it, rather than building a story that actually needs it, or would benefit from it" (Quinn 2018).

In the case of *The Silent History,* the small team behind the project did research and made deliberate choices about the reading experience. It would be serialized, with each day's installment meant to take about ten minutes to read. The story is about a pandemic that causes a generation of children to be born without the ability to create or comprehend language, and it's recounted in the form of testimonials. These are presented as if they were collected in a government report from the future, like the final report of the 9/11 Commission—something the creators could picture and emulate (Quinn 2018).

Greg Albers of Getty Publications likewise finds that it helps for authors to have a model they can look at when they're making the transition from writing printed books to a web publication like those made by Getty. "We have authors respond much better once they see something in a publication or on a website under some other context. They can think about how to use or modify it for their own work. The more publications we do, the more engaged and expansive our authors are becoming" (Albers 2018).

Getty has also begun working with user-centered design. For many of their publications, before anything is written Albers will meet with the author, the editor and a developer, so that they can ask, who are the users? Who are the readers? "Let's understand them, then ask what they need from this publication," says Albers. "How can we present the content in a way that will help them?" Albers says these types of reader-focused conversations help authors decide what they want their publications to do, so that the technical choices can serve that goal (Albers 2018).

Liza Daly, with her background in technology, is already comfortable with emerging forms and can use them with a subtle touch. "I feel like my sweet spot as a creator is taking my knowledge of the web and digital publishing work I've done and making that slightly more interactive," she says. Rather than a choose-your-own-adventure approach, she presents a set story that the reader can explore, not change. "With *Harmonia*, you're interacting with elements on the page that wouldn't really work on paper. There's a concept of discovery and rooting through references. Though I love playing things that are absolutely considered games, *Harmonia* is a traditional fiction piece that has a spin on it" (Daly 2018).

Narrative: Canon and Framework

When it comes to narrative guidance for new forms of storytelling, David Morin's experience in the game industry leads him to envision two contrasting approaches for the developmental editor. In one situation, developmental editors must protect existing story worlds; in the other, they need to set up the framework of a reality that users will later inhabit and expand.

"When you come into an existing universe, there is a canon, and there are rules—and those are known by a large number of fans," says Morin. "If you don't respect that, you're going to get a lot of flack." In this scenario, Morin pictures the developmental editor as someone who is very universe-aware and who protects the franchise by understanding what the fans do and don't want, and keeping the story within those parameters. "Think of Kevin Feige at Marvel. He's the ultimate example of the developmental editor of today. In Marvel's case, they have comic books dating back to the 1950s that they can use as source material, but many contradict each other. The role of Kevin Feige is to pick and choose from this very rich background and put the pieces together so that it doesn't cross the beams in any way" (Morin 2018).

The opposite approach, Morin says, is the development of interactive games that spawn independent, improvisational storytelling. *Fortnite*, produced by Epic Games, is a free multi-player game that runs on all platforms. In eSports competitions, viewers watch players compete in video games, and some fans record the best plays and edit them together; now, there are people who create stories using recorded gameplay. "As the video games evolve into richer and richer environments, and characters are more developed with their personalities and what they can do, you're getting to a place where you can develop stories while you're playing the game," says Morin. "You can improvise, and you can record. And when something works, you can publish it. It's a form of storytelling that completely bypasses the writing of a story."

When making a game, there's a developer in chief, who devises the rules and looks for ways to entice players to sign up for the game, try it, and stay in it for as long as possible. "You do that through story development," says Morin. "Your characters in *Fortnite* have a backstory. There's a lot of research that's been done, and the characters hit the spot: two males, two females; there's diversity; they're lovable characters you want to be. Character development plays a very important role" (Morin 2018).

And then there are the rules of the game itself. "These are simple compared to any story rules that you analyze as a developmental editor," says Morin. "But the permutations of those rules and the game play that comes out of that have an infinite level of complexity. That's very rich in *Fortnite*. The game designer clearly could not imagine at the onset what might happen, but people are picking up the rules and building on them" (Morin 2018).

The creators of *The Silent History* had to do both of the developmental tasks that Morin describes—protecting the main story while making room for further explorations by future users. Quinn, Eli Horowitz, Matthew Derby and Kevin Moffett created a core narrative, but users were

invited to supplement that with their own field reports on the silent phenomenon. Like the designers of *Fortnite* and other games, the creators of *The Silent History* needed to establish a set of basic rules flexible enough to accommodate those additional testimonials. But at the same time, they needed to protect the *Silent History* canon, making sure that none of the contributed stories would undermine the established reality. This was accomplished in part by vetting each submission, but also contributors weren't allowed to use any of the characters from the main narrative. "When you sign up to do a field report, you get two pages of tips and instructions," says Quinn. "The structure of project was conceived to make it easier for people to write self-contained fan fiction without having to bleed over to the main narrative" (Quinn 2018).

