

Oral History

Help Sheet 6: Sharing oral history recordings

Here are some ways in which you could share your recordings. Remember that different methods will appeal to different audiences.

Donate a copy to Gloucestershire Archives

Gloucestershire Archives exists to preserve key records for future generations. Digital records are particularly vulnerable and we have developed processes to ensure that any in our care remain accessible. If your digital recordings are lodged with us, we will undertake to ensure that they will be available for visitors to hear and enjoy (subject, of course, to any agreed closure periods). You will not need to make copies of recordings in response to enquiries, as anyone interested in hearing a recording can just be advised to contact the Archives instead.

Use the “Know Your Place” online platform

Know Your Place is a digital heritage mapping project to help you to explore your neighbourhood online through historic maps, images and linked information. The project began with Bristol and South Gloucestershire and has been rolled out to cover Gloucestershire and Wiltshire, with Bath, Somerset, North Somerset and North East Somerset all in the pipeline. It is easy to add an image, sound file or other digital content to the community layer, as long as it can be linked to a particular place. You could add relevant soundbites from your recordings, and/or use the site to promote your oral recordings, group or project. To find out more, visit the KYP website <http://www.kypwest.org.uk/>

Create a website

Free software for creating websites (Wordpress, for instance), can be accessed via web search engines. It's advisable not to put full interviews online. Unless someone has a particular reason to hear it all, they will find it easier to absorb information in sound bites of around 2-3 minutes each. This gives you the chance to choose the most interesting portions of the interview to edit and upload. The web option also allows you to upload images that you've captured to support the recorded interview.

You can also upload galleries of images to form an online exhibition. Check out sample pages from previous community heritage projects at <http://www.bartonandredworth.org.uk/> and www.fieldingandplatthistory.org.uk.

you need support with designing the website, you could consider a company like Community Sites (<http://www.communitysites.co.uk/>), who specialise in creating heritage websites, with full training, and then provide ongoing support for an annual fee. Gloucestershire Archives offers training on digital preservation, audio editing and web writing skills.

Create a digital story

A digital story lasts for around 2-3 minutes, and combines onscreen images with a related audio track playing over them. It's an ideal way to combine more interesting portions of the interview with the scanned material you've collected. Check out examples at

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/audiovideo/sites/galleries/pages/digitalstorytelling.shtml>.

Digital stories can be uploaded to Youtube and then linked into your website. There are a number of short online tutorials which can show you how to do this.

Gloucestershire Archives offers training on how to create a digital story.

Produce a book, leaflet or hard copy exhibition from the material collected

This may seem a rather 20th century concept, but it's still an option, particularly if you can produce it privately yourself, or include publication and creation costs in any funding bids that you make. It's a traditional way of sharing the collected information but remember that a website will make your material accessible to a wider range of people.

Gloucestershire Archives offers guidelines on how to create an accessible exhibition.