

# Story Publisher Adv app: what it's like and how it's different

By Robin Rempel, Translator, Media Specialist, Literacy and SE Consultant  
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## Introduction

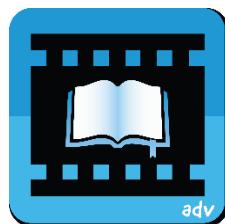
When field worker Kathryn saw the 2-minute video reviewing the Story Producer app, her comment was, “Oh, it’s like Render!” Like comparing the taste of crocodile meat to chicken and fish, when something new comes along, we all find it helpful to have a reference point to anchor our comparisons and contrasts in order to describe or learn about the new item. In this article I’d like to describe the Story Publisher app (SP app) by utilizing more familiar tools and strategies as reference points to delineate similarities and differences. The SP app was envisioned and designed by standing on the shoulders of multiple strategies that are proving useful in the ethno-linguistic world of Bible translation, Scripture engagement, evangelism and discipleship today. It was designed to leverage cutting-edge technology in order to reach the last difficult-to-reach ethnic nations with God’s message. Like all strategies, SP adv has strengths and weaknesses. It is not an end-all and be-all. But maybe you will find it to be a helpful tool for your community, ministry, mission or outreach.



Email [SPadv.info@gmail.com](mailto:SPadv.info@gmail.com) for any questions, feedback or how to get the software and templates.

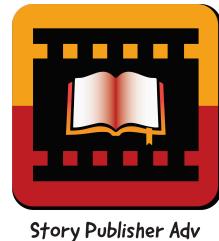
## Branding Progression

In its first five years of existence, this app has gone through several naming or branding updates. The original app, launched officially in 2018 by SIL, was called Story Producer or SP app. Its logo was two-tone blue and white with the iconic filmstrip surrounding a story book. In March 2022, Story Producer was forked by new ownership and rebranded as StoryProducerAdv (SPadv) or StoryProducer Advantage<sup>1</sup>. The logo for SPadv changed the iconic filmstrip to black and added a shadow among other small changes. In late 2022, Tyndale and



<sup>1</sup> SIL International with Cedarville University jointly owns the original Story Producer app (SP app). When SIL’s SP app team began to move in a different direction with the software and development of templates, Robin Rempel and Tyndale Bible Translators forked, copyrighted, developed and launched a separate, more **advanced** and **advantageous** version of the software calling it Story Publisher Adv or SPadv. SP app and SPadv share many basic features (and the generic SP label can be used when referring to these commonalities), but development beginning in 2022 has moved in different directions. The biggest differences are that SPadv provides access to hundreds of templates in multiple gateway languages, SPadv has more exegetical helps for dealing with key terms and names, SPadv is retaining strong accountability for accuracy checking, and SPadv has an option for doing remote accuracy checking. SPadv is constantly trying to improve ease of installation and user experience, and offering robust training options.

Robin rebranded again to signify more distinction from the original app. StoryProducerAdv became Story Publisher Adv. SPAdv or SP app still work to refer to any or all of the app versions. The Story Publisher app is now symbolized with the fire colors of gold and red. The dual colored background remained, signifying moving from one language to another. The film strip icon shows that the output of the SP app is slide-show type videos. The horizontal orientation suggests reaching out to language communities around the world. The central icon of an open Bible or a book signifies that the primary purpose for this app is to provide easy access to Bible stories. It also enables audio-visual publishing of other types of stories.



## Story Publisher brief description

At its heart, the SP app is an offline workflow management Scripture Engagement (SE), oral-audio tool and strategy, but like most SE tools, parts of it overlap with other domains such as translation, ethnoarts, literacy, linguistics, media technology and mission recruitment. And this sometimes raises concerns from domain experts. Hopefully, this article will address most of those concerns.



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It is believed that the SP app will serve as a significant tool and strategy toward reaching the last Bibleless peoples, and to pursue more local ways of working in response to global realities. The motivation behind SP is to provide Old Testament and New Testament Bible content (along with other educational materials) for those who don't have any in their own language. Another impetus for developing the Story Publisher is to significantly raise local ownership and sustainability for translation programs. Affordable accessibility to God's message for everyone drives SPAdv app development and implementation. No doubt some of these are also stimulus for your own favorite reach-the-nations strategy. Maybe you will want to add the Story Publisher to your tool box.

