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Understanding value in digital humanities: a case study from a community oral history archive

By Penny Johnston

Thesis submitted in partial fulfilment for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy, National University of Ireland, University College Cork

Department of Folklore and Ethnology/Béaloideas

Part of a structured PhD in Digital Arts and Humanities

January, 2018

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Declaration of originality

I confirm that the work presented in this thesis is my own, and it has not been submitted for any other degree, either in University College Cork or elsewhere.

Where information has been derived from other sources this is clearly indicated in the thesis according to the norms of academic practice.

_____

Penny Johnston

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I've relied a lot on the support of my family during my research and I really appreciate it! Apart from the general, there were also some specific family inputs to this thesis and the associated work: Derek Johnston and John Sunderland helped with proofreading and John Sunderland photographed North and South Main Streets with me and his photographs were used in Cork's Main Streets.

And finally, Cork city has been the backdrop for much of my work over the past four years. It is a place that my grandfather, Thomas Johnston, was fiercely proud to call his home. He would have enjoyed the Cork Memory Map. I dedicate this work to his memory.

Notes on project names, spelling, referencing and abbreviations

Project names

All of the digital projects described in this thesis are "memory maps" of Cork city, each one succeeding its predecessor. For the purposes of clarity, each map is given a different name in this thesis.

The first digital oral history map is referred to here as "**the original Cork Memory Map**." This denotes the first Cork Memory Map, created in 2010 but now superseded by a new digital project.

- See http://www.ucc.ie/research/memorymap/, last accessed 7 April 2017. (Since May 2017 this URL is no longer fully operational, see Chapter 3.2.3.)

An intermediate site developed as a pilot project to test software is given the name "**Cork's Main Streets**." This site was used as a case study in the research, in particular for carrying out user studies and for generating user feedback.

- See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets, accessed 7 April 2017.

As a result of this pilot project, a new Cork Memory Map was built. This new digital project (also a memory map of Cork and containing some of the same material as the original Cork Memory Map) is referred to here as "**Stories of Place**."

- See http://storiesofplace.org/neatline/show/stories-of-place, accessed 7 April 2017.

Spelling

Digitisation or digitization? Throughout this text I have used the spelling "digitisation" in my own text but, where quoting from texts that use "digitization," I copy the spelling within the cited text. I have used the same approach with other Americanised spellings, leaving them in place when using a direct quotation.

Referencing

I have used Zotero, the citation management tool, to insert references within my text and to build a bibliography at the end. The referencing style that I have chosen is an author/date system, the sixth edition of the American Psychological Association.

While I use many digital and online references, most journal articles have paper equivalents with page numbers that can be referenced. Where these are available I have used these page numbers even when I have consulted digital texts. Where I cite footnotes or end notes, the author and date is followed by the note number (e.g. O'Carroll, 2015, n.7)

I have also referenced articles that are from online-only journals. These do not have page numbers. In journals where it is available I have included the paragraph number; in references to the journal *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, for example, the author and date are followed by a paragraph number (e.g. Borgman, 2009, para. 76). Similarly, I have referenced a chapter from an online book, *A Companion to Digital Humanities*, where there are numbered sections rather than pages or paragraphs. In this case, I refer to the relevant section number (e.g. Hockey, 2004, sec.1).

Abbreviations

This text is liberal in its references to the Cork Folklore Project. Apart from the first usage or within headings and sub-headings, the Cork Folklore Project is usually referred to in the abbreviated form as the "CFP." Occasionally, to avoid constant repetition, it is also referred to as "the Project."

The discipline of digital humanities is widely referred to within the field as "DH." I have used this abbreviation only when it occurs within quotations and titles (for example, "#transformDH").

Abstract

This thesis investigates concepts of value and the ways in which it is assessed in the digital humanities. It does this by examining digital cultural heritage projects created by a community oral history archive. Pressures such as increased oversight, funding cuts and changing audience expectations make it necessary for digital humanists to demonstrate the value of their projects. Both quantitative and qualitative methods are used to do this, but long-form qualitative approaches are rarely used. My research makes an original contribution to the scholarly literature by using a long-form qualitative methodology (participant observation) to study digital projects in context, within the organisations in which they are created. By looking at the "behind the scenes" processes, I have constructed an account of value for my digital project work that concentrates on meaning rather than on measurement. This approach examines criteria such as distinctiveness, the ability to challenge expectations, usefulness, the contribution to fulfilment, whether the material is worth it for its own sake and the contribution that a project can make to public engagement. I argue that, instead of solely examining value through the actions of the end user, in fact value also accrues through making, the process of creation.

This thesis also examines the sensitivities and ethical conundrums that emerge when material collected from living subjects is disseminated online. Digital humanists generally endorse open access while, in contrast, oral historians frequently adopt a curated approach to online dissemination (because of concerns about ethics and privacy). Drawing on empirical data collected during my digital practice, I argue that it is important to eschew dogmatic and binary positions (curated versus open), and instead adopt reflective approaches to the material that we disseminate online. The ethics debate in digital dissemination is not resolved or over, it part of a cycle of engagement that is nuanced, ongoing and relational.

Keywords

ORAL HISTORY, ARCHIVE, COMMUNITY, DIGITAL CULTURAL HERITAGE, DIGITAL HUMANITIES, LIVING SUBJECTS, ETHICAL CONVERSATIONS, CYCLE OF ENGAGEMENT, VALUE, MEANING, QUALTITATIVE, REFLECTIVE

1 Introduction

This thesis is about understanding value in digital cultural projects. It explores the use of digital technologies within a small cultural heritage organisation in Cork city and examines the ways in which digital dissemination strategies can be valuable for host organisations and for the people working there. Drawing on conversations within the disciplines of oral history and digital humanities, I reflect on ideas of value as they pertain to the creation and use of digital cultural heritage projects, with particular reference to digital oral history maps.

My interest in the concept of value stems from the Irish government's response to the 2007/2008 global financial crisis. The subsequent period of fiscal austerity has been characterised by reduced funding for culture, arts and humanities.[1] Instead, the focus of direct investment by the Irish government has been on scientific research, communication and participation; these are seen as crucial to Ireland's future as a "knowledge economy."[2] What does this say about our perceptions of the arts and humanities, and how we, as a culture and a society, value them?

Studies of resource use within digital humanities have generally suggested that impact and value can be measured and assessed using quantitative and qualitative research methods. However, long-form qualitative research methods are poorly understood and applied in digital humanities. While there is a general acknowledgement that qualitative methods should be incorporated into the value and impact assessment process, there is limited agreement on how this can be achieved, and on how qualitative results should be analysed. My research demonstrates how methodological approaches drawn from ethnography can contribute to this conversation.

A central concern of this thesis is a consideration of the way that value is conceived of and assessed within digital humanities. I address this theme by using a long-form qualitative research methodology (participant observation), and working with a community oral history

[1] In Ireland, between 2008 and 2015 there was a 33% cut in the level of funding to the Arts Council. Cultural institutions suffered similar setbacks, with the budget of one, the National Library, being cut by up to 44% (Fitzgibbon, 2015, p. 11).

[2] A series of articles from *The Irish Times* illustrates the point about the prioritisation of scientific over arts and humanities research. An opinion piece by Michael Duffy (chief executive of the Royal Dublin Society) published 15 November 2016 argues that "STEM education [is] critical for the country's future" (at https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/michael-duffy-stem-education-critical-for-country-s-future-1.2861657, accessed 11 August 2017). See also other articles in *The Irish Times* on the funding and promotion of Science, Technology, Engineering and Maths subjects (STEM). In April 2014 an article was published about plans to increase the uptake of STEM; "Science Foundation encourages 'Stem' subjects" by Tim O'Brien (at https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/science-foundation-encourages-stem-subjects-1.1765961, accessed 11 August 2017). By August 2016, Peter McGuire could write of how "Stem steams ahead as students abandon the arts ship" (at https://www.irishtimes.com/news/education/stem-steams-ahead-as-students-abandon-the-arts-ship-1.2763784, accessed 11 August 2017).

archive, the Cork Folklore Project (CFP). My case study focuses in particular on the CFP's digital oral history mapping projects. This thesis documents my work gathering data about the digital dissemination practices of the CFP and the use of focus groups to gather staff responses about digital projects. This empirical research highlights issues associated with digital project creation, sustainability, stewardship and the ethics of online representation and dissemination.

Drawing on the qualitative results gathered during work at the CFP and applying my insights to the theme of value, the thesis culminates in an argument for alternative approaches to value. This is a new contribution to the conversation about the value of digital projects, one that aims to highlight a process of qualitative reasoning and to focus on what value might *mean*, rather than on what can be *measured* to demonstrate value.

1.1 Motivations

My experiences within the cultural heritage sector during the period of austerity have driven this research. This is outlined in some more detail in Chapter 2.1 but I mention it here to underline the fact that my interest in perceptions of value within digital cultural heritage emerges from personal experience. My principal motivations for this study were, firstly, a desire to adopt a position of advocacy for the worth and value of cultural pursuits in general, and secondly, a concern that the conversation about value in digital cultural heritage is being primarily driven by researchers working in large and well-funded multi-disciplinary teams. This fact has, to my mind, the potential to undermine the less spectacular but nevertheless important digital humanities work being done in local community and "grass roots" heritage.

