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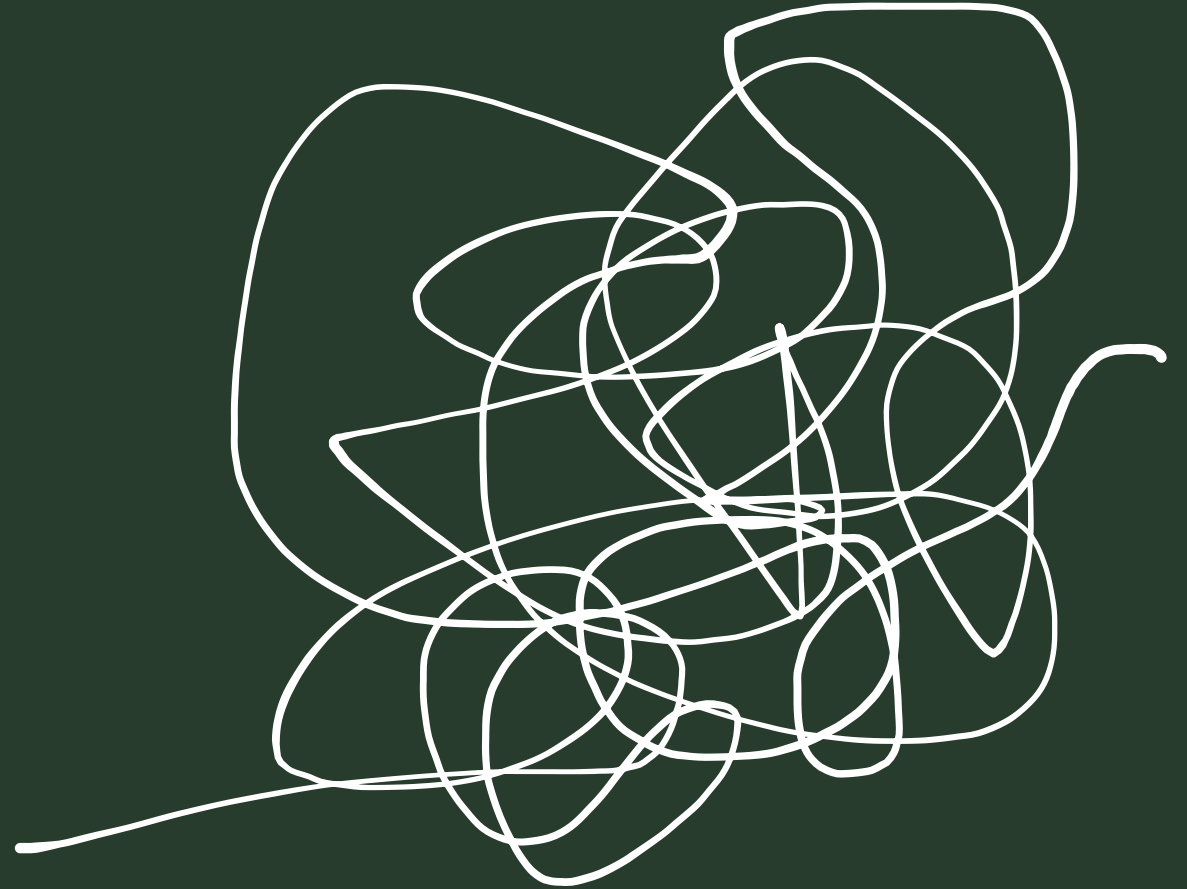
Archiving and Reusing Oral History
a wicked problem

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The Deep Dark Secret of oral history is that nobody spends much time listening to or watching recorded and collected interview documents

*- Michael Frisch, Three Dimensions and More: Oral History Beyond the Paradoxes of Method*

Wicked Problem

*- Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*

As you will see, we are calling them "wicked" not because these properties are themselves ethically deplorable. We use the term "wicked" in a meaning akin to that of "malignant" (in contrast to "benign") or "vicious" (like a circle) or "tricky" (like a leprechaun) or "aggressive" (like a lion, in contrast to the docility of a lamb).

*- Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*

By adopting new, positivist languages, shifting from 'problem' and 'solution' to 'situation' and opportunity'. We can shift to a more optimistic and creatively confident mindset amongst 'situation'-owners."

*- Mark Bailey et al., A design-led approach to transforming wicked problems into design situations and opportunities*

You may agree that it becomes morally objectionable for the planner to treat a wicked problem as though it were a tame one, or to tame a wicked problem prematurely, or to refuse to recognize the inherent wickedness of social problems.

*- Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*

The history of progress is littered with experimental failures.