The Story Publisher app is a workflow management tool which guides end-users, using an Android smartphone, through the following phases to produce beautifully illustrated slideshow Bible story videos in the users' own language:

**Set-up/analytics/archives → oral translation and approval → production and distribution**



The vision and design of the Story Publisher evolved from (1) complex and intimidating (non-user-friendly) processes for producing Bible story videos; (2) much used but outdated Windows software needing a replacement; (3) the opportunity provided by the affordable, omnipresent Android smartphone groundswell; (4) needing to find more economical ways to empower national missionaries/field workers and technicians to continue local material production and distribution; (5) desiring to move in a more nationalized direction from text-to-text story translation processes usually involving an expat translation-trained exegete utilizing their equipment and expertise to produce the videos.

The Story Publisher strategy (with its various interdependent accessories) is a little bit like ... the Jesus Film and VAST ...  
Render ... shell books or Bloom ... Translation  
Studio ... and Oral Bible storytelling....

But it is also different in significant ways from all of these.

*NOTE: as we embark on this journey of comparisons and contrasts, the purpose is in no way to disparage or disrespect any of the tools and strategies that God has raised up to be profitably used in building his kingdom. Every tool has its place. Every strategy has a niche and a time to be used. The intent in utilizing comparison and contrast is to provide an explanatory springboard from something familiar to something less known. When the conversation moves from similarities to differences, this article will focus on the things that are different, the strengths and advantages that the Story Publisher brings to the table. It is beyond the focus of this article to discuss the differing strengths and advantages that the comparative tools bring to the table, although they are certainly present.*

## Comparison with VAST and Jesus Film



Photo from



<http://www.mission865.org/media/translation-process/>

**SP app: It's like the Jesus Film and VAST!** Yes, there are some similarities:

- An oral-audio translation process is utilized, involving a team of bilingual language speakers.
- A template or “shell” is utilized. The visuals, formatting and script are pre-determined. They simply need to be translated and dubbed.
- Translated materials are cross checked and edited for naturalness and clarity.

- Translated materials are consultant checked and edited for accuracy.
- Publication and distribution is done via digital formats (mp4 videos). But there are also some significant differences:
  - Heavy equipment versus light equipment. VAST and JF translation teams and technicians utilize multiple laptops with various software and hardware. The SP app utilizes a single Android smart phone only. This means that the entire process is much more locally own-able and locally sustainable.
  - Moving film versus slide-show videos. This contrast breaks down into several significant differences.
    - Talk time factor and lip/scene syncing. Typically, to translate any material from a majority gateway language into a minority language, it takes 1.5 to 2 times as long to say the content in the minority language. To deal with this factor, when dubbing live action films, the translated content either has to be truncated (some content left out), or retranslated in a less-than-natural way that is shorter. The language must accommodate to keep up with the moving visuals. Or the recording technician has to find clever ways to squeeze in narration and conversation such as during transition times or when actors are not looking at the camera. In contrast, the SP app utilizes still pictures (with optional pan and zoom movement on them). This means that however long it takes to say the translated content for that image, that image will remain in view. The visuals “stretch” to accommodate the talk time required in the dubbing process. Therefore, dubbing is a relatively simple process.
    - The technician factor. Dubbing live action films requires a highly trained and skilled technician, using special software, and usually needing to come from outside the language locale to do the job. In contrast, the SP app enables every local end-user to be an audio technician. No extra software is necessary. The process is much simpler. With still visuals, there are no moving lips to have to sync with conversation.
    - The dubbing studio and audio quality factor. Usually, when a professional audio-video technician leads the dubbing process for a video, their taste for audio quality will be more sensitive, more particular. Therefore, utilizing professional microphones and a sound proof studio is preferred. We are finding that when locals from non-westernized contexts act as their own audio technicians, they are much more tolerant with “background noise” (it’s normal and natural sounding; not “dead”). Microphones built into smartphones provide decent enough quality, even when a studio is not utilized. For dubbing or dramatizing Bible story videos, the SP app utilizes just the smartphone mic, with or without a field/village studio, as per the desire of the end-user.

- Cost! \$10,000s versus \$100s or \$10s. To translate a Bible film with oral-audio strategies typically requires a fairly large team of locals and expats to congregate and be hosted for 4 – 6 weeks in a centralized place with steady electricity to run all the computers and recording equipment. Then a few weeks later local voice actors and audio technicians must reconvene for several more weeks to dub the film, usually in a professional recording studio. Dissimilarly, to translate Bible stories with the SP app is a completely localized process. There are no big travel, accommodation or equipment expenses except for a couple trainers to come for one week into the language locale to do initial training. There is no need for heavy steady electrical power; a few small portable solar panels are sufficient. After one week of training and doing the entire process of translation, dubbing, production and distribution with 4 or 5 Bible story videos, the local production team (end-users) can continue on their own, at their own pace, in their home place.
- Production and publication time. To translate, dub and publish a Bible film requires 4 – 18 months, depending on what type of strategy is utilized. The SPadv end users can translate, dub and publish the shorter stories much more quickly. Short stories can be processed from start to finish in a day. Longer stories might take a couple days.
  - Ease of interpretation and understandability. The Bible films contain much “denser” forms of visuals. The quickly moving live action with foreign customs and unfamiliar cultural items and context can be overwhelming to people who have had little exposure to western films. The visuals could even cause a distraction from listening to the audio in their own language. In contrast, the simpler, much slower moving visuals used in the Story Publisher app are easier to digest. Yes, there is foreignness and unfamiliarity in the visuals, but there is less of it and it comes much more slowly, easier to process.