Bearing these concerns in mind, my case study with the CFP is an appropriate fit since my host organisation is a community oral history archive. The development of Web 2.0 technologies has meant that even small organisations and institutions that are run on shoe-string budgets (like the CFP) have the ability to create, broadcast, publish and generally disseminate digital content. Many small organisations are now disseminating intermittently online, through websites and social media.[3] This change has primarily been driven by the development and ease-of-use of free blogging and website tools, as well as social media,

[3] To list just a few local history groups from Cork county that have a web presence, the Aubane Historical Society have their own website (see http://aubanehistoricalsociety.org/, accessed 7 August 2017), as do the Beara Historical Society (see http://westcork.org/, accessed 7 August 2017), while the Ballygarvan and District Local History Society and Bantry Historical Society use Facebook (respectively https://www.facebook.com/BallygarvanHistorySociety/ and https://www.facebook.com/Bantryhistoricalsociety/ both accessed 7 August 2017).

where technological and cost barriers to entry are minimal.

The prevalence of digital dissemination practices creates new burdens of expectation and labour for organisations, and these burdens are not always easy to manage. Despite ease of entry to social media and website publishing technologies, websites and digital engagement practices tend to require ongoing maintenance. They can therefore either take up a large amount of time, or they result in digital projects that are not maintained and that consequentially tend to suffer from problems of technological obsolescence. This is problematic because "[o]ne of the reasons that users think that resources look 'wrong' is if they seem dated" (Warwick, 2012, p. 14). This has implications for how the host organisations are perceived, in terms of their level of professionalism or their commitment to engagement. It also raises questions about how different new media dissemination strategies are managed and co-ordinated within small organisations, and about how such digital practices have an impact upon the relationship between the organisation and their online audience. The problem of audience expectations, when the digital projects created by small organisations are viewed side-by-side with larger, resource-rich projects, is also a concern. These anxieties motivated my choice of methodological approach (participant observation), as the methodology allowed me to collate a detailed outline of real world practice and to analyse the challenges and constraints that impact upon digital projects created by small cultural heritage organisations.

1.2 Disciplinary scope

The theoretical framework for this interdisciplinary research is primarily situated in the disciplines of oral history and digital humanities.[4] Oral history and digital humanities are fundamentally concerned with method and with practice, with the literature in both being characterised by an early emphasis on method. Oral history, as the more established field, has seen this preoccupation with method evolve into more reflective concerns, to the extent that oral historians now commonly explore "what we can learn about oral history, as both a methodology and a craft, when we honestly reflect on our experiences in the field" (Sheftel & Zembrzycki, 2013, p. 3). This is true when it comes to the process of interviewing, as Sheftel and Zembrzycki discuss, and it is also now true of the practice of oral history as a discipline that uses digital technologies. Oral history is now in its second decade as a primarily digital field of study and, while in the past digital technologies have been seen as part of the toolkit

[4] For the purposes of this work I describe both fields of study as "disciplines," although this could be a contested term for both.

used for oral history (not a medium for inquiry in itself), discussions are now moving away from "mere recording and digitization" (D. Boyd & Larson, 2014a, p. 10) to emerging discussions that deal with fundamental aspects of the way that oral historians carry out their work within a digital field:

> [t]he digital revolution has begun to change how the participants in the oral history process conceptualize projects, how they deal with ethical issues, how they process and preserve their materials, how they think about sound and video, how materials are made accessible, and how they "share authority" (Boyd and Larson, 2014a, 10).

Because oral history is now fundamentally a digital field of endeavour, there are areas of overlap and coherence in the discourse in both oral history and digital humanities. Rehberger hints at this when he explores a variety of different definitions of "digital humanities" and suggests that, despite the fact that all the definitions came from slightly different perspectives, one could still "replace the terms 'digital humanities,' 'humanities,' and 'arts' with 'oral history' in the definitions … and they could appear to fit" (2014, p. 189). His exercise indicates that researchers in both oral history and digital humanities are interested in technological and archival practices, in pedagogy, in using new modes of inquiry to address both old and new research questions, and in making new interactive resources. However, Rehberger goes on to point out that oral history also has an essential element that may be lacking in digital humanities:

> oral history, in its collaboration between researcher and narrator, is a generative and creative space that produces both something new and something more than the words that a transcript can capture (2014, p. 190).

The existence of a real, *interpersonal relationship* between narrator and researcher within oral history moderates approaches to digital practice. Such relationships, between source and researcher, are not common within digital humanities. This is a fundamental difference between the two fields because of the implications it has for the approach to dissemination practices. It has the potential to create subtle tensions in work that spans both disciplines. This thesis explores both the convergences and the divergences within digital humanities and oral history through the use of a case study, examining some of the specificities of publishing oral history online. In particular, it investigates points of tension between methodologies and approaches within oral history and within digital humanities, to reveal the distinctive and the essential "attributes that distinguish oral history from the exaflood of other information available digitally" (Sloan 2014, 179–180).

All practitioners of oral history are affected by elements of digital humanities work and conversations, simply by virtue of the fact that many aspects of oral history methodology (collecting and archiving) are now primarily digital. The number of people engaged in conversations in both disciplines is, however, relatively select. The (2014) book, *Oral History and Digital Humanities*, is one of the few large-scale texts to address both digital humanities and oral history.[5] The editors Douglas Boyd and Mary Larson review the implications of digital technologies for how oral history is presented and practised:

> [d]igital technologies now offer enormous opportunities for collecting, curating, and disseminating interviews and projects. While they may have solved certain issues of access, preservation, contextualization, and presentation, however, new technologies have also posed concomitant potential threats, including increased vulnerability of narrators, infrastructure obsolescence, and a host of other ethical issues (D. Boyd & Larson, 2014a, p. 5).

If oral historians are aware of features of digital humanities discourse because their practice is now bound to digital technology, the reverse if not necessarily true. Oral history has been described as a relatively unexplored or "untapped" area of potential for digital humanities (Tanner & Deegan, 2011, p. 32). Because of this, digital oral history practice and theory has the potential to bring new insights to the field of digital humanities. One area of likely contribution is the fostering of new methodological approaches, ones that emerge from oral history's qualitative practice and contrast with the primarily quantitative approaches prevalent in digital humanities. (The quantitative tradition within the digital humanities is discussed in Chapter 2.5.2, with a particular focus on value and impact studies.)

Value and impact studies within digital humanities advocate the use of mixed methods, but often focus on metrics connected with website use, data that can be collected automatically, crossing over with methodological approaches from fields such as Information Studies (for example, see Warwick, Terras, Huntington, Pappa, & Galina, 2006, p. 12). There is, at the same time, an acknowledgement that qualitative methods of examining behaviour are also appropriate. The list of qualitative approaches used includes surveys, questionnaires, interviews about a resource with users and interviews with creators (see Chapter 2.5.2). However, these are all single interventions with no time-depth. My research uses a long-form, ethnographically inflected methodology and therefore makes a new

[5] *Computation and the Humanities* (Nyhan & Flinn, 2016) is another large text that discusses both oral history and digital humanities, although the approach here is entirely different, since it uses oral history to construct a history of the discipline of digital humanities. In comparison to *Oral History and Digital Humanities*, the disciplinary perspective is flipped: writers in *Oral History and Digital Humanities* look at how oral history has been affected by digital humanities, whereas in *Computation and the Humanities* the writers are looking at digital humanities but using the oral history method.

methodological contribution to the digital humanities literature concerning value and impact.

1.3 Research aims

My research aims in this thesis are three-fold:

1. To use the specificity of digital humanities work within a small community heritage organisation as a case study. The objectives of this work are to gather qualitative empirical data about practical work and the challenges and constraints within such organisations, to analyse and discuss the results, to highlight the barriers to progress that emerge and to suggest ways of getting around or overcoming these barriers.
2. To use my empirical work to explore theoretical and ethical issues and to contribute to disciplinary discourse. One particular objective is to demonstrate that oral history has insights to bring to digital humanities because of its history of discourse about the ethical treatment of living subjects, as well as the ethnographic sensibilities that it brings to practice and to representation online.
3. To use data drawn from my empirical research to create a qualitative argument for the value of my collaborative work with the CFP and, in turn, to use this to create an alternative model for approaching value within the digital humanities in general.

1.4 Thesis outline

This thesis is presented in eight chapters. This opening chapter (Chapter 1) provides an introduction to the research and its motivations, and an overview of the structure and themes that emerged as the research progressed.

1.4.1 Context

I contextualise this research in Chapter 2. The fieldwork was carried out within a small, local cultural heritage group (the CFP), during (or in the immediate wake of) a global economic downturn. I briefly outline how fiscal austerity has had an impact on the funding available for the cultural heritage sector and then track how this, combined with the growing

reputation of “big data” and the currency of neoliberal ideas, has influenced concepts of audience, impact and value within digital humanities.

However, there is an increasing awareness within digital humanities that the understanding of value is more complex than the picture gathered by analysing big data, and an awareness that qualitative research is also important. I identify a lacuna in digital humanities literature, since the discourse fails to comprehensively develop and integrate qualitative methods into modelled digital humanities approaches to measuring impact and value. (This is particularly true for long-form qualitative methods.) Framing my work in this thesis as a response to Borgman’s call for social studies of the digital humanities (2009, para. 76), I argue for an ethnographically inflected approach to describing, analysing and discussing the building of digital humanities projects.

