

Small Screens, Big Stories: Storytelling, Seriality and Mobile Screen Culture

Call for Chapters and Online Symposium Contributions

Evolution of Story IV

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Overview

Small Screens, Big Stories: Storytelling, Seriality and Mobile Screen Culture is the fourth iteration of the Evolution of Story symposium series. This call invites chapters and online symposium contributions exploring micro-drama as an emerging mobile-first narrative form.

Micro-drama has emerged rapidly as one of the most distinctive mobile-first screen forms of the present moment. Built around short episodes, vertical viewing, accelerated narrative hooks, serialised release patterns and intense emotional storytelling, micro-drama has become a major site of popular screen culture, audience engagement and narrative experimentation.

Often associated with romance, melodrama, revenge plots, CEO narratives, fantasy wish fulfilment, family conflict and other highly recognisable tropes, micro-drama is sometimes dismissed as formulaic or commercially repetitive. Yet these conventions are also part of what makes the form significant. They reveal how stories are being compressed, intensified, structured, monetised, circulated and consumed in mobile-first environments. They also raise important questions about how story works when it is shaped by short attention cycles, platform recommendation systems, serial hooks, emotional escalation, audience data and transnational circulation.

This call invites chapters and online symposium contributions that examine micro-drama as an emerging narrative form. We are interested both in what micro-drama is now and in what it might become. Contributions may examine dominant forms such as romance and CEO dramas, but may also explore genre diversification, experimental forms, practice-led innovation, data-informed storytelling, artificial intelligence, participatory development, localisation, and future directions for micro-drama as part of the wider evolution of story.

The project sits under the banner of **Evolution of Story**, a symposium series exploring how storytelling changes across technologies, platforms, media forms and audience behaviours. The Evolution of Story project examines how story has moved beyond linear narrative, the stage and the boundaries of the screen, with attention to immersive, interactive, transmedia and experiential practices. ([The Evolution of Story](#))

Evolution of Story IV: Small Screens, Big Stories: Storytelling, Seriality and Mobile Screen Culture extends this enquiry into mobile-first, short-form, serialised screen storytelling.

Following the selection of chapter abstracts, the editor will submit a formal proposal to an international academic publisher.

Scope and themes

We welcome proposals from scholars, practitioners, industry professionals, creative researchers, postgraduate researchers and others working in relevant fields.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- micro-drama as a mobile-first narrative form;
- vertical storytelling and the grammar of the mobile screen;
- romance, melodrama, CEO dramas and dominant genre conventions;
- how to write stories for micro-drama;
- trope, repetition, pleasure and formula;
- emotional escalation, cliffhangers and serial hooks;
- short-form seriality and narrative compression;
- micro-drama and audience behaviour;
- data-informed story development;
- platform feedback loops and narrative design;
- artificial intelligence and micro-drama production;
- algorithmic recommendation and story visibility;
- participatory or audience-responsive storytelling;
- experimental and alternative micro-drama forms;
- genre diversification beyond romance and melodrama;
- comedy, thriller, horror, fantasy, suspense, science fiction, healing drama or other emerging genres;
- practice research and creative experimentation in micro-drama;
- micro-drama in China, East Asia and Southeast Asia;
- global micro-drama platforms and transnational circulation;
- localisation, translation and cultural adaptation;
- Western uptake of micro-drama;
- comparative international approaches;
- micro-drama and youth audiences;
- micro-drama as popular culture;
- micro-drama and the future of screen storytelling.

The project is especially interested in work that connects industrial, technological or platform-based developments to questions of **story, narrative form, genre, audience experience** and **creative practice**.

This is not primarily a project about platform economics, although economic and industrial contexts may be relevant where they help explain how micro-drama stories are shaped, circulated or experienced.

Contribution routes

There are two routes for contributors.

1. Edited collection chapter track

The chapter track is for contributors who wish to have their work considered for inclusion in the edited academic collection.

This is an accelerated publication development route. Contributors accepted onto the chapter track will be expected to submit a full first draft, attend an online peer review skills development workshop, participate in informal developmental peer review, revise their chapter, proceed to formal peer review, revise again, and prepare a video presentation for the online symposium.

Final chapters are expected to be approximately **6,000–8,000 words**, with **7,000 words** as the ideal target length.

We welcome a wide range of chapter formats, including:

- academic research chapters;
- critical essays;
- case studies;
- methodological essays;
- practice research chapters;
- industry or practitioner reflections;
- interviews or dialogues;
- comparative analyses;
- theoretically informed creative practice accounts.

Acceptance onto the chapter track does not guarantee final inclusion in the edited collection. Final inclusion will depend on quality, fit, originality, rigour, timely completion and successful revision through the review process.

2. Online symposium contribution track

The symposium-only track is for contributors who wish to present work at the online symposium without entering the edited collection development process. This track is open to a wide range of formats, including:

- 10–15 minute video papers;
- provocations;
- panels;
- workshops;
- roundtables;
- practice demonstrations;
- creative presentations;
- experimental formats;
- industry or practitioner reflections.

The symposium-only track will remain open until **March 2027**.

Chapter track timetable

The chapter track is designed to move quickly so that the edited collection can be substantially developed before the online symposium.

Date	Activity
Early May 2026	Call for chapters and symposium contributions released
1 June 2026	Chapter track abstract deadline
Mid-June 2026	Chapter track acceptance notifications issued
Late June / July 2026	Publisher proposal developed and submitted
1 September 2026	First full chapter drafts due
September 2026	Online peer review skills development workshop, date TBC
October 2026	Informal developmental peer review
November–December 2026	Second draft revisions
31 December 2026	Revised second drafts submitted
January–February 2027	Formal peer review
March–May 2027	Third draft revisions
May / June 2027	Video presentations prepared and submitted
June / July 2027	Online symposium
Summer 2027	Final manuscript preparation

Chapter-track contributors will be expected to attend an online peer review skills development workshop in September 2026. This workshop will introduce the review process, establish shared expectations, support contributors in giving constructive and critically engaged feedback, and clarify how authors should respond to peer review comments.

The date and time of this workshop will be confirmed.

Symposium-only timetable

The symposium-only track will remain open after the chapter track has closed.

Date	Activity
Early May 2026	Call for symposium contributions released
March 2027	Symposium-only track closes
May / June 2027	Video presentations and materials prepared
June / July 2027	Online symposium

The online symposium will bring together book-track contributors and symposium-only contributors. The aim is to create a lively, international conversation about micro-drama as an emerging story form.

Submission requirements

Please submit the following:

- **300-word abstract**
- **100-word biography**
- **Five keywords**
- **Name, affiliation and contact details for all authors**
- **Indication of preferred route:**
 - edited collection chapter track;
 - online symposium-only track;
 - or either route.

Submissions should be sent to:

roy.hanney@nottingham.edu.cn

Please use the subject line:

Evolution of Story IV: Micro-drama Submission

Key deadlines

Chapter track abstract deadline: 1 June 2026

Chapter track decisions: Mid-June 2026

First full chapter drafts due: 1 September 2026

Symposium-only track closes: March 2027

Online symposium: June / July 2027, date TBC

Working title note

The current working title is:

Small Screens, Big Stories: Storytelling, Seriality and Mobile Screen Culture

This title may be refined as the project develops, but it captures the central focus of the collection: micro-drama as a mobile-first narrative form that compresses, intensifies and reconfigures storytelling for small-screen environments. The title invites contributors to examine both the dominant forms of micro-drama as they currently exist and the wider possibilities of the medium, including new genres, experimental approaches, data-informed storytelling, participatory forms and future directions in mobile screen culture.