Translation consultant Andrew Sims produced about 75 illustrated Bible story videos for the two remote language communities he worked with in Indonesia. He said that people learned to understand the pictures and the mother tongue narration assisted them in learning how to “read” the pictures. As they listened to the narration they discussed the pictures and figured them out i.e. that’s the king, that’s a sword, that’s a camel, etc.
- Customization. Sometimes in the Bible films the actors act in ways that are confusing or taboo for some language communities (e.g. eating or giving food away with the left hand, Jesus walking around with a purse/bag over his shoulder which is locally interpreted as a shaman’s pouch, inappropriate eye contact between men and women). These cannot really be changed; they have to be repeatedly explained. With still picture videos, if there is a culturally confusing image, it can much more easily be changed or replaced. In addition, other things can be added to the slideshow video to localize it. For example, a photo of a

local icon, landscape, design or color to become the background of a story's title slide. Or a locally composed and recorded song can be added on to the end of the video to compliment the story.

- Content/Packaging size. It is a fairly big project to translate and dub the Jesus Film or the Genesis film. It's a big package, a single template. The slideshow Bible story videos come in much smaller packages or smaller stories e.g. Creation, Sin, Babel, Noah, Abraham, Joseph divided into four stories. The Jesus/Gospel story is divided into about 50 slideshow video story templates. Having more numerous, smaller/shorter templates means that the local community has more options for production – they can pick and choose which stories they would like, what order in which they would like to produce them, and the turnaround time from translation to publication and distribution is much shorter.

## Comparison with Render



Icon and photo from <https://www.faithcomesbyhearing.com/audio-bibles/render>

**SP app: It's like Render!** Yes, in a few ways Render and SP app are similar.

1. They are both oral-audio translation tools, encouraging non-literate language speakers to be engaged in the translation process.
2. Both apps are highly iconized for ease of use in different languages
3. Both tools are designed to be user-friendly for national end-users who are minimally trained in translation procedures.
4. Both tools seek to empower nationals to take advantage of their orality strengths and enable a local community to begin a translation project before having to do linguistic analysis and establishing an orthography (which can take years and usually requires some “outside” assistance).
5. Both tools guide the end-user through an accountable translation process of checking and cross checking for naturalness, clarity, accuracy and appropriateness. Both tools mandate accuracy experts to be engaged in the process to approve the translation drafts.

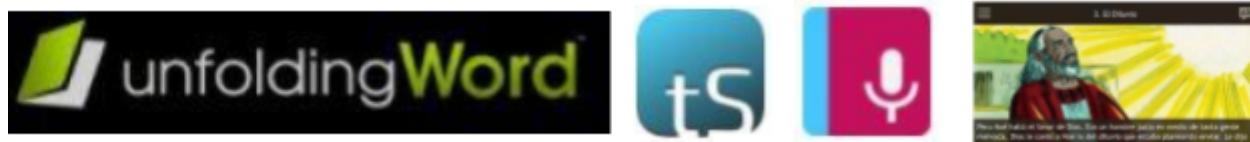
However, there are significant differences:

- Scripture vs stories. Render is a **Bible** translation tool. The Story Publisher is a Bible **story** translation tool.
- Audio only versus written and audio source material. Render relies solely on audio transmission of the source material. SP has both written/text and audio transmission of the source material.
- Exegetical resources. Render relies heavily on outside sources for exegetical help. SPadv has exegetical resources (e.g. WordLinks, unpacked story scripts) embedded within the app.
- Shorter, edited, unpacked source content. Bible stories are easier to translate than unedited/straight Scripture content. Stories can come in smaller chunks and focus on the easier-to-translate narratives. Bible translation has more complexities to deal with e.g. multiple genres, difficult literary structures, more text, deeper need for exegesis and studying mass quantities of translation helps, dealing with ambiguities, deciding if implied information needs to go in the text or in a footnote, parallel passages. With stories there is more flexibility with the text. One can “dodge” difficult terminology or take the time to explain something that is confusing. The story scripts used in the SPadv come pre-digested or “unpacked” like a front translation with ambiguities, passives, abstractions and difficult sentence structures already resolved for easier translation.
- Illustrations. Render is audio only. The SPadv app templates are audio-visual with many beautiful illustrations for every story. The visuals assist with understanding the stories.
- Operating System. Render utilizes Windows OS while the SP app operates on Android. The designers of the Story Publisher intentionally wanted to utilize an OS and device that was easily available, affordable and personally owned by the end-users.
- Devices and maintenance. Render operates on multiple tablets being synced by a central router all working at the same time with a separate tablet for each member of the translation team. Keeping multiple devices synced requires robust technology, more complex maintenance and a more stringent, dependable electrical power system. The SP app operates primarily offline on a single smartphone. Smartphones, particularly Android phones, are becoming ever more ubiquitous in the developing world and this is a foundational reason why the Android OS was chosen for this app. It is also intentional that the app runs on a single device and the one device is carried to and used by multiple people in the community in the process of translating, checking, dubbing, customizing, publishing and distributing the story video. This key factor keeps the technology simpler and more stable so that maintenance is lower and therefore much more locally own-able, locally usable, and locally sustainable. The smartphone is by far the people’s preferred device and communities the world over have figured out ways to keep their phone batteries charged, so an offline production app on a pocket device is a powerful tool which can be used literally anywhere.
- Centralized team versus local mobile team. Render’s technology, process and equipment

(multiple devices plus synchronizing router plus robust stable electrical power source) pretty much requires most of the translation team to all be present and to work at the same time in a centralized place. This challenges the mobility and localizing of Render. The Story Publisher is designed to be used in the village or wherever the end-users live at whatever time they choose. It is built to be mobile and used entirely at their convenience.

- Cost. Due to equipment requirements and centralized team gathering strategies, the cost for Render's language projects and working times run in the \$1000s and \$10,000s. The more localized SP app projects keeps expenses in the \$10s and \$100s
- Activity log. During the translation process, the consultant or accuracy checker is not always present. Sometimes translators are tempted to take shortcuts when drafting or when doing community checks. The Story Publisher provides to the consultant a list of all the listening and learning, recording, drafting, playbacks, community checking and comments along with the dates and times of these activities that the translator does for each slide. These logs are available to the trainer or accuracy checker in the consultant check phase, whether local or remote. It is information that is gathered in the background while the end-user translates, and unbeknownst to the translators. Thus, when a story comes to the consultant for an accuracy check, the consultant can read these logs and get a window into the history of activities that the translators and community were engaged in during the translation process. This provides accountability and a good opportunity for the consultant to give additional training to the translators in healthy procedures for translation should that be necessary. [Render requires the translators to make at least two drafts or a section before being able to move to the next section. The thought behind this is that a second draft attempt will likely be better than the first, and translators should take their time. But if a translator is impatient, they can easily hack this requirement by recording a very short second "draft" (without saying anything) and move to the next section.]
- Navigation. Render has a fairly stiff, forward-only navigation system. For example, once a translator has drafted verses 1-3 and moved on to drafting verses 4-5, he cannot easily go back to verses 1-3. The SP app has a very intuitive and fluid grid-type navigation in which the user can move forward or backward in a story (left and right swiping) and can easily move between translation phases on the same slide by swiping up and down i.e. from the Accuracy Check phase on slide #4, the user can swipe up or tap to the Translate phase to re-draft the script of slide #4 and then swipe down or tap back to the Accuracy Check phase to pick up where they left off. Also, thoughtfully, in the SP app, when a user has swiped through all the slides of a story, one more swipe will put them back at the beginning of the story.

## Comparison with Translation Studio



Icon images from <https://unfoldingword.org/ts/>

**SPadv: It's like TranslationStudio (tS), TranslationRecorder (tR) and UnfoldingWord apps** developed by unfoldingWord and Door 43 to translate Scripture and Open Bible stories! Again, there are a few similarities, but significant differences. These Unfolding Word apps and the Story Publisher app are all intentionally seeking to reach the nations more quickly and with better accessibility, mobility and greater local ownership via Android OS. Costs for use with both of these strategies are quite minimal.

