StoryScapes101: Introduction to the StoryScapes platform

Module 6 - Collaboration & Community Building with StoryScapes

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Also, credit to GeoAcademy for inspiring this open course format.

Introduction

In this Module, students will learn to use StoryScapes as a platform to support projects that are larger than what they can implement alone. StoryScapes is designed to be more than just a tool for individuals to manage their *own* data or produce their *own* map visualizations. It aims to be a platform where people can work together to crowdsource and improve data on an ongoing basis.

StoryScapes provides two special profile types to support collaboration among StoryTellers working on a common theme and StoryTellers working within the same organization.

Additionally, StoryScapes provides mechanisms for StoryTellers to support the ongoing improvement of the StoryScapes platform. As an open-source and agile project, StoryScapes relies on a wide community of users, developers and sponsors to continuously grow and improve to meet user needs.

This module includes the following lessons:

- Lesson 1 – Organizing Community Initiatives
- Lesson 2 – Managing Organization Accounts
- Lesson 3 – Help StoryScapes Improve

Each Lesson is planned to take about 30 minutes to complete. Combined, this module should take about two hours to complete (assuming ten minute breaks between each Lesson).

Lesson 1: Organizing Community Initiatives

Objective

In this lesson, students will learn to start and lead a Community Initiative.

Lecture

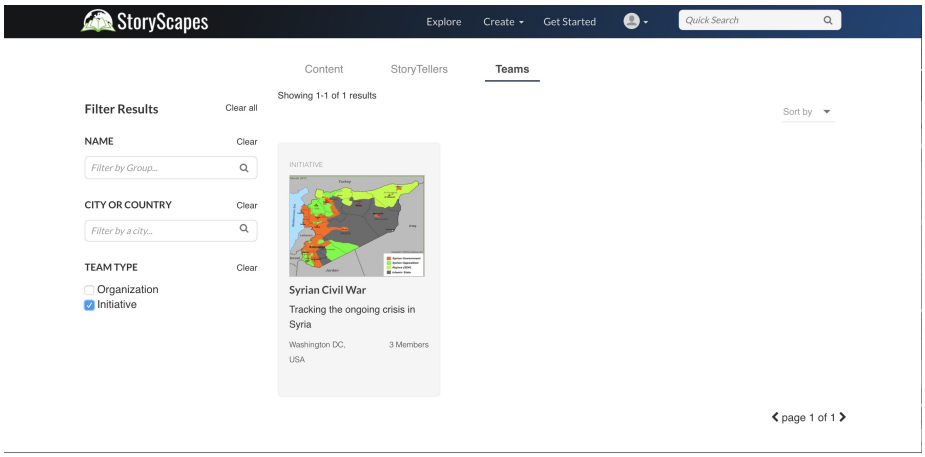
A Community Initiative is an effort by StoryTellers to collect StoryLayer data around a common theme.

For example, when the ISIS movement gained prominence in 2014, a Community Initiative in StoryScapes could have helped analysts across the US Government quickly collect the spatio-temporal data available about ISIS into a single Community Initiative page. As the data accrued, analysts could quickly compose StoryScapes that help explain various phenomena apparent in the StoryLayer data.

A Community Initiative simply empowers crowdsourcing and collaboration around a topic of interest.

The Community Initiative Page

Community Initiatives are publically accessible via a special account page. They can be accessed by going to the StoryScapes `Explore` page and filtering for `Teams`.



On the Community Initiative page you will see the StoryLayers and StoryScapes that are associated with the Community Initiative, as well as the Organizers and Members of the Community Initiative.

