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The Art of Voice Acting

Julius Cho
cho5@uwindsor.ca

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My name is Julius Cho and I am a voice actor. I would like to share my work at the UWillDiscover Conference 2015 and to inspire and educate my audience on what voice acting really is.

Voice acting is a medium of storytelling where the actor must paint the scene, conveying the ambiance, the tone, and the situation, all with just their voice. The career of voice acting can be associated with the voices you hear on the radio, in commercials, in animation, digital applications, public transit systems; these are just a few examples of where you hear voice actors.

There are three primary functions of voice actors. First they communicate important information to the public in our daily lives such as cautions about road obstructions given by a GPS unit. Second, they establish a direct connection to their audience and establishes a one-on-one communication that other mediums, like theatre, cannot accomplish. The last and most important purpose is a voice actor’s power to move their listeners emotionally and engage their creativity. An example would be listening to Public Service Announcements that address certain medical issues and spreading awareness.

Our voice is a powerful creative instrument and although we associate voice acting to just commercials, cartoons, and video games, voice acting has been with us for a very long time. Only we called it a different name: storytelling.

Storytelling recalls a time when children would sit around a fire and listen to great tales of mythology through word of mouth from their elders. Back when there were no televisions or any visual aids, the storytellers would need to create the story with just their voices and gestures. While they did this, the listeners would intently use their imagination to create the world of the story along with the storyteller.

What makes voice acting amazing is that it stimulates the audience to create and imagine the story while they listen. What I’d love to show the audience is that anyone can be a storyteller. We’ve begun to neglect the power we individually have with our unique voices. We lose so much when we only communicate electronically without listening to how we speak and the beautiful subtext behind it. How we say things is just as important as what we say. What I want is to inspire the audience at the conference to consider how they use their voice and what it means to have one.
As an assistant to Elley Ray Hennessy, one of the most well known Voice Actors in North America and also a Windsor alumni, I have learned to see the beauty of voice acting and its potential “to change the vibrations of the world”. What Hennessy means is that each voice has the ability to reach out and affect the audience if we are willing to share it. Whether it is for pure entertainment or to bring up an important subject, our voices have that potential.

I would like to do a performance presentation where I will not only showcase the work I have done, but I would also love to teach and have the audience be involved as well. My performance will be ten minutes long; as I perform 18-25 characters I have meticulously created throughout my career. These voices are created by manipulating my vocal cords and giving the voices a variety of qualities. These qualities are determined by age, sex, occupation, and lifestyle. How I manipulate my voice to create them will be explained in my presentation performance as I teach the audience to replicate a few of them with me. I will have the audience join me in a chorus of voices to teach them how to celebrate their own voices and to create characters with them.

My intention is to open the possibilities for each audience member to realize how they all have a voice and a story to share. I will teach them breathing techniques, to say phrases like “I love you” and examine how these phrases affect them and their listeners, and show them a number of ways they can start to create their own voices. I will make sure they have fun, as my main goal is to peak their interest in what I do professionally and also stimulate their creativity through my performance.

I want to introduce voice acting to a broader audience because I believe this is an important medium that reconnects today's modern audience with our most organic instrument: our voices. With this introduction to voice acting, I want people to pay closer attention to how they use their voice and to celebrate what it means to speak and to vocally connect with each other. I want to see a future where everyone can celebrate having a unique voice to communicate and change the vibrations of the world for a brighter tomorrow.