

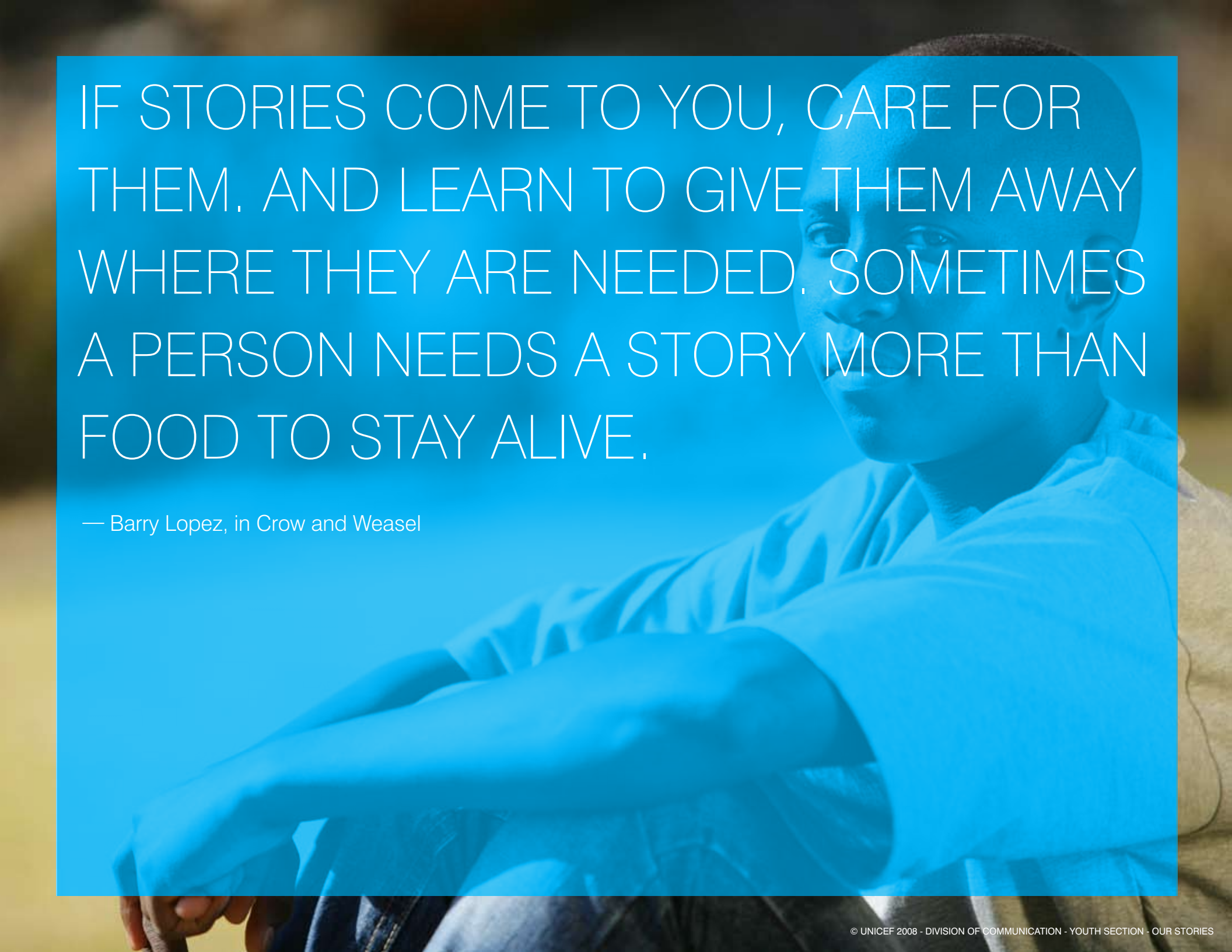
OUR STORIES

OUR STORIES ARE AT ONCE PERSONAL AND UNIVERSAL,
WITH THEIR POWER RESIDING NOT ONLY IN THEIR
WORDS, BUT IN THEIR CONTEXT

PARTNERS







IF STORIES COME TO YOU, CARE FOR
THEM. AND LEARN TO GIVE THEM AWAY
WHERE THEY ARE NEEDED. SOMETIMES
A PERSON NEEDS A STORY MORE THAN
FOOD TO STAY ALIVE.