Becoming a Community Initiative Organizer

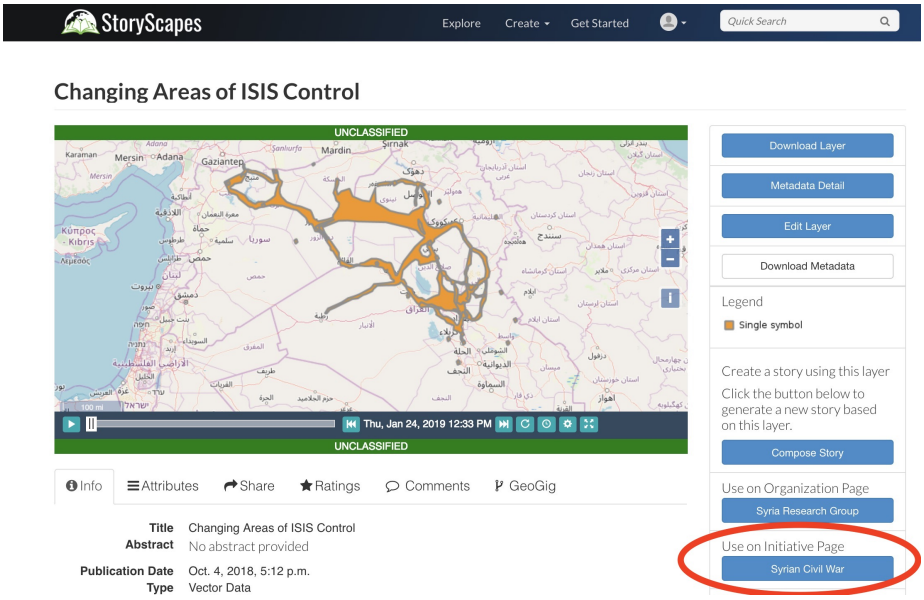
Community Initiative pages are managed by designated Initiative Organizers. Organizers are simply registered StoryTellers that have been given Organizer rights by a StoryScapes administrator.

If you have a Community Initiative you would like to see launched on StoryScapes, or that you would like to organize yourself, you will need to email an administrator. An administrator will then create the Community Initiative and add you as an Organizer. This will give you the ability to manage the Community Initiative page.

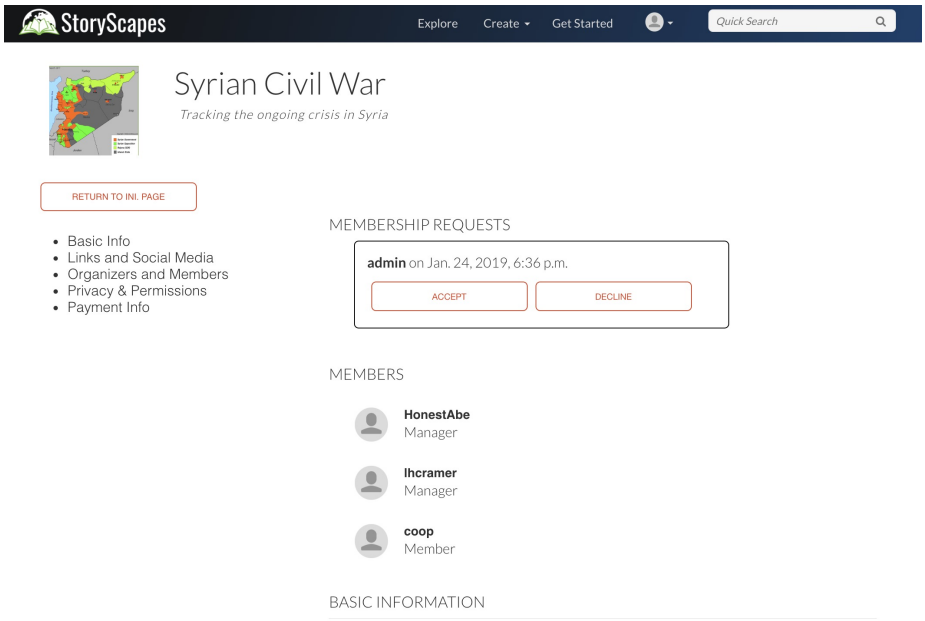
Managing a Community Initiative Page

If you have been given Organizer status on a Community Initiative, you click `Manage` on the Community Initiative page to customize basic information about your Community Initiative.

To add StoryLayers and StoryScapes to your Community Initiative page, you simply go to the StoryLayer or StoryScape page. You will see an option to add the content to the Community Initiative that you are an Organizer for.



StoryTellers can also request to become Members of your Community Initiative. This is simply a way for you to indicate people that are supportive of your Community Initiative and are helping with the work in some way. A StoryTeller can request to become a Member by clicking `Join This Initiative` on any Community Initiative page. You can accept or reject these requests from the management page for the Community Initiative.



Demonstration

Now that you've learned how to access and manage a Community Initiative, let's watch an example of a user performing these actions:

Watch this video. VIDEO.

