Oral history: access and use

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Abstract

The purpose of this dissertation is to conduct and present research into the issues surrounding access and use of oral history in archives.

Oral history has become a valued medium as a way of supplementing records of official transactions with those of experiences of the particular community. The aim of this research is to investigate the state of oral history in British archives, to explore access issues and the way oral history is being used, and to produce recommendations for further research.

The research design combined a review of the relevant literature with the collection and analysis of empirical data. The data collection utilized a twin-methods approach of a web-based survey and case study. 30 archives were approached. Of the 28 who responded, 20 answered the survey questions: a response rate of 71%.

The findings from the research provide evidence that archivists have concerns over the loss of control of unedited material placed online. There is double the number of in-house finding aids than for online use. The two largest user groups of students and academics, and local and family history researchers account for 85% of users. Institutions record a low frequency of attendance. And oral history is still primarily used in written contexts though audio usage in archives accounts for 25%.

The main conclusions from this work are that archives prefer to encourage in-house access for their collections and content. And they take the issue of ethics seriously.

This dissertation recommends further research on user expectations of finding aids and access; how oral history resources are used externally, why do archives prefer in-house access, and how does this conflict with the expectations of users; an in-depth survey of online provision; and experiences of specific groups.

Keywords: access, ethics, finding aids, oral history, use

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Abbreviations

BCE	Before Common Era
	An alternative to Before Christ in dating systems
BME	Black Minority Ethnic
BOP	Burns Owen Partnership
CD	Compact Disc
CIC	Community Interest Company
DVD	Digital Versatile Disc
	Formerly Digital Video Disc
EMOHA	East Midlands Oral History Archive
HC	Heritage Centre
	Generic name for heritage institutions
HLF	Heritage Lottery Fund
	Introduced in 1994 by Conservative government to distribute part of money raised by the National Lottery
LGBT	Lesbian Gay Bisexual Transgender
PC	Personal Computer
PDF	Portable Document Format
	Released by Adobe in 1993 as a device-independent format
RSA	Regional Sound Archive
	A generic title
SLHA	Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology
UK	United Kingdom
UKAASSG	UK Audiovisual Archive Strategy Steering Group

Chapter 1

Introduction

The traditional view of archives has revolved around parchment and paper as the primary carriers of information. For Jenkinson (1922) records are evidence of transactions and only those records deemed to be of continuing value are kept. That is, the archive holds records of official transactions created to satisfy legal and business requirements within a structured physical storage system. However records are created the archivist's role is, according to Nesmith, to protect the integrity of the record as evidence for the benefit of society (2004, p.26). Nevertheless, societies adapt or change and since the mid-nineteenth century new technologies have appeared that replaced the hegemony of hand-written records: the typewriter, the computer, and now 'born-digital'. And a new documentary recording model has emerged that has a place in archives: oral history.

Background

'Oral history' is unusual in two ways. It is not about satisfying legal and business requirements. Instead it is about recording peoples' experiences after the fact, perhaps by many years or decades. And, unlike the traditional carriers of paper or electronic record oral history is about recording speech rather than the written word. It is a product of the mid-twentieth century and the introduction and continuation of portable recording technologies: such as the audio compact cassette, Compact Disc (CD), Mini Disc, Digital Versatile Disc (DVD), and solid-state cards. At its heart is the question of what is oral history. The first definition comes from Sharpless (2006) who suggested that oral history has been used long before the twentieth century by historians for their own

research. Sharpless gives the example of Herodotus employing first person interviews in his account of the Persian Wars in the sixth century BCE (Before Common Era) (p.19). Bornat (1955) disagrees by saying that oral history is speech recorded by a trained interviewer-historian under recognised ethical and procedural standards followed by a supervised transcript: anything else is not oral history (p.241). While Sharpless's definition is perfectly reasonable, Bornat's model is better suited for the archive. The archive is about access and use, whether by the employees of the institution or the wider public. As such, an archive needs to impose order over the records in its care. If oral history wants to be included then it needs to conform to an orderly structure: Bornat's definition of a recording and transcript comes closer than Sharpless's personal research model.

Any new documentary recording model needs to start somewhere. For oral history it starts with the establishment in 1948, by Allan Nevins, of the Oral History Research Office (now renamed the Columbia Center for Oral History). This programme, one of the first and most famous, focused originally on the political, social, and economic elites of America. As other institutions developed their own programmes they too focused on America's industrial, political, and social structures. This state of affairs continued until the 1960s and 1970s when oral historians' focus turned to recording the 'undocumented' and new social movements such as the anti-war, civil rights, and environmentalism.

It should be noted that British oral history developed by focusing on disappearing countryside traditions and the labour movement of the 1950s and 1960s respectively (Smith, n.d., early history section) instead of societal elites. While oral historians were focusing on covering a wider social base than originally had been the case archivists too were having their own debates.

The archive debate was about whether oral history had a place in archives. For Fogerty, oral history's advantage is that it can 'fill the gap' left in the official documentation of a subject's life where significant perspectives may not appear (1983, p.148). While Dryden (1981-82) is against archives arranging, researching, and conducting interviews but not against the collection and preservation of interviews (p.34).

In the years following these debates, oral history began to be accepted by archives as a legitimate activity. Eeles and Kinnear mention several archives, libraries, and museums that have oral histories collected from local communities (1989, p.55). This article predates by nearly a decade the next push into publicising the worth of oral history. It is down to the late 1990s policies of central government and the aims of the Heritage Lottery Funding (HLF) that oral history's popularity began to increase. These policies covering social inclusion, historical education using primary documents, and bridging the information skills gap should be seen as broad concepts. While the aims of the HLF in getting people to access, preserve, and learn about their heritage is the practical implementation of these policies. The document 'Thinking about ... oral history' gives guidance on how oral history can meet the HLF's heritage aims (HLF, 2009, p.3). The HLF suggests that oral history enables the exploration of sensitive subjects that may be hidden in modern accounts such as prejudice, fear, and division (2009, p.5). Additional benefits not mentioned by the HLF is the training required to manage a project. Interviewing technique, project management and IT skills can all help in bridging the skills gap. Enabling people to take an active part in their heritage ensures that oral history is a worthwhile companion to official records.

Research Focus

The purpose of this research is to gather data into the issues of access and use of oral history within British archives. This purpose is realized through the aim and objectives set out below. While data is collected from British archives the literature review takes a multinational approach to archival and oral history publications. Covering the major articles from American, British, and Canadian publications dating from the 1950s onwards. Five surveys were also found that feature oral history in some way.

Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to elucidate how archives are making their oral history collections accessible, the issues that are encountered and the utilization of the finished product by archives and their users. The research combines the theoretical ideas expressed in the literature with current practice through the mechanisms of the survey and case study. The research methods chapter explains in greater detail the research strategy and data collection techniques. To put the project's aim into practice requires the following objectives:

1)   define the state of access to oral history in archives,
2)   explore the issues encountered by staff when enabling access to oral history,
3)   explore the ways the oral history product is being used and by whom, and
4)   produce recommendations for further research.

In this research project the literature review and the data collection overlap with the first three objectives. The literature review reports on the current status (objective one) and defines the theme structure present in the data collection (objectives two and three). In turn, the data collection feeds into objective one as it too reports briefly on the current status of

oral history. Objective four is achieved by an analysis of the findings of the literature review and data collection to produce recommendations for future research. The research's value is to discover how archives are enabling users to access and use oral history collections.

Value of the Research

Oral history has become part of the records repertoire of archives and yet not much literature about how it can be accessed and used exists. This research project is important because there is a lack of current resources examining the practical aspects of oral history resources in archives. Oral history is becoming more popular with archives. An example is the oral history breakout session at the 2014 Archives and Records Association conference where delegates could meet oral history specialists. This research report has twin aims within its chapters: to explore the access and use issues archives face with their oral history collections; and to bring these ideas together in a single resource. Finally, this research will contribute to the research base of archives administration and should be seen as a springboard for further investigation.

Chapter Description

The research report is laid out in the following chapters. Chapter two, the literature review, assesses the relevant literature. It starts with the search strategy and finishes with the themes that will influence the data collection. Chapter three, the research methods, collects data through the survey and case study. Chapter four is the findings of the survey and case study. Chapter five is the discussion where the findings are analyzed in conjunction with the findings of the literature review. The sixth chapter, the conclusion, reviews the research, reflects on the research process, produces recommendations for further research, and the lessons learned. The appendices contain the sample emails, survey questions, sample coded data, the codebook, and the case study text.

Chapter 2

Literature Review

Search Strategy

The purpose of this literature review is to design and implement a search strategy on the sources related to the access and use of oral history in archives. The search strategy is the flexible process that refines the research into key themes. These themes enable the disciplines of archives and oral history to be placed in context. And in turn, provide the structure for the survey and case study. The search strategy consists of:

1) locating as much material as possible written by archivists and oral historians, and

2) locating data from surveys that had been carried out previously.

Part one involved three approaches. Firstly, a Google search using keyword combinations of 'archives', 'oral history', 'access', 'sound', 'audio', 'audio-visual', 'usage', and 'collections', produced a huge number of hits. The best results were the bibliographies of oral history sources located at the Institute of Historical Research, the Oral History Society, and Columbia University. Though this search was useful it was felt that a second search systematically targeting specialist English-language archive and oral history journals would produce higher quality articles. This change proved successful as these journals provided articles with relevant ideas and themes. Of these articles Swain (2003) provided an excellent historical overview of oral history in archives since World War Two as well as providing extra sources in the footnotes. The third approach was to search under the 'oral history archives' keywords in the

online databases of SwetsWise and Taylor and Francis for articles in different academic spheres. This search brought up results such as feminist studies (Sangster, 1994), geography (Riley and Harvey, 2007), and environmental studies (Endres, 2011). These articles gave an indication of the worth of oral history outside of the archival and oral history literature. This research of the archival and oral history literature has been about locating and analyzing the themes of this project. These themes are: politics of archives and oral history, oral history in heritage organizations, access, ethics and rights, and usage. These themes represent a 'marriage' between two different disciplines. As this project features a survey as its main data collecting instrument then locating previous data would assist in finding gaps that could be exploited. This is where part two of the search strategy comes into play. The surveys were found through Google by adding the keyword 'surveys' to the set used to find the articles. These results are discussed later in the section titled 'oral history in heritage organizations'.

Politics of Archives and Oral History

This marriage of archives and oral history is a relationship between two disciplines that are based on different conceptions of 'memory'. Wallot and Fortier (1998) argue that archives are the product of the nineteenth century when archives were about recording the activities of the governing body (p.365). For example, the bureaucratic functions of the nation state, a local council, or a commercial entity. In effect, archives document impersonal political, economic, and social interrelationships that exist in society. A kinder definition is provided by Zinyengere (2006) who defines the importance of archives as reflecting 'the true identity of a people, their culture, economy, social, religious and political history through the information they store' (p.55). Traditionally, this 'memory store' has been achieved through the use of paper records. Since the 1940s the conception of memory has also been achieved through the application of oral history.

Oral history concentrates on recording views and opinions years or even decades after the event. And, unlike traditional paper-based archives, this memory is the interpretation of events, lifestyles, and opinions from people rather than from an 'official' view. Dymond's (2009) view is that local history is about 'people in their place' rather than solely about events (p.1). Oral history is placed perfectly to capture this personal flavour. Swain describes oral history as a means to recover 'history from the bottom up' (2003, p.141). For Mayer (1985) 'oral history can be an excellent source of group and community history' (p.393). These views suggest that oral history can 'democratize' archives by enabling the collection of opinions and ideas not found in traditional paper-based archives. Oral history is not about supplanting paper records but acting as a complimentary source. Indeed, Perks (1999) states oral history is now accepted by most archivists as an available historical source (p.21).

What has also helped oral history to gain greater acceptance in archives is the combination of political pressure and funding via central government and the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF). The political catalyst was the 1999 Command paper titled 'Government policy on archives' introduced by the Lord Chancellor. This paper sought to realign the archives sector with central government's most important policy objectives (Great Britain. Lord Chancellor's Department, 1999, p.2). The objectives of most concern to oral history are the public access to historical sources; the education of all age groups through the exposure and use of historical documents; and social inclusion where archives can help to bridge the gap between the information 'rich' and 'poor.' (Great Britain. Lord Chancellor's Department, 1999, p.6). The HLF's guidance document 'Thinking about … oral history' feeds their three aims of learning, conservation, and participation into these government policies. Oral history is one option to encourage this participation to learn about the United Kingdom's (UK) diverse heritage; and to conserve this heritage by depositing the collections in an archive (HLF, 2009, p.3).

This realignment has not been without its critics. Mortimer (2002) railed against archives turning away from their former core user-base of academic historians to the more populist family and local historians (p.60). In response, archives have ignored Mortimer and allied themselves to the aims of government and the HLF through reports produced by the UK Audiovisual Archive Strategy Steering Group (UKAASSG). The UKAASSG report 'Hidden treasures' developed out of a conference looking at producing an audio-visual strategic framework for the United Kingdom. The report acknowledges that audio-visual collections vividly complements written primary sources as vital historical evidence (2004, p.3). It lists some of the oral history collections that had been established in recent years. For example, the final report of the British Hinduism Oral History Project (http://www.ochs.org.uk/research/british-hinduism-oral-history-project) or the Mental Health Testimony Archive now found in the British Library (catalogue number C905). The report 'Access for all: online access and digitisation' takes a broad view of how technology can improve access to archive services and materials (Rudyard, 2002, p.1). While the report recognises the limitations of the technology that prevents the digitization of oral history (it was written in 2002); it recognises that digital formats will become more important in the longer-term (Rudyard, 2002, p.12).

