

Designing for Narrative Influence:

speculative storytelling for social good in times of public health and climate crises

RAY LC

City University of Hong Kong School of Creative Media

DAIJIRO MIZUNO

Kyoto Institute of Technology Kyoto Design Lab

Keio University Graduate School of Media and Governance

Health and safety concerns have led to policies that put individuals under lockdown, but such restrictions lose effectiveness in the long-term due to inherent human needs of connection and physical action. People maintain prosocial behaviors long-term only if they make decisions themselves intrinsically as opposed to forced restrictions. To build systems for effecting positive social purpose in pandemic and environmental concerns, we apply speculative design to create story structures and interactions that promote behaviors for social good. We designed stories and interactions using both plot-based narrative frameworks and character-based machine-learning-generated dialogues for effecting cooperation. We then ran a series of workshops investigating how designers negotiate and collaborate to tell stories for social purpose using a "finish each other's stories" approach. This work illustrates the application of design fiction to promote sustainable behavioral patterns that value societal good.

CCS CONCEPTS • Human-Computer Interaction • Information Interfaces and Presentation • Miscellaneous

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1 INTRODUCTION

Behaviors that promote social good, such as wearing masks and social distancing in times of pandemics, reducing consumption for sake of reducing climate change, and recycling to help the environment require long range goals that can be difficult to adhere to. An example is observance of social distancing during covid-19 [16], which is difficult to maintain due to the extrinsically motivating forces that led to its enactment. Long term results require instead an intrinsically motivated approach to promote prosocial actions. One of the most intrinsically rewarding strategies we know involves the use of narratives to motivate a sense of purpose and provide implicit sources of information about norms and contexts.

In this study, we take three approaches to study using narratives for social purpose. First, we designed a story template and used plot elements to drive narratives that imply themes of positive social behavior. We used a theatrical medium as in TV and fiction, as well as an interactive medium involving the participant as a player in a messenger-based game. Second, we used a language machine learning model trained on different media of text like novel, twitter, youtube, and messenger to generate prosocial snippets of text that tell a short story persuading the user to act for prosocial purposes. Third, to mimic real-world situations of collaborative story design, we implemented a series of workshops that asked participants design narratives for the purposes of positive action for climate change, epidemics, recycling, and population growth. We gathered data on how designers negotiate story purposes together as they attempt to finish each other's stories.

2 BACKGROUND

Health and safety measures have put a greater proportion of lives under lockdown than ever before. Although lockdown strategies have been found to be effective for reducing spread of infection [1], both the psychological and physiological tolls of these restrictions lead to inability to maintain such lockdown strategies long term [12:19]. Physical isolation-induced

psychological symptoms like loneliness [25], depression, post-traumatic stress [19], unprompted anger [32], increased domestic violence [8], and suicide incidence [37] make the price to pay for health and safety outcomes almost as unbearable. Combined with physiological tolls like increased cardiovascular risks [10], physical inactivity [35], reduced immunity [38], diabetes, cancer, and kidney disease [41], prolonged isolation is impossible to maintain for long-term viability of humans.

Moreover, healthy habits are difficult to form due to motivation being extrinsically driven and to human bias towards immediate concerns [20]. In addition, optimism biases lead us to earlier disregard for previously enacted public health measures, while omission biases explains unwillingness to adopt measures like vaccination [22]. Such biases make sustainable changes in behavior difficult [30]. How can policies affecting public health be implemented in an intrinsically motivating, sustainable, and prosocial manner for public good, despite the limitations of human biases and unreliability?

2.1 Social Influence and Misinformation

One approach is to apply social influence and social norms to affect behavioral change. Strategies like providing information, creating social incentives through norms and comparisons, and giving recommendations and cues for behavior have been applied to positively influence health-promoting behaviors [11]. However these strategies do not appear to affect behavioral intentions that relate to public health like wearing a mask [31]. Moreover, strategies based only on social norms and information delivery are dependent on the quantity of behaviors taken [27], making it difficult to match intentions to actual behavior output. Norms are highly dependent on framing, so that both sides of an issue can be used to convince the other [34], leading to perceived extrinsically motivated policy debate rather than intrinsically motivated actions when a consensus is not reached. Social norms can work in the other direction as well, as social groups that gather to oppose regulation can form as well, leading to social norms for individual actions *against* public health [18].

The difficulty with applying social influence alone is that there's a clear agenda that leads people to react against the perceived attempt to manipulate. Recently the threat of misinformation in uncensored outlets like social media has grown steadily, despite attempts by platforms to limit their spread [2]. The propagation of unvetted health misinformation is doubly dangerous, as it spreads by personal curation that takes a single person's common sense over scientific evidence, and corroborates the lack of confidence in a nation's medical system [13]. Studies have shown the difficulties of distinguishing propagation of credible information like scientific results from misinformation like conspiracy theories on social networks [15], suggesting that providing information to people alone cannot persuade them to a credible degree over other sources of misinformation currently working in our society. As recent election history has shown, propagation of disinformation has been used to persuade voters in decision making processes [17], turning questions of what to do for public good into bickering and debate about control and policy. Arguing in favor of intrinsic motivation, one result showed that electoral participation was not increased by offering extrinsically motivated nominal rewards [33]. The issue of trust and misinformation also applies to our lack of understanding of AI systems, prompting more recent work in using scenario-based design strategies to create explainable AI systems (XAI) [40]. This research in particular, shows that narratives can allow nonexperts to understand AI systems by metaphors and points-of-view that relate (mis)information in machines more directly to us [24].

2.2 Storytelling as Implicit Influence

How, then, can we increase intrinsic motivation for behavioral change? We identified that the power of storytelling-driven approaches to change intrinsic motives is illustrated in the covert behavior modifications. They can be seen in cults and prisoner-of-war camps. One of the ways cults obtain compliance is through iterative enclosure, getting prospective members away from protective forces like friends and family [36]. This generates an environment conducive to framing stories of us versus them, and provides a perspective that slowly creates change in the subject. Story-writing tactics were also employed to subvert beliefs in POW camps. In one case, Allied prisoners were asked to name one thing good about Communist regimes [4]. One good thing led to further nudges like writing letters back home about how Communist life was superior in exchange for privileges like receiving mail. These extrinsically motivated (receiving goods) tasks are then converted into intrinsic beliefs (Communism really is right) by repeated writing and framing on the part of the POWs. Storytelling is a powerful tool for changing behaviors and beliefs under unrelenting circumstances.

To step away from policy debate and into designing for purposive action motivated by intrinsic motives, we propose the use of narrative strategies to design artifacts and interactions that enable public interventions for social good. Instead of arguing over policy, we wanted to show a process of negotiation for narrative purpose, so that instead of debating the merits of particular strategies for achieving a particular goal, we can instead discuss at the level of collaborative design for that social goal. In order to achieve this end, we identified storytelling and story-writing through Speculative and Critical Design (SCD) as a potential means for the public to better engage with the possible problems. Because SCD is, in essence, a democratic practice to inform the public to collectively determine our future directions, and the designed objects serve as a tool to generate interest instead of apathy.