Tasks

Now it's your turn! Complete the following tasks:

- [x] First, find a Community Initiative on the Explore page and request to become a Member
- [x] Second, think of a Community Initiative that you would like to see launched in StoryScapes and share your idea with a colleague.

The following tasks can be completed if your course instructor shares login information for a temporary user account with rights as an Initiative Organizer:

- [x] Log off from your current account and log back on to StoryScapes using the test account provided by your course instructor. Go to this Community Initiative page and make one improvement to the profile.
- [x] Add at least one StoryLayer or StoryScape to the Community Initiative.

Lesson 2: Managing Organization Accounts

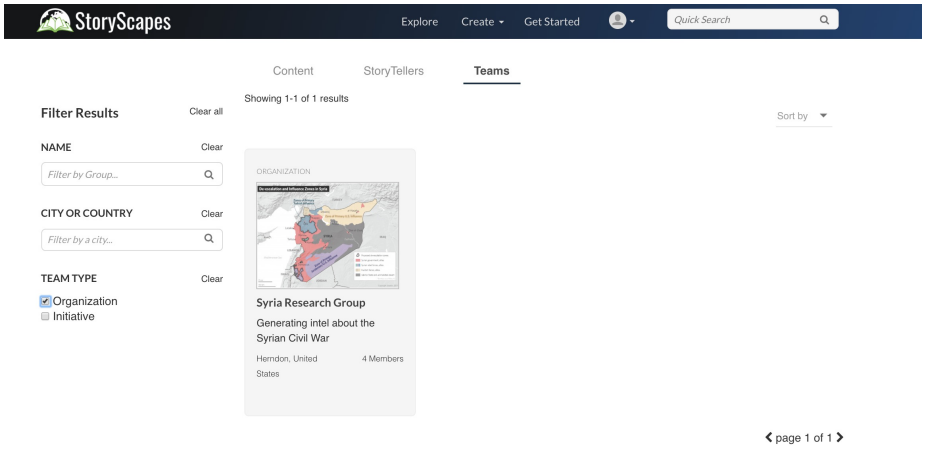
Objective

In this lesson, students will learn how to access and manage an Organization Account in StoryScapes.

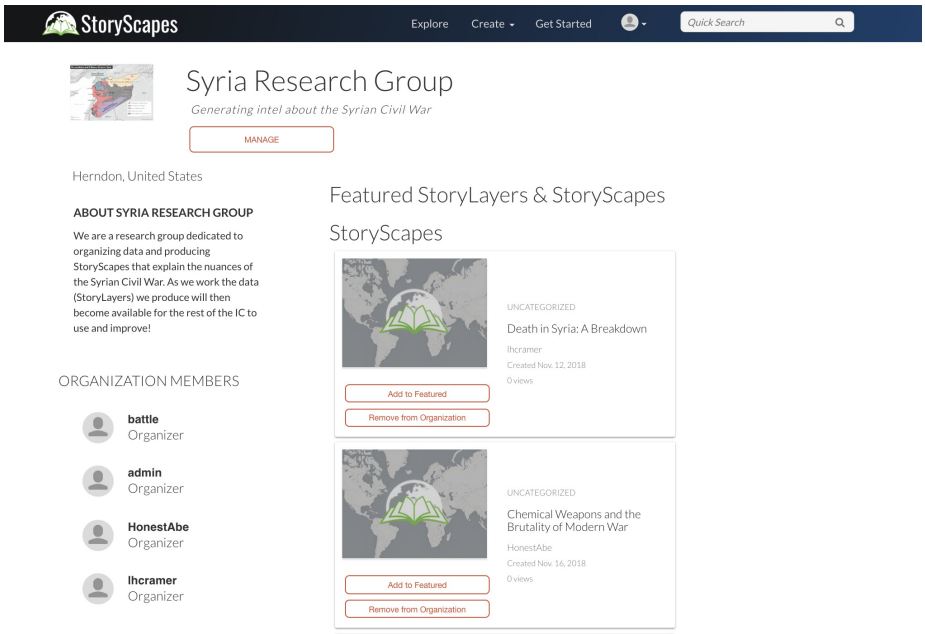
Lecture

Organization Accounts are very similar in structure to Community Initiative pages, although they have slightly different purposes. Community Initiatives are designed to promote collaboration around a single thematic topic that is pertinent for a period of time. Organization Accounts are designed for work units like agencies, teams, offices, departments and companies that benefit from a single place to represent their collective work on StoryScapes. The work of an Organization might span many different topics. For example, a regional desk inside the State Department may manage an Organization Account to host all of the StoryLayers and StoryScapes it produces over time.

