The Age of the Image: Redefining Literacy in a World of Screens

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We live in a world that is awash in visual storytelling. The recent technological revolutions in video recording, editing, and distribution are more akin to the development of movable type than any other such revolution in the last five hundred years. And yet we are not popularly cognizant of or conversant with visual storytelling's grammar, the coded messages of its style, and the practical components of its production. We are largely, in a word, illiterate. But this is not a gloomy diagnosis of the collapse of civilization; rather, it is a celebration of the progress we've made and an exhortation and a plan to seize the potential we're poised to enjoy. The rules that define effective visual storytelling - much like the rules that define written language - do in fact exist, and Stephen Apkon has long experience in deploying them, teaching them, and witnessing their power in the classroom and beyond. In The Age of the Image, drawing on the history of literacy - from scroll to codex, scribes to printing presses, SMS to social media-on the science of how various forms of storytelling work on the human brain, and on the practical value of literacy in real-world situations, Apkon convincingly argues that now is the time to transform the way we teach, create, and communicate so that we can all move forward together into a rich and stimulating future.

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