2.3 Speculative Design of Narratives

Regarding the types of stories to generate debate through SCD, Malpass worked on clarifying the taxonomy of SCD [29]. By identifying two major narrative types: 1. Juvenarian satire that works through narrative techniques of antithesis, obscenity, and violence, and 2. Horatian satire that works through paradoxical techniques of burlesque, colloquialism, exaggeration, and anticlimax, he argues that SCD works through Juvenalian satire, through dark narrative forms of allegory, exaggeration, antithesis, obscenity and violence in order to evoke contempt, shock, and righteous indignation in the mind of the user audience. Similarly, HCI community has developed a growing interest in storytelling and plot development. This is partly due to the fact that designing interactive services and systems demand a given story based on ethnographic research, a story of a user. However, others have argued that solutionism-oriented research and development without considering the possible implications can lead to ethical debates in the context of Science, Technology, and Society and design anthropology [6]. To challenge this, fictional abstracts have been proposed to function as transparent examinations of ethical issues in HCI studies and stimulate discussion in speculative space [28].

Accordingly, we believe storytelling and story-writing are fundamental ways humans use to communicate desired decisions and behaviors. Further, they can be applied to design of interactive services and systems to frame questions, propose hypothetical solutions, evaluate alternatives, and consider possible outcomes [3,5]. Drawing from the analyses Blythe and Malpass made, seven classic plots [7] were identified and modified to analyze the nature of storytelling and story-writing in SCD for promoting the possible public good as follows.

First, we designed narratives that promulgate a particular social goal without explicitly persuading readers. To be as general as possible, we framed these narratives as archetypes without tying them to particular media such as movies, novels, songs, radio shows, apps, games, or websites. Second, we designed interactions with narratives that promote public good. To provide narratives on demand that can be generalized to other purposes, we used an unsupervised language model to generate text based on purposes espoused. As before, we used different sources of text to generate responses that work for different media, including twitter posts, novels, youtube transcripts, and text messages. Third, to investigate how unspecialized designers would use storytelling to design for purpose under collaborative conditions analogous to real-world situations, we ran a series of speculative design workshops that attempted to tease apart which story structures are useful for different storytelling purposes and investigate how designers work with each other to negotiate a narrative-based design.

3 NARRATIVES FOR SOCIAL GOOD

Taking the case of public health and safety, we set out to design templates for stories whose purpose is to show that “Recklessness Leads to Heartache,” encouraging pro-social behaviors that minimize the spread of disease. This hands-on exercise led to detailed examination of plot and character considerations that affect the narrative power and power of influence of the story. The first story we created (Figure 1) is particularly designed to fit theatrical narratives like novels, films, and news items, encouraging the virtue of consistency in its audience with the reward of well-being and happiness. In the spectrum of plot vs characterization, it veers towards the plot as a way of driving the action, because in encouraging behaviors for public good, the individual characterization is reduced in favor of elements in society beyond character control. The latter reliance on society leads to environmental story-telling and favoring plot development. The second story is based on an interactive format where audiences can play a game while acting as the main character. We vary only the

specific characters and situations without varying the underlying process, following the same story template created in the first story. The second story is told by interacting agents like a message chat, so the character development is revealed through interaction with other characters, a style we call “polyphonic” as each character provides her own story. These two stories serve as variations on the same narrative template.

3.1 A Theatrical Plot-based Narrative

Characters: Jason, a strong willed, passionate, and impulsive astronaut in training.

Sonia, a carefree, trusting, devoted nurse working at an older adult care center.

Ricardo, a loving, sensitive, practical, and conflicted astronaut reserve.

Jason is slated to be on a mission to Mars to establish the first Mars colony specifically dedicated to contagion research outside earth. It's a 5 year endeavor and he is 1 month away from launch. In his bubble at the space center, he gets word from his best friend Ricardo that Jason's fiancé Sonia is stricken with a mysterious ailment. Ricardo has conflicted feelings for Sonia, but he is a devoted friend of Jason's, so he decided to let him know despite Sonia not wanting to burden Jason with the issue before the culmination of his life's work so close to launch. Since he is forbidden to leave the bubble, Jason tries to wait it out, hoping for the best.

He waits for 2 weeks (coincidentally equivalent to a 14 day quarantine) but can't handle the uncertainty anymore. He leaves the bubble in a set of bold escape maneuvers without authority to visit Sonia. Ricardo, somewhat regret having told Jason, then informs Sonia, who doesn't want to be the cause of the destruction of Jason's dreams. Not knowing her own condition, Sonia tries to hide from Jason in order to protect him from her possible illness. After a sequence of search and rescue actions, the couple is reunited. Sonia ends up being fine, but Jason tests positive at base and cannot go on the mission, much to the dismay of his partner Sonia, who blames herself. Thus Jason's recklessness led to heartache for all and was not even helpful to Sonia. Ricardo takes his place to go on the mission in his stead.

Sonia feels remorse for taking Jason away from his dream. While Jason feels no regret, he has trouble adapting to “the new normal” after his dream of going to Mars is shattered. Much like the protagonist of *Lucy in the Sky* [23], he finds himself unable to devote himself to everyday tasks. Instead of important work, he applied to be a cashier at McDonalds, but was rejected due to being overqualified.

Sonia returns to her job after the illness while Jason is going mad looking for things to do. One day through her consistent efforts, Sonia finds out from her supervisor that the illness she had was from a leaked experimental vial. Jason, finally finding something to figure out, investigates the cause, tracing it back to a space center shipment 4 months before the launch. He finds out that the leaked viral material was part of the mission he would have gone on to carry out experiments on the effect of the virus on Mars. This also explains why he failed the test to go back, because he was supposed to work on this strain by taking on experiments.

Jason could have tried to crack the case, go to his superiors, etc. But instead, he realizes that “recklessness leads to heartache.” Instead he turns to a safe, consistent solution.

Understanding the situation, Jason decides to join the biocontainment team. Since he already contracted and got over the experimental illness, he has immunity, and is approved for his new job. Realizing that he would be giving up his astronaut dreams by possibly being exposed to other viruses, he nevertheless wanted to be in a position to help if and when Ricardo asks for him or returns home. He also wanted to ensure the safety of humans on Earth when Ricardo's crew returns.

4 years later, we find out that the entire first team has mysteriously disappeared from radio transmissions. Jason puts his research pieces together and realizes that it may be that the mysterious illness has destroyed the first mission astronauts (including Ricardo), because it must be an illness that is only deadly on non-Earth gravity. This is because gravity causes changes to the motor areas of the brain primarily, and the virus specifically affects these human neural motor circuits at non-Earth gravity. In effect, it's analogous to covid-19 in that it affects people under very specific contexts, picking out the old, poor, and immune-compromised.