However, there are several significant differences:

- Text versus oral-audio translation. Translation Studio is a text-to-text translation process with audio added later as an option using Translation Recorder, a separate app. SP app employs an oral-audio translation process for its stories. Text in the source language is also available for reference. Receptor language text can be added as an option to the approved audio draft.
- Training and accountability. To download and use Translation Studio, it is somewhat assumed that end-users/translators need no training and the local church will provide all the necessary exegetical and language accuracy checking for the translation drafts. In contrast, although, the SP app is available for public download, it is designed to be introduced, via side-loading (or downloading) with GBs of templates via micro SD cards (or large internal storage), to a language community in the context of at least one week of training and with committed connection to either a local or a remote accuracy checker trained in principles of translation and Biblical exegesis. Along with local and community / church reviews, the accuracy checker must sign off on the translated story drafts before the production phases are unlocked and the localized stories can be published.
- Publication format and distribution options. The Open Bible stories from Door 43 are published in a manual swiping format via UnfoldingWord app – illustrations + text + audio (optional), downloaded from the internet. In contrast, the published format exported from the SP app are mp4 and 3gp video files (slideshow video) which can be shared immediately from phone to phone via Bluetooth, SHAREit, SD card swapping, or via multiple on-line options.

- Story content. Open Bible Stories via Door 43 and UnfoldingWord app are more condensed or summarized than are the story templates available via the Story Publisher. The SPAdv stories utilize more illustrations and include more story details. The SP story scripts in the major gateway languages include translation helps for key terms and potentially difficult foreign concepts. These story scripts are written like a universal front translation in order to be more easily translated with fewer translation issues.

## Comparison with BLOOM and Shellbooks



...A library in every language!



image from <http://bloomlibrary.org/landing>



**SPAdv: It's like Bloom and shellbooks!** Yes, partially. The primary commonalities are:

- They all utilize mostly Creative Commons templates to enable fast, easy and quality production of language materials.
- They all seek to build local capacity to quickly develop a library of materials in languages that have never or only recently been written.

The biggest differences are:

- Print book format versus digital video. Bloom was originally designed to make printed books; a simpler way to work with shell books than using Word, Publisher or InDesign. SP app is designed to produce colorful digital materials (audio or videos with or without text, etc.), not printed materials. Bloom is becoming more versatile and will soon be able to produce a broader array of audio-visual materials<sup>2</sup>.
- Mobility. Bloom's OS is HTML5 and designed for use on a computer or tablet. It can be utilized online via a browser or the software and shells can be downloaded for offline production. It requires a fair amount of screen real estate. The SPAdv is designed for use on Android phones, primarily off-line. Typically, Bloom is used where there is a steady

<sup>2</sup> It is planned that in 2018 Bloom will have feature capabilities developed to create slideshow type stories, complete with describing pan and zoom Ken Burns effects, attaching music or sound effects to images, along with recording audio narration for each image. SP app and Bloom will utilize HTML5 to communicate together. Bloom developers also plan to build the capacity within Bloom to export ePUB type "movies".

robust power source in a centralized place. SP is designed for local use on the device, right where the end-user lives or wherever they go.

- Accountable, guided translation process. Bloom is not a translation program. Any translation of materials has to be done apart from, outside of or prior to using Bloom as a publisher. The Story Publisher Adv app, before it is a publisher, guides the end-user in an accountable text and oral-audio translation process. Bloom provides no accountability for the content that it enables to be published. The SPAdv app requires that an accuracy checker sign off on the translated content of any story before the publishing phases are unlocked and available to the user.

As Bloom becomes more versatile with audio-visual tools (e.g. defining pan and zoom on images, attaching sound effects or music to images, audio-izing story narration), it is taking the place of the archaic Windows program PhotoStory3 which has been heavily relied upon to create story templates for the Story Publisher. Bloom and its accessories (Bloom Library, Bloom Reader) may be helpful for the StoryPublisher as its template creator, perhaps as a place to archive publications, and also as a distribution point or organizer<sup>3</sup>.

## Comparison with Oral Bible Storying



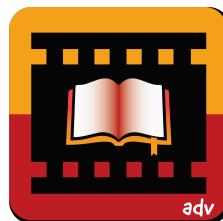
**Share the Story**

@Share\_the\_Story

Image from [https://twitter.com/Share\\_the\\_Story/](https://twitter.com/Share_the_Story/)



image from <https://orality.net/content/oral-bible-storytelling/>



**SPadv: It's like Oral Bible Storying!** Yes, there are a number of similarities between the Story Publisher app package and Chronological or Oral Bible Storying. Primarily, and specifically:

- the content is all about Bible stories, more or less summarized or condensed from Scripture.
- They emphasize orality – oral translation processes, oral means of communication for distribution of the stories ... to capitalize on the strengths of predominantly oral societies.
- They strive for and focus on high local ownership and sustainability. These strategies utilize means of communication that are common everyday occurrences in oral societies (i.e. people talking and using cell phones).

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<sup>3</sup> These capabilities and collaborations are under development in 2018.

