

Oral History Interviews Research Protocol

Oral Histories of Humanities Computing

Oral Histories of Humanities Computing is part of a broader research group at the University of Alberta dedicated to the collection and preservation of the history of Humanities Computing in Canada. It will augment an existing collection of documents related to the origins of Humanities Computing in Canada with oral histories of the key researchers who were involved in the field in these early years.

Protocol

We have identified five key researchers to interview based on their expertise in the field of Humanities Computing or their involvement in the early years of computing in Canada. Following snowball sampling we will begin our interviewing based on existing contacts and build on these contacts to reach out to others who were at one time or another involved in the field. The group aims to collect interviews from 20 to 30 participants.

5 key researchers:

Willard McCarty

Ian Lancashire

Susan Hockey

Joseph Raben

Kelly Gottlieb

We will contact the potential interviewees by email. Along with the email invitation the group will also send a consent form via email. The potential interviewees will be allowed to withdraw their consent at any point up until publication. In addition to the email invitation and consent form we will also provide the potential interviewees with a sample of the questions that we will be asking so they will have the opportunity to prepare for the interview if they feel the need. We will document any and all conversation via email in preparation for the interview which will become part of the interview record.

The interviews are set to begin February 1, 2010. The interviews will take place over Skype as the interviewees are located in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States; this will allow for maximum flexibility for both the interviewee as well as the interviewer. The interviewees will be asked for their verbal consent at the outset of the interview and at this time will be reminded that they will have the opportunity to withdraw their consent at any time up until publication. The Skype interviews will be recorded and later transcribed by the interviewers. The transcription will then be sent to the interviewee where they will have the opportunity to review the results and make any changes they deem necessary.

The resulting interviews will be held in the University of Alberta Library's Education and Research Archive (ERA). It is our intention to make these interviews available to the public. We will use these interviews to augment our current collection of historical

documents with the aims of developing a digital archive in accordance with our mission statement:

To acquire, preserve, and make accessible materials in all formats documenting the history of Humanities Computing in Canada. The Group seeks to provide archival management of these records and to promote the education of such aspects of Canada's computing history for the benefit of the academic community and the public at large.

Invitation

Dear Colleague,

We are writing to you on behalf of the History and Archives group at the University of Alberta to request your participation in an oral history project. Our research group is dedicated to the collection and preservation of any and all documents related to the history of Humanities Computing and the early role of computers in Academic life in Canada.

We will be conducting interviews via Skype beginning in early February. These interviews will later be transcribed and a copy will be sent to you. At this point you will be asked to review the transcription and make any corrections you deem necessary. The resulting interview will be added to our archive collection in ERA, the University of Alberta Library's Education and Research Archive. Our intention is to make whole or parts of the interview available to the public.

Attached is a consent form allowing us to record the interview and _____. At any point up until publication you will have the opportunity to withdraw your consent. In addition we have attached some sample interview questions so you have the opportunity to review some of the questions we will be asking.

In addition to your participation in the oral history portion of our project we would at this time like to request any documents you have in your possession that you believe would aid our group in our research. Our current collection includes: conference proceedings, meeting minutes, personal correspondence, Globe and Mail newspaper articles, newsletters, and research proposals. If you have materials you think would be helpful to us and that you would be willing to share with us, or make reference to during the interview, the research group would be greatly appreciated.

If you have any further questions please do not hesitate to contact us.

Sample Interview Questions

- Can you please tell me about your early research interests?
 - Is there anything in your past that you believe set you in that direction?

- Was that always your intended field of study?
- What led you to a career in Academia?
- Did it seem to you that many of your colleagues shared your interests?
- Can you tell me about the nature of acquiring funding at this time?
 - Relative to you colleagues?
- Can you tell me about the nature of the working environment? For example could you describe it as interdisciplinary (a way it is often described nowadays)?
- How did members of academia respond the onslaught of computers in the 1980s?
- How did the public respond?
- Where did your support come from (personally, financially)? (An institution, organization, colleagues)
- When did you first come to associate yourself with Humanities Computing? (Why)?
- How would you explain Humanities Computing to an 'outsider'?
- How would you define Humanities Computing?
 - If you only had three words?
- Nowadays many choose to use the term Digital Humanities rather than Humanities Computing. What is your take on this?
- Why do you think many find it difficult to grasp the term Humanities Computing?
 - Does this work as an advantage or a disadvantage to the field?
- Where do you believe has the most potential for future Humanities Computing research? (field, location)
- Today, do you think Humanities Computing is its own discipline?

Consent Form

SAMPLE DEED OF GIFT

[From John Neuenschwander, *Oral History and the Law* (2003)]

I, [name of interviewee] of [address], herein permanently give, convey, and assign to [name of archive, program or individual], which is currently in possession of my interview (or oral memoir) consisting of [description]. In so doing I understand that my interview (or oral memoir) will be made available to researchers and may be quoted from, published or broadcast in any medium that the [archive, program or individual] shall deem appropriate.

In making this gift I fully understand that I am conveying all legal title and literary property rights which I have or may be deemed to have in my interview (or oral memoir) as well as my rights, title and interest in any copyright which may be secured under the laws now or later in force and effect in the United States of America. My conveyance of copyright encompasses the exclusive rights of: reproduction, distribution, preparation of derivative works, public performance, public display as well as all renewals and extensions.

I, [agent for the duly appointed representative of] accept the interview (or oral memoir) of [name of interviewee] for inclusion into the [archive or program].

[signature of donor]

[signature of agent/representative]

[date]

Provisions for Control of Access and/or Sealing of Interview

No researcher shall be allowed access to my oral history without my written permission.

No researcher will be permitted to quote from my interview unless he or she has submitted the quotes to me and received my written approval.

My oral history interview will remain closed to all researchers until [date] or my death, whichever occurs first.

My oral history interview cannot be made available to researchers unless all references from which my identity could be known are edited out and a pseudonym is assigned. After my death, all portions of my oral history interview which were held back, as well as my true identity, shall be made available.

DEED OF GIFT RELEASE FOR INTERVIEWER

[From John Neuenschwander, *Oral History and the Law* (2003)]

I, [name of interviewer], who served as an interviewer for the [name of project or sponsoring program or archive] and who conducted an interview or interviews with [name of interviewee] on or about [date] for which no legal releases were executed, do herein permanently give, convey and assign to [name of program or archive]. In doing so I understand that the interview (or oral memoir) with [name of interviewee] will be made available to researchers and may be quoted from, published or broadcast in any medium that the [name of program or archive] shall deem appropriate.

In making this gift I fully understand that I am conveying all legal title and literary property rights which I have or may be deemed to have in this interview or interviews (or oral memoir) as well as all my right, title and interest as joint author in any copyright which may be secured under the laws now or later in force and effect in the United States of America. My conveyance of copyright encompasses the exclusive rights of reproduction, distribution, preparation of derivative works, public performance, public display as well as all renewals and extensions.

I, [name], agent for or duly appointed representative of [the archive or program], accept the interview (or oral memoir) with [name of interviewee] for inclusion into [the archive or program].

[signature of interviewer]

[signature of agent/representative]

[date]