

Introduction

An interactive story is a story where the characters are not static, but instead make decisions based on hyperlinked options where the reader gets to choose what happens next in the story. In this way it is similar to a game, but generally has more authorial control than the average game. One way to make the process of telling a good story more exciting for students who have grown up with a substantial amount of gaming in their lives is to have them write multiple endings to a story, and the path that leads them there.

More interestingly, in almost any field it is possible to *use an interactive game to generate a tool with which to teach the subject matter at hand*. This creates a substantial synergy between the humanities-based skill of teaching story and the educational skill of engaging people with gamified information. Lastly, the stories that are generated tend to demonstrate a much more comprehensive understanding of cause and effect than another form of assessment might discover, like a linear essay or test.

Twine and Inform, the two free and openly-available softwares discussed in this module, present challenges and affordances that make them each uniquely useful for the liberal arts instructor to use as part of a class. For students concerned with transferable skills, being able to make interactive website-based story-games can be an end in itself, but in most cases, adding a lesson and project in Twine or Inform will be useful for many kinds of liberal arts contexts as well.

Inform is more technical and has more options for creating robust gameplay, but because Twine requires so little time to learn, even for teachers and students unfamiliar with coding of any kind, the module will focus on Twine, with a few resources on Inform used at the end.