Jason discovered this newfound knowledge by consistently studying it from a biocontainment perspective.

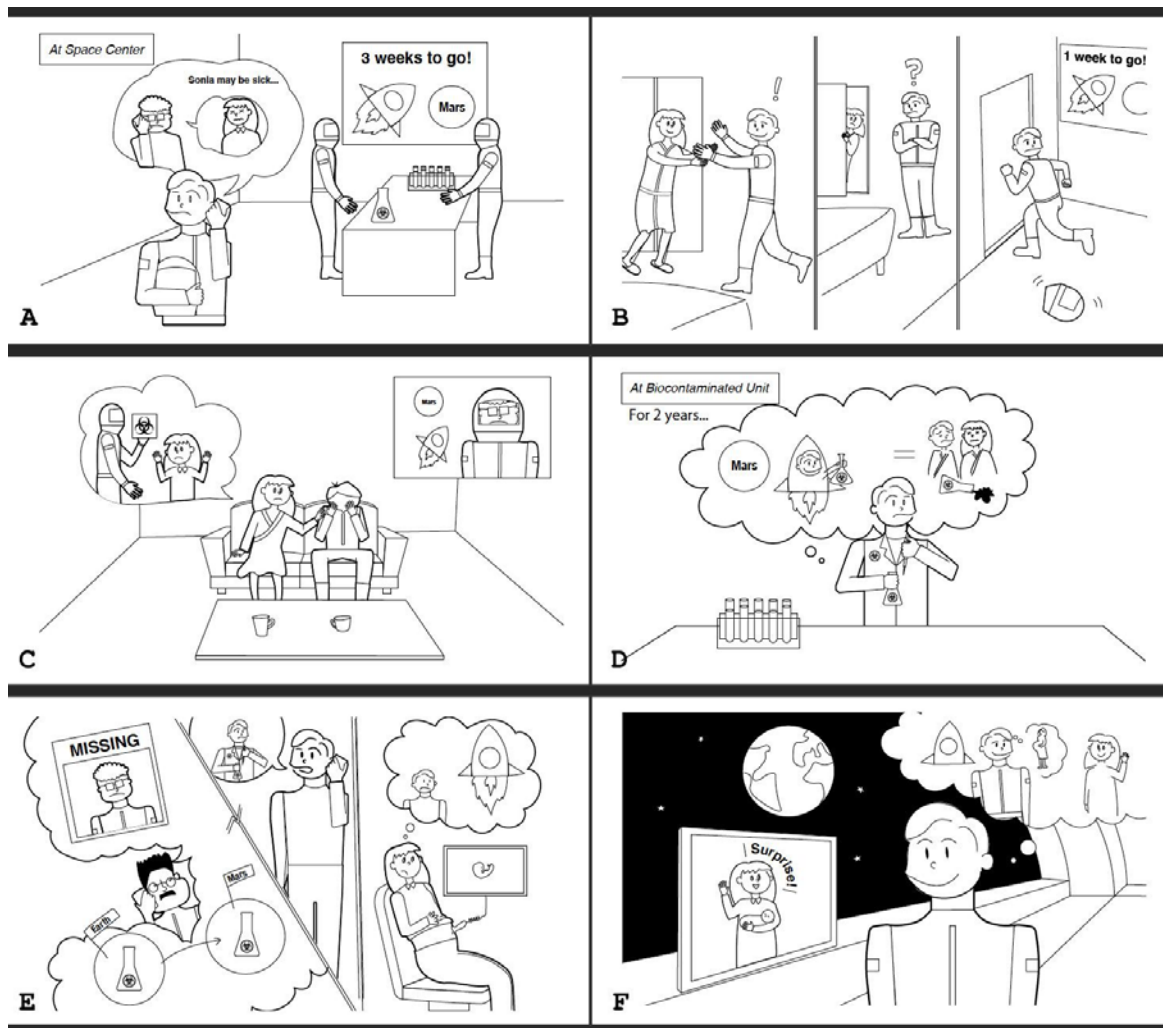


Figure 1: The story template “Recklessness Leads to Heartache” instantiated in the form of a theatrical medium story based primarily on plot development. (A) Jason is in charge of a mission to Mars to study the effect of a virus on non-Earth gravity. He gets a call from Ricardo informing him that Jason’s fiance Sonia seems to be mysteriously sick. (B) Jason decides to break the bubble for his space mission in order to reunite with Sonia, taking a reckless action. (C) Jason is not allowed back to the mission, so Ricardo goes in his place. Sonia consoles Jason on his shattered dreams. (D) Jason decides to dedicate himself to figuring out how the virus works on Earth, eventually realizing that he himself caught the same virus that he was to study on Mars. (E) Informed that Ricardo and his crew have been missing on Mars, possibly due to the virus, Jason realizes that he can go on the next mission since he is inoculated. Meanwhile, Sonia doesn’t want to tell Jason she is pregnant because she doesn’t want to stop him from going to Mars to live out his dream again. (F) Jason is on his way to Mars, and while on video call, Sonia reveals she has given birth to his son. It is revealed that Jason knew about the pregnancy all along but decided to not let it stop him from fulfilling his duties. More plot details in the text 2.1.

Showing his report to his superiors he is chosen for the next mission to bring answers back. In this next mission, they don’t need a leader who isn’t exposed yet, because the mission is to bring victims back. Being exposed is actually an immunity for the dangerous mission, turning the requirements around from the first mission. With one month left to launch, Sonia realizes she is pregnant, but decides not to tell Jason so that he would not be taken from his duties this time.

Jason goes on to Mars to fulfill his destiny for his planet. However on the way there he gets a video recording of Sonia giving him the news of the birth of his child. He is happy but actually not surprised. Why is he not surprised even though Sonia withheld the information? (The surprise is that he’s not surprised.)

It turns out that he knew all along based on related research while looking at Sonia's health data, a skill he picked up doing data analysis in the biocontainment unit. He just decided to keep the pregnancy info to himself, so that unlike his last reckless move, he would fulfill his duty over even the birth of his child. This is actually a huge sacrifice because he is on a dangerous mission and may never actually see his child. Regardless, it's at least 5 year, so he'll miss the childhood of his child. But Jason is ok with giving that up to stay grounded to his duties. This time he'll not let recklessness destroy his dreams. The story ends with us looking back on the small Earth from space. Slowly slowly, Earth becomes smaller.

3.2 A Polyphonic Interaction-based Narrative

Characters: Ken, a strong willed, passionate, and impulsive student who wants to be astronaut,
played by the user as the main character of interaction on a chat platform.

Sara, a carefree, trusting, meek, and devoted student studying to be a nurse.

Tobi, a loving, sensitive, practical, and conflicted student studied astrobiology.