It is clear that these are old policy documents. While the HLF guidance is newer it is aimed primarily at creating oral history. Though it does acknowledge the role that archives play in preservation and access. Although there is no newer document reporting on audio-visual strategy recent policy documents mention oral history as case studies.

The Command paper has been updated and retitled 'Archives for the 21st Century'. The paper details the project 'Connecting histories' that aimed to make accessible multicultural oral collections in West Midlands archives and libraries. In addition, the archives fulfilled their social inclusion

function by engaging the local community in their heritage through research and IT training (Great Britain. Lord Chancellor's Department, 2009, p.14).

'Archives for the 21st century in action: refreshed 2012-2015' highlights a project delivered by Peterborough Archives and Eastern Angles, a theatre company (The National Archives, 2012, p.19). The blog post 'About "forty years on"' describes briefly the project titled 'Forty years on' that documents Peterborough's rapid expansion from 1968 to 2008. The project has three elements: cataloguing the documents of the Peterborough Development Corporation; collecting oral histories; and producing a play titled 'The Peterborough Effect' that incorporates parts of the documents and oral histories.

'Our past your future' publicises Tameside Local Studies and Archives Centre's recording the memories of people who came to Tameside from the Indian sub-continent from the 1950s to the 1970s (Local Government Association, 2009, p.12).

What these recent documents and case studies demonstrate is the change from what can be done to what *is* being done to engage local communities. This political change opens up the contents and expertise of archives to a wider audience than has traditionally been the case. Oral history is an opportunity to tap into this wider audience but also to enable the local populace to contribute their oral histories to local heritage organizations.

Oral History in Heritage Organizations

The organizations that maintain oral history collections are covered by five surveys, four British and one American, found as part of the literature review search strategy. In this section each survey and its coverage of audio-visual holdings is discussed in turn. There is also a short description of the British Library as this organization has the largest collection of oral histories in the UK. Of the five surveys, four focus on oral history though none focus exclusively on oral history in archives. The fifth focuses on audio-visual holdings in the South-East of England. One surprising aspect is that there is no national catalogue for audio-visual oral history collections (Canning, 2014, p.2). All the surveys link oral history to the wider context of heritage organizations: museums, libraries, local community groups, private broadcasters, as well as archives. The surveys have been analyzed for data relating to the scope of the collections and how they are catalogued, accessed, and used.

Only Macleod's 2005 survey (as cited in Perks, 2009) covers the whole of the UK. Macleod focused on web-based access to oral history collections. 265 UK-based websites were found to be presenting, promoting, or giving access to oral history. Only 85 of the 265 websites had any oral history content such as audio or a transcript, with the reminder describing the projects and collections (p.75). Only 50 sites had any audio content of any kind, while 33 had any online searchable catalogue or listings (p.76). Only 38 sites mentioned copyright, though four had addressed ethical issues such as copyright user agreements and/or password access: Macleod's conclusion was that websites were used to showcase work instead of providing access to oral history content (Perks, 2009, p.76).

The Burns Owen Partnership (BOP) (n.d.) survey covered the south-east's holdings of audio-visual material: sound, radio, broadcast, and other collections such as oral history. And held by commercial film and production companies, specialist public sector institutions, cultural

heritage institutions, and private collections. 23% of collections are not accessible while 58% are accessible by appointment (p.43). 74% of repositories get fewer than 50 enquiries a year, 12% get 50-199 enquiries a year, and 7% get over 600 enquiries a year (p.43). Tables 1, 2, and 3 show the percentages of collections catalogued, the type of catalogue database, and access for the collections surveyed by BOP.

Table 1 *Percentage of collections catalogued*

Catalogued fully	28
Majority catalogued	24
No catalogue	20

Table 2 *Percentage of types of catalogue database*

Electronic database	54
Printed catalogue	32
Card index	26

Table 3 *Percentage of top three means of access*

Playback facilities	72
Presentations and lectures	33
Exhibitions	32

Source for all tables: Burns Owen Partnership (n.d.) p.43

Bath's survey focused on oral history and covered Northumberland, Tyneside, Durham, Wearside, and Teesside. Bath located 106 collections in 78 locations (2005, p.3). Table 4 shows the provision of finding aids by number of collections as surveyed by Bath.

Table 4 *Provision of finding aids by number of collections*

Transcription/summary	56 had none
	52 had some degree
Catalogues/lists	20 provided electronic or card
	10 provided lists

In general there was patchy access, a lack of analogue or digital listening facilities, and most resources not widely publicised. Only a handful provide Internet access and those that do provided a small number of short extracts (p.22). Outside of the public archives there was a lack of understanding of the need for rights permissions. Only Beamish Museum kept usage data: 21 visits over 12 months from post-graduates, family and local history, community projects, a radio producer, an author, and a stage director (p.21).

The Society for Lincolnshire History and Archaeology (SLHA) (SLHA, 2005) focused on agriculture and rural oral history within the county. The SLHA found six collections. Of the three county collections: the access ranged from the following: a few transcriptions; a collection available and transcribed; and a collection that had recordings, no transcripts, and a lack of rights documentation. The three other collections are found outside the county. A private collection held in Scotland offers an online database and some online transcriptions; a collection catalogued at the Women's Library at the London School of Economics; and several recordings held at the British Library with online summaries and listening possible at the

Library itself. All-in-all a mixed bag with no uniform level of access, few recordings properly catalogued and transcribed, and with three collections held outside the county.

The Oklahoma Oral History Research Program (Finchum and Nykolaiszyn, n.d.) carried out a state-wide survey. 124 responses were received with 59 collections identified across the state. Percentages are not given in the summary. The issues of access and use are both covered. Under 'access' 18 collections had available transcripts for some if not for all their recordings. A majority indicated in-house access only with a small number closed to the public. The majority had no web presence. Of those online it was a mixture of information of holdings to a combination of transcripts, audio, and video. As for usage, the majority reported on books, displays, other activities, and local history books as popular choices.

R. Perks [personal communication, August 12, 2015] gave details of the Sound Archive at the British Library: 68,000 oral history items are catalogued although there's some overlap because of the way collections and items are catalogued. There are around 500 oral history collections ranging from a single item to the Millennium Memory Bank of 5,500 interviews. Perks estimate that they have got some level of catalogue entry for every collection but perhaps only 60% at item level.

The major finding of this section is of a resource that has been largely untapped and under-utilized by institutions and researchers. There is little online access, a lack of cataloguing and other finding aids. There is a lack of user data especially the type of user and how resources are used, for example, in talks, exhibitions, broadcast, and print and online media. Nevertheless, the surveys are still useful in seeing what had been done, how they were structured, and whether any questions can be adapted for this research project's data collection.

Access

We have seen in the previous section some issues in the data relating to geographical and physical 'access': how no survey gave the thumbs-up for access. This section takes a closer look at some of the ideas about why access is an important concept for archives. Lance, former Keeper of the Sound Archives at the Imperial War Museum, wrote that archives:

> 'are not only responsible for providing records on as many fields of research as possible. It is also their role to meet the broader educational interests of present and future generations (1980, p.61).'

This is especially the case this century where there is a greater emphasis on archives moving away from providing purely a service for historians and towards the population of the local community. Oral history is one way of fulfilling that service. The issues mentioned briefly are transcripts, cataloguing, and remote access.

Although there are legitimate concerns about how the printed text of recordings can flatten the words to lose dialect and meaning (Samuel, 1972, p.19). In Boyd's experiences, users still prefer the transcript. The transcript is a tool that enables users to discover information quickly: a textual navigation that creates access points to the audio and video content (2014, p.84). The transcript is a useful way to access the content as it is easier to skim read a transcript that is not possible with audio-visual. The problem is with the amount of time it takes to produce a transcript. Lack of transcripts is an indication of the time and resources involved in producing them. The East Midlands Oral History Archive (EMOHA) suggests that transcribing can vary between four and ten hours per hour of recorded interview (EMOHA, n.d., time and money sidebar). This commitment may be far too much for any underfunded local government or sound archive let alone community groups.

As we have already seen the surveys highlighted several problems but to recap. SLHA found that few recordings were properly catalogued and transcribed (2005, main findings section). Macleod (as cited in Perks, 2009) highlighted several key problems that were hindering access to oral history collections: namely transcripts, catalogues, and actual content. Oral history projects were being used more as a marketing tool to highlight work undertaken by the group concerned rather than worthy of decent online access. For Greenman (as cited in Rudyard, 2002) the use of remote access lowers barriers and opens up resources to a far wider audience (p.13). Macleod's point about the failure of organizations to provide decent online access many have something to do with ethics and rights.

Ethics and Rights

This theme is about access and control and has led to disagreements between archivists and historians over how much control is desirable. For the archivist, access via the Internet means losing control over the content. For the historian, access to the content takes control away from the archivist and enables the 'democratization' (the second definition of this word: see page 18 for the first) of access. Swain (2003) mentions some of the dangers of 'unmonitored access' to the Internet: misuse and manipulation of online recordings, and loss of archival control over transcripts (p.159). Despite what historians prefer it is notable that not even the British Library offers unfettered access to all of its recordings: snippets of interviews are given online while access to the full version is only possible in the library building.

Archivists are reluctant to give unfettered access to interviews because interviewees may have given opinions before the arrival of the World Wide Web. This new technology changed the way interviews are stored and used. This point has been raised by Perks (2009) when the British Library sought to digitize part of its oral collection. While most

interviewees were happy to have their recordings made available online a few objected. One objection came from an artist who wrote that through digitization he loses his 'privacy to anyone in the world to become a voyeur' (p.81).

Usage

One outcome of the literature review is the difficulty of separating 'access' from 'usage'. As archives may not be informed as to how the content is utilized by researchers. Nevertheless, some data is available though it suggests that oral history tends to be used in books and presentations. The Oklahoma study (% not given) stated that the majority of holdings had been used in local history books, displays and other activities rather than used in spoken contexts (Finchum and Nykolaiszyn, n.d., oral history use in books, displays, other projects paragraph). Though this survey did not ask whether oral history was presented in any other way than through these formats. Bath (2005) found that out of 31 project outcomes the top two favoured the traditional exhibitions (10 times though most not used as audio), and research/archival collections (9 times) (p.23). BOP's data combined both access and usage: the most widely used means of usage were presentation lectures (33%) and exhibitions (32%) (n.d., p.43). No survey gave any detail on who gave these presentations or exhibitions. Were these by archivists or academic historians or by local and family history societies or individuals? This lack of research is characterised by the BOP's findings that audio-visual institutions did very little customer care or user research: 56% of organizations did not collect any data beyond numbers of users, their purpose, and the type of user (p.52).

Summary

For a discipline that been accepted by archives there are surprisingly few surveys focusing on oral history collections within archives. The data that exists covers audio-visual collections in commercial and heritage organizations, the latter including museums, libraries, and community groups. It has been hard to locate specific examples of access and use within the archives sector. Greater emphasis has also been put on access than usage. Probably because it is easier to measure access to oral history rather than what happens to oral history once it has left the archives' control. Where data does exist about external usage, it suggests, like the Oklahoma survey, that the outcomes were the more traditional outlets of books and displays where the written word triumphs over the spoken word. There is scope for an archival focused survey about how oral history is exploited for its content.

Chapter 3

Research Methods

Introduction

This study has four interrelated objectives on the issue of access and usage of oral history collections in archives:

1) define the state of access to oral history in archives,

2) explore the issues encountered by staff when enabling access to oral history,

3) explore the ways the oral history product is being used and by whom, and

4) produce recommendations for further research.

The literature review established that there is not much research on the state of access to oral history in archives. Just as the objectives are interrelated, so are the chapters. The research methods chapter as well as covering objectives two and three also feeds into objective one. This chapter's purpose is to design a research strategy to collect data for analysis. This strategy forms the central part of the research project by employing data collection tools to generate data to cover the issues identified in the literature review: namely the lack of research of how oral history is accessed and used. Having produced the literature review the next step is to describe the benefits of the research methods, followed by the research purpose.

The benefits of this research are as follows: to detail how much experience selected archives have and to disseminate that practical experience into one piece of writing. The purpose, as Orna (2009) describes, is to project manage the research process over three parts. The aim of which is to transform knowledge in to a product for judging by others. Firstly, define the search parameters of 'what', 'why', 'how', and 'where'; secondly, investigate and discover by collecting and analyzing data pertinent to this enquiry using the appropriate research strategy; and thirdly, communicate the findings to a wider audience, via an information product (the research report) (p.29). This chapter follows the framework of the research strategy, data collection, framework for data analysis, and limitations and potential problems.

Research Strategy

The research strategy is designed to produce an information product that disseminates the data analysis to a wider audience. The framework sets and justifies the boundaries of the research, selects the research methods, and designs the data collection component. The research method and data collection forms a two-stage process as defined by Bell (as cited in Pickard, 2013). Firstly, choose the research methods to provide the quantitative and qualitative data required to produce a complete piece of research; and secondly, design the data collection instruments to do the job. Pickard (2013) identifies eight research methods: case study and ethnography, survey and Delphi study, experimental research and usability testing, and action research and historical research.