Organization Accounts are hosted on a special account page inside StoryScapes. They can be accessed by going to the StoryScapes `Explore` page and filtering for `Teams`.



On the Organization Account page you will see the StoryLayers and StoryScapes that are associated with the Organization, as well as the Organizers and Members of the Organization.

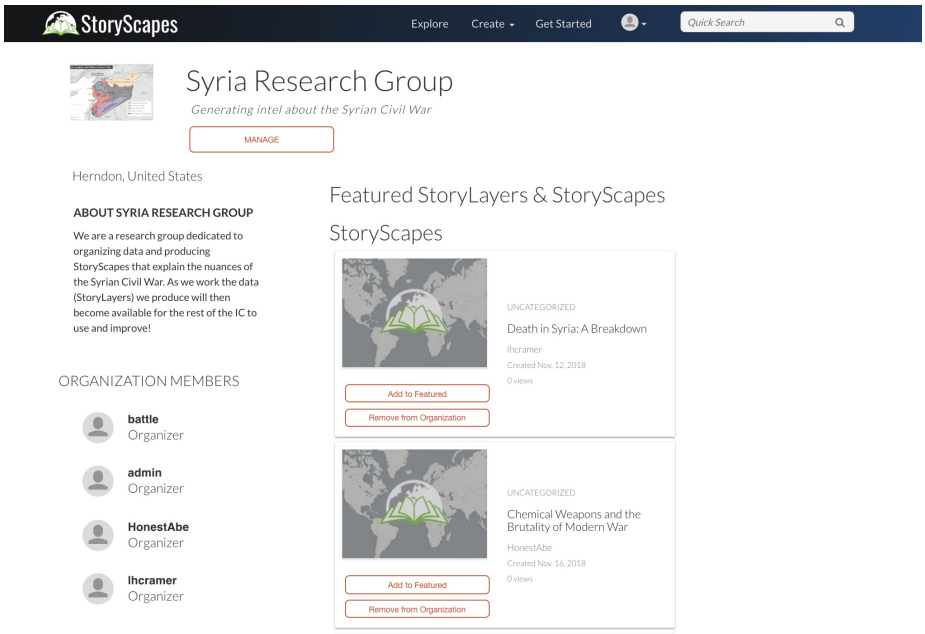


Setting up an Organization Account

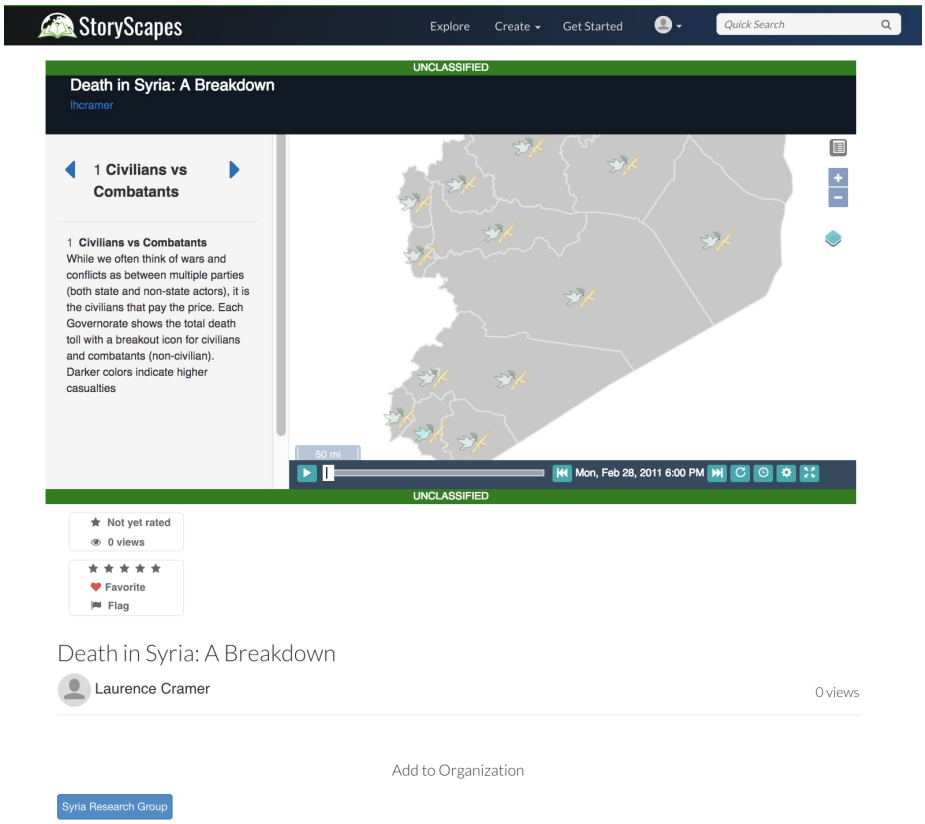
When you are ready to set up an Organization Account for your work unit, you will contact a StoryScapes administrator. An administrator will work with you, or the appropriate point of contact, to get the Organization Account created. Once this is done, this will give you, or the appropriate point of contact, the ability to manage the Organization Account.

