

permission to use the conversation and all its parts. You must also tell them very clearly what you will be using the material for, and tell them you will write or telephone them when the materials will be out in public so that they can go along and see your work. It is also nice to encourage participants to read anything you've written that is based on the conversation you had with them, so that they can have a chance to reflect on what they have said.

- 12. Balance the conversation: don't talk too much as that makes the interviewee stop talking, and don't talk too little because it might make the interviewee uneasy or talk about anything just to fill the silence!
- 13. Thank You: thank the interviewee after the interview!

Software Options

Audio Editors

To chop up your audio files you can use Adobe Audition or Goldwave.

Digital Voice Recorders

We like the Olympus range, particularly the VN-2100PC, which is around £40 or the VN-4100PC which is about £50 (both from Amazon.co.uk). You can record a room of about six people having a conversation, or one person, the microphone is really good and the quality of recording is excellent. You record the conversation, upload it using the provided cables, to your PC (you receive a software disk with the

- 1. Confidentiality: Last and definitely not least! You must tell the participants that their responses are entirely confidential. However, where you want to use their voice, quotations from the conversation, entire transcripts, etc. you must ask their permission.
- 2. Sensitivity: be very wary of your questioning and the effect it is having on participants. If your conversation is on a sensitive subject to do with memories or a sad time then you need to stop questioning where it is causing upset. This is the ethical dimension of interviewing, where you need to be careful not to cause any problems for someone.
- 3. Don't challenge an interviewee by saying you don't think what they have said is factually correct. Most people don't respond to this. Remember they are doing you a favour and giving their time to you. If you don't agree you can either say "oh I read somewhere that..." or you can just leave it. It is most important, particularly when dealing with people's memories or something, that they remember something the way that they did and that is okay. Some things don't need to be factually correct, particularly if it is going to upset them.
- 4. Interpret: you are clarifying and asking for further meaning on what people are saying so that you have understood correctly what they are saying. It's okay to say you don't understand something they have said.
- 5. Don't prod back to the point of the conversation if it has strayed off course.
- 6. Remember what has been said before (notes help here) so that you can clarify anything or respond to what is being said.
- 7. Interpret: you are clarifying and asking for further meaning on what people are saying so that you have understood correctly what they are saying.
- 8. It's okay to say you don't understand something they have said.
- 9. Don't challenge an interviewee by saying you don't think what they have said is factually correct. Most people don't respond to this. Remember they are doing you a favour and giving their time to you. If you don't agree you can either say "oh I read somewhere that..." or you can just leave it. It is most important, particularly when dealing with people's memories or something, that they remember something the way that they did and that is okay. Some things don't need to be factually correct, particularly if it is going to upset them.
- 10. Confidentiality: Last and definitely not least! You must tell the participants that their responses are entirely confidential. However, where you want to use their voice, quotations from the conversation, entire transcripts, etc. you must ask their permission.



Your historical research project might be related to a specific event, subject, geographical location, individual or group in history. Therefore your interviewees might be local people, people who have written, published and presented on the topic, archive work, etc.

You can interview people in person using a digital voice recorder (but you must always get permission from them first), by email where you can have a written conversation back and forward, over the telephone (but

Identifying Your Interviewees

- 1. Identifying your interviewees
- 2. Recording the conversation or taking notes
- 3. Formulating Interview Questions
- 4. Creating the Interview Schedule
- 5. General Rules
- 6. Software Options

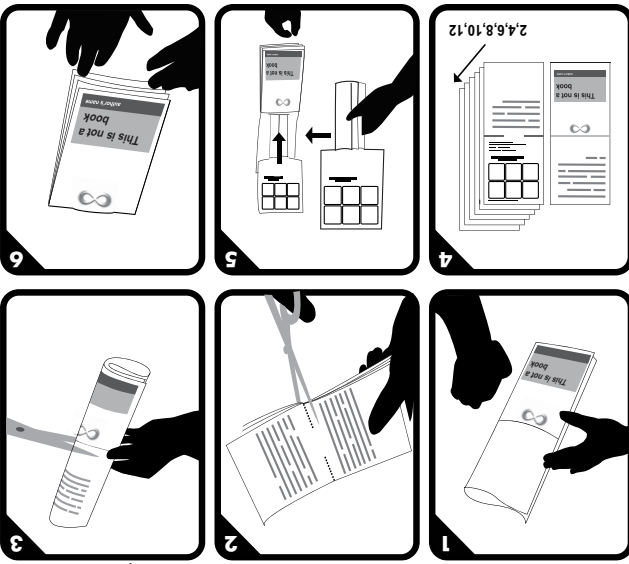
Digital Storytelling involves the use of computer-based tools to tell stories, similar to traditional storytelling. It involves a combination of computer-based images, text, recorded audio (voice), video clips and music. A digital story can last a few minutes or up to ten minutes – it is not recommended you have them any longer. Subjects suitable for digital stories include personal stories, historical events, everyday life in your area/community, almost anything you can think of!

Undertaking a digital storytelling project can be fun! There's a lot of work involved in planning, interviewing and creating your digital story. Here's some guidance which includes:

Digital Storytelling Guidance

Greenhill Historical Society Digital Storytelling Guide

Greenhill Historical Society Members



made with www.bookleeter.com from probocis

Created by Greenhill Historical Society
 Winter 2010
<http://greenhillproject.ning.com>

2010-01-16

you need to take good notes for this!) or via video using a tool like Skype (video conferencing), which is free and quite easy to use, as long as both you and the interviewee have a web camera attached to a desktop computer or laptop.