*- Horst Rittel and Melvin Webber, Dilemmas in a General Theory of Planning*

1. This issue of oral history archiving and reuse is a difficult, multidimensional, and dynamic situation

2. There is a long history which we can learn from
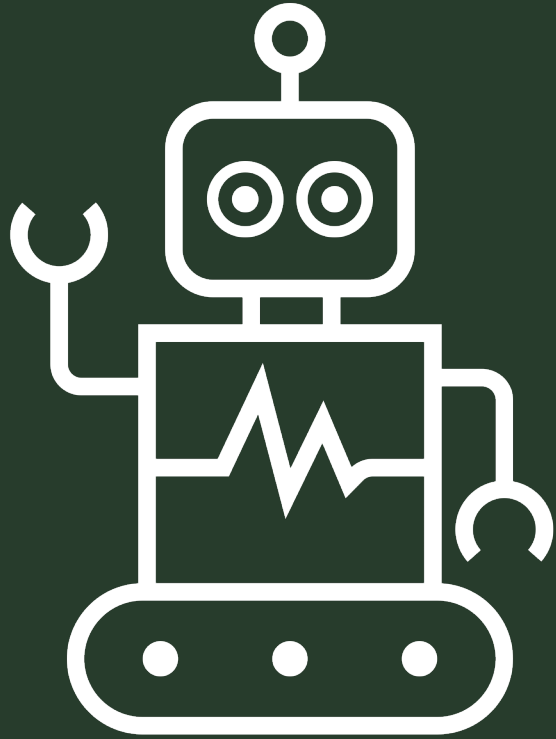
Technology

Ethics

Labour

Money

# Technology

We stumbled onto digital technology for oral history under the false assumption that it would save us money and personnel in the long run.

- Willem Schneider, "Oral history in the age of digital possibilities" in *Oral History and Digital Humanities* ed. D. Boyd and M. Larson.

1.  Obsolescence and Evolution

2.  Systems within systems

We stumbled onto digital technology for oral history under the false assumption that it would save us money and personnel in the long run.

- *Willem Schneider, "Oral history in the age of digital possibilities" in Oral History and Digital Humanities ed. D. Boyd and M. Larson.*

Ethics

- Copyright

- Data Protection

- Sensitivity

# Labour

Technology

Ethics

Labour

Following my departure from the Kentucky Historical Society in 2006, the Civil Rights Movement in Kentucky Oral History Project Digital Media Database was digitally abandoned, opened up to online hackers and eventually taken down. After some time, the online resource returned to life; it has yet to be updated and at this point, it remains incompatible with many modern Internet browsers.

- *Doug Boyd, ""I Just Want to Click on It to Listen": Oral History Archives, Orality, and Usability" in Oral History and Digital Humanities ed. D. Boyd and M. Larson.*

Take proper care of your monuments, and you will not need to restore them. Watch an old building with an anxious care, guard as best you may, and at *any* cost, from every influence of dilapidation.

-   *John Ruskin, quoted by Stewart Brand in How Buildings Learn*
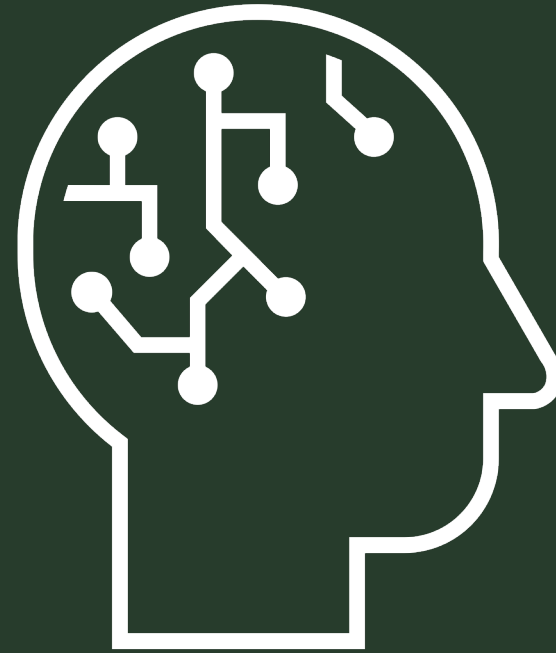
Money

The question of responsibility for maintaining the website after the grant expired became an issue.


*- Sherna Berger Gluck talking about VOAHA in "Why Do We Call It Oral History? Refocusing on Orality/Aurality in the Digital Age" in Oral History and Digital Humanities ed. D. Boyd and M. Larson.*

Technology

Ethics

Labour

Money

# Value

**Technology**

**Ethics**

**Labour**

**Money**

- Topic

- Medium

- Connections

# Value

Technology

Ethics

Labour

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