Language: Medium-Specific Forms of Expression

Before cinema had its own language, it borrowed from earlier forms, such as stage productions, pointing a static camera at action unfolding on a proscenium. But soon pioneering filmmakers began to develop a new language of cinema, different from anything that came before. Early directors such as Georges Méliès, Edwin Porter and D.W. Griffith experimented with editing, camera movement and other techniques that in the decades since have become so familiar that audiences accept them as a given (Millar and Reisz 2010).

In the same way, emerging forms of storytelling may require the development of new language different from a traditional book written by a single author.

Because *The Silent History* relied on work from multiple writers—not just the four core creators but all the users who contributed field reports—consistency of language was a particular concern. To address that, Quinn and his collaborators opted for an oral history approach. They created an initial cast of characters, and the principal writers did the first draft using that cast. The first outside field reports were written by friends of the team, many of them prominent

writers, and the first-person oral-report approach meant those writers could use their own writing style. Later on, as more people filed reports, contributors who might not be as experienced at writing could create their submissions in a conversational first-person style: say, a coach who has a silent kid on his team for the first time and is angry about it. "It made it easier to facilitate the project," says Quinn. "Every decision was a conscious one" (Quinn 2018).

When working with digital tools, like the Getty's Quire, authors have new means of expression that go beyond the language of a regular printed book. Maps, linking, zooming images, and video are all available to the creator, and can be used to enhance the story that they're trying to tell, just like any other vocabulary. "What kind of systems can be used to propel an argument forward?" asks Albers (Albers 2018).

He adds that there's another mental shift required from authors: they have to start thinking about their content differently. An entry in an art museum catalog generally will have data about an object—its name, artist, date of creation, collection—plus an essay about that object. In a traditional print book, the author generally writes both parts of that within the same document. But to make the most of digital publishing, authors need to think about which content is data, and which is more descriptive. Any categories that are consistent across multiple entries in a catalog—titles, dates, authors—are considered data and need to be identified specifically as such so that they're computer-readable. "A computer doesn't understand data in a paragraph—it just sees a string of characters," says Albers. "So writers need to make that shift, from 'Here's all the content' to 'Here's content broken into two types of information'" (Albers 2018).

Cinema only came into its own once it stopped being imitative, and developmental editors working in new forms of storytelling may need to help creators take a similar step away from existing forms of expression. When working in virtual reality, for example, it's tempting to

borrow from the language of movies or games, but neither model fully serves the new form. "Virtual reality itself as a medium has given us beautiful types of experiences," says Morin. "That's the difference: the experience, the fact that you're immersed in 360-degree media." Because the viewer of a virtual reality story is so immersed, Morin says, creators need to tell a different type of story, one that offers time to breathe and to grasp what's being presented. "The best experiences are the ones where you go slow. You can look around, take it all in, in a way that no flat media on screen can give you." Morin singles out the *Nomad* documentaries by Felix & Paul Studios, which plant a 360-degree camera in the middle of a Mongolian yurt or a Maasai hut, to quietly witness the lives of the people who live there (Morin 2018).

New skills for editors

If developmental editors want to work in emerging forms, what new skills do they need to acquire? Although it depends on which forms they're interested in—the needs of a virtual reality project will be different from those of a story app or an interactive novel—whenever the medium is a technical one, it helps for the editor to be well-versed in the needs of that medium.

"I think there's a dearth of people who both understand narrative and what is possible with the technology," says Quinn. "There are people like that in film and TV, where there are more established constraints and people have a firm understanding of what's possible. 'One continuous panning shot is going to cost this much money.' A lot of people know that, and can communicate that. That's not there with these new types of projects" (Quinn 2018).

In the case of *The Silent History*, Quinn says he and Horowitz worked well together because each one understood a bit of the other's world. Quinn grew up programming and studied computer science, so he came from the tech side, but he had also worked in design and publishing; Horowitz was an editor, but he had a process-driven mind. "There was a constant

back-and-forth," says Quinn. "It wasn't a case of an author coming up with a story in isolation, then finding a personnel team to build it, or of a tech company coming out with a platform, then expecting the creators to shoehorn their ideas into that. On *The Silent History*, we were developing the story and technology at the same time" (Quinn 2018).

One of the problems with an editor or creator who's unfamiliar with technology is that they may not realize how difficult things are to execute. A creator may have an idea for a feature in their story app but not know it will take three programmers six months to build, as opposed to another feature of equal story value that might only take a week. "With intelligent discussion, you can figure out there's a less expensive way to do that," says Quinn. He likens his job to that of a product manager, a common role in standard tech companies. "They have a broad level of experience, so they're able to coach and make decisions. If you swap out product management and put in an understanding of narrative and story, then you have someone who can coach with respect to what's possible in technology, without taking control of the narrative. It would be a broad role, with this extra creative and narrative insight, which is the rarer thing" (Quinn 2018).

