

# marketing destinations through first-person stories

## a narrative structure analysis



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**1** background  
theoretical foundation

**2** purposes

**3** method  
data collection  
analysis procedure

**4** analysis & findings

**5** conclusion



people create stories to **organize** their **experiences** and **communicate** those experiences to others

## narratives

people use the **self-constructed** narratives stored in their **memory** as a **basis for judgments** of other people, objects, or events

narratives enable people **interpret** the world around them in order to create **meaning** and to encourage **imagination**

## narratives

storytelling is one of the most **powerful tools** for **presenting** products, services, or brands to consumers

“narrativistic” attitude of tourists

tourists communicate their travel memories through a combination of **text**, images, videos, and/or music to share stories about tourism products and **experiences**

user-created contents | consumer-generated media

DMOs have started to incorporate the **narrative** and **interactive** nature of **first-person stories** as a feature of their **websites** (e.g., [visitPA.com](http://visitPA.com))

## ▶ Real People/Real Roadtrips

ARTS & ENTERTAINMENT

HISTORY & HERITAGE

NATURE & OUTDOORS

REGIONAL ROADTRIPS

BLOGGERS

PA PASSAGES



Try to keep up with our 6 roadtrippers as they travel across the state.

ROLLOVER THE ABOVE PHOTOS TO FIND OUT MORE

### STORIES FROM THE ROAD →

#### What a Long Strange Trip...

During the summer of 2005, lots of people got to know our PA Roadtrippers - their stories circulated far and wide, and their blogs became pretty darn famous! Maybe that's because their adventures were so compelling and (sometimes) downright odd. The first class of PA Roadtrippers were real people, not actors or advertising types, and they filed their dispatches faithfully so that their audience could experience the State of Independence through their eyes. We invite you to browse around and get to know them:



GET IN THE KNOW!

JOIN OUR EMAIL LIST ▶

FEATURED ROADTRIPS

## narratives

**blog** is a digital version of word-of-mouth, offers **thick**  
experiential aspects of a travel

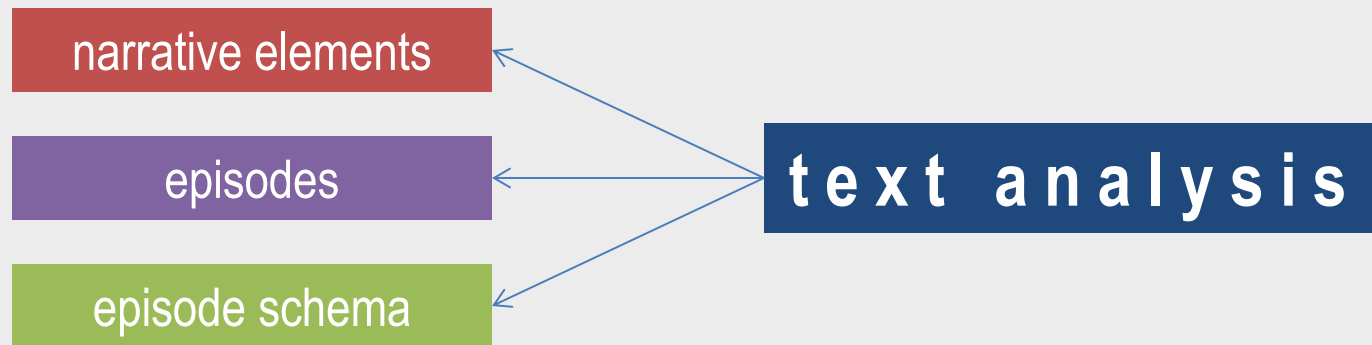


explores how personal travel narratives are constructed by **deconstructing** the stories into **meaningful sequences**



examines the merits of introducing a journal-like narrative approach to destination marketing by **abstracting** the **key marketing elements** from the stories