Pickard describes each in turn. The case study is the study of a particular context and for a very specific purpose. It is both the fieldwork carried out and the subsequent report (2013, p.101). Yin describes the case study 'as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context' (as cited in Pickard, 2013). Ethnography is similar to

the case study in that both involves an outsider looking into a particular setting. The primary data collection method is participant observation. Ethnography is far more immersive than the case study. It involves prolonged engagement instead of visiting at regular intervals and looks at a social and cultural group instead of a single case (Pickard, 2013, p.135).

The aim of the survey is to obtain information that can be analyzed and patterns extracted and comparisons made. The information is gathered from a representative sample in order to study relationships between variables that are identified at the outset (Bell, as cited in Pickard, 2013). Delphi study involves the use of questionnaires to a panel of specialists to obtain a consensus on planning, policy, and long-range forecasting (Pickard, 2013, p.150). Cape suggests that the result of the evaluation model is a gathering of 'rich' and 'deep' qualitative data (as cited in Pickard, 2013).

Experimental research 'is a controlled research situation' (Pickard, 2013, p.119): an environment that can be systematically controlled with no interference from any other factors or unwanted variables. This control is an attempt to establish causality by demonstrating, repeatedly, that the effect of the dependent variable is preceded by the cause of the independent variable (Pickard, 2013, p.121). Usability testing is about testing users and systems. Within library, archives, and information professions this relates to 'user behaviour', 'information seeking', and 'information need'. The rationale is to design tests to implement actual change. (Pickard, 2013, p.127).

Action research is the process of running the research in parallel with the action unlike traditional research where the findings may lead to future action (Rowly, as cited in Pickard, 2013). Action research requires the researcher to collaborate with the client to create change and then investigating the outcome of that change (Pickard, 2013, p.158).

Historical research relies on data that already exists, while other methods rely on creating new data, and is concerned with recreating the past (Pickard, 2013, p.167).

For this research project the boundaries are heritage institutions within Britain that have oral history programmes. From the eight methods described, the survey and case study are chosen as the best options available; and the questionnaire is the quantitative and qualitative data collection component. The design ensures that the research methods and data collection structure are integrated to enable efficient data collection and analysis.

These methods are chosen because they represent the best techniques available for the research strategy within geographical, and cost restraints. The researcher lives in London, has limited funds, and work commitments hinder travelling all over Britain especially to some of the furthest archives. The other methods are not suited because of the following reasons. Experimental research is about conducting an experiment in a tightly controlled environment. This research does not require experiments because it is not about demonstrating the effect of one variable upon another. Usability testing is about implementing change within the environment: while the research project is about investigating the current situation of oral history it is not interested in testing the actual oral history collections or its users.

Delphi Study is the co-ordination of 'experts' within the field of archives and oral history to seek a consensus on a particular topic: in this case oral historians, archivists, librarians, and audio and video specialists. This approach would be useful when seeking a consensus among participants with the experience of oral history to produce a set of best practice guidelines for access and use. As it is this project's final objective is to

produce recommendations for further research, not to seek a consensus from its participants.

Action research is better suited to a single institution that is interested in change and the analysis of that change. Historical research is about interpreting the past rather than the present. Ethnography is an interesting method but participant observation requires prolonged exposure as opposed to a single or a series of visits for the case study.

The data is collected by both quantitative and qualitative techniques. While both approach data collection and analysis from different perspectives, the purpose is the same: to reduce the environment into categorized numbers and words. Creswell and Plano states that quantitative data is collected by the use of closed-ended questions (2006, p.6). In these closed questions the participant is prescribed a set of fixed alternatives from which they have to choose an answer (Bryman 2012, p.246). These questions are useful as performance or behaviour instruments. Examples include attendance records, or a researcher observing behaviour and ticking off a checklist. The analysis consists of statistically analyzing the data to answer the research questions or test the hypothesis (Creswell & Plano, 2006, p.6). Though the hypothesis may be replaced by a set of concerns (Bryman, 2012, p.161). In this research project these concerns are the four objectives as reiterated at the start of this chapter.

Qualitative questions are open-ended where participants answer in their own words or by onsite observation gathering information from media such as diaries, minutes, video and audio. The analysis aggregates the words into categories and presenting this information (Creswell & Plano, 2006, p.6). Bryman (2012) says that qualitative data emphasize the words (p.36). Qualitative data provides extra detail not anticipated in the quantitative research. This aggregating and presenting is done through

coding and a codebook. In this research project sample code is found in Appendix 6 and the codebook found in Appendix 7.

There are advantages and disadvantages of both techniques. De Vaus states that quantitative research has been criticised as sterile and unimaginative while qualitative research suffers from generalizability and is reliant on the subjective interpretations of the researcher (2014, p.6). The aim of this research is to provide data for the objectives and imagination is needed to produce themes that create the survey structure. And the interpretation of the qualitative data and its coding is subjective.

The research strategy consists of a twin-methods approach targeted email survey followed by a case study to understand in detail the nature of the issue. This twin-methods approach is not a mixed-methods approach as the purpose is different. The mixed-methods approach is mixing the quantitative and qualitative data to produce the results to form a more complete picture than when the data stands alone (Creswell & Plano, 2006, p.7). This research project does not combine the quantitative and qualitative data into one. The qualitative data is still categorized and a codebook produced. Instead, the quantitative data is analyzed first and the qualitative data is added as a supplement. This approach is, as Pickard describes, a common approach in library and information science projects and this is rarely labelled as a mixed-methods approach (2013, p.18).

The survey is used to gather statistical data and representative views. The case study is an in-depth investigative study of an institution. Part of the research relies on choosing a suitable sample. A sample is the process for selecting a few from the many. It is trade-off when selecting the entire population is not practicable (Pickard, 2013, p.59). There are two options: probability and purposive sampling. Both have advantages for certain types of research. Probability sampling provides a statistical

basis for generalizing from a research study to a wider population (Pickard, 2013, p.61). Purposive sampling is about selecting information-rich cases for exploration (Pickard, 2013, p.64).

For this research project purposive sampling is used as the project is about examining information-rich cases. Purposive sampling has access to two techniques: a priori and snowballing. A priori sets boundaries in advance of the research being undertaken; snowballing is used to identify initial contacts that point to information-rich cases, or it can begin with a participant who identifies issues that need further study. Unlike the a priori techniques there are no boundaries and it is up to the researcher to terminate the study when enough data has been received. The a priori technique is chosen because it enables geographical, collection, and institutional boundaries to be set. For this research Britain is the geographical boundary. The collection: oral history. Type of institution: primarily archives and similar heritage institutions. Once the boundaries have been set then the desk research begins to identify suitable heritage institutions.

These institutions were identified through Internet research: choosing only those who state that they have oral history collections. The process involved finding lists on Wikipedia that gave the names of county and London borough archives. Another search was conducted using keywords used in the literature review to find additional collections outside of the public archives sector. Combining the results led to contacting 30 archives in Britain. This contact process is described in the data collection section.

The case study is used differently to the survey. While the survey is used to produce data that can be generalized the case study is used to carry out an in-depth study. An advantage the case study has over the survey is that it expands on the survey data by drilling down in to the processes of the institution. Pickard (2013, p.102) describes three types of case study:

1) intrinsic: carried out for no other reason than to give a better understanding of the case,

2) instrumental: purpose is to investigate a particular phenomenon. The case is less important other than a vehicle for investigation,

3) collective: uses more than one instrumental case to investigate a particular phenomenon.

For this research the instrumental case study is used. The phenomenon is the oral history programme rather than the archive. The archive is the vehicle of the investigation from which to collect data.

Data Collection

This research report seeks to produce a piece of work from four integrated components that will stand up to academic scrutiny. These components are the literature review, data collection, findings (the analysis of the results), and recommendations. While the literature review reveals gaps in previous research it is the data collection aspect that is at the centre of this project. It is the stage from which the framework of the data analysis, findings and conclusion follow. Without data collection that follows a consistent structure the research will fail to produce the required data for analysis and fail to be a valid piece of research that stands up to academic scrutiny. The data collection methods chosen to collect the data sample are the survey and case study. Both are employed to give a general and specific flavour to the research as their functions differ. The survey's function, as carried out by the questionnaire, is to obtain

information from a sample that is analyzed for patterns and comparisons (Bell, as cited in Pickard, 2013). This is the nature of surveys in that their findings can be generalized to the wider population. The case study's function is to carry out an in-depth investigation of a specific institution without generalizing its circumstances to any other institution. So, for the purpose of this project, these two methods complement each other. The case study is a partner of, not a competitor to, the survey. One difference between the survey and case study is that the case study is sent to the participant for final checking.

We come to the sampling method and the delivery of the survey questionnaire to the participants. The sampling targets those British archives that already have the knowledge and experience of oral history in their collections. The selection was created by researching the names of British archives. Internet research then located archives with oral history programmes in place. From this list, 30 institutions were contacted using the initial email contact letter (Appendix 1) outlining the research and requesting a contact name to answer the subsequent email survey. Each of the contact names that replied to the first enquiry then received the email survey letter (Appendix 2) that contained the web-link to the survey (Appendix 5). The survey was designed using Aberystwyth University's Bristol Online Survey account. In order to satisfy the ethical requirements of the project the survey was prefaced by the introduction and consent pages (Appendix 3) and concluded by the final consent pages (Appendix 4).

Having administered the data collection the next stage is to describe and analyze the data to produce the findings. The latter of which are found in the findings chapter.

Framework for Data Analysis

This section describes the analysis process and details the steps of the analysis of the survey questionnaires, case study, and coding. The themes are adapted from the literature review and are: oral history in heritage organizations, access, usage, and ethics and rights. In addition, an extra theme is included: reflections and future directions. These themes should be treated as inter-related and not as separate topics. The purpose of the themes is two-fold: to focus the researcher and the participant on specific topics, and to enable easier analysis of the data. A simple definition of analysis is a process of making sense of data. Bogdon and Bilch (as cited in Biggam, 2011) describe it as:

> 'working with data, organising of, breaking it into manageable units, synthesising it, searching for patterns, discovering what is important, and what is to learned and deciding what you tell others.'

The analysis process is done in stages, is on-going, and is non-linear as it involves re-interpretation as more links are discovered. The analysis is conducted in the following stages. Firstly, the data is collected in specific themes by a survey; secondly, the data is coded and a codebook produced; and thirdly, deeper relationships are discovered from the themes and issues.

These themes lead into the discussion chapter that, as Biggam (2011) describes, is a process dependent on cross-referencing the findings with the literature review (p.158). Although the case study cannot be generalized, as it is about a specific point in time, they can still be included in the findings and discussion chapters. Biggam (2011) sets out an appropriate structure on how to deal with the data: break down the data into the themed subjects, and compare and contrast the responses to each theme (p.159). This analysis demonstrates that pre-planning is

essential in the design of the questionnaires for the survey and case study. The design ensures that the process of administering, coding, and producing the findings is manageable and limits potential problems.

Coding is used to bring order to qualitative data given in the survey's free-text answers. Saldana describes coding as the transitional process between the data collection and data analysis (2009, p.4). For the requirements of this research post-coding is employed. De Vaus describes this as developing a coding scheme based on the responses provided by the respondents (2014, p.148). The purpose of coding is to arrange things in a systematic order (Saldana, 2009, p.8). This arrangement of coding is to produce broad groupings below which specific responses are assigned specific codes (de Vaus, 2012, p.150). As to what should be coded, Saldana's advice to novices is to code everything. Only through experience can certain answers be ignored (2009, p.15). For this research's data analysis only answers that correspond to the subject matter have been coded. Finally, once the research report has been assessed all notes and email correspondence will be destroyed. The only data left from the survey and case study will be what is included in the research report.

Limitations and Potential Problems

A research project will always have limitations and problems. This research project is no different. It is the nature of the project that makes compromise necessary: work commitments, limited finances, and one researcher. There may be restraints due to geographical location and access to participants. All this impacts on how the research is designed, conducted, and analyzed through the research strategy, research methods, sampling, and analysis. This project is a limited study designed to enable the researcher to practice and reflect on their project management and data collection skills, to weave the necessary components to produce an information product. It is up to the researcher

to recognise any problems and to justify their approach in the circumstances. This section focuses on the research strategy, sampling, and data collection tools.

The research strategy is dependent upon unknown people in archives choosing to take part in a survey by someone they do not know. It comes down to trust and faith. Trust on the behalf of the sample on the researcher's professional ethics in maintaining confidentiality and faith that enough institutions will reply to make the analysis worthwhile.

This sample was created by systematically searching the websites of British archives. The purpose was to find enough archives so that even if a few archives completed the survey there should be enough to have a meaningful comparison. Neither the survey nor case study provide the definitive answer. Instead, what they offer is a snapshot into the current experiences at work within the profession.

The survey is the primary instrument that collects the data needed for analysis. The survey is supplemented by a case study. The email survey is the fastest and most efficient way of distributing the questionnaire. The alternatives of postal questionnaires and the interview are not suitable for this project within the timeframe. The disadvantage of the postal questionnaire is the cost of the sending and returning envelopes. The email survey is quicker to distribute and easier to answer and return. It is not perfect as there is no guarantee that anyone will respond. There is no way around this except to count on the goodwill of the participants. Interviews have two disadvantages that limit the effectiveness for this research: logistics and cost. The logistics of organizing interviews, outside of work commitments, to a large number of institutions; and the cost of travel to each institution. Even if the survey was limited to London that would still necessitate a lot of travel outside of work commitments. It is unfair to expect archive staff to be in on a Saturday. As for case studies it

is always possible that there will be a lack of volunteers. In this research project an appeal was inserted at the end of the survey asking for volunteers. One institution agreed to be a case study: respondent three. More case studies would have been nice: this is commented upon in the reflections in the conclusion.