Ken is home for the summer holidays for an unusually long time because his school is attempting to renew preparations for the yearly onslaught of "the virus," which evidently has undergone an unusual mutation rate this summer. He is waiting to start his Provost's scholarship next year at school, bringing him unprecedented access to resources and mentors. For example, he is engaged to meet his hero Alan Moch, the first person to go reach Mars on a hibernation cycle. Ken is a passionate space-lover who wants to, like his hero, eventually end up as a colonizer on Mars.

Home now in Kyoto, he has been group-isolated with a small circle of predetermined citizens. Group-isolated means the government sets up a set of 3 families of around 10 people who can only see each other and no one else during the summer. The idea is that they are quarantined against any other possible citizens, so any "virus" contagion is limited to just these 10 people who communicate with each other. Everyone else in society is prevented from social action enforced by colored masks, which indicate to AI "enforcement" that the conversation or gathering is allowed if they are part of the same group (mask turns green) or disallowed for approaching anyone in an outgroup (mask turns red).

Ken misses his girlfriend Sara, one year his senior, whom he met at university, where she studied nursing. They both joined the ballroom dance group, where Ken wanted to make it to top tier competition, while Sara took care of the logistics and became his partner. This summer, Sara is assigned to group-isolate with a family in Kobe, so that even though they are intimate with each other, they cannot physically be together. Next fall Sara will start doing working holidays in New York City, so they won't be able to see each other.

Unbeknownst to Ken, Sara's parents had taken a trip which turned out to be in a high risk area, so she volunteered to get into a group that's farther away to minimize chances of seeing Ken in person, as to not infect him. After two months of talking on screen and playing telepresence games, Ken wanted to see Sara one last time before he goes back to school, and their relationship will fight the test of long distance. However Ken was ready to fight against his instincts until his friend Tobi informed Ken of some unusual things happening to Sara. Tobi also lives in Kobe and is a neighbor to Sara. They had all gone to the same university. In his own home isolation, Tobi tells Ken that Sara has not been in her house at all, that all the lights have been off for almost two weeks. When Ken talks to Sara by text and video, she uses a background and doesn't give too much info. But she says she's home with the lights on, which contradicts Tobi.

This makes Ken eager to text Sara's friends whom he knows from college, such as those from the dancing group. However, Ken is more liable to be fooled by unknown voices. Because he doesn't know what Sara's friends sound like, the conversations can very well be generated using AI to influence his beliefs. These friends all seem either not to know or be focused on their own careers after school. They tell Ken to keep clean. Ken also has to keep clean in order to make his next year the best year as a senior as he tries to get a fellowship that gets him straight onto the staff of the Japan Space Agency. However that requires top physical form, and any transmission of "the virus" is deemed to be detrimental to the effort.

The real life game sees Ken making the decision about whether to approach Sara to ascertain their relationship. Unbeknownst to Ken, Sara is hiding from him to prevent him from being infected. The truth is that her home is being left empty after fumigation, and she has to live with her isolation group. That group, however, has a man she has come to despise, who thinks he can turn Sara into friendly terms with him. Sara doesn't want to burden Ken with this, and instead focuses on her soon-to-be career in New York while allowing Ken to remain focused on his dreams of the space agency.

What will Ken do? He has to make decisions between risk and consistency. The story unfolds depending on what the player types into text and physically does in the world (going to Kobe, for instance). The game has virtual versions of real people in Ken's life, but the actions and behaviors of these virtual analogs are programmed with a language model, and reflect Ken's communication history rather than being communications of real people.

The player (Ken) knows full well still that this is a simulation game of his real life. The reason he plays it is because 1. real life is more exciting than any made up fiction, 2. it prepares him for real life with Sara.

4 MACHINE GENERATED FICTIONAL MESSAGES

Long-form stories like those detailed in the previous section require sustained audience attention, and hence plot devices that maintain engagement until the end, where the purposive influence can be delivered. In the age of social media and direct messaging, flash fiction has filled the gap for narratives in the context of brief attention spans. Flash fiction by authors like Hugh Behm-Steinberg and Lydia Davis tell narratives in formats like 2-3 sentences to one paragraph, forcing the focus to be sharp and succinct, much like the works of Ernest Hemingway. Flash fiction requires short attention spans and are told in modern formats like a twitter post, instant messaging, or short videos. Recently flash fiction has been applied to the realm of HCI and qualitative data analysis to give a narrative framework for experimental interpretation [14].



Figure 2: GPT-2 machine-learning-generated snippets based on prompts for purposive messages indicated in bold for model fine-tuned using: (Upper Left) 4000 tweets containing the words "stay" and "home" over a 39.5 hour period, (Upper Right) messages in the author's own English facebook message data over the last 5 years, (Lower Left) text of the book *The Last Town on Earth* by Thomas Muller about a village shielded from a deadly epidemic, (Lower Right) transcribed text from a selection of 65 youtube videos about social distancing, minimizing risk, supporting each other, health and safety, staying consistent, avoiding danger, listening to experts, effective communication, and better decision making (Appendix 1).

To explore the use of micro fiction in various media to promote sustainable adherence to public health guidelines, we

fine-tuned the machine learning based transformer language model GPT-2 [9:2] to text examples from a novel, twitter, youtube spoken text, and facebook messages to build a generative text model adapted to each medium. 124M models were trained for 10K epochs. Temperature for text generation set to 0.8. We use short openers as prompts for the model to generate messages that reflect public good purposes. The messages reflect short-form stories that incorporate positive social responsibility. We then look through the text to evaluate the effectiveness of each set of text corpus for public health interventions (Figure 2).

To generate text reflective of different media that was content-specific to public health, we fine-tuned the model with the following sources of data: 1. tweets over a 39.5 hour window that contained the worlds “stay” and “home”, 2. text from the author’s own recent facebook messages, 3. a novel about a group of people who escape a deadly illness by secluding themselves called *The Last Town on Earth*, and 4. a set of 65 youtube videos dealing with themes like social distancing, risk management, health and safety, and life advice. The models were prompted with 30 different starter texts, for example “How should we...”, “I don’t think you should...”, “Most of the time...”, “It would be great to...”, “How can I help...”, “Have you tried...”, “Be aware of...” etc. A selection of the generated text that reflects the voice of each model is shown above. Note that the messages model is least domain-specific, while the twitter-trained text is quite direct in its statements. There’s a range of declarative and persuasive (imperative) statements, and they all tell different nuances of the purpose. We imagine these machine-generated text to be part of an interactive system whereby the AI can chat with humans during the narrative-like experience, giving persuasive prompts for social good without making explicit statements that would be reacted against by the human. The implicit influence of such a setup sets it apart from human discussion, for the machine does not necessarily tell us that risky behavior is bad. Rather it shows us these nuances through consistent voicing trained to a large corpus of similar voices.

