

## TROUBLE AT CHECKPOINT FOUR

COMMAND PERFORMANCE RESEARCH AND AUTEUR MEDIA PRESENT "TROUBLE AT CHECKPOINT FOUR"  
DIRECTED BY DOMINIC CIANCIOLO WRITTEN BY ANNA CIANCIOLO AND DOMINIC CIANCIOLO  
STARRING JOEY NABOR AND RYAN O'QUINN ART DIRECTOR FELICIA CAND RIGGER KEMER STEVENSON  
MODELERS JIM ORLIK JOEL KITTLE TAMAR SHAHAM MARK VILLAGRACIA  
TEXTURE ARTISTS CHERME LUCERO TAMAR SHAHAM SOUND DESIGN JONATHAN WAREHAM  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER ANNA CIANCIOLO PRODUCER DOMINIC CIANCIOLO  
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## Experience Without Danger: Digital Storytelling for Developing Individual, Community and Team Leadership Expertise

**Dr. Anna T. Cianciolo**

Command Performance Research, Inc.

**Mr. Joe C. Pearson**

Battle Command Knowledge System,  
*NCO Net*

w/ commentary by

**Mr. Richard McDermott**

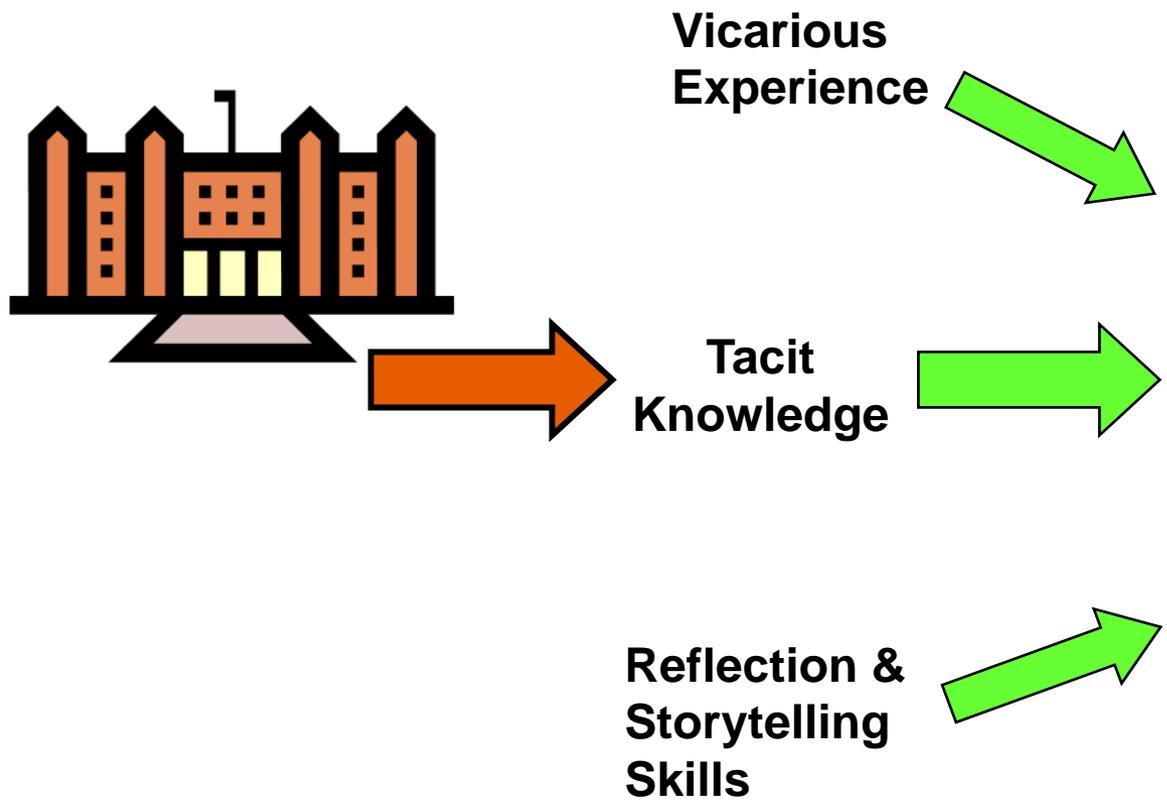
McDermott Consulting

Army Operational Knowledge Management  
Conference

28 October 2008



# Soldier Professional Development – Why Stories?





# Why Digital Stories?

**The combination of narrative, visuals, and audio which communicate values, knowledge, experience or vision for the future**