— Barry Lopez, in *Crow and Weasel*

THE OUR STORIES PROJECT COLLECTS, PRESERVES AND SHARES YOUNG PEOPLE'S STORIES AROUND THE WORLD

**BRINGING TOGETHER THE COLLECTIVE
EFFORT OF UNICEF, GOOGLE, ONE
LAPTOP PER CHILD, AND STORYCORPS,
THE OUR STORIES PROJECT AIMS TO
LEVERAGE EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES
WHILE INTEGRATING EXISTING
ACCESSIBLE TECHNOLOGIES TO CREATE
A GLOBAL PLATFORM FOR STORYTELLING.**

OurStories.org hosts a Google Map Mashup where stories are organized by the location of their telling. Organizing stories spatially contextualizes them against a global backdrop as they record locally relevant voices. These are the voices of young people, everywhere, in all cultures, all languages, at all times. These stories matter because taken together, they enable people to communicate locally but be heard globally. They preserve for posterity a record of our voices, our experiences, our tragedies, our loves, our triumphs, our stories – for ourselves, for our children, for our children's children, and for the generations to come.

Collecting everyone's stories means that it is important that the stories are accessible to everyone, not only those with high-bandwidth internet connections. OurStories seeks to act as a platform to aggregate stories across the spectrum of media, from dynamic web-mashups to mobile phones to radio. Stories collected will be made modular and flexible, allowing them to disseminate organically and virally.

GOALS

COLLECT 5 MILLION STORIES BY 2010

ENABLE ACCESS TO EVERYONE

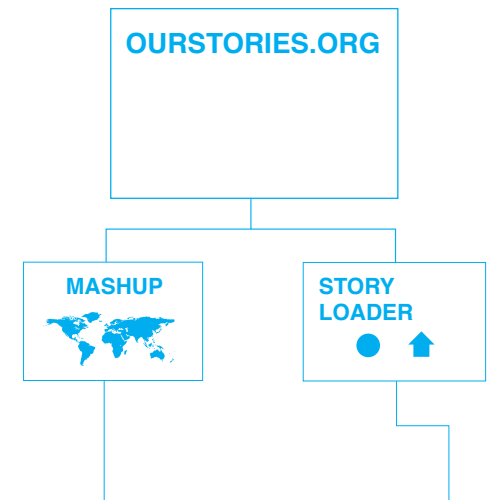
INNOVATIVELY ORGANIZE STORIES

CREATE A GLOBAL STORY PLATFORM

BASIC SYSTEM

At the core of the Our Stories Project is Ourstories.org, which hosts a Google Map Mashup organizing stories by location, and an uploading program to collect stories.

This mashup and story loader are the primary windows to the collection of stories, so their function and ease of use are of central concern.



THE MASHUP will incorporate several features:

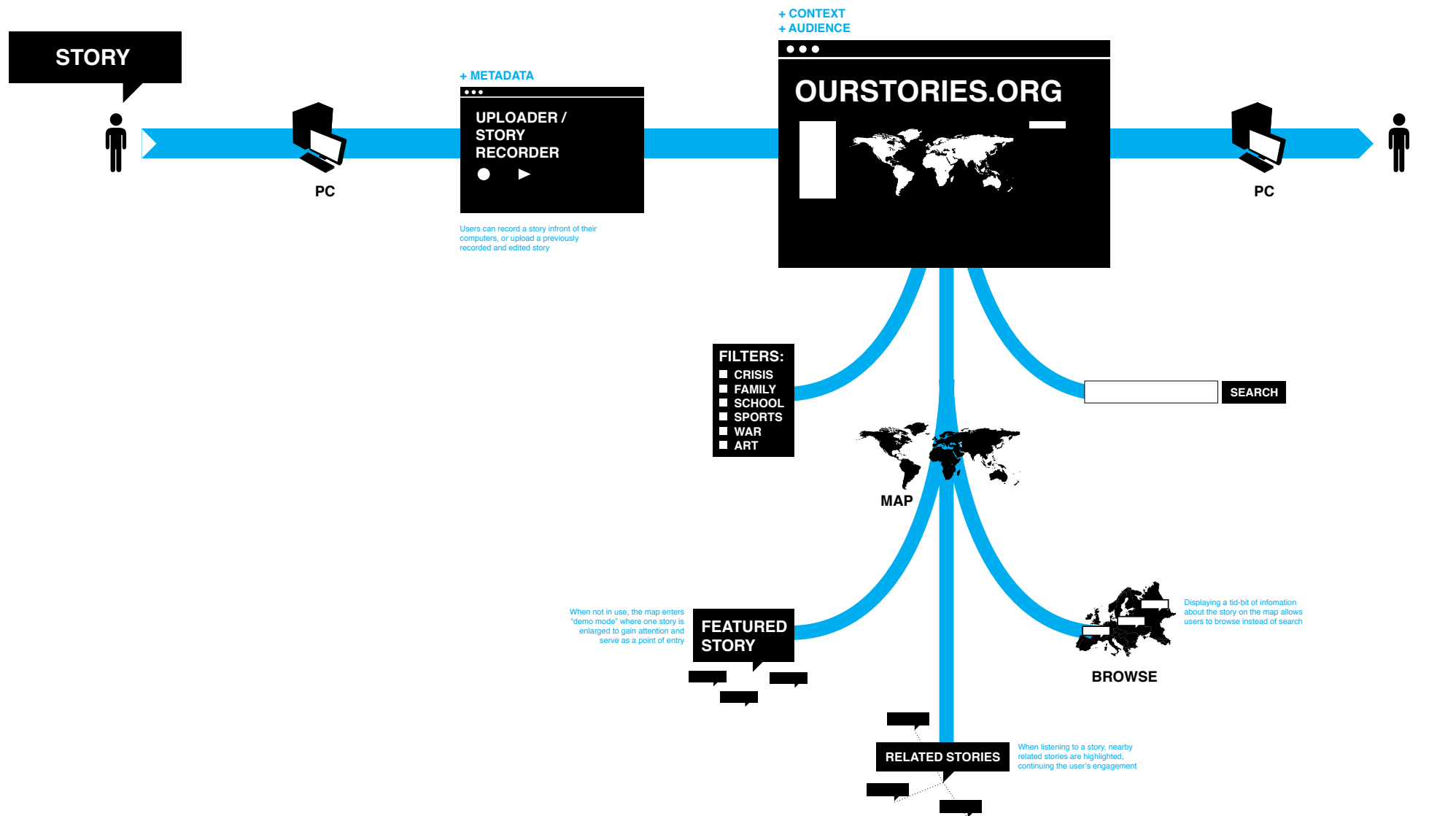
- Filters** - show and hide stories on the map based on desired criteria corresponding to story metadata.
- Related Stories** - visually draw connections between stories on the map based on shared metadata, keywords, and proximity.
- Featured Stories** - highlight certain stories on the map to create points of entry.
- Story Comments and Statistics** - record comments from listeners and count the number of times a story has been heard.
- Search** - filter by keywords