5 COLLABORATIVE NARRATIVE DESIGN

In the real world, storytelling takes place not only in diverse media with different voices, it also takes place collaboratively, with people finishing other people’s stories, elaborating on notable threads, interpreting events described, and spreading rumor that corresponds to their views. Homer’s poetic stories were spread in such a tradition, with points being elaborated further as they are orally transmitted [26]. Ideas like the Reformation were spread in the Middle Ages via an instrument we know well today, the book [21]. Today, the edited and collaborative content we create live on the form of web forums, retweets, chain emails, resampling, etc, as we fit our individual agenda within the context of the story being (re)told.

To understand how narrative design for social purpose can take place in a more realistic context of making and disseminating stories collaboratively for a common goal, we held a series of workshops with designers and storytellers of the Speculative Futures Group in Tokyo and the Fragmentary Institute of Comparative Timelines Program (University of Osaka and University of Chicago). In each workshop, we introduced basic ideas of speculative fiction, then prompted participants to give examples of story structures presented from diverse media. The story templates [7] consisted of “Overcoming the Monster” (e.g. *Beowulf*, *Independence Day*, *Seven Samurai*), “Rags to Riches” (e.g. *A Star Is Born*, *Warashibe Choja*, *Aladdin*), “The Quest” (e.g. *2001: A Space Odyssey*, *Apocalypse Now*, *Uncharted*), “Voyage and Return” (e.g. *Star Trek IV*, *The Hobbit*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*), “Comedy” (e.g. *Super Mario Brothers*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Doraemon*), “Tragedy” (e.g. *Gon the Fox*, *Final Fantasy VII*, *Julius Caesar*), “Rebirth” (e.g. *Siddhartha*, *Bleach*, *Peer Gynt*), as well as our own “Absurdist” (e.g. *Le Peste*, *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Universal Paper Clips*). We then divided the participants into breakout rooms of 3-4 individuals for the collaborative writing intervention. They are asked to design a story for the purposes of one of the following design prompts: societal responsibility and duty in a Flu Epidemic, self-reliance and parsimony in reuse and Recycling, collective restraint and future consideration in Climate Change, collective responsibility in encouraging healthy levels of Population in Japan (Table 1).

The instructions for the workshop consisted of the following: 1. Each team is given a design prompt. Study the prompt as a group (5 min). 2. Come up with a specific idea for your own narrative design idea individually but don’t tell others specifics except the general story structure used (10 min). 3. Pick an order of who to go first, second, etc. Each writer has 15 minutes for her section of writing. 4. Begin writing a story on the shared document individually. When not writing, find or sketch support images you find online. Be sure to understand where the story is going before writing your part. Feel free to

bend the story to your interest, while picking up on others' threads and explaining them. 5. After everyone has gone once, come up with an ending collaboratively (15 minutes). 6. A survey follows which asks you what your own story structure was, what the perceived group story structure was, how well it was designed for the purpose, perceived advantages and limitations, etc. Surveys were returned by 22 of the 24 participants.

Table 1: Design Prompts and Example Stories for Narrative Design Workshop

Title (num participant)	Design Prompt	Example Story Summary (scored story structure)
Flu Epidemic (7)	This year is an especially bad one for spread of flu, with a new virulent strain that doubles the rate of lethality. Design a story collaboratively that attempts to limit infection due to person-to-person contact by espousing societal responsibility and duty .	Yuri is a biologist investigating a virus that infected 50% of the population of Earth. She figures out that the virus is a set of microbots that pray on weak electromagnetic fields. She and others figured out a way to combat the virus by washing hands, which restores the strong fields weakened by hand-to-hand contact. Through sanitation and distancing, Yuri and her team begin to eradicate the microbots. (Overcoming the Monster)
Recycling (6)	The level of trash (a la tapioca among youth) in the city is growing at an alarming rate, especially with non-degradable products. Design a story that encourages recycling and reuse of essentials like plastics and bottles by narrating the virtues of self-reliance and parsimony .	Jacob comes up with a new idea to make landfill swamps into theme parks where people would hunt for plastics and exchange them for recycled products. To combat the persistence of these non-biodegradable plastics, he employs Pla-dogs, which are genetically modified animals who consume plastics. However over-consuming plastics killed these Pla-dogs, so they had to be transported away. Jacob loved his Pla-dog John and decided to make gear to protect animals from toxicity and keep combating plastic waste. (Overcoming the Monster)
Population (7)	The country is experiencing the lowest level of population replacement rate in history, risking large loss in labor force and talent. Design a story that encourages the younger generation of the country to take up collective responsibility and encourage a healthy level of population productivity.	The Indonesian girl Fenly grows up speaking a mixture of Japanese and Indonesian. While working as a nanny, she realizes children are having trouble breathing and will grow up with chemical infertility problems. Wanting to have children herself, Fenly realizes that she must join a communal system where groups of unrelated individuals live together. Her life becomes a life of abundance and diversity without judgment. (Rebirth)
Climate Change (4)	Global warming has affected the human-made coastal area drastically, reducing the coast line by up to 5cm a year. Design a story that encourages generations to reduce fossil fuel use to reduce climate change by emphasizing collective restraint and future consideration .	The rich playboy Vincent goes on the "Antarctic Princess" Cruise with a group of scientists. The ship gets stuck in Antarctica. The 20 survivors have to share food and resources enough for 10 people. Vincent argues resources should go to those with highest "societal values," then realizes his errors upon experience surviving in the void. He is rescued and returns home to espouse the virtues of limit to consumption. (Voyage and Return)

This procedure ensures that everyone has her own story structure (Indiv.Structure) to employ for the purposes of the design prompt, but that collaboratively, each group will share some predominant story structure together at the end of the exercise. The final group-produced stories were scored and agreed upon by two independent reviewers (Scored.Structure), and they do not always correspond to the group story structure perceived by each individual group member (Group.Structure). To show how design using individual story structures evolved over the course of the collaboration, we plot the starting story structures by each participant as given in the survey as well as the final scored structure of the group-collaborated story (Figure 3). Note that the number of lines emanating from a node denotes the number of participants that picked the story structure as their starting point. The number of lines converging on a node is proportional to the prevalence of that particular structure in the final output. Thus you can see that tragedy was a popular starting point, but through group collaboration, structures like Overcoming the Monster and Rebirth appear to be most popular. The collaboration process picked out certain structures that are more adaptable or suitable to the design. Note also that most starting structures get adapted to a different structure through the collaboration. Only 9.5% of the Indiv.Structure match their Scored.Structure, indicating that 9 of 10 individual stories are adapted to a different structure in the collaboration process. However, the structure participants believe the final version to be (Group.Structure) matches Scored.Structure 43% of the time, indicating

that despite some bias, there's overlap in what they think the final structure to be and what the scored structure is.