## **Advantages**

- ✓ **Easily shared in online forums, wide distribution**
- ✓ **Easily shared outside of forum context**
- ✓ **Provide elaborate, detailed context for knowledge**
- ✓ **More emotionally stimulating and memorable**



# **Our Story – *Trouble at Checkpoint 4***

## **General Format**

### **Situational Judgment Scenario/Tacit-Knowledge Vignette**

- ✓ **Open-ended critical incident**
- ✓ **Response strategy options**
- ✓ **Discussion questions**



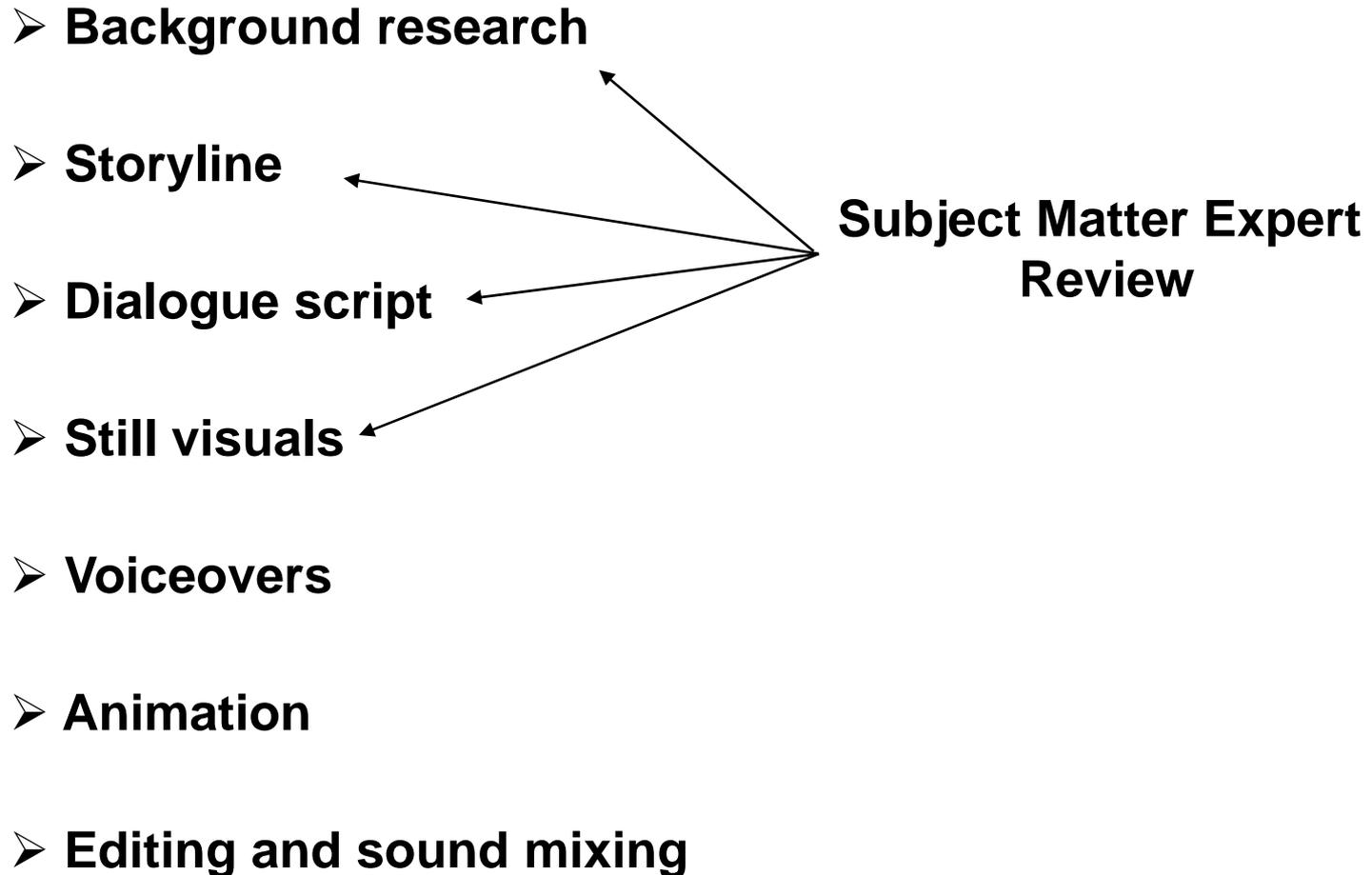
**ARI  
SBIR  
Phase I  
Project**

### **Key Characteristics**

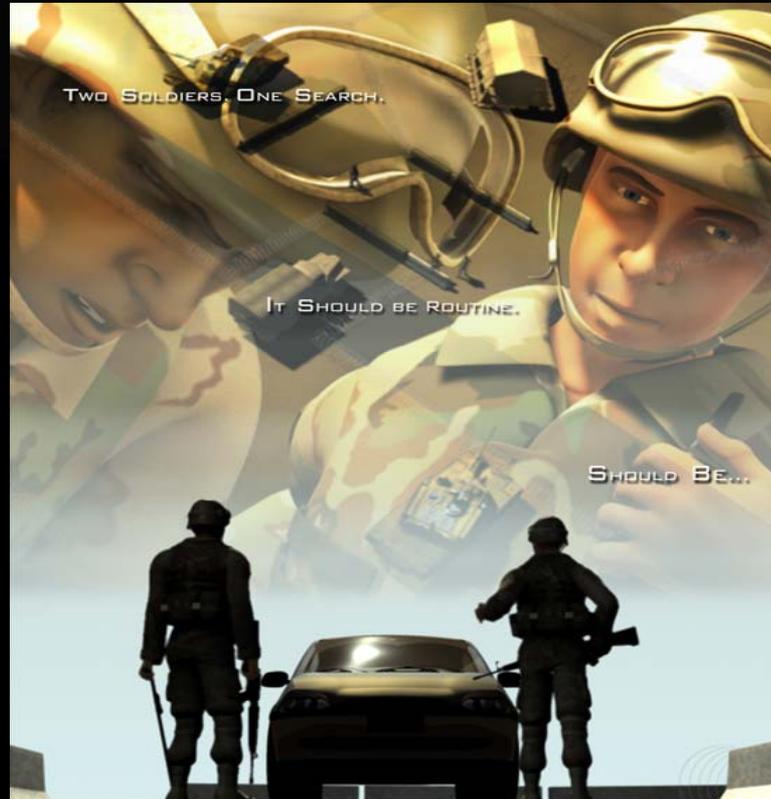
- ✓ **Relevant to current Army professional forum members**
- ✓ **Sufficiently complex subject matter to elicit differing opinions**
- ✓ **Relatively straightforward to depict visually**
- ✓ **Functional without access to classified materials**

# **Our Story – *Trouble at Checkpoint 4***

## **Development Process**



# Our Story – *Trouble at Checkpoint 4*



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# **Our Story – *Trouble at Checkpoint 4* Contd.**

## **Response Strategy Options**

- Immediately request the lieutenant's presence to talk to the Iraqi civilian
- Remove SPC Sondelli and the Iraqi from the search area and finish the search alone
- Promise the Iraqi that he will be compensated for his trouble at the checkpoint
- Radio the platoon sergeant for additional personnel to conduct the search
- Maintain a unified Army front with the Iraqi civilian and go with SPC Sondelli's actions
- Apologize to the Iraqi and let him leave the checkpoint without being searched



# **Our Story – *Trouble at Checkpoint 4* Contd.**

## **Example Discussion Questions**

- What could have been done to prevent this situation from happening?
- Was SPC Sondelli right to question the Iraqi's identity as a sheikh?
- What cues did SPC Sondelli give SGT Ash that he would not interact constructively with the Iraqi civilian?
- What effect could the interaction at this checkpoint have on troop safety?
- What have successful units done to build civil-military relationships in their area of operations after replacing another unit?

# Implementing *Checkpoint 4* on *NCO Net*

The screenshot shows a web browser window with the address bar displaying "Trouble at Checkpoint 4 [Tomoye Ecco]". The browser interface includes a menu bar (File, Edit, View, Favorites, Tools, Help), a search bar with "Google" and "Go" buttons, and various toolbars for bookmarks, checks, and navigation. The page content is organized into several sections:

- Left Sidebar:** A navigation menu for "NCO Net" with folders such as "NCO Net Web Site Questions, Improvements...", "NCO Survival Guides Working Folders", "Sergeant's Topics", "Combat Operations", and "Battle Focused Combat and Deployment...". Below this is a "Participate" section with links for "View my Personal Area", "Contribute...", "Subscribe to this Discussion", "Email this Page", "Search...", and "Who Is Online". At the bottom of the sidebar are logos for "AKO ARMY FOR THE ONLINE", "ATHD ARMY TRAINING HELP DESK", and "CALL Center for Army Lessons Learned".
- Main Content Area:**
  - Related Contribution:** A section titled "Related Contribution" featuring a link to "Trouble at Checkpoint 4" uploaded by "Joe Pearson (Chief of NCO Net)". A description states: "Trouble" is a short, 3D animated video clip that shows a set of problems unfolding at a checkpoint in Iraq.
  - Discussion Post:** A post titled "Trouble at Checkpoint 4" by "Joe Pearson (Chief of NCO Net)" dated "Fri, Feb 18, 12:40 PM". The text begins with "Ladies and Gentlemen:" and discusses the NCO Net's commitment to providing products that help the NCO Corps and soldiers. It mentions a "Digital Story, 'Trouble at Checkpoint 4.'" and describes it as a "short, 3D animated video clip that shows a set of problems unfolding at a checkpoint in Iraq." It expresses interest in users' reactions and encourages sharing related experiences and TTPs. It then provides instructions on how to view the story and participate in discussions, noting that there will be two discussion areas: one for comments and one for questions. It also mentions that the video clip concludes with "SGT Ash must quickly take control of the situation and try to mitigate the impact of SPC Sondelli's actions on civil-military relations...".
  - Discussion Questions:** A section titled "What you think of the following ways of handling the situation?" with a list of five options:
    - Immediately request LT Henderson's presence to talk to the Iraqi civilian
    - Remove SPC Sondelli and the Iraqi from the search area and finish the search alone
    - Promise the Iraqi that he will be compensated for his trouble at the checkpoint
    - Radio the platoon sergeant for additional personnel to conduct the search
    - Maintain a unified front with the Iraqi civilian and go with SPC Sondelli's actions
    - Apologize to the Iraqi and let him leave the checkpoint without being searched
  - Thought Questions:** A section titled "Thought Questions:" with a list of six questions:
    1. What could have been done to prevent this situation from happening?
    2. When did SGT Ash first lose control of the situation?
    3. Was SPC Sondelli right to question the Iraqi's identity as a sheikh?
    4. What cues introduced ambiguity with regard to the Iraqi's identity as a sheikh?
    5. What cues did SPC Sondelli give SGT Ash that he would not interact constructively with the Iraqi civilian?
    6. What effect could the interaction at this checkpoint have on troop safety?

The browser's status bar at the bottom shows "Internet" and "100%" zoom level.

# **Implementing *Checkpoint 4* on *NCO Net***

## **Results – Discussion Stimulation**

### **Within 48 hours of posting (Feb 07):**

- 152 related discussion posts (.6% of NCO Net community members)
- 4,000 views (15% of *NCO Net* community members)
- Highest ranked contribution
- Highest ranked discussion among 44 others

### **As of October 08:**

- 400+ related discussion posts
- 11,894 views
- Still the highest ranked contribution (recently re-released, but never dropped below the top 10)



# Implementing *Checkpoint 4* on *NCO Net* Results – Conversation Content Analysis

## Key Learning Points Identified

- ✓ Leadership – dealing with readiness shortfalls
- ✓ Cultural awareness – understanding escalation of force
- ✓ Tactics – checkpoint setup and manning

## Complexity Recognized

- Balancing cultural sensitivity with force protection

## Some Common Dialogue Created

## Seeds Laid for Related New Conversation

- Training challenges
- Combat stress
- Working with reserve forces

# **Implementing *Checkpoint 4* on *NCO Net***

## **Results – Example Discussion Posts**

**“The situation got out of hand when the SPC started speaking out of turn. The SGT was doing a fine job of communicating with the Sheik. When the SPC came over he should immediately corrected his behavior and directed his soldier to move back to the rear of the vehicle. He then should have requested another soldier to replace the SPC.” – MB**

**“In preventing this situation from happening, training for all new personnel prior to manning check points would have been given to include situational training to help identify negative norms... and correcting them. SPC Sondelli's... comments of "Haji" were clues of deep prejudice... If it were possible, it would have been good for SGT Ash to replace SPC Sondelli at the first point of insubordination but as the incident started to escalate, SGT Ash should have radioed the platoon for additional personnel... Upon the conclusion of the search, SPC Sondelli should have been removed from the checkpoint, replaced, and reprimanded with UCMJ for his inflammatory actions...” – LK**

# Implementing *Checkpoint 4* on *NCO Net*

## Results – Broader Impact

- Requests for *Checkpoint 4* for training outside of *NCO Net*
  - U.S. Sergeant Majors' Academy - BNCOC
  - AMEDD Pre-Command Course
  - U.S. Army Information Operations Proponent
  - Infantry Basic Training
  - *CompanyCommand.mil*
  
