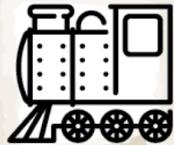


PAST-TIMES



Archiving Oral History – Preparing your files for archiving

Module 4, Unit 1: Guidelines for archiving and storing oral history projects

Archiving Oral History – Preparing your files for archiving

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

- Once you have completed your oral history interview(s) with your narrators, it is important that you begin organising your files so that you don't lose track of your interviews and so that it is easier for you to archive your files later on.
- These slides present some simple tips you can follow to help you to prepare your files for archiving.

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

- Step 1: Complete your field notes
 - As a best practice in oral history, shortly after each interview is completed the interviewer should write up a short transcript of the interview, preserving key points and observations made during the interview process.
 - The interviewer should complete this transcript as soon as possible after the interview is concluded so that they don't forget any key details.
 - Completing field notes or a short transcript will also help to preserve integrity of the oral history interview for future researchers who wish to study your archived interviews, as this will give future researchers a key insight into the interview process and your impressions of your narrator.

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

- Step 2: Organise your Metadata
 - Metadata typically refers to data about data. In your oral history project, metadata refers to information including:
 - Title of your interview and oral history project.
 - Interviewer's name.
 - Narrator's name, age, occupation.
 - Location of interview.
 - Timing of interview – date and time.
 - Key words.
 - To help you to collate this data for each interview, your tutor will share a template with you.

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

- Step 3: Format your files
 - During your interview, you will record the oral history on a smartphone or voice recorder. If your device allows you to select a format that your files will be saved in, we recommend that you choose to save your files as WAV or files, which will allow you to preserve your oral history interviews digitally going forward.
 - WAV are lossless formats– higher quality but larger files to store.
 - MP3 are lossy formats – lower quality recording but smaller files for storing
 - If you are recording your oral history interview(s) as a video file, we recommend that you format your files as MP4.

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

- Step 4: Transfer your files and make copies
 - As soon as you can after the interview, transfer your files from your recorder, smartphone or camera to your PC.
 - If you leave your files on your recording device and continue conducting more interviews, files may get lost or deleted by accident.
 - Once you have transferred your files to your PC, your next step is to create copies of all audio and/or video files you transfer.

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

- Step 5: Create a Master Copy
 - Once you have created some copies of your files on your PC, you should also create a 'Master Folder' on your desktop.
 - This folder will contain all of the original tracks from your audio interview, or all footage from your video interview.
 - It is important that you do not edit or alter files in your master folder – these files are to be left as they were originally recorded and can be used to evaluate the accuracy of your finished oral history project.
 - It is recommended that you back-up your master folder on an external hard drive or using cloud storage in case you face issues with your PC.

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

- Step 6: Label your files accurately
 - Labelling your files accurately and consistently across all files and all interviews is the only way that you can guarantee you will be able to find your audio or video files when you need them.
 - Without accurate labelling, it is not possible to accurately archive oral history interview.
 - Your labelling should always consist of:
 - The narrators name
 - The date of the interview
 - The sequence of the file in the interview
 - For example: ‘John Smith_19.06.2019_1’, ‘John Smith_19.06.2019_2’, etc.

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

- Step 7: Edit your audio and complete your transcription
 - Once everything has been labelled, you are now ready to start editing the audio or video files for your interview.
 - Remember that you should never use files in your master folder for editing.
 - Instead you should make multiple copies of your files and edit the copies.
 - The original copies can also be used to finalise the transcription of your oral history interview(s).

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

- ▣ Step 8: The ethics of editing oral history
 - As an oral historian, you have a duty to respect the stories that were shared by the narrator during the interview process.
 - If your audio requires editing – to remove background noise, to splice breaks in the audio or to cover interruptions – it is important that the message is preserved.
 - You have a responsibility to preserve the story that was shared by the narrator and to not alter or manipulate what was said during the interview process during the editing of the audio.
 - To uphold these principles, it is advisable to share the finished oral history recording with the narrator to confirm that their story hasn't been altered in any way.

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

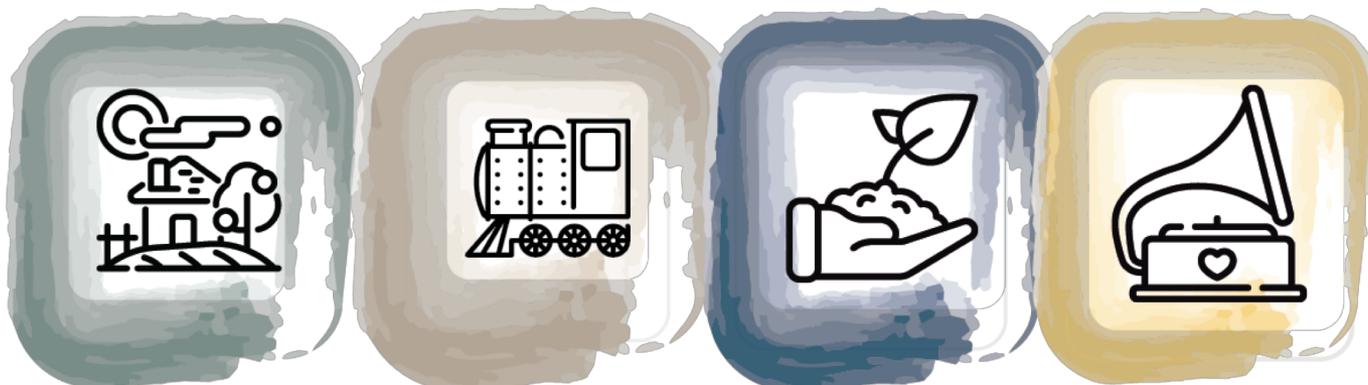
- Step 9: Archive your oral history project
 - During the planning stage of your oral history project, when you are setting objectives and outcomes for your project, you should also have selected a location where you would like to archive your oral history project.
 - If this is a professional, public or historical archive or a depository of local history in your area, you should make contact with them at this stage to inform them that your oral history project is completed and awaiting review before it can be archived.
 - These external archives will then review your project before their files are added to their archives.

How to Prepare your Data to be Archived

■ Summary

- Once you have completed each of your interviews, you need to ensure that your interview content is labelled correctly so that you can find it again, and that it is stored safely and securely.
- For each interview, you should write some field notes after each interview and record your metadata using a simple form.
- You may decide to transcribe all of your interviews, if you have time, so that this transcription can be stored with the audio file.
- You should format your audio or video files so that they can be preserved digitally, and then you can begin the task of editing your audio.
- Once your files have been edited accurately, they are ready to be archived.

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