1.4.2 Data and practice

Chapters 3, 4 and 5 detail the specifics of my digital humanities practice and include data that I have gathered as a participant and an observer within a small cultural heritage organisation. These can be considered a trio of chapters wherein both quantitative and qualitative data sets from my fieldwork are presented. They form a more-or-less chronological narrative, with Chapter 3 describing data associated with the original Cork Memory Map and the problems and legacy issues that arose as I worked with this project, Chapter 4 outlining the process of building a pilot digital oral history map (Cork’s Main Streets) and the user studies that were carried out with that project, and Chapter 5 discussing a new website, Stories of Place, that has successfully been built as a replacement for the original Cork Memory Map. Salient themes were teased out from the data and results that were collected during my fieldwork. A discussion of these themes, and the relevant literature from digital humanities and oral history, is interwoven with results as they are presented in these chapters.

Some of the themes that pervade this work began to emerge very early on in my research. This is particularly true of the theme of sustainability which emerged as I dealt with legacy technical issues and the problems inherent in maintaining a long-term digital resource. These are illustrated in the account in Chapter 3 which begins the first in-depth description of a CFP digital project, the original Cork Memory Map. Here the technical difficulties that emerged as I began my research are described and analysed, as are my attempts to gather website metrics from this site. These discussions highlight the necessity of long-term digital maintenance. I also discuss the fact that privileging ease-of-use of

software tools over a deeper understanding of technical issues has contributed to a tendency to disguise the necessity for expertise in all but the most simple of digital projects. The spectre of digital "failure" and the requirement for sustainability influenced all the subsequent digital practice presented in this thesis (Chapters 4 and 5).

Chapter 4 introduces Cork's Main Streets, a pilot digital oral history map that was built to test the use of new software platforms, Omeka and Neatline. These are two open source software projects developed by digital humanists for cultural and heritage organisations like the CFP. The chapter includes an outline of the reasons why this software was chosen, a short account of how the software was implemented for this project, and a description of the interface of the resulting website. Details and analysis of the user studies sessions conducted with members of staff from CFP are also presented. These sessions were carried out for the purposes of gathering feedback about the site as it was being developed. Drawing on my reading of oral history literature, I outline how theories of orality/aurality influenced the way the site was initially built and I describe how responses from CFP staff members subsequently led me to make changes to the design of the site.

Chapter 5 begins with a description of a new memory map of Cork city, Stories of Place, and details how this developed from the Cork's Main Streets pilot project. The Stories of Place website was built by CFP staff members during a series of workshops that I conducted in 2016. (These workshops were supplemented by documentation comprising a set of guidelines outlining how to build a new digital oral history map in Omeka and Neatline.) The purpose of the training was to foster a spirit of co-creation, which in turn might stimulate a sense of ownership of the site amongst CFP staff so that adding content to the site would continue after my work with CFP had come to an end. However, this hoped-for sustainability has not emerged from this project. I suggest that this site was seen as "my" project, rather than the successful outcome of a process of co-creation. I draw on ideas from participatory research in community archives and digital humanities crowdsourcing projects to suggest ways in which a spirit of co-creation could be fostered in the future to sustain momentum in long-term digital projects. My approach is influenced by oral history's concept of "sharing authority," where collaborative work is seen as being for the "long haul" (Shopes, 2003, p. 105), and I suggest that the work in this thesis could be seen as a stage within a "cycle of engagement" (after Durie, Lundy, & Wyatt, 2012; see also Flinn & Sexton, 2013), rather than a finite, time-bounded project.

1.4.3 Discussion and wider relevance

The wider implications of my work are the topics of two discussion chapters, (Chapters 6 and 7). In Chapter 6 I draw on data collected during user studies to identify specific examples from the construction of Cork's Main Streets where issues of editorial control were explored (in relation to the use of expletives). This data is related to oral history discussions about control of the narrative when oral histories are published and broadcast. This exposes a tension between, on the one hand, the ethos of openness and the concept of mass digitization as a public good within digital humanities, and, on the other hand, a discourse within oral history that holds that duty of care and the narrator's authorship/authority in self-presentation are central concerns.

Chapter 7 expands on a discussion of how qualitative approaches can contribute to digital humanities, focusing on value and impact studies within digital humanities and how these could be enhanced by adopting a nuanced, qualitative understanding of the value and impact of digital work. The unusual approach taken in this work, looking at responses from the "internal audience" (content creators), as opposed to the end user of a website, has allowed me to formulate new ideas of how the "value" of a digital project can be conceived, in particular with relation to the value that it brings to its creators and contributors. Ideas of value modelled here follow Helen Small's (2013) five interrelated arguments from *The Value of the Humanities*. They include distinctiveness, the ability to challenge expectations, usefulness, the contribution to happiness/well-being and intrinsic worth (or "for its own sake"). I add to these criteria by suggesting that the contribution to public engagement should also be included when making an argument for value. I maintain that this kind of qualitative reasoning should be considered in digital humanities discussions of value and impact in the future.

1.4.4 Concluding the research

The final chapter (Chapter 8) sums up the main themes, aims and outcomes of this research. I highlight both the specificity of my work (in terms of case study and material) and how it can be used to address broader disciplinary questions. There is a short discussion of the limitations of the work and the potential for future research. I also outline the ways in which my work has made contributions to the fields of oral history and digital humanities that are practical, discursive and methodological. The practical contributions include the new digital oral history maps that have been constructed during this research, as well as

documentation about how to create similar projects and a model for examining qualitative value. The discursive contributions relate to the issues of ethics, representation and value (and how to argue for value) and the methodological contribution demonstrates the insights that can be gained from adopting long-form qualitative research methods in digital humanities. These combine to provide food for thought about disciplinary ethics and the adoption of long-form qualitative methodologies.

1.5 Reading and practice, practice and reading

This thesis is not primarily an ethnographic account and it is not primarily a theoretical discussion. It is an exploration of the question of value in which real world engagement and reflective digital practice is augmented by engagement with the written sources. Reading and practice influenced each other in an iterative sense. The text that follows is roughly evenly balanced in terms of presenting analysis and discussion of the data from my ethnographically inflected practice, and theoretical discussions that emerge from my engagement with the relevant disciplinary literatures. This balance between reading and practice is demonstrated in the following chapter where my research is contextualised by a detailed outline of the background and circumstances of my fieldwork with the CFP (my practice) and an extensive review of the disciplinary literature (reading) in digital humanities, with particular attention to the literature on value.

2 Specificity matters: contextualising the research

> *… the account which follows … is a story about a particular time as well as a particular place. This specificity is important … this time-place seems to me to be worth speaking from, in order to speak of and to broader political-cultural concerns.*
>
> - From *Behind the Scenes at the Science Museum* by Sharon Macdonald (2002, p.6).

> *Expertise in the development of big data approaches is highly valued … In the face of these developments, to focus on a methodology that argues for moving slowly through relatively small amounts of data, exploring its meanings and depth, tracing its circulation and contextualizing its production and consumption, seems somewhat perverse.*
>
> - From *Ethnography for the Internet. Embedded, Embodied and Everyday* by Christine Hine (2015, p. 181).

2.1 Introduction to Chapter 2

This research project is characterised by its specificity. This is important because, as Macdonald (2002, p. 6) points out, "specificity matters." In this chapter I outline the context for my research, situating it within its own place and time, and acknowledging my own place and presence within the work. I outline the disciplinary context of this work and describe my methodological approach before contextualising the "place" of my research with the Cork Folklore Project.

The research account that follows is deeply embedded in place, and it is particularly embedded in the work of one local cultural heritage organisation, the CFP. The CFP is my "case study," a community cultural heritage project that operates as a public folklore/oral history archive.[6]

This is also an account contextualised by the preoccupations of the time when it was

[6] I choose the term "archive" here as that is how CFP describes itself; traditional archivists sometimes contest the use of the term for organisations like the CFP and question the use of terminology such as "community archive" (see Flinn, 2011, p. 6). Both "archive" and "community" are contested terms, see Zeitlyn (2012, p. 462) for a discussion of the different uses of "archive" and Cohen (1985) for a discussion of the term "community."

carried out. These preoccupations have been framed by a protracted period of economic austerity in Ireland (the research began in 2013). The subtext to cuts within arts and heritage sectors suggested that "culture" was a "luxury," non-essential and therefore not valuable.[7] How does the cultural heritage sector respond to austerity? What role do digital technologies play? What debates emerge? I was interested in these questions because of my own experience of working within cultural heritage during austerity (my professional background includes more than thirteen years working within the cultural heritage sector). I was made redundant in 2011 and, in a shrinking jobs market, I began a Master of Arts programme at the Department of Information Studies in University College London (UCL), home to the UCL Centre for Digital Humanities. Based on my experience, I began to see it as imperative that cultural heritage practitioners advocated for their own profession (and their own worth) and I interpreted digital humanities as a means of engaging in this kind of advocacy work. My research addresses some of the questions about the way value is perceived (in the humanities and arts generally, in cultural heritage and oral history specifically) by focusing on the role of digital cultural heritage and examining ideas of value with relation to digital projects. Studying the creators of one particular type of heritage (oral history), within a very specific local context (Cork, especially within the CFP) was a way for me to follow the processes involved in the collecting and archiving of oral heritage, and the subsequent ways that this material is mediated for a general digital audience. This research concentrates on the processes involved in the creation of digital cultural heritage projects that are created for the purposes of public engagement (and therefore envisaged as having an audience drawn from the general public).[8] The aim of the research presented here is to use the specificity of my experience to speak about broader issues in digital cultural heritage, to look at the "good" of digital cultural heritage within a local community setting, and to look at how oral history can contribute to debates within digital humanities, and vice versa.

2.2 Disciplinary context

2.2.1 Broad definition and focus of digital humanities

While there is no agreed definition of digital humanities, I am taking a very broad

[7] Cuts have been a feature of the arts and heritage sector in many parts of Europe, not only in Ireland, with Fabiani (2014, p. 211) suggesting that this means that culture is seen as a supplement to the soul (and not about the nitty-gritty of everyday existence).