Albers from Getty says that in digital publishing, and the web in general, he's encountered the assumption that editorial work isn't as important as it was in the past, but he believes the core skills of what editors do haven't changed. "We may think about the reading environment and some specifics of format a little differently, but structure, narrative and language are all still just as relevant as they are in print. Editors think of the whole project and get into the fine detail. Digital publishing requires that too, and it can't be sidestepped." (Albers 2018).

At Getty, as much development as possible still happens in Microsoft Word, with the traditional back and forth between editors and authors. But the editors then translate the

manuscript into Markdown, a simple text formatting language, so that it'll be ready for conversion into all the different forms the project will eventually have. "There are new markup things editors have to do, but editors have been doing markup in documents for centuries," says Albers. "It's not a new skill, it's a new application of that skill" (Albers 2018).

Demands on editors vary from publisher to publisher, but at Getty, they're expected to be facile with plain-text editing and to understand what's going on under the Word interface. "Word is an abstraction. We want editors to understand the layer underneath," says Albers. The Getty's editors need to know how the text is affected when it changes to Markdown, and how that directly affects the book, and they need to be comfortable with that. "It takes a leap of faith," says Albers. "A number of our editors have worked this way, on six books so far. Most are willing to do it again. There are benefits to doing it this way. You're working closer to the source and output than in a traditional workflow, where changes have to be translated. It's much closer to the designer level" (Albers 2018).

Daly, working as an independent creator of interactive fiction, has never had the experience of collaborating with a developmental editor on her work. "It's interesting to think of someone involved through the whole process," she says. "There's absolutely room for that." (Daly 2018)

On *Harmonia*, Daly collaborated with the illustrator Seamus Heffernan, and she found their interactions helped her clarify the story. In explaining the plot to Heffernan to tell him where she might want illustrations, she had to articulate the motivations of particular scenes. "That was new to me," she says. "He would come back to me with a bunch of pictures, and some would resonate with me and some wouldn't. I was getting creative input from him. The story ended up being more interesting after it was filtered through another human being" (Daly 2018).

In that case, though, she was the client, so the relationship wasn't an equal one. "An equal or strong voice sounds very promising, and there would be a value in pushing people," says Daly. "Just as authors get tired of their characters and don't feel like writing a scene, I as engineer can get tired. No one is pushing you. As long as everyone is respectful of the really hard limits, it's good to have someone who can campaign for things that are right, even if they're going to be difficult. Some boundary pushing is good" (Daly 2018).

Though Daly prefers to author her own stories, there are many tools to help creators make interactive fiction, and editors interested in this type of storytelling might want to learn some of those. The most popular option for hypertext fiction at the moment is Twine, an open-source tool for telling interactive non-linear stories. "It's a relatively simple way to do interactive storytelling," says Daly. "You could write a really sophisticated story without knowing code" (Daly 2018).

Whatever form a work takes, a big part of the developmental editor's challenge remains finding ways to keep creators inspired and working. "You end up having conversations around the corner, left-handed conversations," says Chiarello of DC Comics. "You're not always talking about the characters or the plot. You're getting them more jazzed to get into their story more. If we're talking about art, I'm not talking about what the artist is drawing, and I rarely talk about comic books. I'll have a conversation about Norman Rockwell, or 'Did you see that show on Netflix last night? It was shot really well.' That will get them jazzed to do the work from the creative side" (Chiarello 2018).

Building a better future

Developmental editors can help shape a literary work, but when the story form itself is still evolving, they can contribute to its overall future as well. Where might these emerging forms be headed, and how can developmental editors foster their growth and progress?

There are problems with many of the formats, disappointments with where they have ended up at the moment. Daly, for example, is frustrated by the state of commercial digital publishing. "It all got commodified," she says. "Amazon is not interested in innovation—not in form, or in the artistry that digital books as an art form would imply. Everything got flattened. There's certainly a missed opportunity in e-books, in that I can't buy a hypertext story and play that on my Kindle device. There's no reason why that can't be true, except that there wasn't a desire on Amazon's part. They could have gone after that, the way they went after self-published authors. But they didn't, and in fact they blocked the ability of people to put up stories that weren't facsimiles of a book. People would try to do things that might work in iBooks or some special community platform, but if it didn't work on Kindle it was dead on arrival. It's very dangerous to have one company be the hindrance to innovation." (Daly 2018).

