

StorySky

As a parent, I want my children to regularly interact with my parents and grandparents, forming a special connection and bond through their shared experiences. Millions of families like my own, however, are separated by distance, and have to use digital devices to maintain their relationships and stay connected. These devices by themselves don't automatically improve communication—in fact, use of these devices has been shown to segregate generations more than unite them, as young people more frequently seek advice from their peers and older people, though more tech savvy than before, remain in touch with others closer to their age range (Strom & Strom, 2015). COVID has only made this separation more difficult and more pronounced, and it forced us all to realize the importance of our relationships for our social, emotional, and cognitive development and well-being. Grandparents play an important role in this development for grandchildren, acting as socializing agents and transmitting important values (Noriega et al., 2016), particularly in a storytelling context. Our goal is to use the technology we have to reconnect families over distance through the telling of personal stories, providing an interactive story-time experience to rebuild those bonds and create a sort of keepsake of those fleeting memories. The practice of storytelling improves the quality of life of seniors, and gives children valuable skills in language acquisition, emotional literacy, and building relationships by being an active collaborator in this social interaction.

StorySky creates a safe environment centered on a family's social network that aims to bring together different generations who may be separated geographically, but, due to the pandemic, have increasing technological fluency. Focusing on developing communication and building relationships within a family network, our hub is centered around stories, and as the relationship grows between users, so does the story itself. Families have always been embedded in networks of relatives, neighbors, friends, and extended family, and the members of those networks have undoubtedly influenced children. Yet those influences have gone unrecognized, so by emphasizing the stories in “story constellations”, the way they are constructed and branch out just as networks do, we put them back in the forefront. In addition, we provide ways to elicit stories from loved ones using prompts or family artifacts and pictures. Because these prompts come from the family members themselves, the stories are more engaging for the listener, enlist children as actors and instigators of the stories, and mimic the reciprocal exchanges between relatives, neighbors, and family friends. Social abilities, like basic trust and empathy are practiced through exposure to regular interactions within a diverse greater social network.

Finally, there is a vast addressable market for our platform. We found that 72 million grandparents in the US spend an average of \$1,200 on entertaining and bonding with their grandchildren, which equals an attractive and untapped \$39 billion market—and if we decide to expand our platform for language learning, schools, and genealogy that market will surpass \$100 billion globally. Launching as a single revenue stream, though our product can be applied to multiple verticals, the rollout will focus on one market before expanding to others. Our freemium model is based on the fact that 98% of worldwide app revenue comes from free apps. Consumers will be able to download the app for free including all functionalities, though limited to sharing it with one family member. In doing so, we are embracing a quality user experience, which will lead to a higher conversion rate into subscription plans. Being a content driven app, we see the benefits of subscriptions, and project about 10% month over month revenue growth in the first 3 years. Moreover, we foresee strong growth in our engagement matrix, stories recorded, and interactions. We expect our customers will spend hours building bonds, creating memories, and preserving such content via a subscription. In 2021, we hope to concentrate on building our platform and raising funds mainly through non dilutive cash from competitions. We believe StorySky to be the ultimate platform for families to stay connected, create lifetime bonds, and treasure valuable memories.