[8] This is in contrast to digital humanities projects that are built as research resources, and therefore see other researchers as their primary audience; they are created primarily for an academic audience.

definition of the field as "all those scholarly activities in the humanities that involve writing about digital media and technology, and being engaged in processes of digital media production, practice and analysis" (Hall, 2011, p. 1).[9] Well-established digital humanities projects include the Perseus Digital Library, Inscriptions of Aphrodisias and Early English Books Online.[10] These examples are primarily text-based and the origins of digital humanities in textual studies is a "foundational story" of digital humanities (Svensson, 2009, para. 18), with a concordance of the works of Thomas Aquinas, Busa's *Index Thomisticus*, generally referred to as the first digital humanities project (for example in Dalbello, 2011, p. 481; Hockey, 2004, sec. 1).[11]

Despite the textual origins of the discipline, digital cultural heritage is now widely accepted as being within the remit of digital humanities (and it fits within Hall's broad definition cited above). A recent edition of *A New Companion to Digital Humanities* (Schreibman, Siemens, & Unsworth, 2016) includes articles about digital humanities work in museums, alongside more traditional digital humanities articles about textual analyses (as well as a range of other topics such as infrastructure, interdisciplinarity, gaming, virtual worlds, linked data, crowdsourcing and the state of the digital humanities). This expansion of the field is likely down to the fact that digitisation is now seen as an everyday activity for many organisations involved in cultural heritage; it is "now commonplace in most memory institutions, as digital representations of cultural and historical documents, artifacts, and images are created and delivered to users, generally online" (Terras, 2011, p. 686). It (digitisation) has become "the bedrock of both digital library holdings and digital humanities research" (Terras, 2012a, p. 47).

2.2.2 First wave digital humanities (bespoke projects)

Presner identified two "waves" of digital humanities, and suggested that the first (from the late 1990s to the early 2000s), focused primarily on "large-scale digitization projects and

[9] According to Warwick et al. (2012, p. xiii) "what is digital humanities?" is a question that "seems to be repeatedly asked, but seldom answered to anyone's satisfaction." And Rehberger (2014, p. 187) says that "digital humanists have a mania for defining the Digital Humanities, almost an obsessive compulsion."

[10] See Perseus Digital Library at http://www.perseus.tufts.edu/hopper/, Inscriptions of Aphrodisias at http://insaph.kcl.ac.uk/iaph2007/ and Early English Books Online at https://eebo.chadwyck.com/home, all accessed 1 June 2017.

[11] Furthermore, Kirschenbaum (2012) suggests that digital humanities is particularly associated with English departments because, "there is a long tradition of text-based data processing that was within the capabilities of even some of the earliest computer systems and that has for decades fed research in fields like stylistics, linguistics, and author attribution studies, all heavily associated with English departments."

the establishment of technological infrastructure" (Presner, 2010a). Within oral history, this first wave of digital projects could be said to include pioneering work such as Project Jukebox and the Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive (VOAHA).[12] Both projects used born digital and digitised older oral history recordings and disseminated them online. These were bespoke projects where the underlying technological infrastructure was specifically built around the oral history collections, and where oral historians worked in collaboration with technologists to create outcomes that suited both the researchers and the technologists (there are detailed discussions of these projects in Gluck, 2014 and Schneider, 2014).

Some of the work of these projects emphasised the establishment and implementation of technological infrastructure, and the sites as they survive today still contain many of the legacies of this early technological early work. For example, the Project Jukebox website explains "[u]ntil funding is secured to convert all of our old projects into our newest format, many of our older projects will remain in our older online format. What this means is that some of the older projects may no longer work as they once did, especially if you are using a new web browser to access them."[13] The VOAHA website also explains that "[a]fter ten years, the hardware and software with which VOAHA was built were no longer viable and VOAHA has migrated to a new architecture. The site looks different and will function differently than VOAHA I, but even during this transition period, all materials are available."[14]

2.2.3 Second wave digital humanities (software tools by and for practitioners)

Presner argues that this first wave of bespoke projects has been followed by "the current second wave of Digital Humanities … [which] is deeply generative, creating the environments and tools for producing, curating, and interacting with knowledge that is 'born digital'" (Presner, 2010a).[15] This generative phase includes a significant cohort of digital humanists who are involved in building non-commercial tools for other researchers, often because they realised that there was a demand that was not adequately supported by expertise. Cohen says that the idea for Omeka (a software platform discussed in more detail below, section 2.2.5 and in Chapter 4, sections 4.2.1 and 4.3.2) came as they developed

[12] See Project Jukebox at http://jukebox.uaf.edu/site7/, and the Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive (VOAHA) at http://www.csulb.edu/voaha, both accessed 18 May 2017.
[13] Quoted from the Project Jukebox website, http://jukebox.uaf.edu/site7/, accessed 18 May 2017.
[14] Quoted from the Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive (VOAHA) website, www.csulb.edu/voaha, accessed 18 May 2017.
[15] Berry (2012, p. 4) also posits a third wave, centred on a "computational turn."

bespoke projects for others:

> Omeka grew organically out of a strong need that we identified … as we built a series of projects that presented, and in some cases collected, historical artifacts ... [These projects] … made us realize how much work – and how much money – it takes for institutions (and individuals) to mount high-quality and flexible exhibits online, and to manage the underlying collections (Cohen, 2008).

I discuss two significant examples here, Mukurtu and Omeka, both content management systems, as well as a notable plugin, Neatline, that has been built to work with Omeka.

2.2.4 Mukurtu (a digital humanities CMS for indigenous communities)

Mukurtu is a content management system that was been developed to deal with sensitive ethnographic materials, particularly those held in colonial era institutions. Different protocols about rights to access pertain in indigenous communities as opposed to those in western colonial institutions (like museums or archives). This can cause difficulties when creating digital archives. The Mukurtu Project, an online archive of material associated with the Warumungu community in Northern Territory Australia, was designed to take local cultural protocols into account at the design stage. This meant that, for example, the system restricted or limited access to certain content for some users, replicating restrictions that were already in place for non-digital objects, customs and rituals. For example, male users are not supposed to view footage of "women only" rituals, and photographs of deceased people are not supposed to be viewed without permission from family members. By respecting and replicating already existing norms, the Mukurtu archive did not privilege preservation and access (the preoccupation of colonial institutions), but instead respected "the dynamic social and cultural protocols within which information is embedded" (Christen, 2009, p. 5). The launch of the Mukurtu project led to conversations and collaborations with many other indigenous communities around the globe, all with different conventions about access to information:

> [t]he Squamish Nation in Canada wanted an archive whose protocols could accommodate their intricate clan and family system; the Citizen Potawatomi Nation in Oklahoma wanted a digital archive that could ground use and access within the 47 families to which all community members belong; in New Zealand, some Maori archivists wanted a system that could deal with extensive kin-based social networks; the Zuni libraries wanted to be able to exchange content and metadata with the Library of Congress through their own cultural-based standards; and in Kenya, the Maasai wanted a system that would allow them to differentiate materials meant for commercial purposes from those meant only for internal circulation through intellectual property management tools (Christen, 2012, p. 2881).

This, in turn, led to the development of an open source Mukurtu Content Management System (see Figure 2.1).[16]

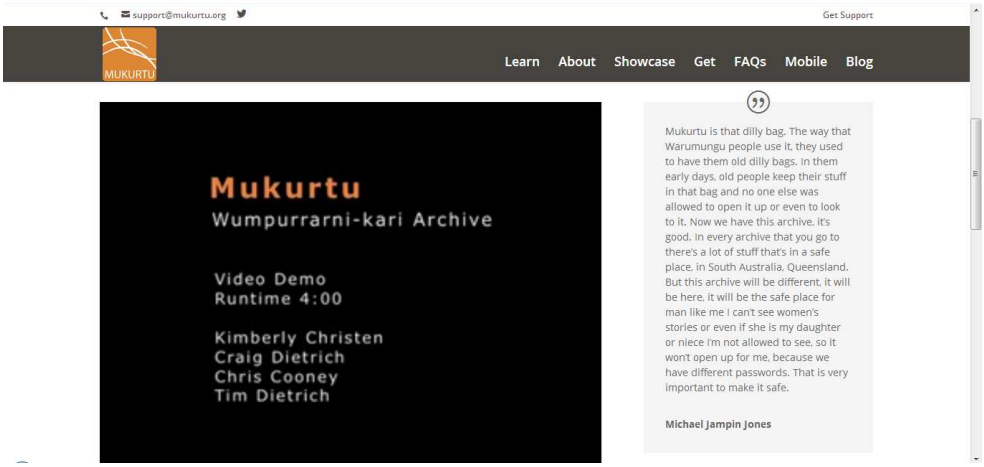


Figure 2.1: Screenshot from the Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari Archive on Mukurtu.org.[17]

2.2.5 Omeka (a non-commercial tool for digital cultural heritage exhibitions)

Like Mukurtu, Omeka content management system was built with specific users in mind; this software was developed to help smaller organisations meet the ever-changing expectations of online audiences. It is an open source exhibition platform for small and medium-sized organisations that was designed by the Roy Rosenzweig Centre for History and New Media at George Mason University in the United States.[18] It was designed for cultural heritage practitioners, with their particular design and display needs in mind. For example, Dublin Core metadata fields are included as standard, but many different schema are also available to use (including an oral history option), keeping the approach very open and flexible.

