

Archival Film: New Opportunities for Case Study Development and Presentation?

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The potential opportunities and limitations of utilising archival film as a primary data source have received very little attention from business historians. Archival film can be a rich source of oral and visual material for the development and presentation of historical case study material, but it can also be utilised as a powerful research tool. The paper draws on the experiences of the author, who produced two films during a study of the history of the South Coast Labour Council (SCLC). The SCLC is the peak union body for the Illawarra region of NSW. During the study access to one of the region's local television newsreel archives provided a rare opportunity to work with primary data that significantly extended the range of possibilities for rich case study development and presentation. The resulting artefacts included 1) a 15 minutes documentary on the 75 year history of the SCLC and; 2) a two hour set of selected historical excerpts.

The presentation explores first, a range of essential processes that require consideration when working with this form of data. Issues explored include: 1) access, 2) equipment and 3) production processes. Second, the paper explores a range of research methods that allowed a deeper exploration of the history of the organisation post production. This section includes methods for eliciting memories in focus groups and small groups.

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