- Use of *Checkpoint 4* for training inside of *NCO Net*
  - Individual *NCO Net* members conducting unit training
  
- Use of *Checkpoint 4* for KM training
  
- Requests for *Checkpoint 4* sequel
  - *NCO Net* members
  - U.S. Sergeant Majors' Academy
  - BCKS

# Possible New Stories and Recommended Changes/Improvements

- Escalation of Force (EOF)
- Understanding of cultural TTP's balanced with appropriate actions at a CP/TCP/ECP
- A shoot/don't shoot video; where we would reveal the end after the community posted their response; let the group discuss over 24/48 hrs; then we post the end of the clip.
  1. Where the vehicle explodes in our faces, (if we chose not to shoot)
  2. Or where wounded innocent civilians cry for help (if we chose to shoot)
- Situational ethics issues
- CALL Handbook 06-15 on Traffic Control Point
- Amateurs talk about TTPs, professionals talk about ethnographic & anthropology
- Allow you to put your name under the author
- We need to be able to modify the vignette in the future to support training

# **Digital Storytelling Lessons Learned**

- 1. Use relevant and controversial content**
- 2. Match medium to content and learning goals**
- 3. Make response strategy options plausible and challenging**
- 4. Design reflection questions to focus thought and learning**
- 5. Use facilitation techniques to enhance pedagogical value**
  - ✓ Shape discussion on important story details**
  - ✓ Summarize learning points**
  - ✓ Probe individual comments**
  - ✓ Encourage new and related contributions**



# Applying Digital Storytelling to Developing Teams of Leaders

Stories convey information about the perspectives, culture, and expertise of team members

Storytelling helps to build interpersonal relationships and fosters team building (trust and shared narrative)

Stories illustrate the challenges/benefits of unified effort

Stories help to develop horizontal influence skills

*Denning (2005)*

# Ongoing Digital Storytelling R&D

## Purpose & Goals

**Collaborative effort with BCKS, Auteur Media, and Harvard Negotiation Project, led by CPRResearch**



**Conduct R&D related to digital storytelling that will assist BCKS in developing its narrative engineering capability**

- Identify user requirements for a “Digital Storytelling Wizard”**
- Implement requirements in an advanced prototype Wizard**

**Use digital storytelling to foster horizontal tacit knowledge sharing and the development of high-performing leader teams**

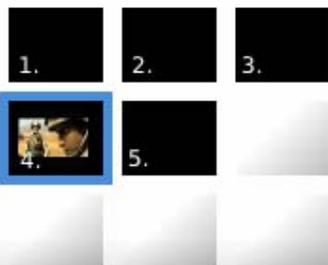
- Build a new 3D-animated video focused on interagency/civil-military negotiation**
- Develop the video with a more explicit set of learning objectives and performance criteria**

# Concept Graphic of the Storytelling Wizard

## Digital Story Creator

[New story Wizard](#)
[Save story](#)
[View story](#)
[Close Story](#)

### Slides

[Add slide](#)  
[Remove slide](#)


### Media Library

Images  
[\(click for images\)](#)

Movies  
[\(click for movies\)](#)

#### Sounds

- Pistol shots 
- Tank driving 
- Argument 
- Mess hall chatter 



Title: *Trouble at checkpoint 4, Iraq, July 6 2007*



I wasn't sure what to do at this point, but I had to make a decision quick. So I went with my gut.

Thinking about it now, I realize....

(  "Pistol shots" will play during this slide.)

Author: *Sgt. Michael Slone*

# Ongoing Digital Storytelling R&D

## Interim Findings

### - The Stories Soldiers Are Telling – Content

- General impressions/personal expressions
- Tactical or technical situations
- Critical incidents (prompted)

### - The Stories Soldiers Are Telling – Format

- Interviews/Q&A (live, transcribed, recorded)
- Lessons Learned (via email, forums, etc.)
- “Home video”
- Milblogs
- BCKS Forums

### - Wizard Design Challenges

- Recalling critical incidents, especially interpersonal ones
- Generating narrative
- Structuring stories as decision games/learning events
- Applying multimedia



# Conclusions

**Storytelling is a critical component of Soldier professional development in today's Army**

**Stories can stimulate discussion and reflection on the key points of interest to the storyteller and share actionable knowledge**

**Stories can and should take a variety of formats, including face-to-face stories, depending on the purpose and target audience**

**Stories should be flexible and able to serve multiple purposes, yet simultaneously be grounded and relevant**

**Fostering storytelling in an automated fashion must take into account the why/how/when/what of Soldiers' storytelling**

**Questions?**