The Omeka developers were also cognisant of the fact that many organisations have limited budgets, and limited technical skills. One of the aims is that the software should "satisfy the needs of institutions that lack technical staffs and large budgets."[19] It is designed

[16] See http://www.mukurtuarchive.org/, accessed 24 May 2017. Mukurtu CMS is built on Drupal.

[17] See http://mukurtu.org/project/mukurtu-wumpurrarni-kari-archive/, accessed 21 August 2017.

[18] The aim of the Roy Rosenzweig Centre for History and New Media is to democratise history "through digital media and tools." See https://rrchnm.org/our-story/, accessed 17 May 2017. Omeka's developers built the software with the aim of helping "universities, libraries, museums, historians, researchers, and anyone else who would like to put a collection or exhibit online" (D. Cohen, 2008).

[19] See the entry about Omeka on the Roy Rosenweig Centre for History and New Media website at http://chnm.gmu.edu/omeka/, accessed 22 August 2016.

specifically to display humanities digital data, with non-technical users in mind, and to meet the challenge of easy web publishing. Omeka can help eliminate "the need for outside assistance and enables educators and scholars to create sites that not only display information but also allow collaboration" (Morton, 2011, p. 952).

A long user-generated list of sites powered by Omeka include projects such as (chosen randomly from the list on the Omkea website) an Archive of Colombian Advertising 1800-1950, an Australian Directory of Electronic Literature and Text-based Art, Elvis at 21 and the Cork LGBT Archive (Figure 2.2).[20] The number and variety of different projects illustrate the fact that Omeka has become an important resource for people who wish to use technology to explore and display humanities data.

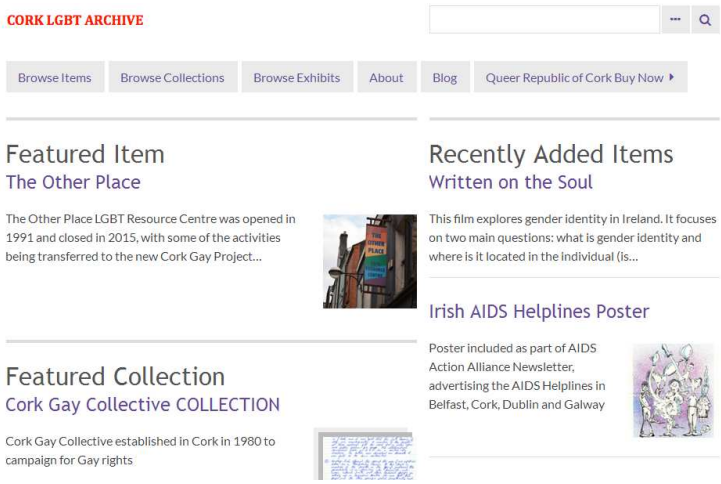


Figure 2.2: Screenshot of the Cork LGBT Archive homepage, an example of a small site powered by Omeka.[21]

The success of Omeka can be measured also in the fact that new digital humanities software has been created as plugins for the Omeka Content Management System. This includes Neatline, built by the Scholars' Lab at the University of Virginia Library; a digital humanities project that allows users to create "geo-temporal visualizations of archival collections" (Nowviskie, 2013, p. 62). (For a discussion of Neatline, see Chapter 4.3.2.)

[20] See http://omeka.org/codex/Sites_Using_Omeka, accessed 29 May 2017 for a list of projects powered by Omeka. To see these randomly chosen projects, see Archive of Colombian Advertising 1800-1950 (http://apc.historiaabierta.org/), Australian Directory of Electronic Literature and Text-based Art (http://adelta.westernsydney.edu.au/), Cork LGBT Archive (http://corklgbtarchive.com/) and Elvis at 21 (http://160.111.252.141/elvis/), all accessed 29 May 2017.
[21] See http://corklgbtarchive.com/, accessed 21 August 2017.

Mukurtu, Omeka and Neatline were recently available as I started my research. The development of Neatline (which is a plugin that built on the foundation of Omeka) demonstrates how digital humanities tools were beginning to gather momentum and come of age at this point (around 2013). Both Omeka and Neatline were ultimately chosen as the software platforms used to build the digital oral history maps that I describe in Chapters 4 and 5 of this thesis.

2.2.6 Oral history and digital technologies

In most institutions such as museums and archives the focus of digitisation has been on "born analogue" material objects and documents (Hall, 2011, p. 2), in particular with the creation of a digital surrogate, often for purposes of preservation and access (so that a collection could be displayed online). Oral history's place in this conversation includes the digitisation of older analogue recordings, usually for the purposes of preservation. For example, Boyd (2014, p. 80) describes his reaction on receiving a recording of a folktale on reel-to-reel tape: "[k]nowing that this was the only existing copy and that it was potentially fragile, I quickly arranged to digitize the tape."[22] Digitisation was also seen as a way of improving access to oral history collections, partly born out of a concern that oral history recordings were not often used because they were difficult to access; Frisch (2008, p. 223) called this oral history's "Deep Dark Secret."

However, oral history recording is now almost exclusively born digital, and oral history practice has become inherently technological. This means that digital practice is also a process of digital preservation. In contrast to, for example, digitised objects from museums that are surrogates of the tangible originals, the oral history recording is only a surrogate for the original intangible conversation, otherwise it is the primary document of the discipline. It is not a surrogate that can be easily re-digitised if it is not preserved. Oral history practice has become increasingly archival and oral historians are "now expected to acquire advanced technological skills to capture, preserve, analyze, edit, and present their data to ever larger audiences" (Perks, 2011, p. 316).

Several oral history projects have become enthusiastic users of Omeka, mirroring the uptake of Omeka within the digital cultural heritage community in general. The list of sites powered by Omeka on the Omeka website includes nine oral history projects (see Appendix

[22] The CFP has also digitised its old/early interview recordings, previously held on tape and mini disc for preservation purposes.

I for a complete list). However, this is a user-generated list, and is not definitive.[23] For example, it excludes perhaps the most prominent large-scale oral history project powered by Omeka, a project called Cleveland Historical.[24] This is an oral history map of Cleveland, Ohio that was primarily built as a mobile application as well as a mobile enabled website.[25] It uses map-based multi-media presentations that allow users to explore items associated with people and places that feature in the city's history (see Figure 2.3) and it also has a tour feature that connects stories "providing a historiographical, thematic, temporal, geographic, or human context, deepening the experience through making contextual meaning" (Tebeau, 2013, p. 26).

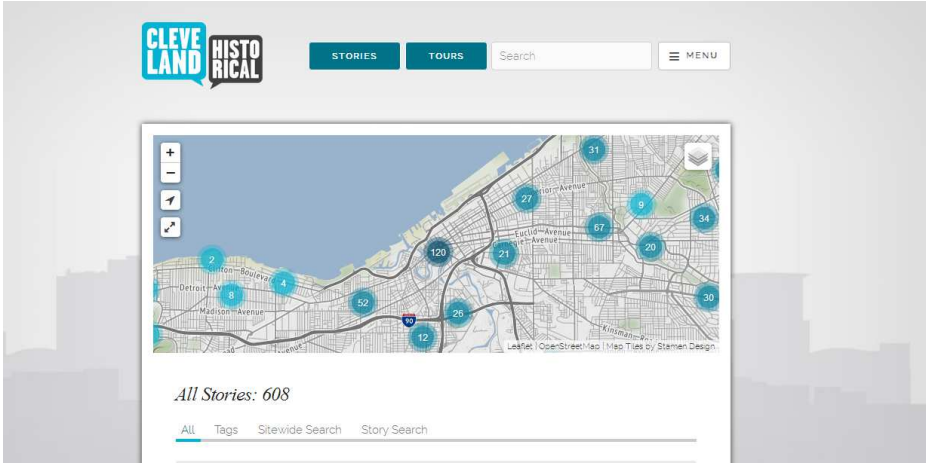


Figure 2.3: Screenshot of Cleveland Historical oral history map, with numbered points on the map indicating the quantities of associated interview material.[26]

A review of Cleveland Historical claimed that it is "at the cutting edge of new media projects that seek to deliver historical content" (Kerr, 2012, p. 315) and, while noting some gaps in content, also suggested that these could be gradually adjusted, since "[o]ne of the wonderful aspects of this platform is that new stories can easily be added and old ones revised as the project matures" (ibid., p. 317). This fact that digital projects can be ongoing

[23] This list (http://omeka.org/codex/Sites_Using_Omeka, accessed 18 May 2017) is collated by the Roy Rosenzweig Centre for History and New Media and is hosted on the Omeka domain. Omeka users submit their site using a form, and the site is then added to the list.
[24] See https://clevelandhistorical.org/, accessed 18 May 2017. This site is also powered by supplementary software for creating mobile phone applications, https://curatescape.org/, accessed 18 May 2017.
[25] See an outline that explains the project on the website's "About" page, https://clevelandhistorical.org/about/, accessed 18 May 2017.
[26] See https://clevelandhistorical.org/items/browse, accessed 18 May 2017.

and unfinished in one of their key strengths, allowing practitioners to build multi-layered, complex narratives. This demonstrates the benefits that digital humanities has brought to humanities disciplines as they moved towards disseminating material on new media platforms. The availability of a range of a different open source, non-commercial tools that are relatively easy to use is a significant asset. Inevitably it is necessary to add a note of caution to this idealised picture; these tools do require some expertise, and they need to be updated regularly. These are themes that I will return to throughout this thesis, particularly in Chapters 3, 4 and 5.