Chapter 4
Survey and Case Study Findings

Introduction

This chapter presents the survey and case study data as described in the research methods chapter. The research targeted archives and other heritage institutions based in Britain that hold oral history collections. The aim of this research is to elucidate how archives are making their oral history collections accessible, the issues that are encountered and the utilization of the finished product by archives and users. This aim is translated into the following objectives:

1) define the state of access to oral history in archives,

2) explore the issues encountered by staff when enabling access to oral history,

3) explore the ways the oral history product is being used and by whom, and

4) produce recommendations for further research.

This chapter uses data collected by the survey and case study to look at objectives one, two, and three. The case study focuses on a single institution to see how they are making use of oral history. The case study uses an expanded structure based on the survey. Along with sections in access, ethics, and use extra sections such as outreach and staff resources are included. The case study text is included at the end of this chapter. Sample coded survey data, the codebook, and the case study text are found in Appendices 6, 7, and 8 respectively. All are anonymized for the confidentiality of the respondents.

To aim for a decent return on the survey several steps were taken:

1) identify through desk research archives, within Britain, that hold oral history collections of any size,

2) send an email to the advertised email address asking if anyone is available to answer the survey,

3) send an email with a web-link to all those who replied.

The survey is in Appendix 5. Of the 30 people to whom the initial email letter was sent, 20 competed the survey: a response rate of 67%. Of the 28 who agreed to answer the questions, 20 completed the survey: a response rate of 71%. One person agreed to be a case study leading to an email exchange building on the answers given in the survey. The case study process ended with 'member checking:' the respondent checking the text for accuracy. The research uses a mixture of quantitative and qualitative data. The primary data collection relates to quantitative questions. The qualitative data has been coded from question 7a. The findings are divided into the themes explored in the survey: access, ethics and rights, usage, the future, and extra sections titled introduction and holdings. Table 5 below shows the categorization of the survey answers into each theme.

Table 5 *Categorization of survey questions*

Themes	*Survey question numbers*
Introduction	1, 1a
Holdings	2, 3, 3a, 3b
Access	4, 5, 6, 7, 7a, 8, 8a, 10, 11, 19
Ethics and Rights	17, 17a, 18, 18a
Use	9, 12, 12a, 13, 13a, 14, 14a, 15, 16
The Future	20, 21, 22, 23

Of the 20 institutions that replied 12 (60%) identified themselves as archives. The other answers were museums, library, and local heritage studies centre. The four qualitative answers were history centre, local history library, and archive.

Holdings

Question 2 was interested in the audio-visual type. All 20 institutions hold audio oral history while 10 hold video oral history. From this point the research does not make a distinction between audio and video oral history. Questions 3, 3a, and 3b are qualitative answers. These answers are trickier to define because many institutions were unable to give accurate answers. As we saw in the literature review even the British Library could only give estimates.

Question 3 details the size of holdings regarding the number of collections, interviews, and hours of recordings. The number of collections range from 1–200 with the total being 310. The number of interviews held by institutions range from 40–11,071 with a total of 32,880. And the hours of recordings range from 20–10,000 with a total of 25,000 hours. The totals, given the incomplete data, represent a minimum amount. Many of the respondents are unable to give an accurate number such as respondent two who answers:

> 'hard to quantify, but likely to number 100s of interviews, and 100s of hours of recordings.'

Or respondents nine and twelve who both gave answers of '1,000 recordings.' Hence, the data in Table 6 represents the respondents who gave the best quantifiable data.

Table 6 *Holdings*

Respondent	a) collections	b) interviews	c) recordings hours
3	c.20	1,686	c.1,425
4	4	40	20
5	——	12,130	c.6,000
6	12	280	150
13	12	636	1,100+
14	200	11,071	c.7,000
16	68	c.8,000	c.10,000

Question 3a (Table 7) asked how many of the collections, interviews, and recordings have been transcribed. Only respondents four, six, and sixteen answered all three parts. As the data shows there is very little information about how much material has been transcribed. The best answer is from respondent ten who wrote that 'all were transcribed by creators before deposit' though respondent ten has 15 collections. Respondent fourteen stated that less than 1% of recordings had been transcribed. Respondent seven's approach is to create summaries; while respondent seventeen also included summaries with transcripts in their answer. Respondents two, three, and fifteen all hover around 50%. Respondent fifteen has summaries and synopses for all interviews

Table 7 *Transcriptions*

Respondent	How many of following have been transcribed?		
	a) collections	b) interviews	c) recordings hours
4	1 (entirely)	12	6
6	10	218	218
16	5	c.3,000	c.3,000

Question 3b shows that nearly 43% have catalogued all of their collections. Only two respondents said that they do not have detailed entries. Respondent twelve replied that most have a title entry only, and respondent nine replied that a brief entry exists for most items. Although question 3b had three sections the vast majority of data refers to cataloguing at collection level and this is displayed in Table 8.

Table 8 *Percentage of cataloguing at collection level*

All collections	42.9%
75–99%	28.6%
50–74%	21.4%
0–49%	7.1%

Access

Access is concerned about online and in-house finding aids, access permissions, and onsite access facilities. The purpose of questions 4 and 5 is to evaluate the types of finding aids available to the public online and within the archive building. It should be noted that question 4 garnered 43 responses while question 5 doubled that number to 86. In question 6, respondents were asked to list the top three means of onsite access. Question 6 had 34 responses.

For question 4 the top answers for online access (Figure 1) are *electronic catalogue* (41.9%), *summary* (16.3%), and *recording extracts* (14%). These top three took 72.2%.

Figure 1 *Online access to finding aids*
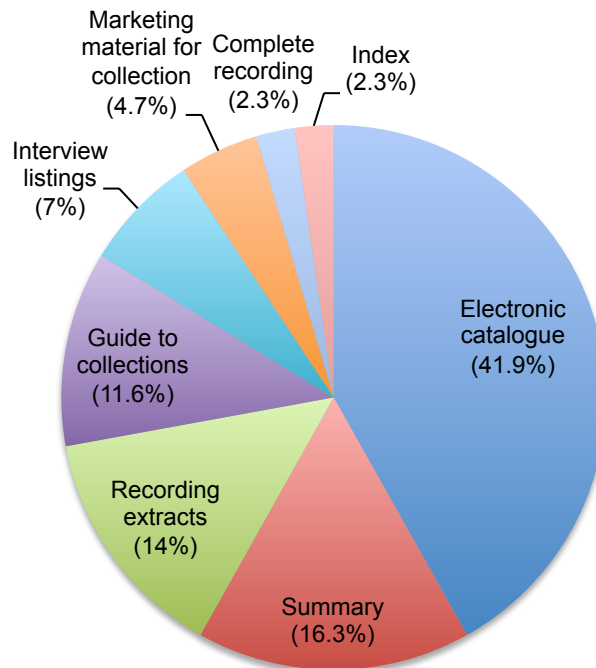
Question 5 shows that archives have a far greater number of finding aids available within the building. The top three answers (Figure 2) are the *electronic catalogue* (20.9%), *complete recording* (18.6%), and *transcripts* (16.3%). These three make up 55.8%.

Figure 2 *Finding aids available within building*
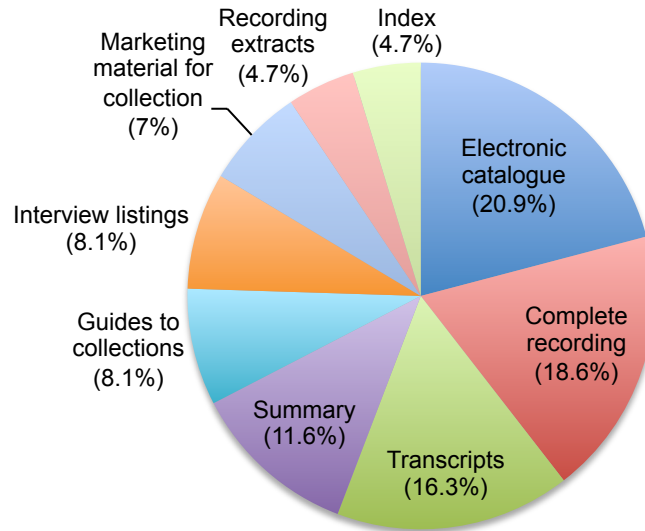
Question 6 (Figure 3) is about institutions revealing their top three onsite finding aids. The four shown are the most popular with nearly 80% of the answers. The summary is also the fourth favourite in Figure 2.

Figure 3 *Top four finding aids available within building*
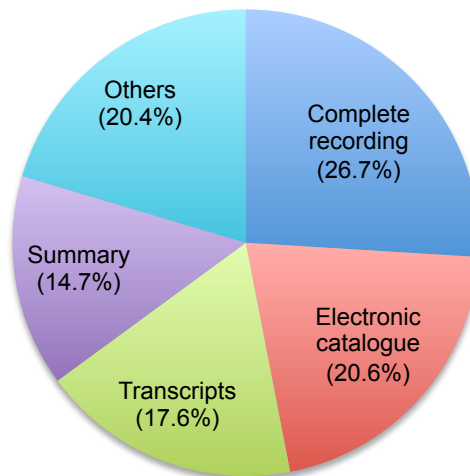
Questions 7 and 7a are about the permissions needed to access the collection. As can be seen from the data from question 7 (Figure 4) a combined total of 54.6% of respondents *required advance notice* or *permission*, while 31.8% of respondents *did not require any advance permission or notice*; and 9.1% needed *playback equipment booking*. No institution charged for access: keeping with the notion that archives are free at the point of entry.

Figure 4 *Permission*
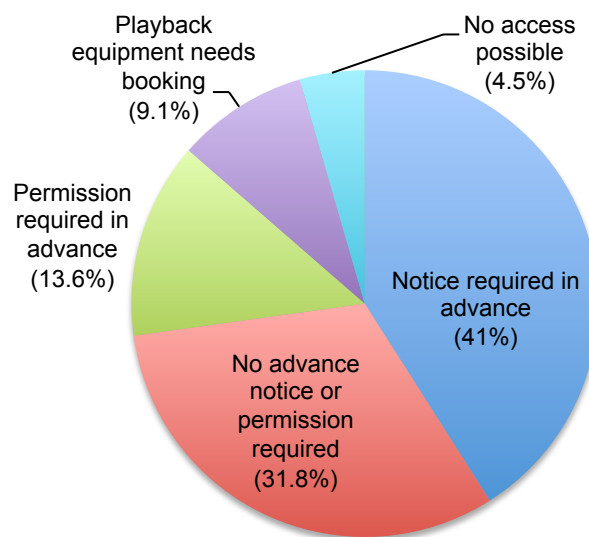
The coded data for question 7a reveals a range of issues covering rights permissions, access, preservation, carrier, and equipment. Some histories are closed or allow limited access, or are on obsolete formats. Respondent two wrote that some collections require third-party permission. Respondent eighteen stating that they only allow access 'where we judge that it will be of worthwhile research value to the researcher.' Respondent eighteen also requires researchers to sign an agreement to have any data they use anonymized. This is due to having few signed user agreements for their older interviews.

Once users get access then questions 8 and 8a answers what access facilities are available. Figure 5 shows that no other answer comes close to *onsite audio-visual facilities* at 64%. Though *website* and *Internet* access make up 24%.

Figure 5 *Onsite access facilities*
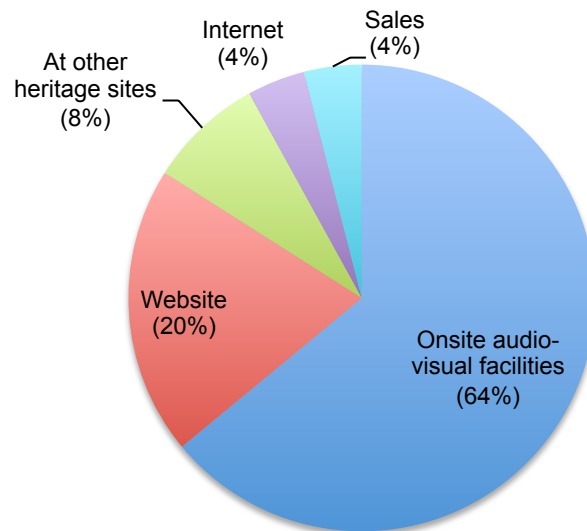
The qualitative answers for 8a range from using books, pamphlets, and exhibitions (respondent three); to respondent five launching a cloud-based service: a step-up for the latter from CDs and cassette tapes. Respondents fifteen and twenty both deposit material at the Regional Sound Archive (RSA).

This now leads into how often the collections are accessed (question 10). The most popular is *monthly* (36.8%). Followed at 15.8% each for *once every three months* and *annually*. 5.3% of institutions records *weekly* visits. 5.3% of institutions has recorded the *never* answer. Four institutions do not keep figures and no institution records a daily figure.

The major themes for the coded data for question 11 are finding aids, access, ethics and right, partnerships, and users. Respondent fourteen replies:

> 'though we would like to post full-recordings online, we are fully aware that this is not always possible due to [the] personal nature of the recording or rights issues.'