- They all utilize accountable translation procedures in the process of localizing the stories. Naturalness, clarity and accuracy checks by reviewers and consultants are a mandatory part of the process.
- In the world of Bible translation language programs, oral storying and passing along Bible stories in the language is a strategy that can be beneficially implemented pre-, during, and post- formal linguistic and Bible translation activities. “Progressive engagement” is a strategy being utilized more and more by Language Program Coordinators around the world to empower local language communities who desire the Scriptures in their own language to get a start on the long process by starting with helpful activities that they can do to show their local support and commitment to Bible translation. For example, these helpful Progressive Engagement activities might include:
  - Hosting an Ethno-arts music composition production workshop and contest
  - Helping a language survey team to come and analyze the dialects and attitudes in the language area.
  - Hosting an Alphabet Development Workshop in their locale.
  - Begin oral translation, telling and/or distribution of Bible stories in their own community.

These numerous commonalities aside, there are also some significant differences between Oral Bible Storying and the StoryPublisher (SPadv) strategy. These include the following:

- Cost and sustainable impact with multiple centralized training workshops versus one initial localized training. Oral storying typically requires an outsider to train and supervise local people to learn, craft, translate and record each story, one at a time. In a three-week workshop, perhaps 5 or 6 stories can be prepared in the local language. The local storytellers return to their home area to tell and distribute these stories they have prepared. When the story-tellers want to learn more stories, they need to attend another storying workshop. Often, oral story trainers will organize a centralized training venue and invite people from multiple languages to come and prepare stories. Of course, these workshops are costly to conduct. In contrast to multiple training workshops, the Story Publisher strategy employs a single initial training workshop – conducted in the local area, hosted by the people receiving the training – and once the local people learn the process of translating and producing the Bible stories, they can, with the help of the smartphone technology (SPadv), go on to prepare as many stories as they have templates for. This can be done on their own time. They do not need to attend another workshop to learn more stories. In this way the translation, production and distribution of Bible stories is even more locally sustainable, and can be done at comparatively very little cost.
- Distribution. Oral storying relies primarily on individual people to distribute the stories. This is good and natural. The SP app, though relying on people to tell and distribute the

stories, is also assisted by technology to hasten, broaden and multiply the distribution process (for example, to diaspora).

- Illustrations. Sometimes Oral Storytellers utilize images in various formats (paper, digital, drama) to help them learn or to help them tell and illustrate their stories. The SPadv templates are set up with many images to help tell the stories. It is not mandatory that they be utilized, but they are available (by default) if desired. Default illustrations in SPadv can be swapped out for the user's preferred images or photos.
- Contextualization. Some Oral Storying strategies choose the stories they want to tell based on analysis of what they think their culture needs to hear, perhaps even starting with a cultural theme or issue to hook the listener into the Bible story the teller wants to relate. And typically, orally told stories are concluded by engaging the audience with questions and discussion about the story, its meaning and applications. The StroyPublisher, publishing a rigid, digital video form of the story, focuses more on the story proper. However, there are ways that the SPadv encourages contextualization:
  - SPadv app translators/users are free to make the title slide of the story as captivating as they can create, perhaps utilizing questions, open-ended introductions of a cultural theme or applying an engaging image to be the backdrop of the title slide.
  - At the end of a story, the SP encourages and enables the end-users to compose and record a song (audio) that is added on after the Bible story is told. This can be accompanied by text or a photo of the singers or of anything the story producers think is appropriate i.e. perhaps a dramatic pose regarding a cultural issue which the story addresses.
  - Any of the images that come in the SPadv templates can be replaced with photos taken by the user or replaced with other images inserted by the user.
  - As story publishers share the Bible story videos, this can lead to engaging viewers in discussions, questions and answers. They can be utilized in group contexts, at church, home devotions, Sunday school, etc.

## Comparison with SAB



Image from <https://software.sil.org/scriptureappbuilder/>

**SP app: Is it like Scripture app Reader!** Actually, no, the Story Publisher app is not like Scripture App Builder (SAB) or Scripture App Reader (SAR). SAB is a computer program that enables the operator to build nice Scripture viewing apps with *already published Scripture*. The SP does not work with already published Scripture (although already published Scripture, if available, should certainly be a resource!). Rather, it works with the user, from a smartphone, to translate, dub, produce and export Scripture stories in video form. Story Publisher is a story translation and video publishing app; it is an android workflow management tool that builds videos.