Managing an Organization Account

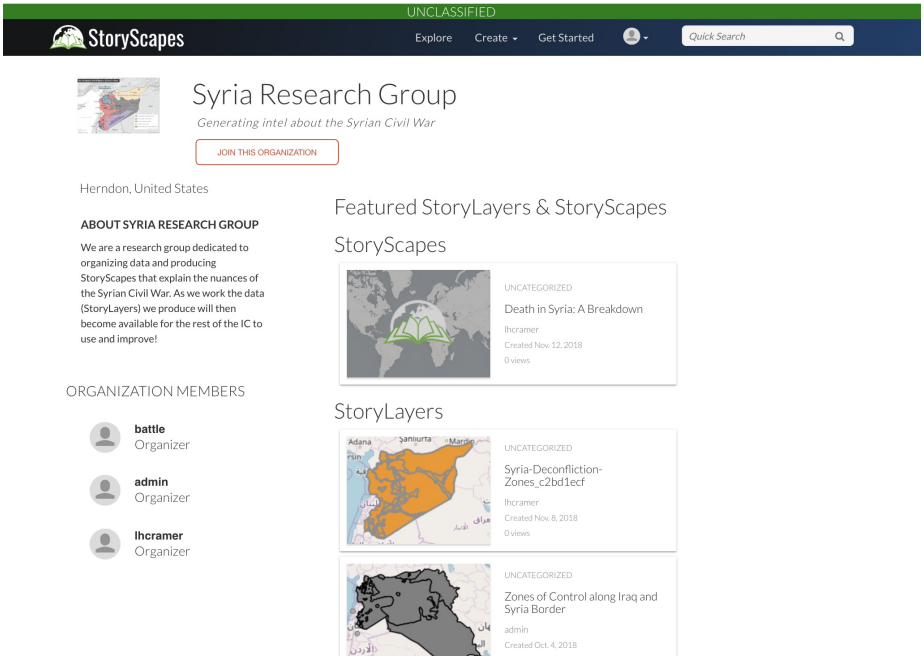
If you have been given Organizer status on an Organization page, you click `Manage` on the public Organization page to customize basic information about your Organization.



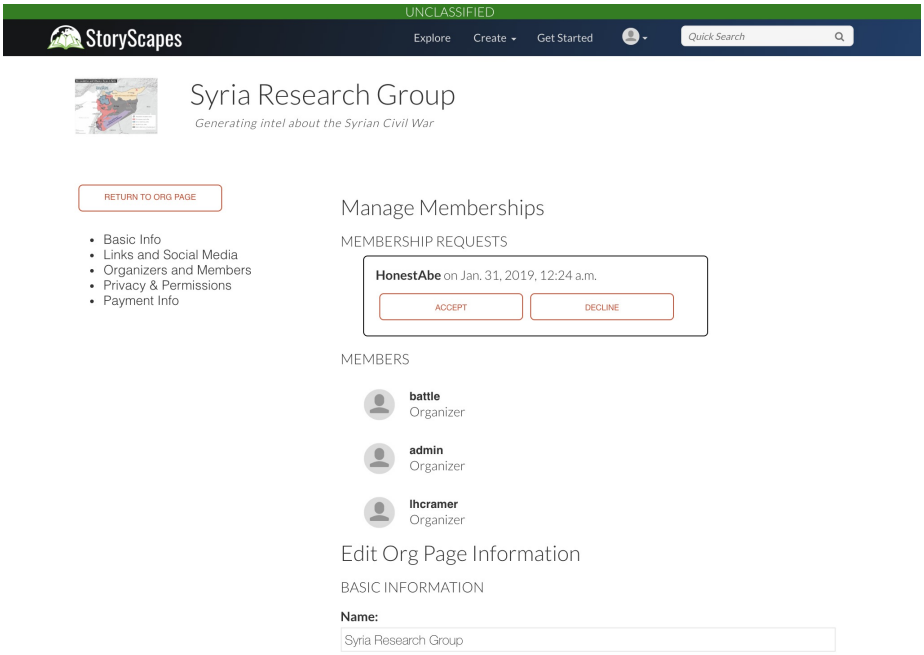
To add StoryLayers and StoryScapes to your Organization page, you simply go to the StoryLayer or StoryScape page. You will see an option to add the content to the Organization that you are an Organizer for.



