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QUALITY
CONFERENCE



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QUALITY

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Storytelling Techniques:

Reporting Product Status in a Meaningful Way

Karen N. Johnson



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Who am I?

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Hosted on Tech Target	http://searchsoftwarequality.techtarget.com
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About this presentation

Let's look at the elements of story.

- I've researched storytelling books, joined a storytelling guild, and attended storytellers events.
- Fascinating, right? But what did I learn and what can you get from this?
- Even better, how can you apply this to your work in software testing?

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The Story

- Stories don't fit in power point
- Stories don't belong in bullets
- Stories belong in telling ...

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Stories bring data to life



"Facts need the context of when, who, and where to become Truths."

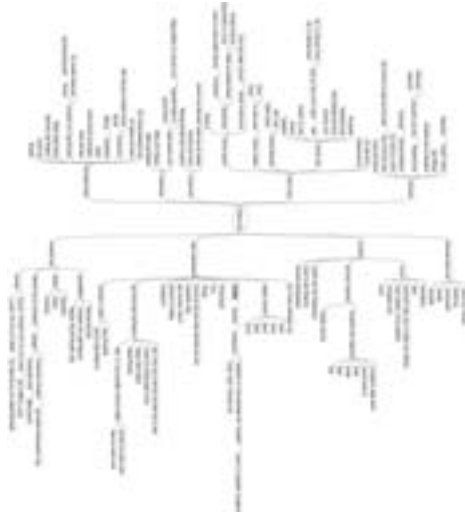
Annette Simmons
The Story Factor

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Mindmapping: the Story



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Homework



- There's no bypassing our investigation and analysis work.
- We still need to build, collect and interpret data.
- But in post analysis, there's an opportunity to use the story for delivery.
- There's room for story even in a hallway meeting.

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Structure



- Identify the parts of the whole.
- Seek the narrative opportunities.
- Determine the type of story you want/need to build.

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Calibrate



- Audiences and meetings have a temperature.
- Gauge and calibrate to accommodate.
- Prevent automatic repeat mode. Adjust the story for the audience.

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Timing



- Delivery
- Overall length
- Pauses during
- Silence has its impact

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Clothespins



- Leave space on the line for others to interpret and interact with the story.
- Clip in and out pieces based on audience and timing.
- While you maintain the theme and overall message(s).

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Twine



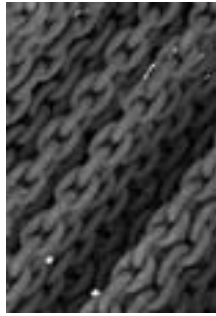
- Weave details around core columns.
- Look for inklings, impressions, hands on experience to fortify facts.
- "... quirky details and tangents enhance a good story ..." (Simmons)

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Linkage



- Transitions are essential in story.
- The linkage between the core columns create context, continuity and avoids the data dump.
- Storytellers often memorize key words. Phraseology matters.

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Roman Columns



- Know the core components of the story.
- Map out and memorize the core.
- With technical stories and details learn how to use the comprehension graph.
- Check-in with your audience to make sure each core column is understood.

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Sensory Details



- Senses get dulled by volumes of data.
- Story gives opportunity to liven the senses.
- "... linear analysis misses the point..." (Simmons)

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Think Unique



- What do you have that could be unique?
- A concept
 - Memorable elements
 - Interesting point of view

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Send ahead's and leave behind's

- Tie story to data.
- Data provides proof that backs the story.
- Data prevents story from becoming fable.
- To build a story of value, story has to correlate to facts.



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Wrapping the pieces together: Opportunities to use Story



- Planning
- Execution
- Analysis & status
- Results
- Debriefs

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Practical Application: Tying it together



- Structure:
- What do you want to communicate?
 - Monologue? Dialog?
- Calibrate
- Who are talking with?
 - Audience's technical comprehension affects details offered.
- Timing
- Snippet
 - Full report

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Practical Application: Tying it together



- Clothespins
- Candidates for clothespins: metrics, milestones, on shore team vs. offshore team, test lab needs, project readjustments.
- Twine
- How testing impressions relate to defects reported.
 - How testing impressions relate to remaining work.

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Practical Application: Tying it together



Linkage

- Tester's hands on experience tied to critical defects.
- Tie reported customer issues to test strategy to open defects.

Columns

- Core information
- How can you organize information so you don't forget to deliver.

Sensory Details

- How can you deliver story so they don't forget what you've shared.

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Acknowledgements

"The Story Factor"
Annette Simmons

Wonderful quotes, highly readable, practical applications to business.

"There are two main reasons people hold back they tell a story. The first reason is that they are afraid they will look stupid, corny, manipulative, or "unprofessional." ... So we act "professional" and keep things tidy, logical, and rational. ... Unfortunately our delivery becomes uptight, clinical, emotionless and b-o-r-i-n-g."

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Acknowledgements

"Presenting to Win:
The Art of Telling Your Story"

Jerry Weissman

Concepts: Six roman columns, the data dump, the comprehension graph. Send ahead and leave behinds *

* Terms also referenced by Ed Tuiite.

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The Springboard	Stephen Denning
Influencer: The Power to Change Anything	Kerry Patterson, Joseph Grenny, David Maxfield, and Ron McMillan

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Beth Horner, storyteller	http://storytelling.org/Horner/