



# EMPOWERING YOUTH TO REDISCOVER EUROPE'S ARCHITECTURAL LEGACY

**A3.2 CREATING GUIDELINES AND TEMPLATES THAT WILL SUPPORT THE PROCESS OF DIGITAL NARRATIVE CREATION, INCLUDING SUGGESTIONS OF MULTIMEDIA MATERIAL, FORMAT OF PICTURES, LENGTH OF TEXT, STEP BY STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE IN DIGITAL NARRATIVE CREATION.**



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## Deliverable Factsheet

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| Abstract:        | Activity A3.2 focuses on the development of practical guidelines and templates to facilitate the creation of digital narratives. These resources will provide clear, step-by-step instructions for building compelling and accessible stories in digital form. The guidelines will include recommendations on the use of multimedia elements such as images, audio, and video; standards for picture formatting; and guidance on optimal text length and structure. Templates will ensure consistency and ease of use across different user groups, while also promoting creativity and inclusivity in digital storytelling practices. The outcome will be a comprehensive toolkit enabling diverse stakeholders to produce engaging, coherent, and user-friendly digital narratives. |
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## INTRODUCTION

This document presents the Guide for Youth Workers (R3.2), produced as part of Activity A3.2. The guide establishes both the practical and theoretical framework for the creation of digital narratives within the ArchTech project. It aims to offer youth workers concrete guidelines and ready-to-use templates for producing narratives that combine text, images, and multimedia, while also providing a step-by-step methodology to ensure clarity, accessibility, and coherence.

Beyond practical instructions, the guide outlines the theoretical benefits of digital narratives for non-formal education and heritage engagement. By enabling young people to co-create stories linked to selected heritage buildings, digital narratives enhance creativity, strengthen digital skills, and promote critical reflection on cultural identity.

The results developed under A3.2 will feed directly into the project's interactive maps, where the narratives will function as "pins" that bring heritage sites to life for diverse audiences. In this way, the current guide contributes to ArchTech's broader aim of empowering youth workers to act as facilitators of inclusive digital storytelling and strengthening the connection between young people and European heritage.

### Glossary of Key Terms

**Digital narratives** are stories that combine multimedia elements such as text, images, audio, and video to enrich the storytelling experience. **Non-formal education** refers to learning that happens beyond traditional school settings and is often flexible, learner-centred, and community-based, for example, through youth workshops or local projects. **Heritage engagement** describes activities that connect people with cultural and historical heritage, promoting awareness, belonging, and participation. **Digital inclusion** means ensuring that everyone has equitable access to digital tools and skills so that all can take part in digital projects confidently and effectively.

### Objectives of the Guide

The specific objectives of this guide are to:

- Provide youth workers with clear, ready-to-use guidelines and templates for digital storytelling.
- Support young people in co-creating engaging and accessible narratives about heritage buildings.
- Ensure consistency and comparability across narratives for integration into the ArchTech interactive maps.
- Promote inclusion, accessibility, and creativity in digital heritage education.



## User Roles and Responsibilities

Youth workers will act as facilitators, mentors, and guides. They will provide practical and pedagogical support, from helping with content creation to strengthening technical skills and promoting ethical storytelling principles such as respect for privacy and informed consent.

Young participants will take on the role of researchers and co-creators, contributing their perspectives, gathering information, and producing digital stories enriched with multimedia. Both groups are expected to work together in a spirit of mutual respect and collaboration, ensuring that storytelling practices remain ethical, inclusive, and participatory.



# 1. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

## 1.1 Digital Narratives in Non-Formal Education

Stories are one of the most powerful ways for people to connect with places and culture. Research shows that storytelling helps audiences engage more deeply with cultural practices and heritage (Vrebos et al. 2022; Goskar 2022a; Blaschitz, Mayr and Oppl 2022). Through stories, heritage sites, buildings and objects gain meaning, and people develop a stronger sense of belonging. Sharing stories can turn a walk through a city into a personal experience that resonates emotionally and encourages people to return, recommend, and participate again.

Narratives also make cultural spaces more open and inclusive. They bring together different voices and perspectives, preserving the cultural memory alive while making it relevant for today's communities. Instead of one "official" version of history, stories allow dialogue, polyvocality, and participation (Serota 2005; Hein 2000).

