

Making 'Choose Your Own Adventure'–style Tutorials with Twine: Preliminary report

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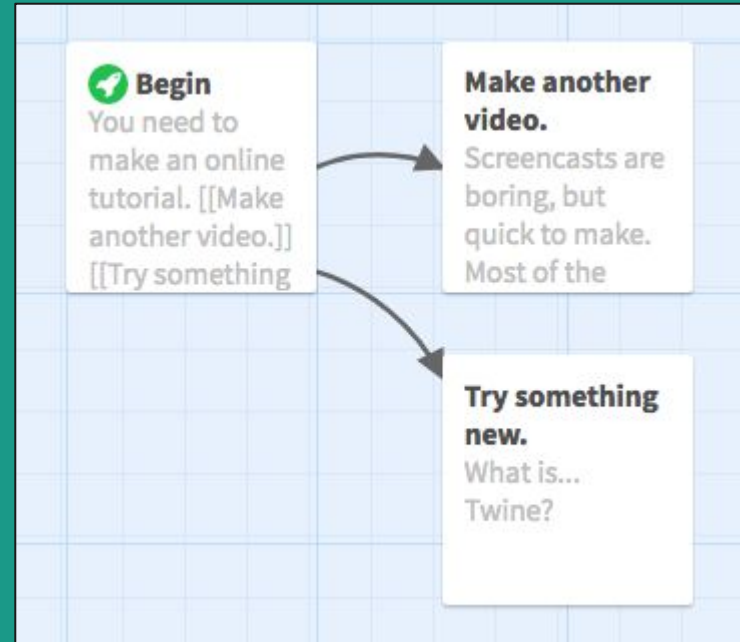
Emerging Tech & Online Learning Librarian at John Jay
College of Criminal Justice, CUNY

January 22, 2018

CUNY Games Conference 2018

CUNY Graduate Center, New York, NY

Slides online at jjay.cc/cunytwine



Where I'm coming from...

Research help



- [How to find a book in the Library](#)
- [Guide to finding books](#)
- [Requesting books from other CUNY libraries](#)
- [Help with ebooks](#)



- [Finding articles \(OneSearch\)](#)
- [Finding articles \(general\)](#)
- [Guide to finding articles](#)
- [Troubleshooting problems](#)



- [From question to keywords](#)
- [OneSearch tips](#)
- [Guide to using a database](#)
- [Searching tips](#)
- [Help for EBSCO databases, LexisNexis, and PsycINFO](#)



A screenshot of the Lloyd Sealy Library website. The header includes the library name and 'JOHN JAY COLLEGE OF CRIMINAL JUSTICE'. Below the header is a navigation menu with tabs for 'About the Library', 'Library Hours', 'Workshops', 'How to find books', 'How to find articles', 'How to search', and 'Journal list'. A search bar is located in the top right. The main content area is titled 'How to use the library: About the Library' and contains several sections: 'Welcome to the Library', 'Get Help from a Reference Librarian', 'Library locations', and 'Borrowing books, etc.'. The 'Get Help from a Reference Librarian' section includes a video player showing a librarian reading a book.

A banner for the 'Escape the Library!' game. The banner has a red background with white text. At the top, it says 'WANTED: FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS TRANSFER STUDENTS FOR:'. Below this, in large white letters, is 'ESCAPE THE LIBRARY!'. The banner features three images: a silhouette of a man in a hat, a bookshelf with a sign that says 'ESCAPE', and a group of people in military-style uniforms.

← A game!

Twine

twinery.org

Open-source software for creating **nonlinear** stories, exported in HTML



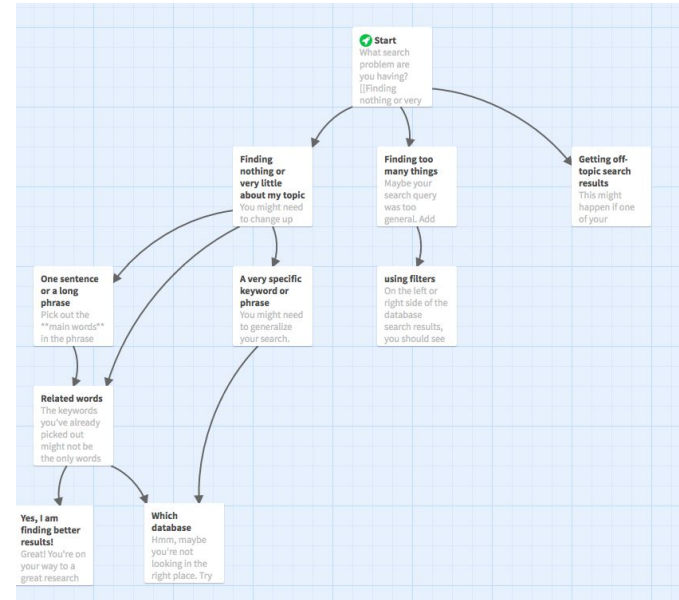
Nonlinear stories

“Choose your own adventure”