Recording the Conversation or Taking Notes: Big Decisions!

Remember to consider beforehand whether you need to have full transcripts of the conversation (i.e. absolutely every word the interviewee says so that you can use specific sentences as quotations, etc.), or whether you are happy with a summary of the conversation, in which case you would write up rough notes of the conversation without the need for word-for-word detail. This decision makes a big difference to the time you will need to set aside for the project. To transcribe a one hour conversation (i.e. listening to the audio recording you have and typing it into the computer) could take a few days if you are slow at typing.

If you record the conversation into a digital recorder and transcribe it there are some programmes that will slow the conversation down for you so that you don't have to type too fast, or keep stopping the recording to catch up! Express Scribe (www.nch.com.au/scribe) will allow you to slow the conversation down once you've loaded the digital file into it.

Formulating Interview Questions

Be very careful that you consider exactly why you are interviewing people for your project, including what the project is seeking to achieve and exactly the questions

that are going to help you answer the questions you have. Good planning before you undertake interviews will be beneficial to you later on because you won't have to re-interview someone if you've forgotten to ask something! Of course, most people are happy to be interviewed again, and you can always ask at the end if the person would be okay with you contacting them again with more questions or to clarify anything you didn't understand or catch properly. But it is nice to get it all done first time!

Interview Schedule

There are several ways you can tackle the interview situation. You can either write up a rough schedule of the topics you want to cover in the conversation, or you can write exact questions that you want to ask the interviewee. Either way it is very important to write up a plan for what topics you want to cover in the interview before you go along. This will act as a guide within the conversation and you are less likely to miss anything out.

1. Interview Guide: a rough set of notes with topics that you want to cover. These are not usually in the form of questions but words or phrases like "Clay mines: what it was like to work there", "street parties", things like that. They help jolt your memory to ask about these things.

2. Structured Questions: this is a list of exact questions you want to ask and you stick rigidly to these questions. If the interviewee answers another question by chance that you had on your list for later on you can just strike that one off.

Writing down structured questions is often the best

Contact us:

Bonnybridge Community Education Centre
Bridge Street
Bonnybridge FK4 1AA
Tel: 01324 503290
Mobile: 07794 072190
Email: gilliancowell@btinternet.com
Web: <http://greenhillproject.ning.com>

You can find further tutorials at <http://atrk12.hi.us/tutorials/digstory/element.s.htm> or you can always ask us!

Adobe Flash Player, Quick Time and iTunes. available players, including Windows Media Player, You can play the finished digital story in most freely- and digital video recorders are getting cheaper and cheaper! You can even buy small ones for under £50. You can use images and video for your story, as long as they are both digital (available on your PC). You can scan paper images into your PC if you have a scanner,

Windows Movie Maker 3 - <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxsp/using/moviemaker/default.aspx>

Microsoft Photostory 3 (PC) - <http://www.microsoft.com/windowsxsp/digitalphotography/photostory/default.aspx>

You can also use:

We used Photoshop Elements <http://www.adobe.com/products/photoshop/family/> for our digital story,

Slide Show Software

software (www.nch.com.au/scribe) which can allow you to slow the conversation down so that it's easier to type.

way to do interviews if you are not used to doing them or if you feel that the interviewee or yourself might go off-topic and talk about irrelevant topics or where the conversation might become completely unrelated to the reason you are there!

- 3. Semi-structured questioning: this is a list of questions as in the point above that you want answered, but you also leave room for asking new questions that you might not have considered before you started interviewing the person. Sometimes the person will say something that makes you think about something else you'd like to ask, so this kind of style of interviewing leaves room for you to ask. Conversations never go to plan so it is always important to have space for the discussion to go into territory that you hadn't planned for, **but that is still very relevant and important to your project**. So you would write up your schedule with questions but also during the conversation you can jot down words or phrases that have occurred to you during the conversation that you will ask at a convenient point. This is a nice style of interviewing because it means you are not just firing questions at someone, but it becomes a real conversation and the person you are interviewing is able to bring up other things you might not have got if you had stuck rigidly to a question sheet.

Some people take notes during a conversation. Again if you are digitally recording it there is no real need to take notes, but it is worth writing down key words or phrases that will help you remember the conversation afterwards. So it is worth taking a small notebook and

- 1. Structure the interview and introduce yourself, your project and what you want to find out, so that the interviewee is clear why they are being interviewed and what knowledge they have that might be useful.
- 2. Clear: ask simple questions which are short and contain no jargon!
- 3. Let people finish their sentences, don't talk over them, allow for pauses where they are allowed to think.
- 4. Listen attentively to what people are saying, particularly if it is a sensitive topic. Empathy is very important (where you understand the situation they are in).
- 5. Remember it is a conversation so be open and responsive to the interviewee, as well as flexible. Steer the conversation: you know what you want to find out so keep the interview on track by gentle

General Rules:

If you are doing several interviews, previous interviews might bring up topics you hadn't thought about, and these topics can be discussed with subsequent interviewees. But remember to be flexible in your questioning to allow the interviewee (who is the expert in what you want to find out!) to bring up things that you wouldn't have thought about. Having the question at the very end: "is there anything you wanted to talk about that we haven't covered here?" is a good one to end on.

(these are less obtusive than a massive pad of paper!)