StoryScapes users can also request to become Members of your Organization. This is simply a way for you to indicate people that are involved in your Organization. A StoryTeller can request to become a Member by clicking `Join This Organization` on any Organization page.



You can accept or reject these requests from the management page for the Community Initiative.



Demonstration

Now that you've learned how to manage an Organization Account, let's watch an example of a user performing these actions:

Watch this video. VIDEO.

Tasks

Now it's your turn!

- [x] First, find an Organization Account on the Explore page and request to become a Member
- [x] Second, think of an organization that might benefit from having an Organization Account in StoryScapes. Share your idea with a colleague.

The following tasks can be completed if your course instructor shares login information for a temporary user account with rights as a manager of an Organization Account:

- [x] Log off from your current account and log back on to StoryScapes using the test account provided by your course instruction. Go to this Organization Account page and make one improvement to the profile.
- [x] Add at least one StoryLayer or StoryScape to the Organization Account.

Lesson 3: Help StoryScapes Improve

Objective

In this lesson, students will learn how they can help make StoryScapes a platform that continuously improves to better serve its user community. ### Lecture

StoryScapes is designed to be a community-driven piece of software, more like Wikipedia than Microsoft Word. StoryScapes is a knowledge platform where users work together to make the StoryLayers and StoryScapes that are published more complete and accurate over time.

Therefore, StoryTellers have an opportunity to help improve the platform itself, and are encouraged to do so! Consider the following ways you can help StoryScapes improve:

Report Issues

As you use the StoryScapes platform, you can report any issues you experience by using the Flag tool that was introduced in Module 4.

Contribute to the Roadmap

StoryScapes development follows a Roadmap that is available here XXXX. If you have ideas for features you want to see built, contribute it to the Roadmap XXXX.

Write Code

If you're a software developer, you're invited to get involved in the StoryScapes development pipeline. StoryScapes develops on a Agile process anchored by an open Scrub Board. Read more about our process here XXX. Check out our Backlog of issues here XXX. If there is one you feel you can tackle, go ahead!

Apply to become an Administrator

Administrators are the glue that holds StoryScapes together. Administrators are StoryTellers that have demonstrated significant experience and skill in using StoryScapes and are willing to volunteer time above and beyond their work duties to help make StoryScapes succeed. Administrators take on tasks like:

- Responding to content Flags
- Responding to Community Initiative and Organization Account requests
- Featuring excellent content on the Homepage
- Setting development priorities for the Roadmap

If you are interested in becoming a StoryScapes Administrator, email XXXX. XXXXX

Demonstration

Take a few minutes to listen to XXXX, a long-time StoryScapes developer, discuss what its like to be a StoryScapes developer and administrator;

Watch this video. VIDEO.

Tasks

Now that you've reached this final lesson in the Course, we want your thoughts! Take a moment to think about a new feature that you'd like to see in StoryScapes. Maybe its a new tool to help you curate StoryLayers or compose StoryScapes. Contribute your idea to the StoryScapes Roadmap!

Conclusion

In this Module you have learned how you can use StoryScapes to bring people together, whether by connecting people around a common interest in the form of a Community Initiative, or helping colleagues collaboration with an Organization Account.

You've also learned that StoryScapes depends on its users to step up in order to succeed. You've been invited to provide feedback, write code and even to

become a site Administrator. The future of StoryScapes depends on you! Join us to chart the future!