“Chooseable path”

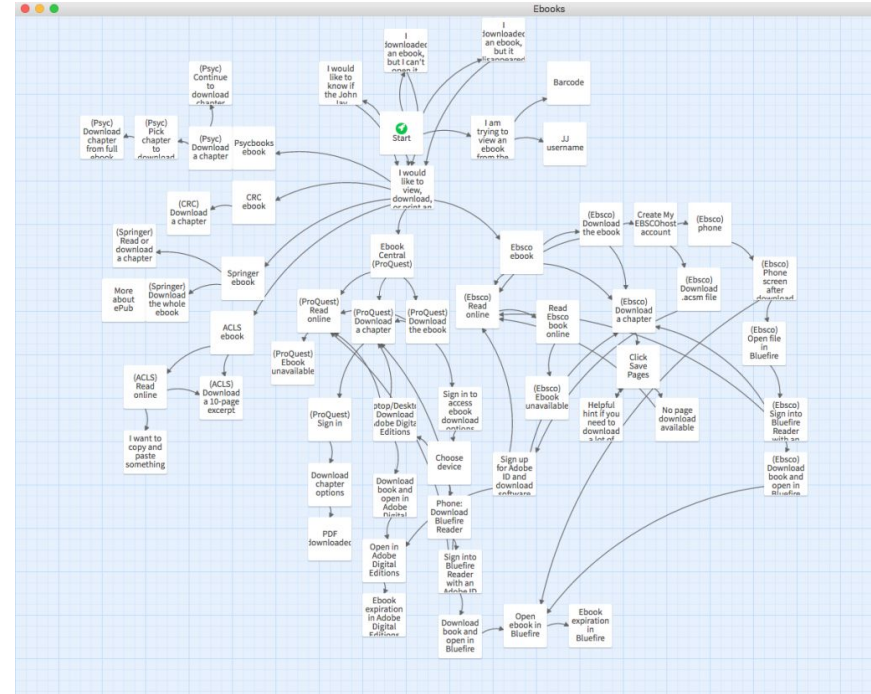
Skip, loop, reverse, traverse the story

Great Twine example: birdland.camp



Uses for Twine

- Interactive creative fiction
 - [Interactive Fiction Database](#)
- Choose-your-own-adventure game
 - [Birdland.camp](#)
- Creative assignment
 - [Bookmoss.org](#)
- Step-by-step tutorials
 - [Library example](#) from Miriam Posner
 - [Ebook example](#) from me





Try Twine yourself!

Open up **twinery.org**

Click the **Use it online** link, upper right

Click **Skip / No Thanks**

Click **+Story** on the right



Harlowe markup style basics

[[[Link to another page](#)]] ← if the link name doesn't already exist, one will be created

[[preferred link name|[Link to another page](#)]]

****bold**** or **'bold'**

italic or *//italics//*

* list

* list

some HTML is okay



Export your HTML



Click your story's title (bottom left nav bar)

Select **Publish to File**

Open the resulting .html file

Looks good in the browser? Upload to your website



Advantages of using Twine for tutorials

- Familiarizes tutorial creator with different scenarios
 - “User personas”
- User only sees what’s relevant to them
 - Avoid wall of text
- User is active agent inside tutorial
- Visual interface that generates web page
- Easy onboarding for staff training





Disadvantages of using Twine for tutorials

- May have to revisit to maintain
- Can be time-consuming
- Learning curve
 - Markup style
 - Requires uploading HTML file





Go further

Add custom CSS to change background color, fonts, etc.

Randomize some choices: `The referee reveals that the coin is (either:"heads","tails").`

Try using Sugarcube/Snowman for more features: save points, inventory, etc.



Web app vs. downloaded app?

- The web app
 - is **easiest** to start using
 - stores data *in your browser cache*, so clearing your cache would delete your story.
 - lets you download the finished HTML product with the Publish to File option
- The downloadable software
 - stores data *locally*, so **no worries about accidental deletion**
 - is otherwise exactly the same





Interested in e-lit?

Explore the Electronic Literature Organization (ELO)

Follow Dene Grigar, ELO President and champion of saving/documenting e-lit

Check out [NaNoGenMo](#) (and Darius Kazemi) in November

Thanks!

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