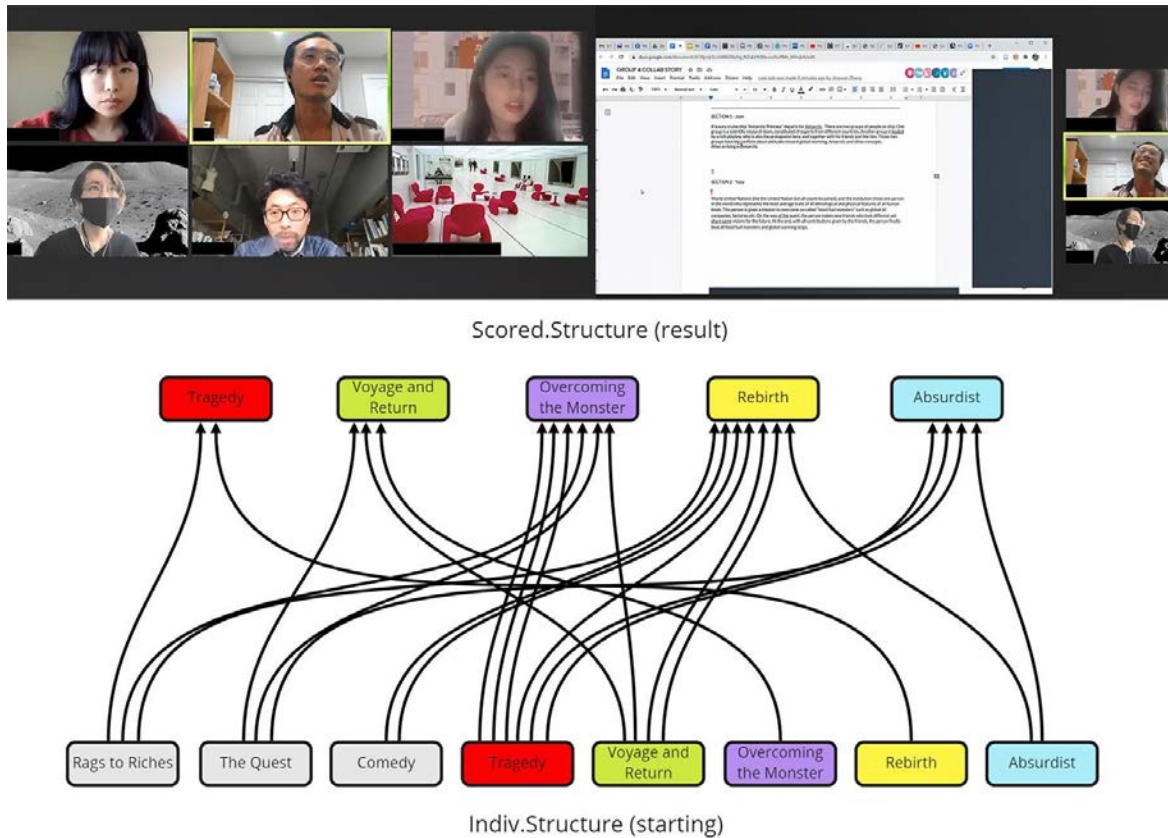


Figure 3: Group story collaboration in process. (Upper Left) Breakout rooms in Zoom during the 1.5 hour story collaboration. (Upper Right) Writing and sketching on the same googledoc during the workshop. Participants are asked to contribute related images when they are not writing. (Lower) Story structures used by each participant below and how they correspond to the final story structure scored on the group-collaborated story. Note the popularity of particular structures in the results.

Another interesting finding is that if you let the participants themselves identify what the final group structure may be (as opposed to being objectively scored), they tend to have a greater probability of thinking their own structure was used (Appendix A.2): 29% of the time their own structure matches the what they believe the final story structure for the group was (as opposed to 9.5% objectively). How collaboration altered the story structure choice can be seen by doing a Pearson's Chi-squared test on counts of Indiv.Structure ($p=0.419$), Group.Structure ($p=0.286$), and Scored.Structure ($p=0.0068$) against expected distribution of equal probability (22 / 8, or 2.75 each). The result shows that distribution of each participant's own chosen story structure are not significantly different from uniformly distributed set of structures, but that the independently scored story structure of the final collaborative story was not randomly distributed (Appendix A.3). The collaborative process focused attention on a few particular story structures (Overcoming the Monster and Rebirth, in particular) that were most easily agreed upon by the participants.

To investigate the perceived mechanisms of storytelling approach to design for social purpose, we surveyed the participants post-workshop (Figure 4). The short answer answers are qualitatively scored into categories. The results show that adding plot elements was preferred by the participants if they wanted to make the collaborative story more like their own, as opposed to character development and plot refinement. This corroborates previous consideration that plot-based techniques may be especially useful for storytelling for purpose for theatrical effect.