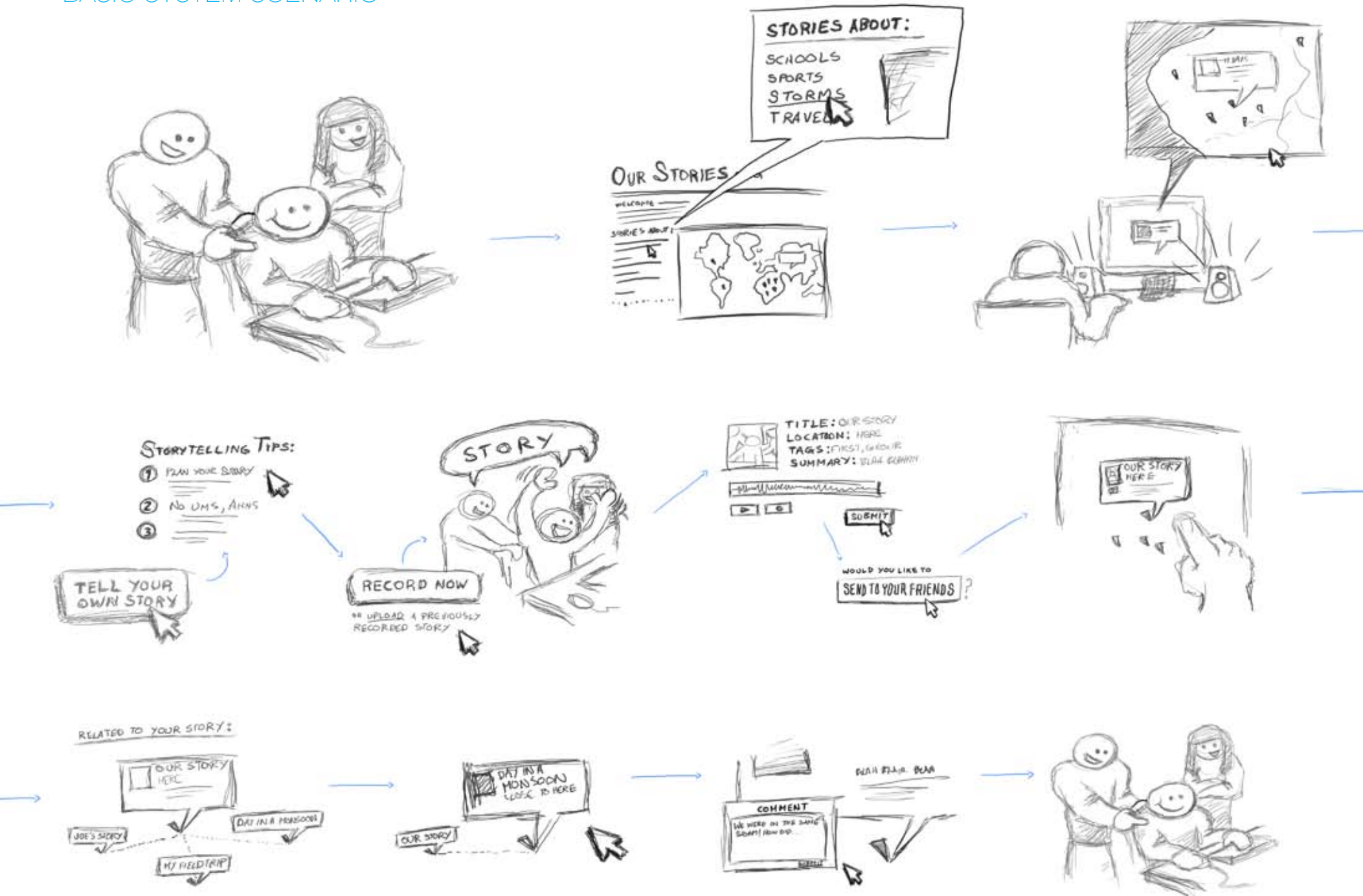
THE STORY LOADER is a web-based application that allows storytellers to record or upload a previously recorded story directly onto Ourstories.org, while attaching all relevant metadata such as title, location, and tags.