*NOTE: The SAB acronym was considered when the shortcut acronym for the Story Producer app was being determined. The SPA acronym was purposefully rejected because it looked too much like SAB (i.e. each having three letters, and two letters being the same); we did not want the tools to be confused. SPApp or SPapp shortcuts were also rejected [because the one-syllable word typically pronounced from these abbreviations sounded too much like a medical procedure]. Therefore, SP app, with a space and a 3-syllable pronunciation, is the official truncated way to refer to the original basic Story Producer app. Story Publisher Advance can be abbreviated as SPadv or SP app.*

## Conclusion

Do you want to help people who want to help themselves? Are you a remote or minority language speaker who would like to easily and inexpensively produce Bible story materials in your own language? Have you been praying for a vision for how to reach out to diaspora or remote “forgotten” peoples with God’s story (from Creation to the Cross to the Church) in their own language? Are you looking for a very low cost, ongoing sustainable way to help the unreached with accurately translated visual Bible stories? Do you want to train Bibleless peoples (those without a whole Bible in their language) to easily and quickly, orally and with accountability build and distribute a digital library of Bible story videos? Do you know of people who struggle with orthography difficulties, multiple dialects and high illiteracy who would still like to hear and know about the God of the Bible? Do you appreciate principles such as: publish early and publish often, translate with accountability, involve the community, go local! work economically, utilize the arts, train faithful people who can train others, and start with sustainability and accessibility in mind? Are you a mission recruiter who would like to connect Western churches with remote people groups in significant short and long term ways for Kingdom purposes? If you answer “yes” to these questions, the Story Publisher app might be a helpful tool for you.



Go to [StoryPublisher.website](http://StoryPublisher.website) for further information and access to Story Publisher assets. Story Publisher Adv or SPadv is also available on the Play Store. Any further questions or feedback can be directed to [SPapp.training@gmail.com](mailto:SPapp.training@gmail.com).

## Answering a few other questions

**What about backing up technology, syncing data and archiving?** The vision for the Story Publisher Adv is to keep the technology as simple as possible for the sake of easy maintenance and uncomplicated use by the target audience. Also, to make the technology available offline as much as possible so that it is affordable and fitting for the target end-users who typically do not have access to steady internet. The APK and templates are stored in several central locations (e.g. google drive via the website; an online server dedicated to SPadv and ROCC4SPadv, local drives and SD cards) for trainers and users to easily download or sideload. When a trainer introduces and shares the app and templates with a local community via SD cards, there may be only 2 or 3 copies of the technology available to the community. If a locally owned phone with the SP app on it is lost, disabled or destroyed, the only way to recover the app and untranslated templates is to get another phone/device and reinstall the app with a loaded SD card. These could be copied from another loaded SD card in the community, or the end-user would need to contact the trainer to get another copy.

Although it does not appear to be exceedingly necessary to back-up or archive all the audio draft files, the community comments and the individual dramatization files that go into producing a new language video, once an mp4 or 3gp video is produced with the SPadv, the producer is encouraged to share the video around the community for “consumer backup”. Story video publishers are encouraged to regularly back up the Videos folder that is found in their SP Workspace folder on their Android device. This can be done easily via the SPadv’s main menu Copy/Share Video Files feature. Also, as of Aug ‘23 and v 2.11 for SPadv, there is a Translation Data Backup feature available from the app’s main menu.

**What about analytics?** Some amount of analytics are desired so as to keep track of the number of end-users, production of materials, and quality of end products. These type of analytics are useful to make improvements in the technology or systems or training, and to provide statistics to keep funders satisfied and to keep management satisfied that it is worth giving time and effort to keep up the technology. The Registration phase requested at the beginning of the SP app is designed to provide information about all end-users and to provide contacts for who receives this information. This also guides where all language products (videos) can be archived. To get an evaluation of the quality of the translation of stories, one would need to communicate with the accuracy checker consultants whose contacts are also included in the Registration information.

**What about accuracy, accountability and consultant checking?** There are four ways in which the SPadv provides accountability to minimally trained language translators for accuracy in translating stories. #1, #2 and #4 are proactive techniques designed to help story translators improve their skills. Techniques #1 and #3 provide accountability by control or regulation.

1. Initial access and installation is controlled. The app and story templates are not publicly accessible; they are designed to be introduced in the context of a week-long training

workshop by a trainer to a language community, including formal connection to an accuracy consultant checker.

2. Scripts are easy and helpful. The template scripts are “unpacked” like a front translation with built-in translation helps and wording options in the written source script. The scripts avoid difficult lexical and complicated grammatical issues.
3. Accuracy checker approval is required. The process for translating the Bible stories within the app includes both a community review phase (for naturalness and clarity) and a consultant check phase for accuracy. Each slide in the consultant check phase needs to be checked/ticked in order to bring up a password window. When the accuracy checker submits the required password, then the dramatization and production phases for the story are unlocked for the end-user. The trainer and accuracy checkers are entrusted to keep the password secret or protected from the community story translators. The password is hard-coded into the app so that if a local accuracy checker forgets the password, quick contact via text with the trainer can provide a reminder.
4. Translation activity logs are available in the consultant check phase. Logs recording all the activities from the Learn, Drafting and Community phases are available for each slide in the Consultant phase. The consultant or accuracy checker can review these logs to give him a picture of the history of the work done and time spent by the story translators. If, for example, the Learn or Community Check phase was skipped, the logs will show evidence of this. The Consultant can utilize this information to further train and encourage the story translators to work their way through the entire process in order to get better quality translations. Slide-by-slide logs record time, date and color-coded order of each activity in each phase (e.g. listening, recording, comments).