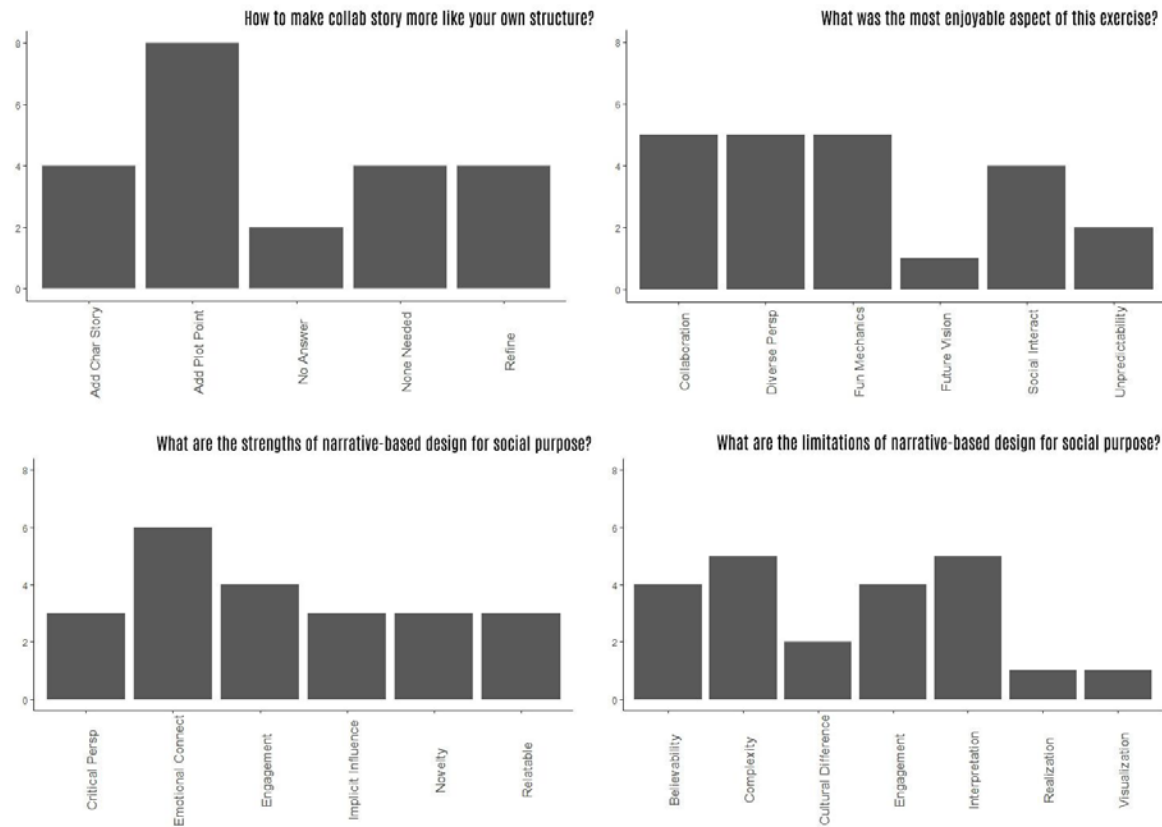


Figure 4: Histogram of coded answers to survey questions about the workshop. (Upper Left) “What else would you have done given the chance to make the collaborative story more like your own?” Add Char Story - add more character-specific elements or new characters to the story, Add Plot Point - add other plot devices or change the plot, None Needed - would make no other changes, Refine - refine details of the story. (Upper Right) “What was the most enjoyable aspect of the workshop?” Collaboration - with other designers, Diverse Persp - perspectives from different countries and communities, Fun Mechanics - includes improv-like way to finish each other’s paragraphs and conceding ideas, Future Vision - fun way to dream about the future, Social Interaction - chitchats and connecting with each other, Unpredictability - story going in unexpected direction. (Lower Left) “What are the strengths of the approach?” Critical Persp - a way of questioning linear designs and speculating the future, Emotional Connect - putting emotional ties into policy discussions allows empathetic response, Engagement - makes audiences more invested, Implicit Influence - promote ideas without preaching by relying on existing tropes, Novelty - driven by curiosity, Relatable - relevant to people’s lives. (Lower Right) “What are the limitations of the approach?” Believability - stories may have to have less believable plot twist for sake of satisfying purpose, Complexity - audience may not follow details of the story, Cultural Difference - different norms in East and West, Engagement - boring stories won’t teach anything, Interpretation - depends on individual view points, Realization - may not foster real-world action, Visualization - does not provide understandable visual artifact like movies or games or cartoons.

Participants also considered the emotional connection the audience has with a story to be the most effective aspect of the narrative-based approach. On the other hand, the complexity of a story may make the message more difficult to comprehend, and even when the message is understood, it may be perceived differently by different audiences, both considered limitations of the narrative approach. One participant also pointed out interestingly that having been affected by a story does not necessarily equate to action.

Finally, the survey also quantifies participants’ perceptions of how well their individual ideas were reflected in the final story collaboratively determined, as well as how they believe the particular story would promote the purpose detailed in the prompt (Figure 5). Participants appear to rate both quite highly. There is also a trending bimodal distribution of some who really got their stories their way, and another group who didn’t.

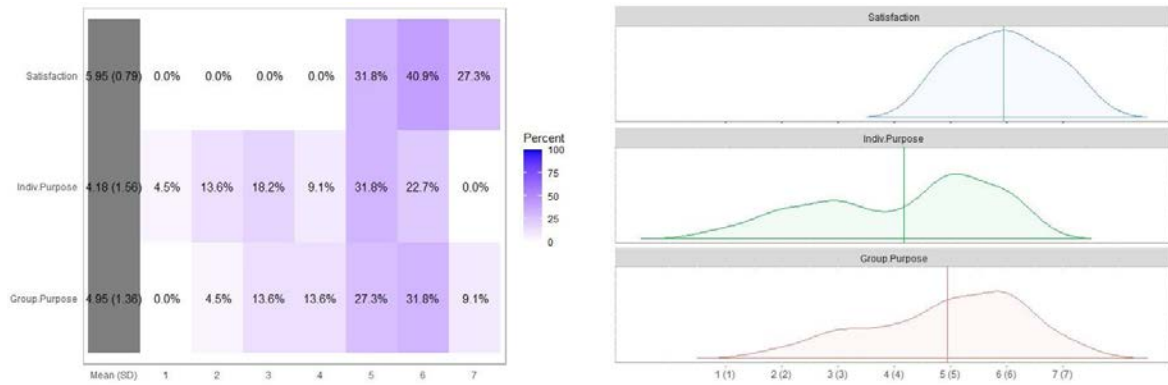


Figure 5: Likert scale ratings (1-7) for workshop survey questions. (Indiv.Purpose) “How successful were you able to promote the ideas of your own story in the completed collaborative story?” 1 - not successful, 7 - very successful. (Group.Purpose) “How successful do you think the completed collaborative version of the story would be in promoting the goal outlined in the prompt?” 1 - not successful, 7 - very successful. (Satisfaction) “How much did you enjoy the workshop?” (Left) Heat map of Likert scale data. (Right) Density estimation of Likert score data.

6 DISCUSSION

We have addressed how narrative-based design can be generated by careful writing, machine-text generation, as well as collaborative design, to induce self-motivated behavioral effects for social good. In order to achieve this end, we worked with: 1. author-oriented domain-specific story writing for purpose, both in theatrical and interactive media themes, 2. algorithm-oriented automatic text generation using a transformer language model for snippets of narrative content and a wider set of media like twitter, social messaging, and youtube, and 3. collaboration-oriented workshop participants-based public models of storytelling to explore how the multiplicity of story-writers bring their own story ideas and structures together to collaborate and negotiate a design for public good purpose.

Some surprises bear future investigation. The medium of choice makes a difference in the presentation. Showing the manga-form vs an interactive product determines how much story you can tell in each format, and this limitation of the medium was also pointed out in the workshop survey. The generation of text revealed a surprisingly identifiable tone in the machine’s voice even with limited input. GPT-2 tends to keep generating text that reveals the origin of the voice and the medium. The collaborative workshop produced surprisingly coherent works of fiction, despite the high level of intermixing and negotiations involved using the 8 different story-structures. We found that people tended to overestimate their own influence on the collaborative process, but found that the process of negotiation led to the strict use of particular story structures that predominate (Overcoming the Monster and Rebirth), perhaps as determined by the particular domains we were working with (recycling, epidemic, climate change, etc). We also found that plot-based interventions appear to be used over character-based methods of storytelling, although further study is needed to systematically examine how effectively participants employed each strategy.

The workshop also revealed that participants often have to adapt the believability of the story in order to tell a narrative with purpose. There’s a tradeoff between how effective the tale was and how believable it was. We identified different models of believability based on the interventions and interpretations of other storytellers. Generating a believable narrative for behavioral change requires a suspension of disbelief. A future direction is how each storyteller and story-writer can generate a sound way of suspending the disbelief.