Daly spent nearly three years on the board of the International Digital Publishing Forum, the organization that set standards for electronic book publishing, and she pushed for more support for interactivity. But most of the membership was made up of technologists and device makers. No authors were part of it, and publishers were slow to join, other than Harlequin, an early digital adopter, and the technology publisher O'Reilly. "The voices were dominated by engineers who wanted a spec that would tell them exactly what to expect from an almost mathematical perspective. I had empathy for that, because I was a reading system developer myself, but it was fundamentally at odds with what a book is—a mess of human creativity and thought that can't be expressed as well-formed XML. I was always pushing to have a spec that

allowed for that messiness, and for the idea that an e-book could be something other than a facsimile of print."

Quinn believes it takes a long time for new forms to become established, and that they need constant experimentation—something that developmental editors have the ability to encourage, especially if they have the support of publishers. "There have been some experiments, but I haven't seen anything on the scale that the bigger publishers could do," says Quinn. "If they would commit to ten projects in a year, then learn from those and carry the code forward, they would fairly quickly come up with a toolset that they could reuse. They already have relationships with big-name authors and could work with them more to coax them into this new world and help them understand what they can do" (Quinn 2018).

Getty Publications explored one project that was proposed as an app. "We thought if we could prove there was a market for it—classroom adoption—other institutions could see a financial model." But instead, Getty found it more promising to put its emphasis on its open-access browser-based model. "It requires more tech work to make an app feasible, with administrative structures that have to be in place," says Albers. "It limits our audience" (Albers 2018).

The Getty's browser-based books also have a distribution advantage over apps, because they don't rely on Apple, Amazon, or Google. The Quire project is part of a Getty-wide mission to build and share tools that other cultural institutions can use but might not have the resources to make for themselves. "Open-access digital publishing, outside of the e-book trade market, is in its infancy," says Albers. "We want to find ways to develop that community and participate in that community. To spread the possibility of digital publishing to other institutions, that's worth our time" (Albers 2018).

One area of digital publishing that Albers would like to explore more is the idea of different levels of experience for different readers. "Imagine a chapter in a book where there's one path for the reader who's skimming, another path for the reader who has more interest but is not super scholarly, then a third path for someone who really wants to dig in. It's a non-linear approach to publishing that could be facilitated through a new sort of editing and enhanced publishing" (Albers 2018).

DC Comics tracks new technical possibilities for storytelling, and Chiarello says that over the last eight to ten years, they've encountered small companies run by smart, creative people who pitch them a new ways to tell comics. "It's a visual form, so it makes sense that somebody clever will figure out a way not only to digitize them but to make it a more immersive experience, but nothing has really clicked," says Chiarello. "I'm pretty sure that someday one of these small companies is going to figure out how to tell these visual stories, but it hasn't happened yet" (Chiarello 2018).

Meanwhile, he says that some of his most successful experiments have been done not by looking into the future, but by dipping into the history of the medium. "In the '20s, '30s, '40s, '50s, the Sunday funnies were an incredibly popular medium, as big as radio and movies, then they completely disappeared. I think the advent of television and comic books neutered the Sunday funnies and serialized stories. A couple of years ago, I said, let's take what we do, like *Batman*, *Superman*, and *Wonder Woman*, and bring it back in that big sheet of paper. It was an experiment to go back in technology, and people loved it. Current readers don't remember the 1930s. They thought we were being really cutting-edge" (Chiarello 2018).

Chiarello adds, "I think what people have lost sight of is when you see something and you say, 'Fuck, that's cool!' What's better than that? You rarely hear people who shepherd creators say that anymore" (Chiarello 2018).

Conclusion

My goal with this paper has been to look at emerging forms of narrative and to explore what developmental editors might contribute to the creation of those works. This is a deep and evolving subject, and this report represents only the first steps in learning about it. With time, this study could be expanded to go more in depth on different types of narrative, as well as on additional skills that developmental editors could learn to better help creators working in these new areas. The abilities that developmental editors already have, including their understanding of structure, narrative, and language, remain as necessary as ever. Whatever form or forms stories may take, the developmental editor will continue to be the person who asks thought-provoking questions and helps creators become better acquainted with their own work. But even more than that, developmental editors think fundamentally about the scaffolding on which stories are built, and about the parameters of possibility, and in working on new types of projects, their contribution can become even more global. When a form of narrative is still in its nascent stages, a developmental editor has the opportunity to look beyond any individual project to shape the form itself into its most perfect version.

Interviews

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Mark Chiarello (senior vice president, art and design director, DC Comics and Warner Bros.). April 8, 2018. Interviewed by author.

Liza Daly (staff engineer, Democratic National Committee; author of interactive narrative). March 18, 2018. Interviewed by author.

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