

Symposium Program

Time	Presenter and Bio	Topic
9:30	Al Thomson <i>OHV President</i>	Welcome and introduction: Opportunities and challenges for oral history in the digital world
9:45	John Francis John has been a journalist in various forms since the 1960s. He still has his beloved Tandberg portable tape recorder from those early days, but these days he uses Canon video cameras - and an iPhone 7 Plus (with special accessories).	Let's Remember This: Video for oral history recording With ever-improving digital equipment it is getting easier and cheaper to use video for oral history recording. Using examples from his own work, John explores the essentials, from location considerations to sound, lighting, and editing. Various equipment options will also be demonstrated. Finally, he'll look at delivery options - from DVD to the internet.
10:00		Discussion
10:10	Judy Hughes Judy Hughes is a journalist, communications professional and oral historian. She is currently finalising her thesis for a Master of Arts by Research and Coursework at Monash University. The thesis uses oral history to explore how Melbourne newspaper journalists experienced change in the period 1975 to 2015. Judy worked in journalism for 16 years, specialising in politics and industrial relations and in 1999 was engaged as the first media and communications manager for the Australian Industrial Relations Commission. In 2015 Judy was commended in the Oral History Victoria's Community Innovation Awards for a short video combining oral history audio excerpts with illustration and animation to tell the story of a community action campaign. (Video available at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RBr1QwAjvWc .)	Using websites in oral history One of the key challenges facing oral history today is the question of accessibility. If oral history interview material is to be stored for future researchers it must be kept in a repository that can be accessed by those who have an interest in its contents. Ideally that would be a library or an archive, but even then, a physical location has its limitations. A possible solution to this dilemma is the use of websites, but they too have their problems including ongoing maintenance and global exposure for interviewees. I look at some of the benefits and issues associated with using websites for oral history projects.
10:25		Discussion

10:40	<p>Al Thomson</p> <p>Alistair Thomson is Professor of History at Monash University in Melbourne, Australia. He was previously President of the International Oral History Association and an editor of the British journal Oral History, and is currently President of Oral History Victoria. His oral history books include: Anzac Memories (1994 and 2013), The Oral History Reader (1998, 2006 and 2015 with Rob Perks), Ten Pound Poms (2005, with Jim Hammerton), Moving Stories: an intimate history of four women across two countries (2011), Oral History and Photography (2011, with Alexander Freund), and Australian Lives: An Intimate History (2017, with Anisa Puri). Website: http://profiles.arts.monash.edu.au/alistair-thomson/</p>	<p>A new type of oral history book - Australian Lives in the digital era</p> <p>A discussion of the digital technologies used in the Australian Generations book and their implications.</p>
10:50		Discussion
11:00	Morning tea	Catered by OHV
11:30	<p>Rachel Goldlust</p> <p>Rachel is currently beginning the third year of her PhD scholarship looking at the environmental history of people moving ‘off-grid’ across Australia from the 890s until today. Previously having worked as both a historical researcher, town planner and environmental educator Rachel has been living and working around alternative rural dwellers for 7 or 8 years and wanted to study them and their influences.</p> <p>Her research is seeking to explore the ideological drivers and the political and environmental context through which communities and individuals have sought out the practice of ‘physical disengagement’ from city life. This ‘movement’ will be studied as the outpouring of generations of individuals and communities seeking out alternative living practices based upon returning to the land.</p>	<p>Digital homesteading and oral history, what can oral history provide that the internet can’t?</p> <p>After completing close to thirty interviews across Australia with individuals who have decided to release themselves from urban living to a more conscious, self-sufficient, slow living paradigm, interesting issues have been raised regarding the function of oral history in a saturated online space. Little oral history material has looked specifically at collecting and compiling an archive of rural ‘homesteading’, nominally made since the 1970s, as a form of environmental protest. This research presents not only an insight into the means and a mechanism for living in environments disengaged from the services, institutions and lifestyles of mainstream society but argues for oral history stories as distinct from online repositories and social networking sites.</p>

11:45		Discussion
11:55	<p>André Dao and Michael Green</p> <p>André Dao is a writer of fiction and non-fiction. He is the co-founder of Behind the Wire, an oral history project documenting people's experience of immigration detention, and the deputy editor of the New Philosopher.</p> <p>Michael Green is a journalist and coordinator of Behind the Wire. He's an editor of They Cannot Take the Sky, an oral history book and exhibition about immigration detention. He is one of the producers of The Messenger, a podcast about Abdul Aziz Muhamat and his life in detention on Manus Island.</p>	<p>Behind the Wire</p> <p>Behind the Wire works with people who have been, or still are, in immigration detention to tell their stories. Narrators are often in legally and psychologically vulnerable situations. That vulnerability can be exacerbated by the global accessibility inherent in working digitally. However, the amplification of narrators' stories does not necessarily, or only, entail increased risks. In some cases, visibility can offer protection.</p> <p>This paper will provide (de-identified) examples, delineate potential risks, and outline how we worked collaboratively to identify and minimise those risks and ensure informed consent. We will discuss the complex questions of risk and visibility, caution and agency.</p>
12:10		Discussion
12:20	<p>Mike Jones (Keynote speaker)</p>	<p>Preservation, Presentation, and Possibility: oral histories in a complex age</p> <p>The impact of digital technology on oral history practice has been significant, from project design and the sourcing of potential interviewees through to the long term preservation of audio files, video, multimedia and online content. At first glance, we can capture more content, process it faster, and distribute it further than ever before. But with this come challenges as well as opportunities. Digital preservation and the management of recordings and other research data solves some problems while creating new ones; and the potential speed with which we can share (or manipulate) our work raises interesting ethical questions. At the same time, digital technologies open up new possibilities for sharing our findings, engaging with communities, analysing networks, and exploring our data. In this presentation, Mike Jones will draw on his experiences as an archivist, historian, and digital humanities researcher to examine some of the complexities faced by contemporary oral historians and related researchers, while also looking forward to new and exciting possibilities available to us as we head further into the digital age.</p>
12:45	Discussion	
12:55	Al Thomson	Conclusion