2.3 Methodological approach

Writing in 2009, Christine Borgman identified that period as a "pivotal" time for digital humanities:

> [t]he community has laid a foundation of research methods, theory, practice, and scholarly conferences and journals. Can we seize this moment to make digital scholarship a leading force in humanities research? Or will the community fall behind, not-quite-there, among the many victims of the massive restructuring of higher education in the current economic crisis? (Borgman, 2009, para. 1).[27]

To meet this "sink or swim" moment in digital humanities, Borgman proposed a series of questions that acted as a "call to action" for humanities scholars. One of these questions was "[w]hy is no one following digital humanities scholars around to understand their practices, in the way that scientists have been studied for the last several decades?" (2009, para. 76). In essence, she called for "social studies of the digital humanities." Such an approach is not common in digital humanities.[28]

My approach in this research is, in part, a response to Borgman's call to "follow digital humanities scholars around." Instead of following a digital humanities scholar around, however, I am both the digital humanities scholar and the person following the digital humanists around in order to understand their practices. This thesis includes a narrative

[27] The growth of digital humanities in the period immediately following Borgman's paper suggests that those working in the field did seize the moment: Klein and Gold (2016) suggested that the publication of the first volume of *Debates in the Digital Humainties* in 2012 "marked the 'digital humanities moment,'" while the second volume (published in 2016) "confirms that the digital humanities, as a field, has arrived" (Klein & Gold, 2016).

[28] One rare example of an ethnography of digital humanities by Antonijević (2016) seeks "to illustrate how ethnographic analysis of scholarly practice can cast a better understanding of the complexities of digital knowledge production" (Antonijević, 2016, p. 2). The focus of this work is on humanities academics and their use of digital tools, rather than on the digital humanities community per se. (See Chapter 8.3.2 for further discussion.)

account that details the course of my research and records insights and changes that were made along the way. It details the construction of digital cultural heritage projects, tells the "behind the scenes" stories of how these developed and reflects on the institutional and human factors (as well as the technological ones) that enable and constrain the creation and maintenance of digital projects. I use the first-person voice throughout as I critically reflect on my digital practice with the CFP.

My methodology is influenced by the practice of ethnography, following Zeitlyn's suggestion that archives (even small community archives such as the CFP) should be considered "as complex social organizations … [that can be studied] … anthropologically to produce ethnographies of archives, works of archiveology" (Zeitlyn, 2012, pp. 466–467). The benefits of this approach include the fact that it is a long-term, immersive method, providing "a fuller account of the nature and complexities of production: of the disjunctions, disagreements and 'surprise outcomes' involved in cultural production" (Macdonald, 2002, p. 8). The approach requires an atmosphere of open enquiry, flexibility of approach, and time-depth. As with internet ethnography in general, it offers potential:

> contemplative approaches that situate data and explore ramifications of meaning, and offer an important corrective to the tendency to treat patterns identified in big data as straightforward reflections of reality and imperatives to action (Hine, 2015, p. 182).

2.3.1 Fieldwork

This thesis is the culmination of four years of experience working on both online and offline cultural heritage projects, an ongoing literature search (followed by reading and reviewing), attendance and presentation at pertinent academic conferences (in oral history and digital humanities), participation in public engagement and work with a local cultural heritage organisation (the CFP) in a voluntary and, for a short period of time, a paid capacity. This has been both an active and a reflective experience, one that included practice (building digital projects), as well as observation (at CFP) and discussion about digital cultural heritage (at CFP and within the Digital Arts and Humanities community at UCC).

The core fieldwork for my research was carried out at the CFP, where I acted as an embedded researcher in the years and months between September 2013 and December 2016. Fieldwork involved spending approximately one day a week at the CFP. This was a significant portion of the CFP working week, which lasts just two and a half days. At each visit I spent time engaging with staff, attending meetings, conversing informally with the

researchers there and participating in the everyday activities of the project. This included interviewing and transcribing, particularly at the beginning of my time with CFP. I also attended CFP events and helped out at public engagement initiatives (for example, the Celebrating Cork's Past exhibition in 2015, see Figure 2.4). Towards the end of my time working with the CFP my activities focused exclusively on matters associated with the development of digital oral history maps and supporting documentation.



Figure 2.4: Photograph of the CFP stand at the Celebrating Cork's Past exhibition in Cork City Hall, 5 October 2017, with a member of the public. Photo: Stephen Dee. © Cork Folklore Project.

Throughout this fieldwork I recorded observations (from meetings, from informal conversation, from impressions) in notebooks and in a private blog. Collectively, these have been combined to form my ethnographic diary, and some excerpts from these are quoted as I analyse the outcomes of my fieldwork in the chapters below. More formal sessions, such as user studies, were recorded (audio only) and subsequently transcribed. The transcripts and audio from these sessions have also been used extensively in my qualitative analysis of responses to digital projects (in particular in Chapter 4, but also in Chapter 6, as well as a small amount in Chapter 7).

2.3.2 Participant observation?

My experience of working with the CFP was that I could be both an insider and an

outsider and that my status was fluid and contingent. For a time, when my attendance at the CFP was most frequent, I was an accepted member of the team. However, I was not there all the time and did not share in all the everyday dramas of a working office. In addition, there are frequent (and sometimes quite sizeable) turnovers in CFP staff that, naturally enough, cause the dynamics of the group (and my status within it) to shift and fluctuate.

However, where my work unquestionably took on the character of an insider was my experience of working with digital projects. I observed and contributed to three related digital projects undertaken by the CFP, including the original Cork Memory Map and its successors, Cork's Main Streets and Stories of Place (described in Chapters 3, 4 and 5). I carried out much of this work under my own initiative, as interest and motivation amongst other staff members was limited. I sometimes became lost in the myriad technical issues that beset my work, often wrapped up in the search for solutions to these problems (and their attendant frustrations). Insider status can have advantages and disadvantages:

> [b]eing somewhat of an insider may give access to a field that an evident outsider would struggle to achieve … but it also means losing the analytical edge that being able to treat the subjects of an ethnography as unproblematically "other" can offer (Hine, 2015, p. 130).

Reflecting on my experience of building CFP digital projects now, some months after my regular visits to CFP have come to an end (visits to CFP became intermittent and rare as I concentrated on writing my thesis), and when I have begun to feel like an outsider again, I feel that the way I tried to drive these digital projects may have meant that I had more "ownership" of them than was ideal within the circumstances of a community archive. I reflect on the practical outcomes of this in Chapter 5, but the implications from a methodological standpoint are that this thesis is not a conventional ethnography of an organisation. My status as a participant observer is questionable: I was a very active *participant*, a driver even, of progress of the digital oral history mapping projects, but I cannot claim to have been a cool-headed *observer* of all the interactions that influenced and inflected their creation. Instead this thesis presents an account of my practical work, with plenty of empirical detail concerning the process of building digital projects. (Although a minimalist approach has been taken to technical descriptions in the main text, where necessary these are supported by in-depth technical documentation in the appendices.) It is not a techno-utopian account of building a shiny new digital project that was received with rapturous acclaim. It is an account of legacy issues, of trial and error, of minor failures and minor successes. To my mind this makes it a very true and typical account of the work that small cultural heritage organisations need to undertake, and the pitfalls they need to be

aware of, when they contemplate creating sustainable, long-term digital resources.

2.4 The Case Study

2.4.1 Background to the Cork Folklore Project

Founded in 1996, the CFP's objective is to collect and record stories of everyday life in Cork.[29] In the past, the focus of this work has primarily been on Cork city, and this means that the majority of the holdings in the archive are centred on urban everyday life. However, the Project is also interested in expanding beyond the city to rural areas of Cork county. Oral history practice at CFP is reflective and critical, aiming to question "who our communities of contributors and resource users might be, and how they might be meaningfully represented, served and/or challenged" (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 16).

The CFP's collection is maintained as a public oral history archive approaching approximately 600 audio recordings (the interviewing process is ongoing, and consequently this number is always changing and growing).[30] There is no online access to the CFP's collection of interviews. While all the recordings are digitized, the CFP is concerned about unrestricted online access to all the interviews, seeing this as potentially in conflict with a duty of care towards contributors and participants, an ethical commitment the organisation takes very seriously: "[d]eveloping a policy of access that will maintain duty of care towards the material and the individuals and the community … is central to our concerns" (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 26). Instead, the CFP research director, co-ordinator and staff act as gatekeepers and access to the archive is limited to "on site" visits. Researchers and members of the public are welcome to consult the oral history archive by making an appointment to visit the CFP offices.

In the meantime, there are plans to develop an online catalogue of all the interview holdings, which *may*, where appropriate, include some examples of long-form interviews. However, these will be the exception rather than the rule, since there are "no plans to make full interviews from our existing collection, apart from perhaps a sample of five or so, openly accessible online in the near future" (O'Carroll, 2015, p. 46). The purpose of the catalogue,

[29] The CFP describes itself as an oral history archive, rather than a folklore archive, because members of the general public find this easier to grasp (there is a tendency to equate folklore with fairy tales). The CFP Research Director outlines her understanding of folklore as "the investigation of the construction of meaning in everyday life" but acknowledges that the "conception of folklore as existing in the present as well as the past and among diverse groups is somewhat at odds with the public perception" (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 23).