Digital storytelling builds on this tradition by adding multimedia, for example, text, images, audio, and video, to create richer and more flexible ways of telling stories. Research highlights that well-designed digital storytelling should include: clear intentions, good facilitator guidance, attention to participant needs, strong narrative integration, support for production, accessible technology, and opportunities for sharing and collaboration (Arnau Erta-Majó & Vaquero, 2023).



For young people, digital storytelling can be more than a creative exercise. It can help them build teamwork, digital skills, and critical thinking. By drafting, scripting, and producing their own stories, they practice reflection and peer review, which develops both confidence and digital literacy (Roza 2023; Yang 2012).



## 1.2 Heritage Engagement and Identity Formation

Storytelling has always been very important in transmitting cultural values. In the digital age, it also provides new opportunities for heritage engagement. Participatory digital storytelling projects are able to empower youth to co-create narratives about heritage buildings and local cultural assets, strengthening their sense of identity and reinforcing connections to their community (Zort, 2023). Recent research gives emphasis in the role of educators and families in facilitating this transmission, with the use of digital platforms in order to make cultural values accessible and engaging for younger generations (Zort, 2023).

Digital storytelling offers a rich and interactive way of presenting cultural heritage, supporting the preservation and transfer of traditions through creative media. Narrative integration, especially when facilitated by youth workers, enables young people to act as agents of cultural continuity and sustainability (Zort, 2023).

## 1.3 Digital Inclusion and the Role of Youth Workers

Youth workers are central to advancing digital inclusion through creative media production and digital storytelling. Their role involves providing resources, guidance, and support for digital projects and ensuring equitable access to technology and learning opportunities, particularly for vulnerable or marginalised youth (Vermeire, 2024). Digitally inclusive practices must begin with the needs and talents of young people, offering them active participation,

support for digital skill development, and collaboration with other stakeholders (Vermeire, 2024).



Successful digital inclusion requires youth workers to foster digital citizenship, media literacy, and collaborative learning spaces where a variety of digital tools and media can be explored safely. This approach is especially important in bridging educational gaps and supporting social

participation for all youth, regardless of background or access barriers (Vermeire, 2024; Carmi, 2020).



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The theoretical insights outlined above highlight the educational, cultural, and social value of digital narratives. The following section translates these principles into practical steps and templates that youth workers can apply directly in workshops and co-creation activities with young participants.

### 1.4 Gamification and Engagement

Research proved that gamification increases engagement by satisfying needs for competence, autonomy, and relatedness<sup>1</sup>. The mechanisms underpin motivation and sustained participation in learning and non-learning contexts (Bitrián,P., Buil, I., Catalán, S., 2021) (Jack, E., et al., 2025). A systematic review of the impact of gamification on school engagement also proved strong effects on motivation, participation, and collaborative learning (Ramírez Ruiz, J.J. et al., 2024).

Social isolation is a public health concern, as it has been associated with poor health, worse cardiovascular and mental health outcomes, increased risk of substance abuse, and premature mortality (Leigh-Hunt, N., et al., 2017). A recent study considering 17 European countries pointed out that highly socially isolated individuals are more likely to be physically inactive, with important health consequences (Delerue Matos, A., 2021). The lack of social connections and meaningful social interactions can lead to feelings of loneliness, helplessness, and hopelessness, which are linked to an increased risk of depression and anxiety. On the contrary, social support can help individuals to cope with stressful situations, reducing the level of stress, and improving self-esteem.

The core factor influencing the effect on helping and prosocial behaviour versus malevolent and antisocial behaviour seems to be the extent to which games are played cooperatively versus competitively (Ferguson, C. J., & Garza, A., 2011). Moreover, as the growth mindset

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<sup>1</sup> Autonomy, (Mastery//)Competence, (Purpose//)Relatedness are the pillar of the motivation theory developed by Deci and Ryan (Ryan, RM., Deci, EL. 2020), and made popular by Pink (Pink, D., 2009)



theory recommends, it is the effort rather than the talent to be praised regardless of the success achieved by the activity undertaken (Dweck, C., 2016).