DIAGRAM

OURSTORIES BASIC SYSTEM



BASIC SYSTEM SCENARIO



ADVANCED SYSTEM

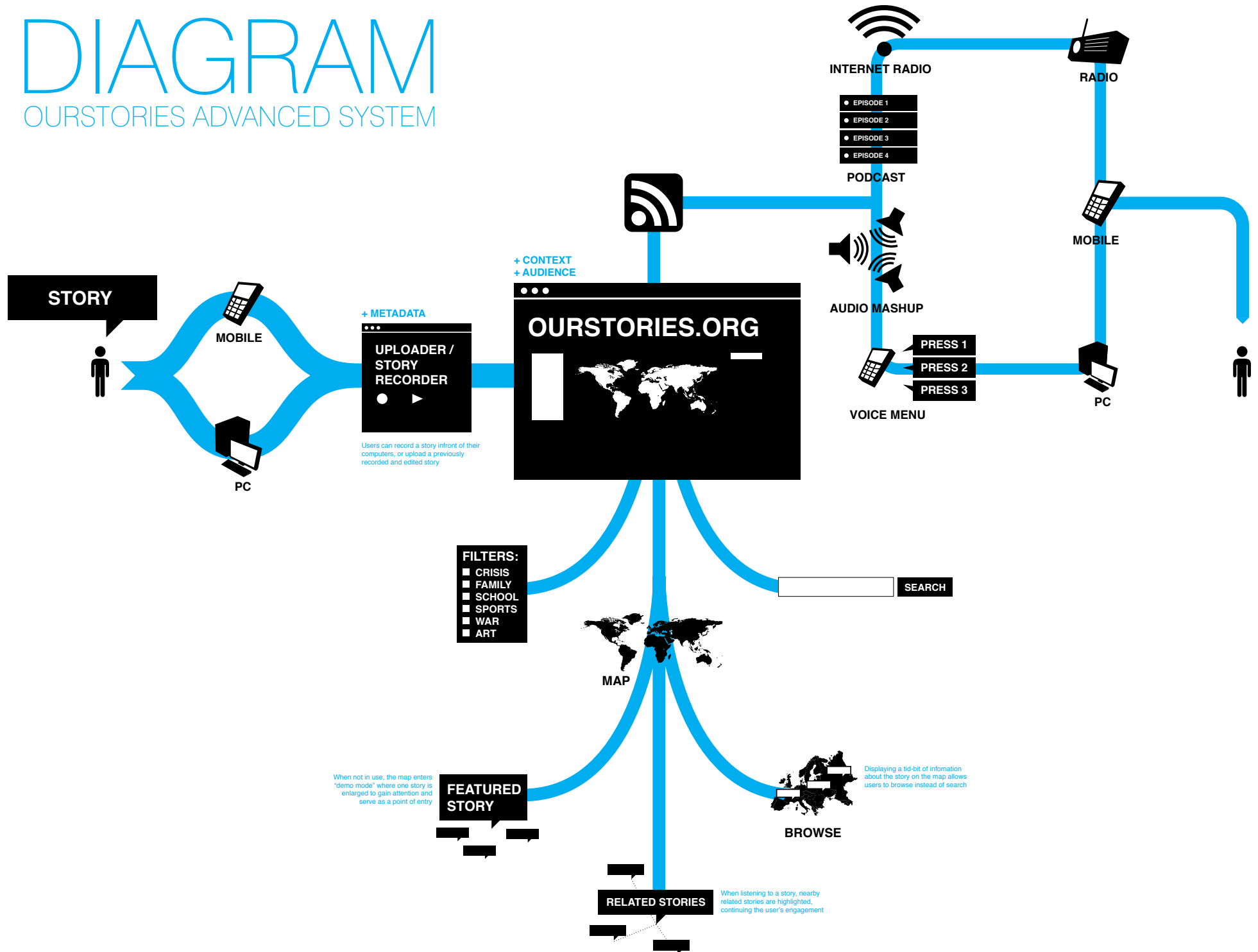
OurStories collects stories in a manner that makes them accessible to everyone: by aggregating and channeling them in forms compatible across media. We do this by packaging stories in a way that is downloadable like poscasts, and easily accessible, like radio.