Respondent seven is working towards to upgrading their catalogue to include an online version. Respondent thirteen stated that 'access is restricted for reasons for copyright and confidentiality, not because we could not choose to go online.' Respondent sixteen has experience of a regional sound archive: the existence of the RSA has meant that the respondent's institution 'has not actively collected, created or promoted oral history,' though they are now hoping to be more proactive.

Ethics and Rights

Questions 17 and 17a are concerned with the reasons as to why complete recordings are not available online. 17a is concerned with the 12 qualitative answers given as *other* and discussed separately. Of the answers from question 17 (Table 9) 64.3% are concerned with *rights issues* with only 10.7% about the *cost of online storage*. Of the four possible answers nearly 90% are concerned with control: whether loss of control or copyright restrictions.

Table 9 *Reasons for no online access to complete recording*

Loss of control over the content	25%
Restricted copyright consent given by interviewee	32.1%
Restricted copyright consent given by the oral history creator	32.1
Storage restrictions, e.g., amount and cost of online storage	10.7%

The qualitative data, of 17a, suggests that the impracticality, resources, and ethics are the main reasons for not having the complete recording online. Respondent six suggests that entire recordings are not a very accessible resource and only useful for a small group of users. Respondent seventeen says there is no demand and they have other online access priorities.

Respondent eight prefers to encourage use of the onsite facilities first and foremost. Respondent fifteen has no facility to offer online access as the local authority is not in the position to provide this access. Respondent sixteen too has limited resources to digitize, catalogue and clear the rights issues. The privacy concerns lead into questions 18 and 18a.

Questions 18 and 18a are concerned with the measures taken to protect privacy and confidentiality. The answers listed as *other* are described separately and excluded from the Table 10. 50% chose to *close recordings due to disclosure of confidential information*.

Table 10 *Privacy measures*

Redact passages in the transcript	28.6%
Close recordings due to disclosure of confidential information	50%
Refuse permission for use of oral history because of concerns of distress to interviewee	21.4%

In the qualitative data respondent three answered that there have been three instances where recordings have been removed from public view: one was destroyed, and the other two are now accessible only by the heritage centre staff. Two respondents have never done any of these. Respondents one, eight, and thirteen have all edited recordings. Respondent one also hides the corresponding sections of the catalogue summaries from public view.

The issue of ethics continues into question 19. Respondent seven prefers to create oral history that do not have access or closure issues. While respondent thirteen has had to spend a lot of time clearing rights issues as they did not used to separate copyright and consent forms.

Use

Use is concerned with how the collections are used by the public, the collecting institution itself, and sister organizations. The questions cover the primary attitude to the Internet; types of users; how the collections are used by the archive, governing body, external researchers, and within the exhibition programme.

Question 9 is about the primary attitudes to using the Internet (Table 11). The joint top answers with a total of 73.6% is split between *widening access to oral history resources* and *showcasing the work of the heritage institution*. Both can be interpreted positively promoting the institution's holdings and access to these holdings. *Marketing tool to highlight the oral history collection* came in third with 15.8%.

Table 11 *Primary attitude to the Internet*

As a marketing tool to highlight the oral history collection	15.8%
Widening access to oral history resources	36.8%
Generating interest in social history	0
To showcase the work of the heritage institution	36.8%
To provide information about the oral history project	10.5%
To raise the profile of the archive/heritage service for fundraising	0

Question 12a details the qualitative responses (Table 12). From the answers emerge two major groupings: education, and local and family history accounting for 48.4% and 36% of users. 84.3% of users are from two groups. The qualitative answers of 12a highlight three partnerships: two in-house and one Community Interest Company (CIC). And TV production researchers and one in-house exhibition.

Table 12 *Users of oral history*

Further and higher education	25%
University of the Third Age	1.8%
Business	1.8%
Local government	3.1%
Academic researchers	23.4%
Family history individuals or groups	18.8%
Local history individuals or groups	17.2%
Community groups	9.4%

After exploring the type of user the survey turns to how oral history is used by members of the archive or governing body (questions 13 and 13a) and external users (questions 14 and 14a). The options were changed to reflect the different users. We can see differences between the internal and external users in Table 13. The qualitative results from 13a are excluded from the table and are described separately.

Table 13 *How is oral history used?*

	Internal	*External*
Private research	10.6%	25.8%
Book, magazine, newspaper	12.8%	13.6%
Broadcast	12.8%	16.7%
Online publication research	10.6%	3%
Business research	——	1.5%
Podcasts	2.1%	——
Dissertation or thesis	——	22.7%
Public exhibitions and talks	23.4%	——
Talks and presentations	——	9.1%
Pop-up booths in local community areas	4.3%	——
Theatre productions	——	9.1%
Audio trails in museums	6.4%	——
Audio trails	——	3%
Outreach	17%	——

The top two for internal use (left-hand column) reflects the archival priorities of outreach and exposure: *public exhibitions and talks* (23.4%) and *outreach* at 17%. So far, 40% is dedicated to outreach and talks and exhibitions. The other significant grouping is the combined (36.2%) for *print*, *online*, and *broadcast* media. Most of the options (excluding *private research* at 10%) are geared to broadening exposure to collections: running at nearly 90%.

The coded data, of question 13a, highlights outreach, events, and access as the areas of interest. Outreach involves the community, minorities and volunteers; exhibitions and pop-up events; and access, online, and social media. Respondent eight tweets about their collection and this is the only mention of social media in this survey. Respondent thirteen uses pop-ups at events; while respondent five's museum partner uses the content in talks and exhibitions on their behalf.

When it comes to question 14 and the external use of oral history there is almost a role reversal (Table 13, right hand column). Private study as a combination of *private research* and *dissertation or thesis* makes up 48.5%. The publication of oral history through *print*, *online*, and *broadcast* media accounts for 33.3%. That is very close to the internal use figure (though external use is not spread as evenly). The public use of oral history through *talks and presentations*, and *theatre productions* are evenly split and combined reach 18.2%.

The results for private study correspond with the top two groupings from question 12 and 12a (see Table 12) that put the biggest groups as education and local and family history research.

There is very little coded data for question 14a. Respondent eight replied that they have not had much external interest yet; while respondent sixteen answered 'museum exhibitions.'

Table 14 *How is oral history used in your exhibition programme?*

Events	35.7%
Access	28.6%
Outreach	10.8%
Finding aids	7.1%
Resources	7.1%
Themes	3.6%
Staff	3.6%
Equipment	3.6%

As a departure from the presentation of the quantitative data the answers in Table 14 represent the coded qualitative answers provided by question 15. The question asks how the collecting institutions use oral history in their exhibition programmes.

Oral history has been used in a variety of ways: *events*, *outreach*, *equipment*, *finding aids*, and *resources*. The two most popular headings by far are for *events* and *access*. Exhibitions, as a sub-heading of the events heading, is the single most popular answer with 35.7%. The combined total for the access sub-headings of online, listening posts, and kiosks is 28.6%. The top three answers of *events*, *access*, and *outreach* all fulfil archives' objectives of access to the collections or involving the local community. At 75.1% these themes dominate the answers. Respondent seven received HLF funding for two traineeships recording immigrant and BME (Black Minority Ethnic) communities ending with exhibitions. Respondent eight uses their website as the exhibition site with excerpts and information about the participants. Listening posts are a popular choice with 14.3%. Respondent sixteen has permanent posts and content is changed quarterly; while respondent fourteen may include extracts on a listening post.

Question 16's coded data of four short answers raises three issues: restructuring, online access, and external users. For respondent thirteen external users already make much more use of the collection than the institution does. Respondent fifteen already has some extracts online; while respondent four says that it could be exploited further.

The Future

The qualitative answers for questions 20–22 were included to see what plans institutions had and question 23 is for general comment about any final thoughts.

Question 20 is about plans to exploit further the oral history collection. 10 have further plans. Of those that do the issues of resources, partnerships, access, finding aids, preservation, and events were raised in the coded data. Respondent two answered:

> 'There are planned budget cuts that will limit future events and outreach. It is likely that in the future there will be externally funded projects or partnerships with other institutions.'

Respondent seven wants to develop an online presence and 'enhance our in-house digital access.' Respondent nine wants to carry out in-house catalogue upgrades and migrate onto current formats. Respondent sixteen has been awarded funding for digitization and making them available online.

Question 21 asks about the areas institutions would like to collect. There is a wide range of communities: BME and migrant communities, business and manufacturing, and those on low-incomes.

Question 22 asks the respondents would like to do if they had the resources. Several themes were mentioned. By far and away the most popular was access: online scored 10 responses. Respondent seven would like dedicated terminals in their reading room just like the facilities at the London Metropolitan Archives and British Film Institute Mediatheque. Respondent eight would like to install sound booths for students to listen to the sounds of the past of that particular space.

Question 23 generated six comments. Community involvement was mentioned by respondent nineteen: they have recording equipment that they can lend to community groups. In return they ask for copies to be deposited in the Heritage Centre. Resources had four comments covering budgets, software, and staff.

Case Study Findings

Introduction

To maintain anonymity respondent three is classed as a Heritage Centre (HC). The structure for the case study findings is nearly the same as with the survey findings: resources, access, ethics and rights, use, and the future. It holds both audio and video oral history and they estimate they have about 1,425 hours of recorded material.

Resources

There are currently seven members of staff. The weekly breakdown is of one staff member and one volunteer each contributing one hour to oral history. This is in stark contrast to previous HLF funded projects. When the HC had two HLF funded projects between 2002–2009 there was a full-time project officer, one member of staff working ½ day a week and about five or six volunteers contributing 10 plus hours a week at any one time. Over these two projects there were about 30 volunteers taking part in interviewing, transcribing, and creating exhibitions.

Access

All oral history recordings are digitized. All but one of the 20 collections has been catalogued. These 20 collections contain 1,706 interviews of which 1,686 (98.8%) have been catalogued. Only a handful of the collections are transcribed in their entirety though 905 (53.7%) of the catalogued 1,686 interviews have been transcribed. The emphasis on in-house access rather than remote access enables greater control over the content. And the HC believes it is not worthwhile putting the raw unedited footage on the Internet. In-house access takes the form of

analogue and digital playback facilities. With a few minutes notice the digital files can be loaded onto the personal computer (PC). The finding aids in use are the catalogue, summaries, and collection guides.

Ethics and Rights

Ethics are a serious issue. Especially with the older practice of not collecting deposit agreements; or of the oral history creator not keeping such forms or losing them prior to deposit. Some interviews have restricted access conditions or been redacted though very few interviews have been closed or destroyed: one was destroyed, three closed, and two only accessible by HC staff.

Use

The primary user of the collection is the museum service in exhibitions and publications. The HC itself has a limited exhibition programme as it does not have the appropriate playback equipment or the services of an audio-visual technician. The HC get twelve users a year and the HC would like to see more people use it as their own usage has altered due to spending cuts.

The Future

The HC wants to provide a small room dedicated to oral history playback. In addition, the HC wants to expand their access-on-demand resource to encompass all their digitized files and finding aids including the museum's collection management system. The access-on-demand details are in Appendix 8**.** About 50 transcripts and audio files have been linked this way though the institution does not have the funds to continue with the project at the present. Finally, the HC would like to do more but 'resources are too limited and there are those cataloguing backlogs…'

Chapter 5

Discussions

Introduction

The aim of this research is designed to elucidate the issues archives encounter for access and use of their oral history collections. This aim was split into the following research objectives:

1) define the state of access to oral history in archives,

2) explore the issues encountered by staff when enabling access to oral history,

3) explore the ways the oral history product is being used and by whom, and

4) produce recommendations for further research.

Objective one has been explored by the literature review. The survey and case study, while exploring objective one, has concentrated on objectives two and three. Objective four is covered in the conclusions chapter. The sample coded survey data, the codebook, and case study text are found in Appendices 6, 7, and 8 respectively. Having described the data in the findings the report now moves on to the discussions.

The purpose of this chapter is threefold. To synthesize the findings of the literature review with data collection of the survey and case study to see what is confirmed or contradicted. How the findings match the original aims and objectives. And what the findings contribute to the research question. This chapter adapts the core structure of the survey to produce the following themes: ethics and rights, access, playback facilities, users, usage, and the conclusion.

Ethics and Rights

Ethics and rights are about the responsibilities of the institution in safeguarding the material and ensuring it is not misused or misappropriated. Respondent three wrote that 'ethics are a serious issue' and this view is reflected in the quantitative and qualitative data in questions 17 to 19. This idea goes back to the idea of 'democratization' in the context of how much of the online access demanded by historians is desirable. This section on ethics and rights covers the issues of the complete recording online, the redacting of interviews, and rights.

These concerns are about why complete recordings are not available online, measures taken to protect privacy, and general comments about the subject. As Table 9 shows loss of control accounts for 25% yet restricting consent by interviewee and oral history creator accounts for 64.2%. It is clear that it is not only archivists who are worried about losing control but the interviewees and creators themselves. The qualitative data suggests that the issues of practicality, resources, and ethics are the main reasons not to have the complete recording online. Sub-headings include agreement, redacted, closed, privacy, and impractical. Macleod (as cited in Perks, 2009) suggests that lack of actual content is hindering access to oral history. The data suggests that unfettered access is not possible because archivists have concerns over the loss of control. In addition, they have safeguarding responsibilities to the interviewees who have concerns about confidentiality and uncontrolled access to their opinions. It is all very well for historians and oral historians to complain of the lack of online recordings but they are only concerned with accessing the content.