Finally, the use of cultural content in digital gaming experiences has been included in topics of scenarios through use of historic facts or heroes, through adoption of legends (e.g. Legends of Europe<sup>2</sup>, THIATRO (Froschauer, J., 2012) and fairytales, poetry or novels. However, please note, that all of this can be implemented any time in face-to-face settings and independently from ad hoc features of the Building Alert! App that youth workers and youth participants will use. Most of the time, youth workers are well acquainted with engagement and participation techniques. For instance, facilitation techniques like 1-2-4-All can guarantee the effective inclusion of all participants.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.ludicius.com/en/serious-games/legends-of-europe-2/>



## 2. PRACTICAL GUIDELINES

The aim of this section is to outline the design specifications and methodological guidance for the creation of digital narratives, ensuring that the process will be able to meet the needs of both youth workers and young participants. The guidelines will draw on the ArchTech project objectives, the findings of the pilot activities, the modules outcomes, recommendations arising from Steering Committee discussions, and relevant academic research on digital storytelling and non-formal education.

To ensure consistency across all entries, the guidelines will establish a unified framework that will balance creativity with accessibility. They will provide clear structure and practical step-by-step guidance, giving the opportunity to youth workers to support young people in producing narratives that are engaging, coherent, and aligned with the project's objectives. This approach guarantees that all digital narratives can be easily integrated into the ArchTech interactive maps while maintaining high-quality and inclusivity standards.



## 2.1 Step-by-Step Integration Structure

### 2.1.1 Predefined Fields and Data Entry

The ArchTech platform provides a structured and accessible environment for creating digital narratives.

- Youth workers and participants begin by filling in the **online form**, which includes predefined fields that guide them through the storytelling process.
- **Title and Location:** Each narrative will start by marking the building's exact spot on the interactive map, anchoring stories in real geography and ensuring coherence (Arnau Erta-Majó & Vaquero, 2023).
  - A **pin** is placed on the **interactive map** to mark the precise location of the building, linking each narrative to its geographical context.
- **Media uploads** form an essential part of the process, with users able to add up to five images in JPEG or PNG format at a minimum resolution of 1080px, as well as optional audio or video clips of up to two minutes, each supported by transcripts or captions for accessibility.
- Users are encouraged to write in **clear and concise language**, to save their work regularly, and to check the quality of their media before submitting it.
- **Basic Information:**
  - Participants **input key details:** address, building typology, date of construction, architectural style, and architect/designer. This step supports comparability and aids later searches.
  - **Historical and Cultural Context:** Facilitators guide youth in exploring and recording construction materials, major historical events, transformations, and varied uses over time. This section brings material and social heritage to the foreground.
  - **Collective Memory and Narratives:** The process encourages the community's voices: local traditions, notable stories, and communal memories linked to the building become part of the record (Zort, 2023).
  - **Current Status:** Ownership, accessibility (public/private), relevant legal protections, and recognitions such as UNESCO listing provide an up-to-date legal and usage profile.
  - **Description:** All prior information is synthesized into a concise 300–500 word narrative, demonstrating how factual and emotional threads intertwine in heritage storytelling (Roza, 2023).



## 2.1.2 Inclusivity and Accessibility Practices

Inclusivity is at the heart of the ArchTech approach.

- **Narratives** should be written in plain language and, wherever possible, in multiple languages to support broader understanding.
- **Activities** should be adapted to the diverse cognitive, physical, and sensory needs of participants so that everyone can contribute meaningfully.
- **Storytelling** should reflect multiple cultural perspectives, ensuring polyvocality and the fair representation of diverse voices.
- **Accessible digital tools and formats**, including alt text, captions, and transcripts, must be used consistently.

Above all, youth workers should foster a respectful and welcoming environment where all participants feel valued and included.

## 2.2 Multimedia Integration

- **Image Gallery:** Participants may upload up to five images, maximizing visual documentation and audience engagement. Guidance on photographic composition and relevance is provided by youth workers.
- **Audio/Video Content:** In order to enhance accessibility and inclusivity, short clips with transcripts or captions will be encouraged, helping to reach audiences with diverse needs (Roza, 2023).