Our Stories is a platform where uploading to a database is not a story's final destination. It gains a continued life by becoming modular and finding itself fed through many different forms of media – broadcast on local radio stations, used in U.N. presentations, and featured on OurStories.org. Additionally, the map mashup incorporates listener comments, related stories, even a counter documenting a story's activity.

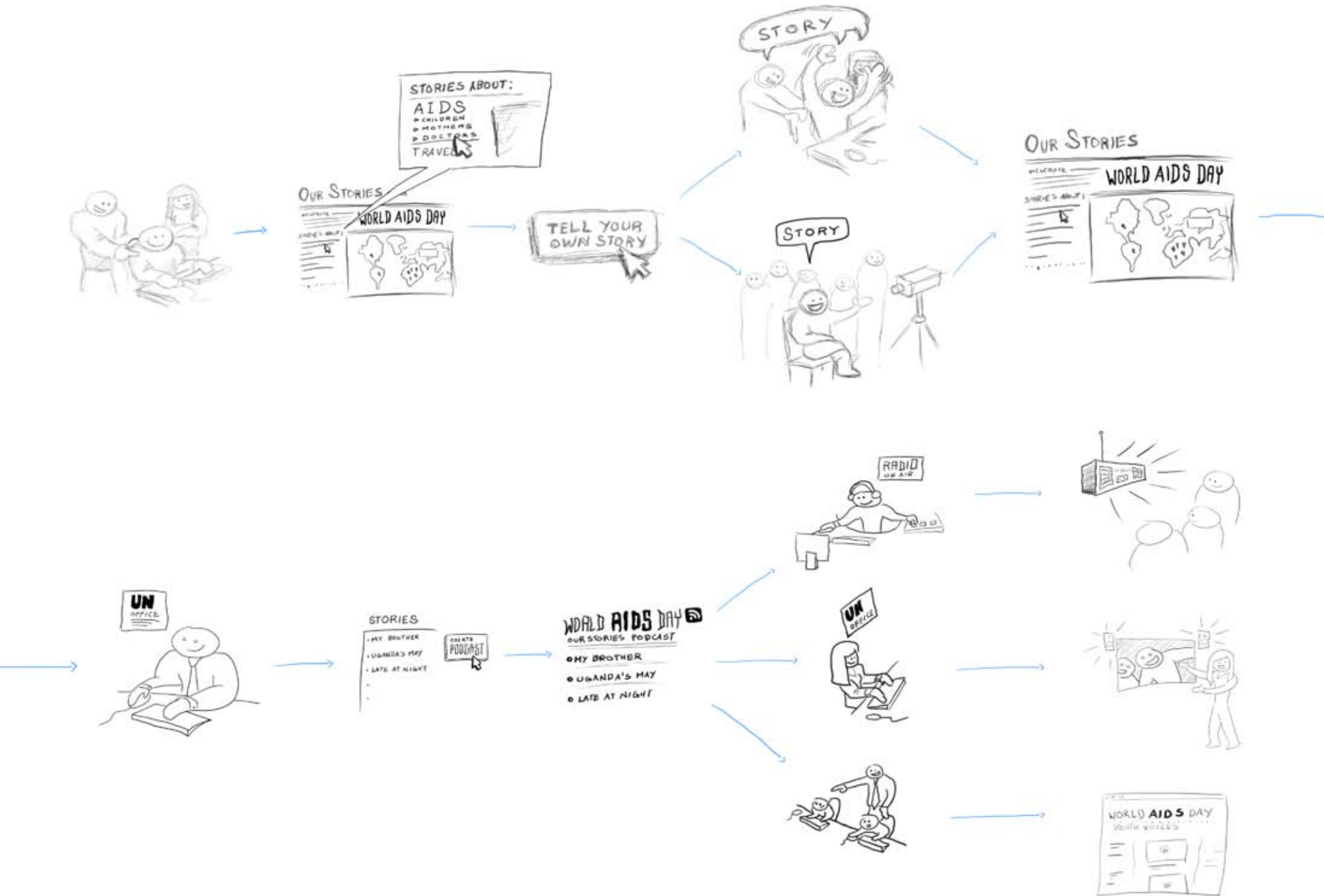


DIAGRAM

OURSTORIES ADVANCED SYSTEM



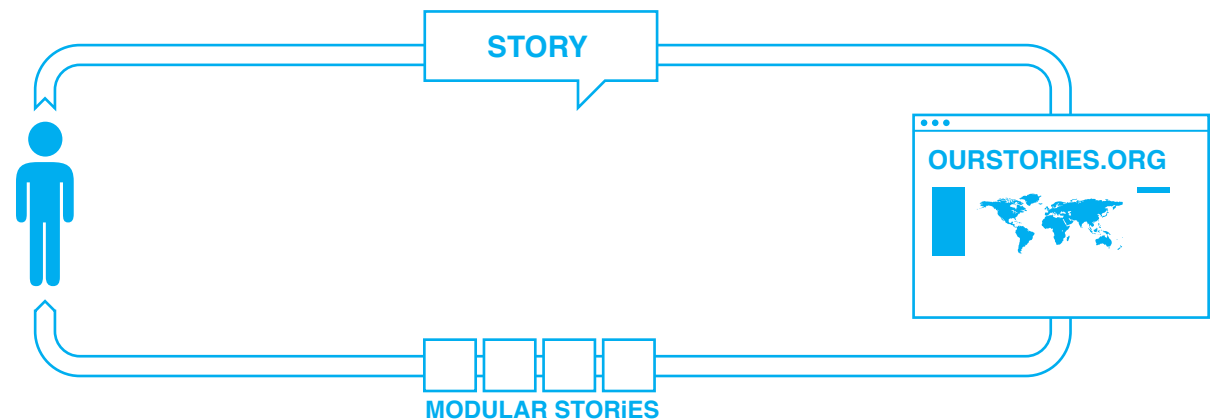
ADVANCED SYSTEM SCENARIO



BLUE SKIES SYSTEM

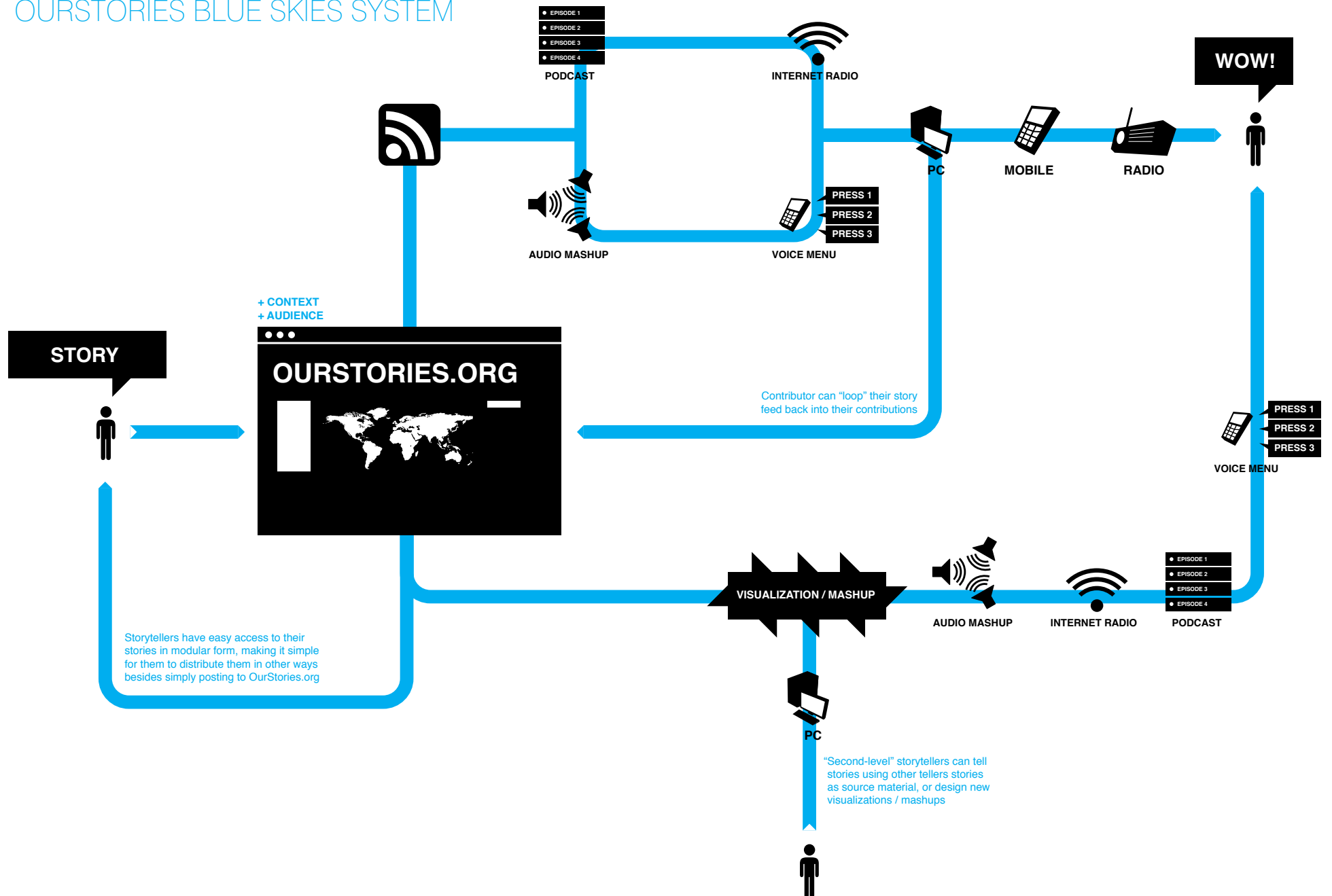
Our Stories can be the Google News of young people's stories', serving as both a supportive environment and a powerful communicator for the storytellers, a rich and congruous source of content for designers and policy makers, and a potent and appropriate service for listeners.