This concern of responsibility is backed up by data from Figure 1 that states that only 2.3% have the complete recording online. When we look at the data from Figure 2 about the in-house use of the complete recording that we see the reversal. The complete recording is accessed in-house by 18.6% thus demonstrating that archives prefer to keep control

of the recording. This is also raised in the qualitative responses: respondent six feels that the complete recording online is only accessible to a small number of users. While respondent three finds that it is not worthwhile putting raw unedited content on the Internet.

Archives also face the issue of which privacy measures should be enacted to protect confidentiality. Half of the respondents in Table 10 have closed recordings. 28.6% have redacted passages in the transcript and 21.4% have refused permission for access. The qualitative data suggests respondents only ever need to close a section occasionally. Respondent seven's current policy is not to take in any recordings that have access issues or requires closure. What is harder to solve is the issue of rights.

The rights issue in the literature review was only raised by the experience of the British Library when they decided to put the recordings online. The British Library had to find the interviewees and get their consent for this medium all over again. Most were happy for their opinions to go online but one artist felt his original interview was not intended for such a mass medium of access (Perks, 2009, p.81). From the qualitative data respondents did have problems with rights forms. Respondent three had many recordings before it was common practice to have consent forms with even the depositor losing the consent forms. Respondent thirteen has had to spend resources clearing rights forms going back to the 1980s.

Access

The theme of access details the finding aids employed to enable users to locate what they require. Differences are highlighted between online and in-house access. One aspect is clear from the literature review surveys: online access is very important. Greenman (as cited in Rudyard, 2002) sees remote access as widening access to resources. The research survey findings do support Greenman but that the archives' conception of access is different to that of the literature review surveys.

The literature review surveys take the view that online content of transcripts, catalogues, and actual content is important. The research survey confirms that there is a lack of transcripts and actual content available externally. According to the survey data no transcripts are online and only one complete recording is online too. Instead of this unedited print and spoken content archives do have finding aids but they are of the edited variety: catalogues, summaries, excerpts, and collection guides. These edited formats are more accessible: two respondents felt that putting complete recordings online was not very practicable and that summaries were of more use to researchers.

So, instead of unedited online resources archives are emphasizing a preference for in-house access. It is with in-house resources that we see a far greater use of unedited resources of the transcript and complete recording. The complete recording and transcript now account for 34.9% of in-house finding aids (up from 2.3% for external aids). The literature review treated the lack of transcripts as a bad thing. Boyd (2014, p.84) suggested that users prefer to use the transcript as an access point into the content. Macleod highlighted a lack of transcripts as a key problems hindering oral history access: of 265 websites only 85 had any content whether audio or transcript (as cited in Perks, 2009).

This lack of transcripts online reflects archivists' concerns of putting unedited opinions into a domain where misuse and misappropriation is a threat. In-house use of the transcript is a different story. The transcript is a popular finding aid coming in third place just behind the complete recording and the electronic catalogue. This may be balanced by the data showing just few transcripts have been produced. Respondent five stated that they had 12,130 separate recordings yet only had transcriptions of 380 of those recordings. Respondent fourteen put their transcripts at less than 1% of their recordings. Respondent three stated that of 1,686 catalogued interviews, 905 had been transcribed. Respondent sixteen has transcribed 3,000 interviews (out of about 8,000) and 3,000 recordings (of about 10,000). Some respondents included summaries as well as transcripts in their answers. Only respondent ten's deposits have transcribed. Though they only have about 15 collections and all were transcribed before deposit. Overall, the research survey data is not favourable to anyone who wants to see the transcript as the primary access point to the spoken content.

The concept of 'democratization' of access is a laudable goal but archivists have their priorities and providing limited access is one way to achieve that. After all, an archive is about managing control of resources. Oral history is now accepted as a legitimate resource to collect, store, and disseminate through in-house playback facilities and externally. As such, oral history collections should be subject to the same access conditions as paper documents.

Playback Facilities

The research survey asked about the facilities through which users can access the content. Burns Owen Partnership (BOP) found that 72% of institutions had playback facilities (n.d., p.43). Of the 20 respondents of the research survey, 16 (80%) had onsite audio-visual facilities: so not that much higher than BOP found. This answer was by far the most popular with the website coming in a distant second. Several respondents replied that they have a variety of media ranging from cassettes, CDs, to digital files on PCs. Two respondents enable access to other heritage sites, and two deposit recordings at a RSA. Respondent five is looking towards a limited online preservation system; with respondent seventeen looking to convert to digital. Respondent three has a cassette player, other recorders, and a PC as all their recordings have been digitized. The summary of these answers is one of limited access to the correct equipment.

Clearly archives prefer in-house facilities even after the content has been digitized. In-house facilities offer control over who can access the content: You have to be dedicated to visit an archive. This may not be how historians envisage access but once again the conflict between control and democratization appears: the literature review is more concerned with 'democratizing' access for users while the research survey suggests that archives prefer onsite audio-visual facilities as this enables greater control to be exercised over what are valuable primary sources.

Users

This section is about frequency of access and which groups use the collection. No institution records a daily figure and only 5.3% records a weekly figure. The most popular answer is monthly with 36.8% and 15.8% each for three months and yearly access. These figures may reflect the possibility that oral history is not yet seen by researchers as an appropriate resource: a young resource that does not yet have the cache of older written or printed documents. Oral history is still a growing resource especially as it has only been around for seventy years. It is hoped that in the coming decades, and as this resource grows, that users will access the content in greater numbers.

The research survey comes up with better figures about who uses the collection than the literature review surveys managed. BOP (n.d., p.52) found that 56% of institutions did not collect data beyond the basics of numbers, purpose, and type of user. Bath (2005, p.21) found that only the Beamish Museum collected decent user data.

In the research survey the education group is the largest with 48.4% followed by family and local history with 36%. These groups probably have the time to do the research and to learn the necessary research skills. A limitation of this question is that it does not ask whether any researchers in family and local history are also members of the University of the Third Age. There may be some overlap and without further research it is impossible to say definitively. A combined score of nearly 85% from the two major user groups shows that archives have been unable to break out from a relatively narrow range of users. Thus, there is an opportunity to market their records to other users such as the University of the Third Age, business users, local government, and community groups.

Usage

This section shows how the collection is used by the institution and governing body, and by external researchers. What the literature review demonstrates is that oral history is still used primarily as a printed source rather than an audio and video source. Printed sources include books, articles, exhibitions, and displays. There was a lack of data from the literature review on whether presentations and talks either internally or externally used audio or the printed version of the audio. The research data suggests that if we look at the internal answers that include audio then podcasts, broadcast, pop-up booths and audio trials account for 25.6%. The data for public exhibitions and talks is one instance where the option should have been split in two.

One way of looking at the survey data for internal use is that the options are geared towards promoting the content to a wider audience. It is noticeable that the top two internal methods are public exhibitions and talks and 'outreach' with 40.4%. The traditional methods are not expensive and are effective. It shows that archives are using traditional methods because they are tried and tested low-cost means of communication.

The final part of internal use relates to the qualitative data in question 15. The coded data of the headings is displayed in Table 14 and relates to how oral history is used in the institution's exhibition programme. There were a variety of answers focusing on the technology, location, and projects focusing on immigrant communities. Several of the exhibition answers mentioned that the oral history is used in its audio context. There is a desire to showcase their collections whether in exhibitions, via listening posts, in print, or online.

The common use as seen in the literature review is through exhibitions. Bath (2005, p.23) found that out of 31 projects, 10 used exhibitions to display the content (though mostly not as audio). While the Oklahoma study found that oral history was used not in speech but as text (Finchum & Nykolaiszyn, n.d., oral history use in books, displays, other projects paragraph). BOP (n.d., p.43) found that lectures and exhibitions (33% and 32% respectively) were the top two means of usage. The only survey in the literature review to mention the type of user in any detail in Bath's description of Beamish Museum. The museum kept statistics of the type of user, for example, students, family and local historians, a radio producer, an author, and a stage director (2005, p.21).

Data from Table 12 reflects the make-up of the users. The top external groups were students and academic researchers, and local and family history researchers. The top answers for use are private research at 25.8% and dissertation or thesis at 22.7% equalling 48.5%. The public use of oral history in the print and broadcast media account for 20.3%. While these are seen as the 'traditional' way of using oral history there is scope for growth. 9.1% of respondents gave theatre production as having used oral history content. Respondent three gave two examples: students using content for a musical and an artist for an outdoor public theatre event. It is surprising that oral history is not used more often in podcasts. Perhaps this is down to time, resources, and rights and permissions. This is certainly a more imaginative use of oral history and engaging in a spoken context normally reserved for the television and radio media.

Conclusion

This chapter had the three-fold aim of synthesizing the literature review and research survey data; of deciding whether the findings match the research's original aims and objectives; and what the findings contribute to the research question. The first aim has been achieved in the previous pages.

The findings do generally meet the original aims and objectives: to find out how archives are enabling access to these oral history collections and how those collections are used internally and externally. The research survey data reflects the priorities for archives: outreach and public engagement. Hence the use of audio trails, exhibitions and talks, pop-up booths, and using online, print, and broadcast media. While nearly half of the external researchers use the oral history for private research and academic dissertations and theses.

The findings do contribute to the research question. It provides a more focused approach to oral history than the surveys in the literature review achieved. Though the literature review surveys were not looking purely at archives. Nevertheless, the research survey contributes more data to the area of oral history in archives and other heritage institutions. It is not a perfect survey, as will be discussed in the conclusions chapter, but it contributes useful data and ideas about what archives are doing with this relatively young resource.

Chapter 6
Conclusion

Introduction

The aim of this research has been to elucidate how archives are making their oral history collections accessible. To support this aim four objectives were produced. The first three objectives formed the basis of the literature review, research methods, the findings, and the discussion chapters. The data collection was carried out by a survey and case study. This chapter will revisit the first three research objectives. This is followed by reflections on the research process and objective 4 on the recommendations for further research. The final section is on the lessons learnt on the journey to produce a research report based on a survey and case study.

Review of the Research

This research project is organized on the following objectives:

1) define the state of access to oral history in archives,
2) explore the issues encountered by staff when enabling access to oral history,
3) explore the ways the oral history product is being used and by whom, and
4) produce recommendations for further research.

Objectives 1 to 3 have been covered by the literature, review research methods, findings, and discussion. Objective 4 is found in this chapter in the section titled 'recommendations for further research.'

Objective 1

Objective 1 defined the state of oral history in archives. The literature review found that oral history is a resource that is largely untapped and under-utilized by institutions and researchers. Oral history is recognized as an opportunity to widen the resources available to the community. Oral history, in the first context of the word, democratizes archives by including voices not normally represented in the records of the local governing bureaucracy. There is a lack of finding aids such as catalogues, transcripts, little online access, and little actual content online. The second definition of democratization refers to taking away control that archives have over the content and giving it to the online user. The survey data demonstrated that there is a wide variety in the holdings and what is known about them. Not all archives kept the figures asked in the research survey so collecting and analyzing the data proved challenging. The data, for transcripts, conflicts with the opinions in the literature review that sees the transcript as a good access point. Far fewer transcripts exist than would be preferable by users. Summaries are a popular alternative and a better use of archives' time. The data for catalogues is far better. 42.9% of archives have catalogued their entire collection with 50% cataloguing between 50% and 99%.

Objective 2

Objective 2 explored the issues encountered by archive and heritage staff when enabling access to oral history. The research survey showed far more options and greater use of these options for in-house access than online. Surprisingly, there were no online transcripts. It was not a surprise that there was only one complete recording online: this relates to concern of losing control and of confidentiality of such material when place online. The transcript and complete recording went from 2.3% for online use to 34.9% in-house. Archives are at odds with the literature about the amount of online access. Though several archives stated that if they had the resources then online access would be increased.

Redacting is not done often: archives only do this when asked. Rights and permissions do take up time especially when forms were not a requirement decades ago or were lost by the depositor.

Objective 3

The third objective explored the ways in which oral history is being used and by whom. The two largest external groups are education and local and family history researchers: i.e., private and education use, with broadcast and print media coming in third. The low usage by other groups may be because that oral history has not yet been accepted as a legitimate form of primary source material; or there may not be enough content for other users such as business researchers. In-house, oral history content is primarily used in written contexts such as print media, exhibitions, and displays. These traditional methods are low-cost and effective means of communication. Several respondents reported that they use listening booths so some archives are trying out techniques more associated with museum exhibitions.

Reflection on the Research Process

Overall, the data collection went well though some adjustments to the questions would have improved the quality of the data collection. A pre-test of the survey would have helped to iron out some of the issues and enable extra questions. For example no transcripts are available online. This scenario was not envisaged and a question about the lack of online transcripts would have been useful. It may be that the sample, by chance, choose the institutions that do not have online transcripts. Perhaps an enlarging of the sample would have brought a few positive responses to the question. Also, more case studies were needed. The research survey included a sentence at the end asking for case studies (see Appendix 4). A better approach would have been to choose a number of archives specifically about being case studies and contact them directly.

They would not have been part of the original survey. This direct appeal may have yielded more case studies though this cannot be guaranteed.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research report has been about finding out about the state of oral history in archives. This section covers objective 4 as stated in the original aims and objectives. The popular conclusion is to offer advice on best practice but the researcher feels this would be patronizing to archives that may not have the resources to implement any of the recommendations. Instead, this objective recommends various subject areas for further research. These ideas have been identified by the discussions chapter and most were not covered in the research survey.