[30] At the beginning of October 2016, the number of sound files and interviews in the CFP catalogue was five hundred and eighty-six (586). In January 2017, it was five hundred and ninety-seven (597).

which will be available at some time in the future, is to make the wider public more aware of the contents of the CFP's archive and to therefore increase interest and use of the archive by researchers and the public. This is the tightrope that many oral history archives and collections walk, trying to balance the ethical duties to participants (and their privacy) with the openness of online dissemination.[31] The general expectation that *all* archival material is now online is an additional pressure that small archives and collections also grapple with on an ongoing basis, since the "weight of casual (and not so casual) expectation that this is what we will automatically do, now that the technology enables it, is to be felt in myriad interactions" (O'Carroll, 2015, p. 46).

Collecting and archiving oral histories are core activities at the CFP. However, the Project's researchers also engage in other activities, particularly those associated with promotion and dissemination of the CFP's oral history archive. This includes the production of an annual journal, *The Archive*, a free magazine that is distributed across Cork city (particularly through the local library network). The CFP has also produced and collaborated on books, in particular two volumes specifically based on material from the oral history archive; a book of oral histories called *Life Journeys: Living Folklore in Ireland Today* (Hunter, 1999) and a collection of stories about life in Cork that reflects experiences of both natives and migrants, *How's it Goin', Boy?* (O'Carroll, 2006). Other outreach and collaboration activities include involvement with radio programming and the production of short films. ("If the Walls Could Talk," a film of pictures and oral histories about notable historic buildings in Cork was produced by the CFP in association with Cork City Council. Combined with visits to open building during Heritage Week in 2013, this project won a Heritage Council award for "Best Interactive Event.") Researchers from the CFP also organise listening events, public meetings where selections from the CFP archive are played to give members of the public a flavour of the oral histories that have been collected to date.

In addition to these activities, the CFP is involved in creating digital projects that promote the activities of the organisation and it has a growing online presence. The view of this digital work within the CFP is generally that this is a form of engagement, another way for the organisation to disseminate material from the oral history archive, to promote the CFP to a wide audience. In summary, this digital work is seen as a supplement to the core activities of the organisation.

The most successful digital project created by the CFP to date has been an oral history

[31] The theme of ethics and online dissemination is explored further in Chapter 6.

map of Cork city, the Cork Memory Map. First created in 2010, this is a narrative mapping project that includes embedded audio excerpts and images from the CFP's oral history collection. The audio stories take the form of short excerpts from longer interviews; these are much shorter than normal, long-form oral history interviews and are edited and presented in this way in order to enable people to get an idea of the material that is within the CFP archive relatively quickly and easily.

> The map was initially devised to give the public a small taste of our holdings … A set of short audio excerpts could communicate the variety, liveliness, texture and rich expression in interviews in our collection much more effectively than any amount of explanation from us (O'Carroll, 2015, p. 44).

The Cork Memory Map is the focus of the digital humanities research that is carried out in this thesis, and it is discussed in detail in Chapter 3.2, with follow-up projects described in Chapters 4 and 5.

2.4.2 Cork Folklore Project as a community organisation

The CFP was set up as a community organisation in collaboration with the Department of Folklore and Ethnology at UCC. Initially under the remit of Dr Marie-Annick Desplanques, it was founded after a long period of consultation "between the staff and students of Folklore and Ethnology, local cultural heritage groups and Historical Societies, and Cork City Partnership" (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 24). This partnership between academy, community and local development companies creates an interesting tripartite structure of support. Desplanques (2015, p. 20) describes this as being divided between the academic, the local community and government. Today, the CFP retains its strong links to the academy (the research director, the project co-ordinator and the oversight committee are based in the Department of Folklore and Ethnology in UCC, and the university provides infrastructural support such as some computer equipment and technical support). In addition, the CFP is also hosted by a community charity, Northside Community Enterprises (NCE), which provides office space and administrates the recruitment and wages of the research staff on the project, all of whom are hired as part of an Active Labour Market Policy instigated by the Irish government (see O'Carroll, 2013, p. 25).[32] Within this context, the CFP's view of itself is that it is very much a community organisation:

> [t]he Project regularly acts as a community based facilitator, advising and mentoring individuals and groups from all over Munster who wish to set up

[32] Staff are generally recruited as part of a Community Employment Scheme. Such schemes are supported by the Irish government and are designed to help people on the live unemployment register return to work.

> folklore and oral history projects and groups, or who wish to incorporate an oral history dimension into creative, historical or social inclusion projects. Contact with other community groups in a spirit of reciprocity has always been a feature of the Project's activities, whether with local community filmmakers, boat builders, Travellers' and arts organisations, and cultural heritage and social inclusion initiatives (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 25).

Named the Northside Folklore Project at its inception, the CFP offices are based on the north side of Cork city, in an area that is characterised as having a long history of poverty and disadvantage. The initial aims of the Project were that it was a means through which this community could "speak for itself," going beyond the way that others (often the state and the academic world) framed these communities by examining their problems through a lens of disadvantage (Desplanques, 2015, pp. 31–32). The practice of oral history at CFP was envisioned, from the start, as a form of radical ethnography, with the express idea of focusing on aspects of lived experience and everyday life, and placing the narrators as the expert witness of their own lived experiences.

> The ways in which we referred to people, in all of their capacities, tended to reflect a dynamic, political (almost 'militant') perspective in how the Project was perceived and became active in the communities it represented. It was important to actively demonstrate that as an eclectic Project team we valued the community's ownership and control of the production of knowledge (Desplanques, 2015, pp. 29–30).

The CFP was thus initially envisaged as ethnography/oral history collected by community members, and reflecting their own communities. The original name of the Project, the Northside Folklore Project, was the chosen designator because it reflected both the research focus of the organisation as well as the physical location where the work was carried out (Desplanques, 2015, p. 27). However, the extremely local nature of the organisation has gradually changed over the years. This is partly a result of the way that Project researchers are recruited, with government policy dictating that they are only allowed to stay at the organisation for a limited amount of time (usually between one or two years, depending on the age of each individual). The constant change in personnel can have an effect that gradually and subtly changes the character of the organisation as time progresses. Today, few of the researchers within the Project are from the Northside, being drawn instead from a wide area across Cork city and often from outside the city (and, occasionally, from outside Cork). The volatile nature of the Irish jobs market has also meant that the staff members are not necessarily from backgrounds that are educationally or socially

disadvantaged.[33] The Project has also been through a series of name changes, from Cork Northside Folklore Project (still in use in O'Carroll, 2011) to the Cork Folklore Project (in use by 2013, see O'Carroll, 2013), specifically to encourage people from across Cork city and county (and not just the Northside) to contribute to the oral history archive. Desplanques (2015, p. 32) says that since the CFP began, it "has expanded its 'field' to reflect the moving boundaries of Cork, both real and virtual." A combination of all these reasons means that the perceptual "boundary" that surrounds the "community" that the CFP draws on, serves and caters to, has widened and expanded. Nevertheless, the work of the CFP remains a community representation in the sense that the oral histories are the words and the voices of community members, who have given freely of their time, memories and creative self-expression in order to contribute to the CFP archive and the associated research and dissemination projects.

2.4.3 Cork Folklore Project's oral history collection strategy

The interviews held within the CFP archive often reflect the interests of staff and management and the nature of the material held is growing and diversifying, with the focus changing depending on the interests of those working at CFP at any given time. Each new staff member introduces new ideas about who should be interviewed, and what kinds of stories to collect. For example, two staff members created a sub-collection of interviews about LGBT experiences of Cork. Another recruit, a former stone mason, collected interviews about the work of stone masons that also added rich new material about buildings in Cork and beyond. Yet another staff member is working on a place-based oral history with a local community group from Ballyphehane, a suburb on the southside of the city. This collection strategy, in operation over the long life-span of the CFP, has resulted in the accumulation of a rich and diverse archive of interviews that deal with many aspects of everyday life in Cork.

> Our specific situation enables us to engage in a mode of open social enquiry that is gentle and slow-burning with outcomes that cannot be comprehensively foreseen, developing as they do in the iterative process of practice (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 27).

[33] During my time at the CFP I have known at least twenty researchers come and go and almost half of these have had higher degrees, including Masters and PhDs.

2.4.4 Cork Folklore Project and current funding environments

The long-term existence of the CFP and the fact that the organisation has had some latitude to evolve its own practice and interviewing agendas has fostered a slow and thoughtful research practice, and has furthered the development of a rich ethnographic/oral history archive. All of this operates in significant contrast to research funding strategies where project length is often limited.

> The ability to give ethnographic undertakings the time and space to grow through open enquiry may not be possible to achieve to the same extent in funded, time-bounded research, which tends to be well-defined from an early stage in terms of themes and outcomes, and to lack the flexibility to follow new leads and achieve the same kind of time-depth (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 27).

But while there are benefits to being an organisation that does not conform to these patterns there are also disadvantages. The CFP has had difficulty articulating its own worth to potential supporters and funders because the Project does not necessarily tick all the boxes that are required within bureaucracy-bound administrations. This could have implications for funding and support in the long-term:

> [w]hen pressed to define the Project's public folklore work within academic institutions, it is difficult in the context of the current administrative ethos to find a meaningful label that will lead to the justification of continuing institutional support, despite the Project archive's potential as a rich research resource in studies of social history, linguistics, memory, migration, placemaking and social and cultural process (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 26).

Like many organisations involved in cultural heritage, the CFP is now operating within a rapidly changing environment.[34] Changing times have created new pressures and new requirements within the CFP. The former research director reflected on how the CFP now operates within the context of:

> rapid technological advances and social, economic and political change in Ireland. The economic boom affected value systems and modes of thinking. The need for active and visible productivity became a palpable reality … The Project, like many socio-cultural organisations in Ireland, came under increasing pressure to account for its activities. It became sometimes necessary to consider research direction and archival practice more on the basis of financial survival, hanged on perceived 'popularity', rather than on the quality of the representations of contemporary local popular culture that could be realised (Desplanques, 2015, p. 22).