Flush with resources, there is no limit the innovative features that could be implemented – imagine calling in with your mobile phone and hearing a story recorded from your actual location – but the real power of Our Stories will still depend on the simplicity and ease of use of the system. Automating the modularization and syndication of stories – and their subsequent availability to their creators – is key to rewarding storytellers and the continued health of the system. Storytellers can be empowered by giving them the ability to disseminate their stories creatively, all by themselves.



DIAGRAM

OURSTORIES BLUE SKIES SYSTEM



NEXT STEPS

The next steps involve development of the Basic System components and the acquisition of additional resources to move the project forward. Development will begin in the end of June, with a working alpha-site up and functioning by the end of August.

REFERENCES

REFERENCES

Our Stories

<http://www.ourstories.org>

UNIWIKI Project

<http://www.mepemepe.com>

UNICEF

<http://www.unicef.org/>

One Laptop Per Child

<http://www.laptop.org/>

SMS to Mashup

<http://mizizi.co.ke>

Unisay

<http://www.unisay.org>

Rapid SMS

<http://rapidsms.mepemepe.com>

Sean Blaschke's Uganda Blog

<http://seanblaschke.blogspot.com>

RELATED WORK

Newsmap

<http://marumushi.com/apps/newsmap>

Wikimapia

<http://www.wikimapia.org>

Twitvision

<http://twitvision.com>

Ushahidi

<http://www.ushahidi.com/index.asp>

StoryCorps

<http://www.storycorps.net>

Trulia Real Estate

<http://www.trulia.com>

Center for Digital Storytelling

<http://www.storycenter.org>

Halsey Burgund's ROUND

<http://www.aldrichart.org/exhibitions/burgund.php>

A young girl with dark hair is looking at a laptop screen. The screen shows a video of another young girl. The background is a library or classroom with bookshelves. The entire image has a blue overlay.

www.ourstories.org

www.mepemepe.com