**interpretivist** approach, analyze the qualitative data  
based on **subjective** interpretation

## visitPA.com roadtripper blogs

history buff

culture vultures

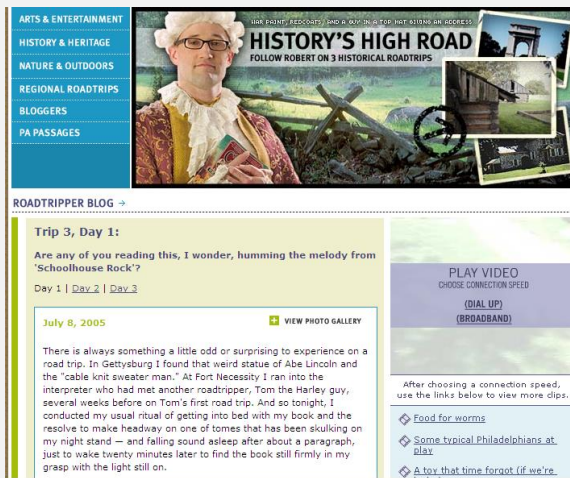
hipster  
roadtrippers

2 stories

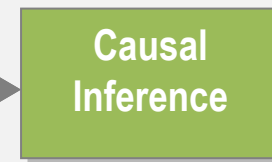
3 stories

3 stories

## Stories



## Narrative Structure



## Marketing Elements

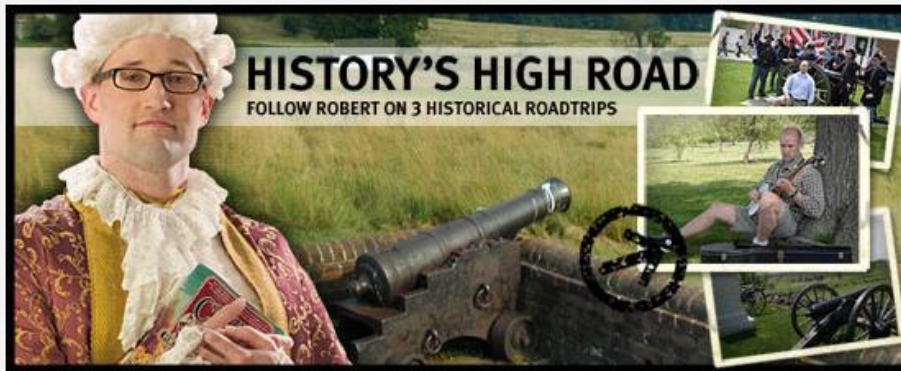


# characterization: introduction of hero & heroine

the **effectiveness** of a story relies on its ability to present structured **characters'** action sequences

characters in a story are lived identities to which people can **relate** in real life

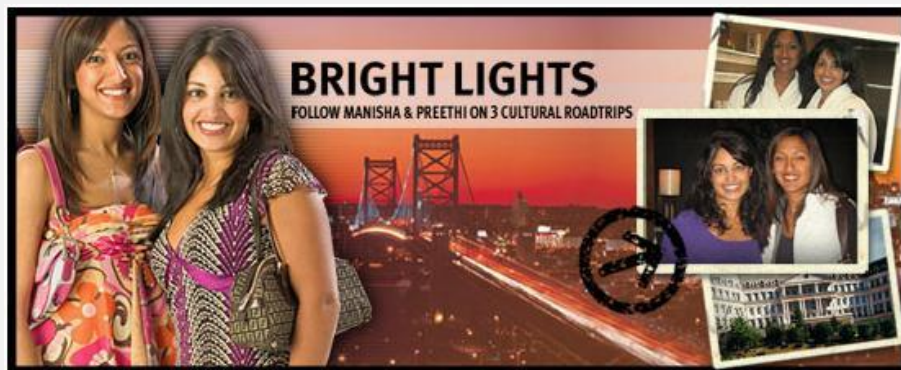
# characterization: access to lived tourist identities



## History Buff

Robert (37), Married

**Keywords:** book, city living, history, tradition, kids, parents



## Culture Vultures

Manisha (26) & Preethi (27),  
Singles

**Keywords:** second-year business students, top tier school, clueless about direction, bridal shower, dress, makeup



## Hipster Roadtrippers

Mike (29) & Tamara (30), Married

**Keywords:** Mexican (food/spot), cool spot, drinks, music, game, history walk

# key characterization: label

labeling actors with travel genres

history buff

culture vultures

hipster roadtrippers

the characterization is strongly associated with the product that they (PA tourism office) are trying to sell, i.e., different types of tourist attractions and forms of trip itineraries

# key characterization: multiple characters

leading character with supporting actors | multiple characters

the introduction of multiple characters in a story is important for audiences' sense-making process, they are able to understand the narrative plots by connecting the narrative parts from the characters' interactions with each other.