Speculative and Critical Design (SCD) is related to participatory design in the context of democratic decision making. The participatory constructivism of practice-based design research is part of the post-normal response to the crisis, a way of reconstructing trust in processes for determining future directions for our society [39]. In this context, we have served as a critical response to the crisis we are facing in misinformation and covert influence. We hope that narrative design can serve as a beacon to designing for public good.

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APPENDIX

A.1 Training Data for GPT-2 Language Model

The list of 4000 tweets used to fine-tune the GPT-2 with twitter model to generate purposive messages:

<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1-8RlixVPo6OOgwinBNRG6iMn-k38byX2ebhfHQx9WA/edit?usp=sharing>

The entire text of the novel used to fine-tune the GPT-2 with novel model to generate purposive messages:

<https://freelibrary.overdrive.com/media/96311>

The list of youtube videos used to fine-tune the GPT-2 with youtube model to generate purposive messages:

social distancing:

CDC covid safety: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0G6ekalKTxQ>

Telegraph story: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FZrjuPXnu5I>

GistNigeria: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e-dnKQFJT7A>

activities in covid: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BZsJ4Qcolko>

collective living: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vr138_2576k

minimizing risk:

stock trading: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tgtzkE38W0g>

OCD uncertainty: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yoD-Ge6jA44>

leadership: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1SRXmtD9vV0>

TED talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4op2WNc1e4>

operations risk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cYrirJunffU>

Don't test God: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0GdBOfrgEhU>

5 rules: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NtX-lbi21tU>

Bhargava: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KG9rPTNFyTE>

support each other:

active listening: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2fkOTd0mz68>

hack empathy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-DspKSYxYDM>

learning to empathy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=YFyWceiSZKc>

lifehack: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UzPMMSKfKZQ>

develop empathy: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yEQauNBQuDU>

support each other: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=76B4OAdH9R0>

TedxBend: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wWff7KANm58>

CBC News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ObSa51leuwo>

Rashid Buttar: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u7p3gAbN6N8>

healthy and safety:

covid: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l4cco2KSvnU>

habits: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oKHs_-6oR6s

effortless health: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vH5xqaAEWIs>

BBC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UxnEuj1c0sw>

staying consistent:

Marie TV: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DZNnKzVS1Yw>

motivational video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZfggpMauBk>

Terry Crew: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kpNbUN2_ebo

Evan Carmichael: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWZKDazcfk4>

Mascara: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hf6E86ljg5A>

TedMannheim: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J8CXL8vkGNs>

Power of habits: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iUKwFuV6FaA>

avoiding danger:

realtors: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oqCDcKeTTI>

London safety: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ng8MWrNA79A>

kids safety: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k5xtqmyHnj8>

friendly stranger: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SY7RhBs2p0k>

work safety: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xmbl7GcGxwI>

free med edu: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FC4soCjxSOQ>

safety in NYC: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o5EIsdRYbm8>

online predator: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jsXlDuUSCn0>

mugging: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=iHFKKewlnwU>
 dark web: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KrV2f8NpiQM>
 dangerous year: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bEc0wy_mEA8
 self defense: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=x2WyiCZkcNw>
 listen to experts:
 marital science: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=awyb2Bzs4XE>
 Spectrum News: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6lDS0AMUclc>
 science of expertise: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1feChwxfoY>
 credible sources: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PLTOVoHbH5c>
 thefutur: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Mj1PhPKkERY>
 effective communication:
 AlexLyon coach: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6pYSbdGiDYw>
 skillopedia: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=etIl6J5MG0w>
 TedXWalcott: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2Yw6dFQBklA>
 improvement pill: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mPRUNGGORDo>
 TedxVasa: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zvcbn6WtJvQ>
 Think Fast: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HANw168huqA>
 smart people better choices:
 5 things: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jPdW47gqbMI>
 smarter than others: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bwm8WgTQiXM>
 TedxBourke: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MZCyUANqYyw>
 TedxOaklawn: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d7Jnmi2BkS8>
 improvement: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W8eMB3gSAGs>
 TedxCalgary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NQ7SAcFp4so>
 essentialist: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DGAUCv3Gniw>
 TedxNorrkoping: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-Lg7G8TMe_A
 art of decisions: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jka7Q9LqIUg>

A.2 Individual Story Structures and Corresponding Believed Final Group Story Structure

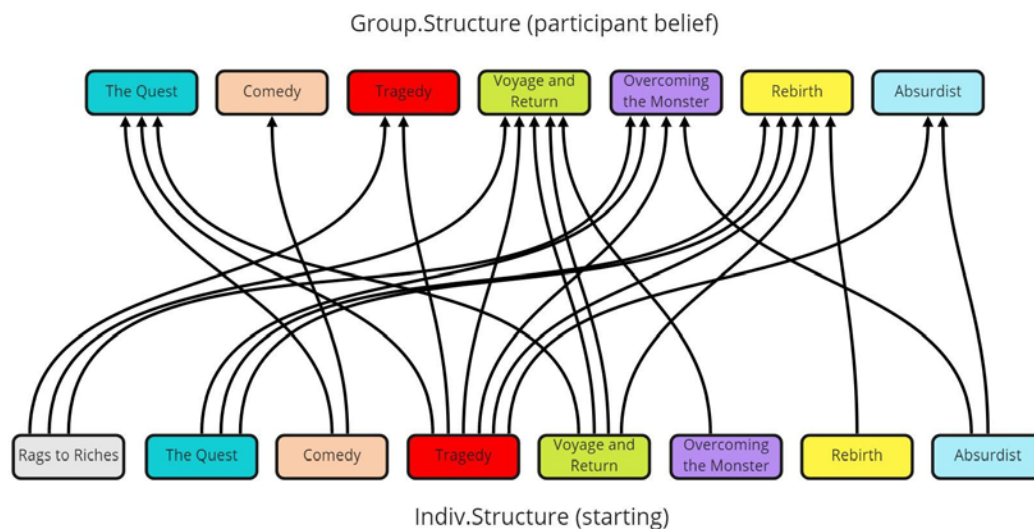


Figure A.2: Story structures of individual participants and how they believed they evolved into story structures for the group collaboration. Note that a number of links go from one structure to the same structure. This shows the bias for participants thinking that their own structure was the one adopted by the group.

A.3 Contingency Table for Pearson's Chi-squared Test for Evaluating Expected Distribution

Table A.3: Table of Counts for Each Distribution of Story Structures

Story Structures	Indiv.Structure	Group.Structure	Scored.Structure	Expected Counts
Overcoming the Monster	1	4	6	2.75
Rags to Riches	3	0	0	2.75
The Quest	3	3	0	2.75
Voyage and Return	4	5	3	2.75
Comedy	2	1	0	2.75
Tragedy	6	2	2	2.75
Rebirth	1	5	7	2.75
Absurdist	2	2	4	2.75
Chi-square test p-value	0.419	0.287	0.0068	