1) Expectations of users from their viewpoint, e.g., what kind of finding aids do users expect? Do users expect unfettered online access and how do these expectations conflict with the issues with which archives have to deal?

2) How are oral history resources used externally? In-depth data collection needed to gather information about theatre, broadcast, print media, and other usage.

3) Why do archives prefer in-house access?

4) In-depth survey of online provision, e.g., catalogues, audio and video, and written content.

5) Specific user group experience of oral history, e.g., students, academics, community groups, University of the Third Age, business groups, and local government.

Lessons Learnt

This research project is the culmination of the experience gained on the taught modules. It has led to a better understanding of the research process. The researcher has more confidence in his ability to design the data collection and organize the information product. Three areas have been identified that need improvement: the coding of qualitative answers, the visual display of data, and the creation and use of mixed methods data analysis.

There is a sense of satisfaction gained in designing, organizing, analyzing, and writing about a survey. We should conclude the research process with a quote by Umberto Eco (2015, p.xxvi):

> 'research is a mysterious adventure that inspires passion and holds many surprises.'

This research project has not always been plain sailing. The research proposal got bogged down because the original title was far too broad in its scope. And the literature review seemed to take an eternity. After the literature review the process did manage to stick roughly to the timetable. It is important not to look at the very end of the process but only at each stage. This keeps everything in perspective and keeps the project manageable. The experience of starting out with a research proposal of just a few pages and ending with the research report is just how Eco describes.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Initial Email Contact Letter

Subject: Contact name for email survey

Dear Sir or Madam,

My name is David Clifford and I am studying for a Master's in Archive Administration by distance-learning at Aberystwyth University.

As part of my course I am undertaking a research project into how archives are enabling access and use of their oral history collections. Would a member of the [————] Archive be willing to complete the survey and, if yes, to whom should I address the subsequent email with the attached survey?

I await your reply and thank you for your time.

Yours faithfully,

David Clifford

Appendix 2

Email Survey Letter

Subject: Survey about accessing and using oral history

Dear [————],

Thank you for agreeing to take part in this survey about the access and use of oral history within [————]. This survey forms the data collection for my dissertation for the the MSc Econ in Archive Administration at Aberystwyth University. The survey link is at the end of this email and the closing date is 10th July at 9pm.

If you have any queries my dissertation supervisor, Sarah Higgins, can be contacted at sjh@aber.ac.uk. After I have I submitted the dissertation later this year I will email you the summary of my findings.

Thank you again for agreeing to take part.

Best wishes,

David Clifford

https://aber.onlinesurveys.ac.uk/oral-history-access-and-use-3

Appendix 3

Survey: Introduction and Consent

Oral history: access and use

Page 1: Welcome!

This survey is about how your oral history programme is accessed and used. I am interested in how heritage institutions are exploiting their oral history collections. This questionnaire should take around 20 minutes to complete and it is possible to navigate back and forth.

If you choose to take part in the research please read the following statements:

I understand that my participation in this project will involve completing a questionnaire about the access and use of my institution's oral history collection.

I understand that participation in this study is entirely voluntary and that I can withdraw from the study at any time without giving a reason.

I understand that the information provided by me will be anonymous and cannot be traced back to me.

I understand that I am free to ask any questions and discuss concerns at any time with David Clifford at dac13@aber.ac.uk.

I agree that by completing this questionnaire I am giving my consent for the data I have provided to be used for the process of research.

I also understand that at the end of the study I will be provided with a summary of the findings of the research.

Thank you in advance for your time and help.

Researcher's contact details
David Clifford
dac13@aber.ac.uk

Supervisor's contact details
Sarah Higgins
sjh@aber.ac.uk

Appendix 4

Survey Consent Page

Research project for Master's dissertation (MScEcon Archive Administration by distance learning, Department of Information Studies, Aberystwyth University).

Researcher's contact details

David Clifford

dac13@aber.ac.uk

Supervisor's contact details

Sarah Higgins

sjh@aber.ac.uk

By clicking on the finish button the data will be saved to the BOS account for analysis.

I give my consent for the data to be used in this study. The data will be anonymized in the dissertation. No contact, employment, or personal details will be divulged.

I confirm that I have read and understood the welcome information for the above study and have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and they have been answered for me.

I understand that my participation is voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving a reason.

I agree to take part in the above study.

Can I contact you to take part in a case study about the access and use of your oral history holdings? If yes, please email me at dac13@aber.ac.uk.

Thank you for your time and effort in answering this survey. Your sharing of your institution's experience with oral history is much appreciated.

Appendix 5

Survey Questions

Oral History in Heritage Organisations

Q.1) Which institution is responsible for the oral history collection?
(Please tick one)

   Archive

   Museum

   Library

   Local heritage studies centre

   Other

Q.1.a) If you selected Other, please specify

Q.2) Which type of oral history do you collect whether as recording or
transcript (Please tick one or both)

   Audio

   Video

Q.3) What is the size of your holdings? a) no. of collections b) no. of
interviews and c) no. of hours of recordings.

Q.3a) How many of the a) collections b) interviews and c) recordings have
been transcribed?

Q.3.b) How many of the a) collections b) interviews and c) recordings
have been catalogued?

Access

Q.4) Which of the following resources and finding aids are accessible online by the public? (Please tick all those that apply)

Electronic catalogue

Complete recording

Extracts of recording

Transcripts

Summary

Index

Interview listings

Guides to collection(s)

Marketing material for collection

Q.5) Which of the following resources and finding aids are accessible, within the archive building, by the public? (Please tick all those that apply)

Electronic catalogue

Complete recording

Extracts of recording

Transcripts

Summary

Index

Interview listings

Guides to collection(s)

Marketing material for collection

Q.6) In your experience which three of the above categories (in question 5) are the preferred choices of resources and finding aids within the archive building? (Only answer if you ticked four or more)

Q.7) What permission is required for access to the oral history collection? (Please tick all those that apply)

Permission required in advance

Notice required in advance

Charging system in place

No advance notice or permission required

Playback equipment needs to be booked

No access possible

Other

Q.7.a) If you selected Other, please specify

Q.8) How is the oral history collection accessed? (Please tick all those that apply)

On-site audio-visual facilities

Website

Internet

At other heritage sites

Sales, e.g., CDs, DVDs, and digital audio formats

Off-site storage facility

Other

Q.8.a) If you selected Other, please specify:

Q.9) Which of the following represents your primary attitude to using the Internet? (Please tick one)

      As a marketing tool to highlight the oral history collection

      Widening research access to oral history resources, e.g., transcripts, entire recordings, extracts etc.

      Generating interest in social history

      To showcase the work of the heritage institution

      To provide information about the oral history project

      To raise the profile of the archive/heritage service for fundraising

Q.10) How often is the oral history collection accessed? (Please tick one)

      Daily

      Weekly

      Monthly

      Once every three months

      Annually

      Never

      No figures kept

Q.11) Do you have any other comments for this section?

Usage

Q.12) Which groups use the oral history collection?

      Further and higher education

      University of the Third Age

      Business

      Local government

      Academic researchers

      Family history individuals or groups

      Local history individuals or groups

      Community groups

      Other

Q.12.a If you selected Other, please specify:

Q.13) How is the oral history used by members of the archive or governing body? (Please tick all those that apply)

Private research, e.g., local and family history

Book, magazine, or newspaper research

Broadcast, e.g., radio and television

Online publication research

Podcasts (either private or professional capacity)

Public exhibitions and talks

Pop-up booths in local community areas

Audio trails in museums

Outreach

Other

Q.13.a) If you selected Other, please specify

Q.14) How is oral history used by external researchers?

Private research, e.g., local and family history

Broadcast, e.g., radio and television

Book, magazine, or newspaper research

Business research

Online publication research

Dissertation or thesis

Talks and presentations

Theatre productions

Audio trails

Other

Q.14.a) If you selected Other, please specify

Q.15) How is oral history used in your exhibition programme?

Q.16) Do you have any other comments for this section?

Ethics and Rights

Q.17) If there is no online access to the complete recording please state the reasons. (Please tick all those that apply)

Loss of control over the content

Restricted copyright consent given by interviewee

Restricted copyright consent given by the oral history creator

Storage restrictions, e.g., amount and cost of online storage

Terms of online storage conflicts with institution's copyright and access

Other

Q.17.a) If you selected Other, please specify:

Q.18) Has your institution ever needed to do the following. (Please tick all those that apply)

Redact passages in the transcript

Remove transcripts and/or recordings after complaints by third parties

Close recordings due to disclosure of confidential information

Refuse permission for use of oral history because of concerns of distress to interviewee

Other

Q.18.a) If you selected Other, please specify:

Q.19) Do you have any other comments for this section?

Reflections and Future Directions

Q.20) Does your heritage organisation have any plans to exploit the oral history collections in ways not already mentioned in previous questions?

Q.21) Are there any communities, events, or periods of time etc. that you would like to see represented in the oral history collection?

Q.22) What would you like to offer if you had the resources available, e.g., video oral history, other ways of access?

Q.23) Do you have any comments for this section or final comments about this survey?

Appendix 6

Sample Coded Survey Data

Q.8.a) How is the oral history collection accessed?

We have published a number of	[*Books – Publication*]
books and pamphlets using the collection;	
users are encouraged to use these also.	
A number of the recording campaigns	
ended with the creation of exhibition	[*Exhibition – Events*]
panels which we still occasionally use	

Onsite access is currently (June 2015)	
via audio CDs or cassette tapes,	[*CDs – Carrier*] [*Tapes – Carrier*]
but by August 2015 will be via cloud	[*Cloud – Access*]
storage with limited access	

Masters now deposited at Regional	
Sound Archive, so collection	[*Sound Archive – Partnership*]
also available there	

Depends on format of original; digital/CD	[*CD – Carrier*]
on public access PCs; cassette	[*Playback – Equipment*] [*Tape – Carrier*]
have facilities to play but would look	
to convert to digital	[*Conversion – Preservation*]

CDs could be run on computers in	[*Playback – Equipment*]
the building.	

Q.15) How is oral history used in your exhibition programme?

Extracts from selected recordings
were used in one interactive exhibition. [*Exhibition – Events*]
We have also used them to create
online resources (articles) highlighting [*Online – Access*]
the collections and the history of our
organisation.

Exhibition gallery has facility to play
sound recordings, either via [*Listening post – Access*]
headphones or as ambient noise

See above! Archives and libraries do
no use it much because our exhibition
programme is very limited and we do
not have an AV technician to help,
nor the playback equipment for the
exhibitions. thus we use the occasional [*Transcript – Finding aids*]
transcript or extract, or haul out the [*Extract – Finding aids*]
exhibition panels from past exhibitions. [*Exhibitions – Events*]

Very limited on-site display space,
so oral history only used in small-scale
wall-mounted listening post [*Listening post – Access*]

As part of a range of media and
collections used to interpret local and
social history themes [*History – Themes*]
Our oral histories have been the focus
of various exhibitions held here, one
example of this is exhibitions held to [*Exhibitions – Events*]
celebrate the culmination of oral history

projects/traineeships.

For instance, the capturing of oral
histories has been at the core of three
archive traineeships which we have
hosted between 2011-2014. These
traineeships were funded by the
Heritage Lottery Fund's   [*Funding – Resources*]
grant programme which sought to
support the development of a more
diverse workforce in England's
archive sector. As part of the scheme,
trainees were recruited to paid, full-time   [*Traineeships – Staff*]
placements at host institutions (such as
ours) where they would learn a range of
on-the-job skills from core staff.
The first two traineeships here
were focused on recording oral
history interviews with members
of the Bengali and Somali communities   [*Immigrants – Outreach*]
respectively (voices missing from our
collections) and the last was about
capturing the histories of Black and
Minority Ethnic women in [——] by   [*BME – Outreach*]
recording oral history interviews with
BME women from the local area.
Each traineeship ended with an
exhibition to celebrate the work   [*Exhibition – Events*]
completed and to highlight the oral
history recordings collected.
Other exhibitions held here have also
focused on oral history material collected
as part of projects on which we partnered

(e.g. [——] project run by [——] Museum.   [*Exhibition – Events*]

Exhibitions held here have often naturally
led to the undertaking of oral history
interviews by us (almost a by-product),
arising from the research undertaken to
put on the exhibition itself which can   [*Exhibition – Events*]
lead to interviewing people relating to
the content of the exhibition (e.g. shop   [*Business – Outreach*]
owners for a photography exhibition   [*Exhibition – Events*]
about shop fronts) or persons with a
direct relationship to the creator of the
work on display (e.g. relative who can
add context and whose interview will be
of interest for future audiences).

We haven't used it in an onsite
exhibition yet but would love to
feature excerpts at some point.
Our Oral History website is like
an exhibition with excerpts and   [*Online – Access*]
information about the participants
and the history of the [————].

We include audio-visual material
as part of our on-site exhibitions   [*Exhibitions – Events*]
programme where appropriate

We usually have an audio-visual   [*Playback – Equipment*]
item playing as part of our
exhibition programme in our foyer   [*Exhibition – Events*]

OH Kiosk, quotations in print   [*Kiosk – Access*]

and online   [*Online – Access*]

We may include extracts of

recordings on a listening post.   [*Listening post – Access*]

Oral history is part of permanent

displays in the ——— Museum

(recordings relating to the ——),

whilst is also used in temporary

displays (e.g., recordings of

WW1 women workers used in recent

[———] Journey's exhibition at the museum.   [*Exhibition – Events*]

We have listening posts permanently   [*Listening post – Access*]

installed in the building. Content is

changed quarterly.