# story episodes: temporal dimensions

the narrative structure of the blogs were deconstructed based on the chronology or temporal dimension of events

temporal sequences of tourists' movement

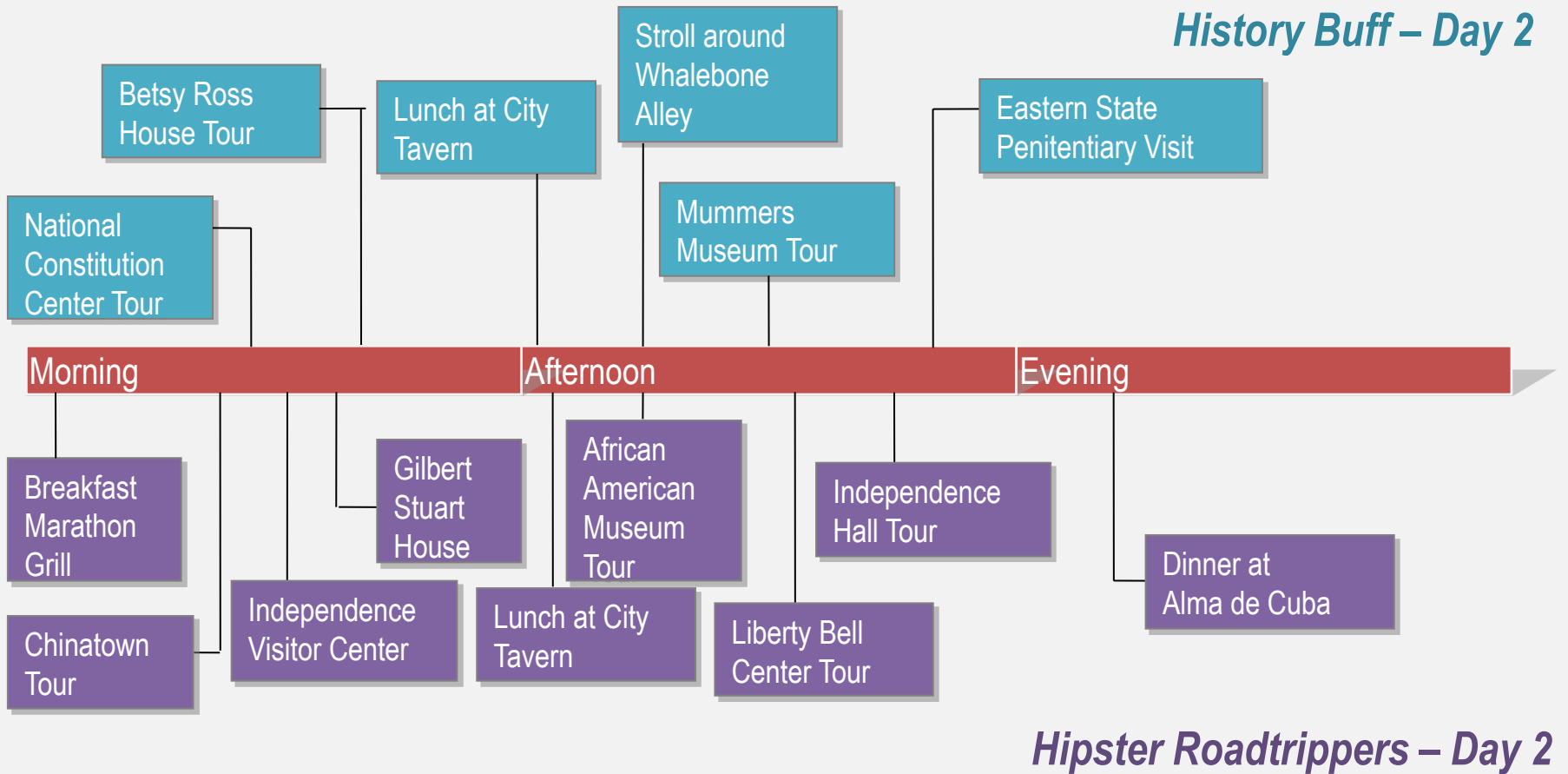


episodes

three time intervals: morning, afternoon, and evening



# story episodes: temporal dimensions



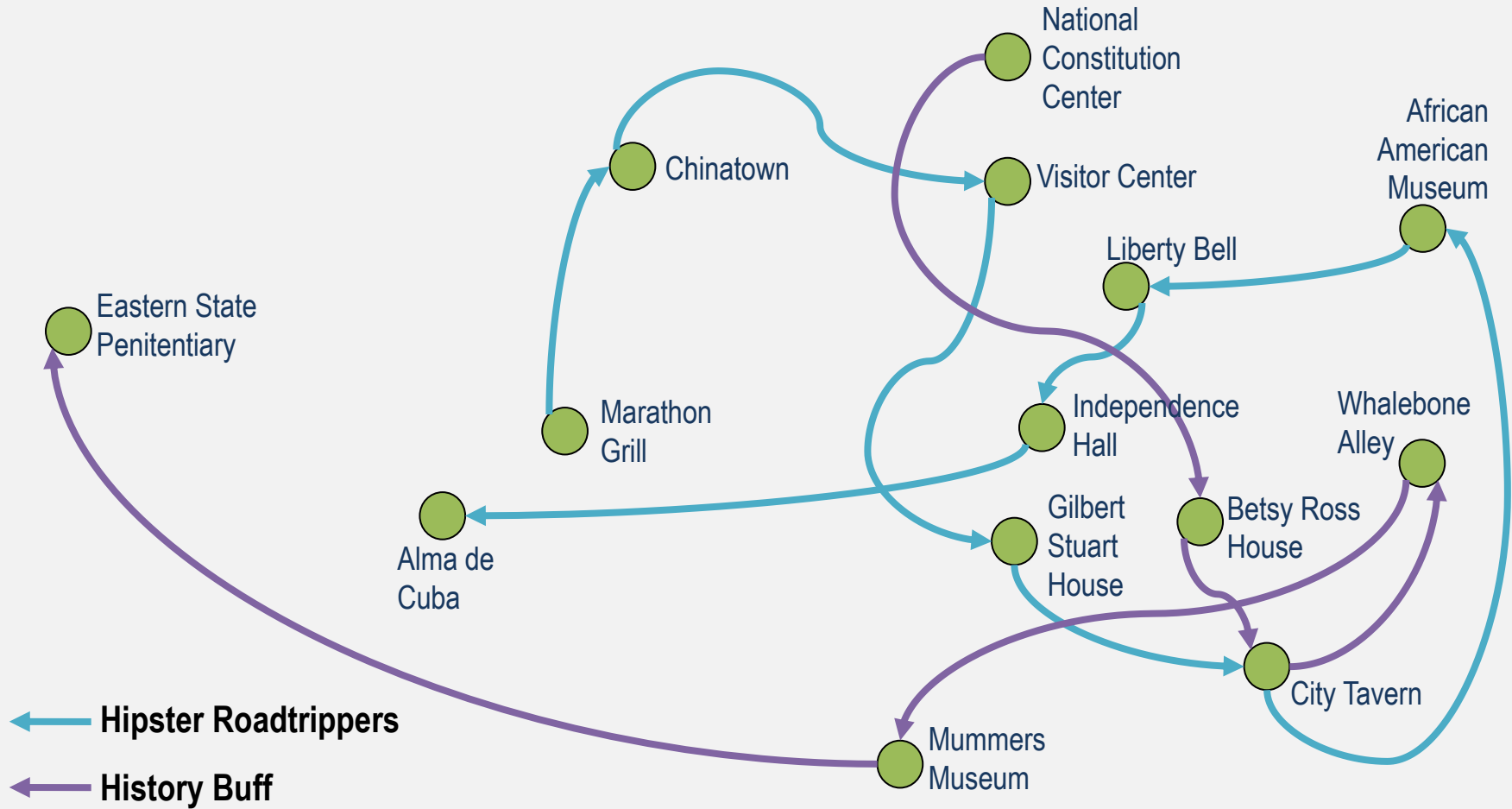
the **experiences** represented in the narratives  
can be **plotted** into **spatial movements**

**spatial sequences of tourists' movement**

the attractions and places visited by each blog  
character and their **movement patterns** signify  
the space categorization of each **travel genre**

**tourist-activated network**

# space categorization: spatial networks



# episode schema: relational organization

the narratives were deconstructed by their relational organization: **goals – actions – outcomes**

keyword search on each identified episodes

goal

## Extract 1

- 1.1 *We walked around for quite some time, but finally decided that we*
- 1.2 *wanted to do some serious shopping. So we jumped in a cab and*
- 1.3 *headed down to Rittenhouse Square. Rittenhouse Square is an*
- 1.4 *upscale section of Philly that is known for great boutiques and stores.*
- 1.5 *Manisha and I spent a couple hours walking up and down the streets,*
- 1.6 *stopping at various stores and trying on clothes. Manisha was*
- 1.7 *looking for a dress for her upcoming bridal shower so that was the*
- 1.8 *focus of our shopping adventures today. After searching for hours,*
- 1.9 *we still had not found the perfect dress.*

action

outcome

## extract positive & negative feelings

general statements about **satisfaction**, the **quality of attractions and facilities**, the level of information available to make **decisions**, and **knowledge gained**

most stories contain **positive** evaluation, a few **negative notions** were mostly results of **negative outcomes** in attempts to achieve certain **goals**, not directly related to the **quality** of the **products**

## key marketing elements

- introduction of **tourist identities** by labeling characters with different travel genres
- introduction of **tourist drama** by presenting multiple characters – provide notions of “realness” and character believability
- real** spatio-temporal movement of tourists as **product characteristics** – provide cognitive construction of hypothetical travel scenario