**What if there is no local on-site accuracy checker/consultant?** In the Registration phase, under the Consultant information tab, there is an option to choose whether the consultant is local or remote. If there is no local on-site person to provide accuracy checking and approval of story translations, then the Trainer will connect the language team to a remote consultant. The Remote Consultant Phase interface and the process for checking a story remotely<sup>4</sup> is quite different from the simpler local consultant checking process. Local accuracy checking is done on-site via the device with the SP app, offline. Remote accuracy checking requires online sending and receiving of audio and text files and chatting [instant messaging] between the language story translation team and the remote consultant. The language team works from the SP app on their phone while the remote consultant works from an intermittently synced web app called the ROCC (**Remote Oral Consultant Checker**). The ROCC web app is accessed by the remote consultant from any device via a web

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<sup>4</sup> Set up to do remote consultant checking in the SPadv and with the accompanying remote consultant checking web app and mediating server is currently under construction and is ready for field testing as of September, 2022. The ROCC web app is accessed via a browser (the link is available from the StoryPublisher.website) and it is required that the local translation team be running StoryPublisherAdv (SPadv) ver. 2 from the Play Store.

browser. The ROCC login link is available via the [StoryPublisher.website](#). Features of the remote consultant phase which are different from the local consultant check phase include the following:

- a) Logs for each slide are sent to the remote consultant.
- b) Audio back translations recorded for each slide of the story are sent to the remote consultant,
- c) Optional text back translations are typed for any slide of the story and sent to the remote consultant.
- d) An audio back translation is recorded for the entire story and sent to the remote consultant.
- e) Slide-by-slide [instant] messaging (texting) between the remote consultant and the on-site story translation team is enabled to ask and answer comprehension and inference questions and discuss any translation concerns the consultant might have.
- f) The remote consultant controls the change of status for each slide, whether it is: waiting (for checking or improvement), rejected, or approved. Once the consultant ticks the approved status for each slide in the web app, and these slide status changes are accepted in the on-site SP app, then the dramatization and production phases of the SP app will be unlocked and the local language team can proceed with publication and distribution of their story video.
- g) Other messaging apps such as Whatsapp or Viber can be utilized to enable more elaborate types of communication between the remote consultant and the on-site story translation team to set up a time for the consultant check of a story.

**What about key terms?** Within the SPadv app is a feature called Wordlinks which hyperlinks all names and difficult words (key concepts) to a central database attached to the SPadv app. The WordLinks feature enables story translators to search, research and document how they are rendering each term. The Wordlinks feature brings coherency and consistency to key terms and names across all story templates. SPadv Accuracy Checkers also have access to the WordLinks database and documentation.

If the SPadv is being used in a context where some Scripture has already been published, the app end-users would be expected to consult those approved Scriptures and make their story translation conform and be consistent with the published Scripture, provided the published Scriptures are meaningful, not too archaic and they were translated with a dynamic and rigorous checking system. Every slide in a story comes with a corresponding Scripture reference for the explicit purpose of making it easy to consult with any Scriptures available in that language. If, however, the SP stories are being translated in a situation where Scriptures have not yet been translated, then the story translators can utilize the helps available in the text scripts, struggle and dialogue among themselves, review their decisions with the community and any available church leaders, perhaps research what related languages did with a term and eventually come to some conclusions with the help and approval of their accuracy consultant.

**How long does it take to train and to learn the SPadv?** The basics of the app can be learned in a matter of minutes. Learning the essentials of translation principles and media production take longer and require some days to practice. Being personally mentored through the process is the most effective way to learn. The basic app interface is transparent and “easy-peasy” according to a Hakha Chin end-user. A trainer can realistically walk through the entire process of story translation, dramatization, production and distribution with new end-users three or four times in the course of a 4-day workshop.

Visit [StoryPublisher.website](http://StoryPublisher.website) for further information. Email [SPapp.training@gmail.com](mailto:SPapp.training@gmail.com) or [SPadv.info@gmail.com](mailto:SPadv.info@gmail.com) with any questions, feedback or how to get the software and templates.