## 2.3 Methodological Justification

**Structured, template-driven storytelling** increases comparability, ensures completeness, and supports multidisciplinary evaluation that is critical for heritage documentation (Arnau Erta-Majó & Vaquero, 2023). The template will allow youth workers to guide participants step-by-step while leaving room for personal voice, emotional connection, and creative experimentation (Roza, 2023).

Moreover, the process will mirror contemporary digital storytelling pedagogy, emphasising visual metaphors, contextual design, collaboration, and multimedia diversity (Roza, 2023; Arnau Erta-Majó & Vaquero, 2023). The integration of narratives into interactive maps not only brings buildings to life but fosters critical digital literacy and inclusive participation.



### 2.3.1 Engagement and Motivation Strategies

Maintaining enthusiasm throughout the storytelling process requires deliberate strategies.

- **Gamification** can be introduced by awarding badges for milestones such as completing a first story.
- **Peer sharing** and **feedback** sessions provide opportunities for participants to exchange ideas and build a sense of community spirit.
- Creative contributions can be formally **recognised** with certificates or public acknowledgements, which help validate participants' **efforts and achievements**.
- **Group dynamics** should be managed in ways that encourage participation from quieter members, ensuring that no voices are overlooked in the co-creation process.

### 2.3.2 Quality Assurance and Feedback Loops

Quality assurance is essential for ensuring the narratives produced are clear, accurate, inclusive, and aligned with the values of the ArchTech project.

- **Youth workers are responsible for reviewing stories at different stages, providing constructive feedback that allows participants to refine their work.**
- A **final approval step** ensures that only stories that meet agreed standards are published on the interactive maps.

This cycle of review and improvement not only guarantees quality but also teaches participants the value of reflection and iteration in digital creation.

### 2.3.4 Evaluation and Impact Measurement

Evaluation ensures that the impact of storytelling activities is understood and used to improve future work.

- **Feedback from participants** is gathered through surveys or interviews to assess satisfaction and learning outcomes.
- **Engagement metrics**, such as the number of narratives created, the volume of views, and the frequency of shares, are tracked to measure reach and visibility.
- The **quality of content** is also analysed to determine how well it represents diverse voices and cultural connections.

Insights from this evaluation process feed back into the project, strengthening the design of future storytelling activities.



## CONCLUSION

The Guide for Youth Workers (R3.2) provides both the rationale and the practical framework for creating digital narratives within the ArchTech project. It equips youth workers with clear methods, templates, and checklists to support young people in telling stories that connect heritage with identity, creativity, and inclusion.

By following these guidelines, all narratives produced will be consistent, accessible, and ready for integration into the ArchTech interactive maps. In this way, the deliverable ensures that heritage sites are not only documented but also brought to life through the voices of young people. The guide therefore contributes directly to the project's wider aim of empowering youth to rediscover Europe's architectural legacy and to participate actively in its preservation and re-imagination.



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## ANNEXES

### **Annex A – Narrative Template**

**Title of Building**

**Location** (pin on interactive map)

**Address**

**Typology**

**Date of Construction**

**Architectural Style**

**Architect/Designer**

**Construction Materials**

**Historical Events/Context**

**Uses Over Time**

**Collective Memory / Traditions / Narratives**

**Current Ownership or Operator**

**Accessibility Status**

**Status of Protection/Declarations (local, national, international)**

**Status as UNESCO Monument (Yes/No + Comments)**

**Description** (300–500 words, combining factual and narrative elements)

**Media Uploads**

- Up to 5 images with captions
- Optional audio/video with subtitles or transcript



## Annex B – Multimedia & Accessibility Checklist

### Text

- Word count 300–500
- Plain and inclusive language
- Clear structure (introduction, body, reflection, conclusion)

### Images

- JPEG/PNG format
- Minimum width 1080px
- Captions for all images
- Alt-text for accessibility

### Audio/Video

- Short clips (max 2 minutes)
- Subtitles or transcripts included
- Content relevant to the narrative

### Accessibility

- Plain-language summary included
- Multiple perspectives represented (polyvocality)
- Free of jargon or overly technical terms



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