

Syracuse University

SURFACE

School of Information Studies - Post-doc and
Student Scholarship

School of Information Studies (iSchool)

6-5-2019

Talking the Talk: Public Library Oral History Projects on the Web

Georgia Westbrook

Syracuse University, gwestbro@syr.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://surface.syr.edu/ischoolstudents>



Part of the [Library and Information Science Commons](#), and the [Oral History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Westbrook, Georgia, "Talking the Talk: Public Library Oral History Projects on the Web" (2019). *School of Information Studies - Post-doc and Student Scholarship*. 7.

<https://surface.syr.edu/ischoolstudents/7>

This Poster is brought to you for free and open access by the School of Information Studies (iSchool) at SURFACE. It has been accepted for inclusion in School of Information Studies - Post-doc and Student Scholarship by an authorized administrator of SURFACE. For more information, please contact surface@syr.edu.

Talking the Talk: Public Library Oral History Projects on the Web

Georgia Westbrook

iSchool Public Libraries Initiative, School of Information Studies, Syracuse University

Introduction

This poster presents research in progress considering how oral history projects are, or are not, presented on the websites of public libraries who host them and attendant issues. A study of 38 public library websites has prompted a focus on these questions:

- *What are best practices for sharing oral histories online?*
- *What are the ethical considerations when sharing oral histories online?*
- *What accessibility issues exist related to oral histories online? What are public libraries doing to address them?*

Key takeaways

- Without a best practices guide tailored to oral histories online, follow web accessibility guidelines and provide at least some transcription and some audio online
- Ensure those who need to access your collection can learn about the collection online — limiting that information to in-person visitors limits exposure and discourages use of collection
- Plan for changing media and practice due diligence in securing permission to share online; remember that the interviewer and subject share copyright

Emerging Trends and Issues

- 7 libraries surveyed did not share their collections online – because of format problems, insufficient releases, etc.
 - Understanding the community and potential benefits and harms is vital
- Many oral histories were recorded before the Internet existed; release forms for those could not have anticipated the Internet's existence. Modular and customizable forms can mitigate this issue going forward, but how can it be addressed in the present?

What's Next?

- Continuing research at Syracuse University this fall
- Creating a directory of public library oral history projects online
- Creating a comprehensive set of ethics and accessibility guidelines for sharing oral histories online

References: shorturl.at/ghxW6

Learn more about the iSchool Public Libraries Initiative: shorturl.at/oqERZ