Not used yet for online exhibition –

but selection and use for funded   [*Funding – Resources*]

project may allow this to be explored.

Q.17.a) If there is no online access to the complete recording please state the reasons.

We have not investigated online storage

so can't say if that would be a factor.

More important the recordings are raw data.

Few would interest potential listeners

for 50 or 90 minutes, so I doubt that

putting whole, unedited interviews   [*Impractical – Access*]

online would ever be worthwhile.

Resources to put collections on line.   [*Budget – Resources*]

Entire recordings are not a very
accessible resource and only useful   [*Impractical – Access*]
for a very small group of users.
Summaries and clips are more practical.   [*Summary – Finding aids*]

Lack of resources   [*Budget – Resources*]

We want people to encourage people
to come in to the archive and use our
onsite facilities first and foremost.   [*Onsite – Access*]
If someone was desperate to listen to
one and couldn't come in then we might
consider sharing the whole file with them.   [*Sharing – Access*]

Software required to add audio content   [*Software – Resources*]
not available

Privacy and confidentiality in some   [*Privacy – Ethics*]
cases, not all.

Personal or sensitive nature of content   [*Privacy – Ethics*]

Our local authority isn't in a position to   [*No facility – Resources*]
provide online access;
we are still fighting to be able to provide   [*Budget – Resources*]
an online catalogue for wider collections.
Once this is accomplished, then I still
think it unlikely that there will be online
access to complete recordings due to   [*Impractical –Access*]
all of the above reasons; most of interviews

are at least 2 hours long; some have
restricted copyright consent   [*Privacy – Ethics*]

Limited resources to digitise and   [*Migration – Preservation*]
catalogue collections and clear rights   [*Catalogue – Finding aid*]
issues   [*Agreement – Ethics*]

Demand not demonstrated –
other online access priorities   [*Online – Access*]

No facility to do so   [*No facility – Resources*]

*Q.22) What would you like to offer if you had the resources available, e.g.,
video oral history, other ways of access?*
Video oral history and   [*Video – Recording medium*]
online access would be good.   [*Online – Access*]

Access to more original oral history
material online, via Library website.   [*Online – Access*]
Greater use of oral history in Library
exhibition gallery   [*Exhibition – Events*]

We have found a way of linking
transcripts to audio which allows the   [*Transcript – Finding aids*]
transcript to become, in effect, an
index to the recording. We have done
the necessary work for about 50
recordings, but do not have the resources   [*Budget – Resources*]
to follow it up at present.
We would like, therefore, to transcribe   [*Transcribe – Finding aids*]
all our interviews in Word (some are MS
at present) and to link them to the audio.

Make existing collection accessible in   [*Migration – Preservation*]
up to date format.

Using [————] cloud storage   [*Online – Access*]
and its public access module,
we hope to extend access to
selected other libraries.   [*Libraries – Partnership*]

More web-based access to clips.   [*Online – Access*]

Dedicated terminals for visitors to   [*Playback – Equipment*]
listen to recordings in our reading room
and in other areas for the building for   [*Listening posts – Access*]
exhibitions/outreach (e.g. akin to facilities   [*Exhibitions – Events*]
such as London Metropolitan Archives'
Mediatheque and the BFI Mediateque etc).   [*Kiosk – Access*]

We would love to include them in an
exhibition where excerpts could be heard.   [*Exhibition – Events*]
It would be fantastic to have sound booths   [*Listening post – Access*]
you could go into all around our campuses
where you could put on a pair of headphones
and hear someone's memories of that space
in the past.

Online access where appropriate would be   [*Online – Access*]
very useful.
Online access   [*Online – Access*]

We would like to convert our recordings   [*Migration – Preservation*]
to current digital formats for preservation
and access, and implement a migration

process. We would also like to make oral
history material more widely available, e.g. online   [*Online – Access*]

Access will remain controlled/restricted.   [*Control – Access*]
If we had more resources these would
go into more interviewing as we have
enough equipment, software, technological   [*Budget – Resources*]
support and staff time to enable us to manage
the collection.
Marketing is on another budget, as is the   [*Marketing – Resources*]
web site which could be significantly better.   [*Online – Access*]

More of an online presence would be good   [*Online – Access*]

Dedicated pod style listening or listening   [*Listening posts – Access*]
posts – or supply of [county] recordings
to heritage venue with those facilities.   [*Heritage – Partnership*]

Online access where appropriate.   [*Online – Access*]
Copy VHS to DVD.   [*Migration – Preservation*]

Appendix 7

Codebook

There are three themes [**bold**], fourteen headings [*italics*], and 75 sub-headings. Number of responses per heading and sub-heading are in square brackets [ ]

Themes

 Headings

  Sub-headings Frequency of appearance

Usability [total: 30]

 Users [total: 4]

  External   1

  Students   1

  TV researchers   1

  Visitors   1

 Publications [total: 1]

  Books   1

 Events [total: 21]

  Exhibitions   20

  Pop-ups   1

 Themes [total: 4]

  History   2

  Reminiscence   2

Accessibility [Total: 130]

Outreach [total: 23]

Alumni	1
BME	2
Business	4
Community	4
Immigrants	2
Irish	1
LGBT	1
Low income	1
Migrants	2
Minorities	1
Young	1
Vietnamese	1
Volunteers	1
Groups	1

Ethics [total: 19]

Permission	1
Anonymized	1
Confidentiality	1
Personal nature	1
Privacy	3
Agreement	4
Redacted	7
Edited	1

Equipment [total: 7]

Playback	6
Technology	1

Finding aids [total: 13]

Catalogue	5
Extract	1
Indexes	1
Summary	2
Transcript	4

Access [total: 52]

Appointment	2
Limited	1
Closed	6
Cloud	1
Access-on-demand	1
Online	21
Social media	1
Listening post	7
Impractical	3
Onsite	1
Sharing	1
Public	1
Digital	3
Control	1
Kiosk	2

Partnership [total: 16]

Sound Archive	5
Libraries	1
CIC	1
In-house	4
Museum	2
Other groups	2
Heritage venue	1

Assets [Total: 35]

Carrier [total: 5]

Tape	3
CDs	2

Preservation [total: 8]

Surrogate	1
Migration	7

Recording medium [total: 1]

Video	1

Resources [total: 21]

Funding	5
Traineeships	1
Restructuring	1
Budget	6
Software	2
No facility	2
Cuts	1
Marketing	1
Staff	1
Backlogs	1

Appendix 8

Case Study Text

Oral history: access and use
The case of respondent three

Introduction
Respondent three is a Heritage Centre (HC) with an oral history collection. The oral history collections were created separately in the 1980s by the museum and archives: the museum service (6 museums) created a D-Day collection with another project deposited by a volunteer group. The museum service's intention was to add these interviews to its permanent resources for future displays and research. The archive collected interviews produced mainly by external groups or individuals rather than by its own staff. The bulk of the oral history interviews were recorded by members of the joint museums & archives service or volunteers working with them in 1993-2009.

The museum service (6 museums) and archives were amalgamated in 1994 with the archives transferred to the libraries department in 2013. Museums are now run jointly with the city's visitor services section. The HC has only existed since 2011 when the museum and archives search room combined with the local studies library in the central library site.

Overview

Holdings

The Heritage Centre (HC) holds both audio and video oral history: of which there are about 1,425 hours. There are approximately 20 collections: all but one has been catalogued. These 20 collections contain 1,706 interviews of which 1,686 have been catalogued. Only a handful of the collections are transcribed in their entirety: 905 of the 1,686 interviews have been transcribed.

Staff Resources

Currently, there are seven staff within the HC. The weekly breakdown is as follows: one member of staff and one volunteer both contribute one hour to oral history.

The current situation contrasts with what is possible when Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funding is available: under the two HLF funded projects of 2002–2009 there was a full-time project officer, one member of staff working ½ day a week, and about five or six volunteers at any one time contributing 10+ hours a week.

Access and Playback Equipment

Notice is required in advance. There is a cassette player, recorders that can be used as players, and a personal computer (PC) with headphones as in practice all interviews are digitized. Currently, with a few minutes notice, the digital files and transcripts can be loaded onto the PC.

The oral history collection is accessed about once a month. The most common users are university students for academic research.

Online and In-house Finding Aids

The Internet is used to widen access to oral history resources. Three types of finding aids are used both in-house and online: the electronic catalogue, summaries, and collection guides. The catalogue and summaries are preferred over the collection guides: the latter are incomplete and are produced to accompany research projects rather than by collection. The catalogue contains the summaries and people can search by free-text, names, and recording campaigns.

Usage

Publicly, the collection has been used by students, lecturers, and artists: local university students used recordings from the clothing industry for a musical; an university lecturer used some extracts in publications about the history of health and safety; and recordings of the seafront were used by an artist for an outdoors public theatre event. One group is missing: radio and television broadcasters. It was found that broadcasters prefer to make their own contacts, via the HC, and make their own recordings. In the one instance of looking at a piece of audio the audio was not used because of its poor quality.

Along with public use the local council also makes use of the oral history: oral history extracts have appeared in a press release about the Falklands war, and in a history of local public housing. Oral history is a key element in council museums: exhibitions, audio-visuals, text panels, and labels for objects. Oral history is also used to inform the selection of objects and of writing in general.

Within the HC itself there is limited use. This is due to limited financial resources: there is no funding for an audio-visual technician, and no playback equipment for use in exhibitions. Where oral history is used it is used on display panels, and an occasional transcript or extract.

Some recording campaigns have ended with exhibition panels that are still used occasionally.

Ethics and Rights

Ethics is a serious issue. The issues range from editing recordings because of privacy concerns, permissions rights, and online access to complete recordings.

The HC has redacted passages in transcripts at the request of interviewees; closed recordings due to confidential disclosure of confidential recordings; and refused permission for use of the recording because of concerns of distress to the interviewee. So far, only three interviews have been withdrawn from public view: one was destroyed, and two restricted to archive staff only.

Many recordings were made before rights forms became accepted. And depositors have lost the rights forms that contain the interviewee consents.

There is a lack of online access to complete recordings: The HC believes that few recordings would be of interest to potential users because the recordings are 50–90 minutes long, and that putting the raw data of unedited interviews would not be worthwhile. The HC is also concerned about the loss of control over the content of the recording. And some interviews have restricted copyright consent either by the interviewees or the oral history creator that forbids the content placed online.

Outreach

The HC's oral history programme does not just exist for the local residents to consume but aims to encourage residents to get involved in documenting their own local heritage. This involvement starts with the local residents receiving training from the HC staff. It ends with either the

volunteers depositing their own work with the HC or returning to work on externally-funded projects. Some volunteers have continued to work with the HC on non-oral history related work such as cataloguing.

Between 2002–2009 there were two Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) funded projects leading to 600 interviews involving 30 volunteers. Skills were learnt in interview technique, transcribing, and creating exhibitions. Some volunteers have found the skills learnt on oral history projects useful for their studies and future employment. Several volunteers looking for museum jobs have got them because of their oral history experience.

These HLF programmes also collected photographs, documents, and objects to create a more rounded collection.

Future Direction

The HC has several ideas about improving access to their oral history collections. Firstly, there is a proposal to set aside a small room for dedicated audio access. Secondly, they envisage an access-on-demand system utilizing their existing content and finding aids: recordings in the MP3 format, all existing transcripts whether Word documents or PDFs (Portable Document Format), embedded audio in PDFs (see next paragraph for description), and the museum's collection management system. Users will have a range of resources from which to choose. These resources will be available on a PC within the HC.

As mentioned above the HC staff have created an innovative way of linking transcripts (as PDFs) to the audio file so the transcript becomes the index. So far, 50 recordings and PDFs have been linked but the HC does not have funds to continue.

The technique cannot link the word in the transcript directly to the word in the recording: it does take the user to the start of the audio that

corresponds to the start of the page of the transcript. At its longest the user will have to listen to about one minute of audio before their selection appears; at its shortest the wait will be about 15 seconds. A brief description follows of how to embed audio into a PDF file:

1) Transcript is divided into short sections in Word and then converted to a PDF.

2) The audio file is divided into sections. Each section begins with the words from the start of the PDF page.

3) Audio sections are then embedded in the appropriate page of the PDF.

4) When searching for a word or phrase in the PDF document you are taken to the start of the appropriate page of the PDF and the embedded audio starts to play.

5) The recording starts from the first words on the page: the shorter the page = quicker you will get to the part of the recording you need.

Aside from the technological aspect the HC will continue to cooperate with the museum. There are no plans to cooperate over oral history with other libraries and archives in the county. And the HC would like to see more the following communities included: immigrants, and local businesses such as aerospace and manufacturing.

Conclusion

Oral history always consumes resources and there are always those cataloguing backlogs, and limited staff time and budgets. The HC is, due to financial constraints, currently (and in contrast to the recent past) more of a facilitator of access to oral history than a creator. Other than when it receives external funding for projects it has a greater involvement in assisting the museum service in their own exhibitions, and local residents in creating their own heritage projects.

There is an emphasis on in-house access rather than the Internet. This emphasis enables greater control over who can access the content and whether it is used as the interviewee specified.

Yet, the HC is not standing still. Even with limited finances it is looking at how to improve digital access to its recordings by combining its content and finding aids into one access-on-demand system. It has also devised an innovative system for embedding audio in PDFs and this too will be a part of its on-demand system.