[34] Talking of museums, and based in the UK, Ross (2014, p. 1) notes that the *fact* of change is not new since organisations such as museums have almost always operated within evolving and changing environments and circumstances, but that the *pace* of change is new.

Many of the changes now facing cultural heritage organisations are problems of funding. For example, in Ireland, cuts to funding have had a drastic and deep impact on arts and heritage organisations (see Lagerqvist, 2015, p. 285; Hardiman & MacCarthaigh, 2013, p. 19). However, the changes are also a combination of technological and social factors, since in general "cultural institutions are facing the challenges of the accelerating pace of technology driven changes in society" (Ross, 2014, p. 1). Digital technologies have made profound inroads into everyday life, which has implications for general expectations about how cultural heritage organisations use technology.

2.5 Digital pressures (what the online audience expects)

The embrace of digitisation has become standard to the extent that some form of web presence is expected from all cultural institutions: Bearman and Geber (2008, p. 385) reviewed innovation in museums and noted that "a museum without a collections database and a Web presence is hardly considered professional, although not all institutions are using online access equally well," indicating that a digital presence has become the expected norm.

User expectations of digital resources have also changed and audiences are increasingly habituated to high standard interface designs produced by commercial organisations. There is now little allowance for, or tolerance of, inferior quality (Warwick, Terras, Huntington, & Pappa, 2008, p. 95). Additional pressures and expectations have emerged with the development of Web 2.0 technologies (also known as the Social Web, where platforms encourage information sharing, interaction and collaboration). Terras (2010b, p. 25) notes that "[i]nstitutions are just beginning to realise the power of many web 2.0 technologies in aiding them to disseminate information about their collections." While large institutions (such as national galleries and museums) have the advantage of technical support teams, the support for smaller organisations is often minimal. Digital expectations can be heavy burdens for small cultural heritage organisations operating within limited budgets.

There are therefore at least two sources of pressure for cultural organisations, one that comes from operating within a more restricted funding environment, and the second that comes from the increasing expectations of members of the public, who expect organisations to be involved in digitisation, at the very least:

> [i]t is now commonplace for most memory institutions to create and then

> deliver digital representations of cultural and historical documents, artefacts and images to improve access to, and foster greater understanding of, the material they hold (Terras, 2012a, p. 47).

However, it is now no longer possible to suggest that digitisation alone is a benefit, preferably the organisation will also be involved in digital innovation. In fact, such digital innovation is seen by many cultural organisations as crucial to their success (and their survival) in the future (see Vicente, Camarero, & Garrido, 2012, p. 675; and Ross, 2014, p. 91). In terms of policy, this is largely viewed through the lens of economics, with cultural economists suggesting that "the digital environment has enhanced the economic potential of the cultural sector through the creation of new cultural products and new modalities for the distribution and reception of cultural experiences" (Bakhshi & Throsby, 2012, p. 205).

There is also an increasing expectation that cultural organisations will be able to demonstrate that their digital projects have a real-world impact. This is an impetus that has largely developed from increasing demands to demonstrate the efficacy of funding, in particular where that funding has been granted from a public body. This theme of impact (and, implied if not overtly stated, "value") has been threaded through digital humanities literature since approximately 2008, with several studies setting out to tackle the issue of how to gauge the use and impact of digital cultural heritage and scholarly resources. These included assessment projects such as LAIRAH (Log Analysis of Internet Resources in the Arts and Humanities) and TIDSR (Toolkit for the Impact of Digital Scholarly Resources), both discussed below (this chapter, section 2.5.2). Other research included work by UKOLN (an Information Studies unit at the University of Bath) which primarily focused on the use of metrics as evidence for value and impact (UKOLN, 2011).[35] A similar early project was also conducted by Rice University Fondren Library, which looked at the Impact of Digital Resources on Humanities (cited by Meyer, Eccles, Thelwall, & Madsen, 2009, p. 14). In what follows, I discuss the concept of "value" and the measurement thereof as it is constructed and understood in relation to cultural heritage (and digital cultural heritage in particular).

2.5.1 The ideas behind "cultural statistics"

The developing need to justify or prove value in return for funding is not just a product of austerity. Throsby (a cultural economist) discussed the need for "cultural statistics" as early

[35] This UKOLN report "Final Report on Evidence, Impact, Metrics" included some advice about carrying out metrics-based surveys, but suggestions about gathering supplemental evidence were limited. (UKOLN closed in 2015, see http://blogs.bath.ac.uk/ukoln-informatics/, accessed 23 January 2017.)

as 2001, deeming them necessary because (after Throsby, 2001, p. 158) they:

- Describe the cultural sector (in terms of its size and the place it holds in the economy and in society).
- Act as the basis for evidence-based policy formation.
- Enable others to monitor the success or failure of cultural policies.
- Facilitate the comparison of data from across different sectors and different countries.

Funding for cultural heritage and the arts is increasingly governed by such neoliberal ideas. However, instrumental views of the value of culture were already current before the onset of austerity and they have come under increased scrutiny from a variety of different disciplinary perspectives. For example, in 2015, the international journal *Arts and Humanities in Higher Education*, published a special issue that comprised a "Forum on the Public Value of Arts and Humanities Research" with contributions from many different people. Many of the papers in this issue resist the idea of measuring value and "provide a glimmer of hope that scholarship and research in the arts and humanities can enjoy a future as a valued and appreciated partner in building tomorrow's knowledge society" (Benneworth, 2015, p. 6).[36]

Gathering cultural statistics is the consequence of a political trend that views arts and humanities as an extravagance when compared to science and technical disciplines. Olmos-Penuela et al. (2015, p. 62) argue that the "sense that they are a luxury is not determined objectively, but has been arrived at through political negotiation" which has "unconsciously framed our understanding of humanities," a situation that has developed over several decades. This, some argue (e.g. Belfiore, 2015, p. 106; and Michaels, 2011, p. 9), is because

[36] I use two papers from this special issue here in my argument. These includes, firstly, the research of Eleonora Belfiore (see http://www.lboro.ac.uk/departments/socialsciences/staff/eleonora-belfiore/, accessed 16 May 2017) from Social Sciences at Loughborough University, and secondly, the combined work of Julia Olmos-Peñuela and Elena Castro-Martínez (both from the Institute for Innovation and Knowledge Management (INGENIO) in Spain, see http://www.ingenio.upv.es/en/julia-olmos-penuela-1, and http://www.ingenio.upv.es/en/Elena-Castro-Martinez, both accessed 16 May 2017) and Paul Benneworth from the Centre for Higher Education Policy Studies at the University of Twente in the Netherlands (see https://www.utwente.nl/en/bms/cheps/training_and_consultancy/team/cvbenneworth/, accessed 16 May 2017). Belfiore's research has a British slant, while Olmos-Peñuela et al. take a broader view, describing the trajectory that gave rise to the idea that science was more valuable than the arts and humanities as something that emerged in post-World War II USA and then moving on to survey British attitudes. To supplement, I quote from F.S. Michaels, who published a controversial book about neoliberal monoculture; Michaels is a Canadian writer and her theories come from a North American perspective (see http://www.fsmichaels.com/, accessed 14 July 2017). This broad geographical range of contributors indicates that the academic concern about the validity of cultural statistics is primarily emerging in the developed West. The range of contributors also demonstrates that this is an issue that impacts upon researchers and practitioners in many different disciplines.

of the emergence of a neoliberal monoculture that has become such a normalised perspective, so fixed, that it is now difficult to see beyond it.

> In these early decades of the twenty-first century, the master story is economic; economic beliefs, values and assumptions are shaping how we feel, think, and act ... In a monoculture though, that single perspective becomes so engrained as the only reasonable reality that we begin to forget our other stories, and fail to see the monoculture in its totality, never mind question it (Michaels, 2011, p. 9).

While the discussion about gathering cultural statistics is not new, the ability to automatically gather large amounts of data associated with digital culture has been dramatically augmented in this era of "big data," a term that refers to the vast quantities of digital data that are aggregated (often automatically) and parsed (using algorithims) to reveal patterns that are generally not otherwise apparent. Big data can influence all areas of life, from online search to research into health care.[37] This research developed during a period when big data was having a cultural "moment" and 2014 was "destined, according to business analysts and marketing gurus, to have been a big year for big data … apparently, data scientist is 'the sexiest job of the 21st century'" (Hine, 2015, p. 181).

For digital humanities, one of the manifestations of this big data moment has taken the form of concern about impact and web metrics. This preoccupation is problematic for many humanities projects that are created as digital resources since, as Hughes et al. (2015, p. 186) note, digital resources in the humanities can often gain momentum slowly. This is because funded research often does not (or cannot) demonstrate a value until it has been read, digested, and disseminated across several platforms, all of which can only occur after time has elapsed from the initial creation of the resources: "funders often fail to appreciate that the 'value' of digital collections and the scholarship they enable may take time to emerge" (Hughes, 2012, p. 6).

2.5.2 Digital humanities, web metrics and issues of impact and value

Nevertheless, the study of digital resource use, impact and value has become increasingly common, and in digital humanities this is primarily a response to funding cuts. Writing in 2012, Lorna Hughes suggested that:

> [t]his is an auspicious time to take stock of this mass of digital content, and

[37] A generalist account of big data from 2010 (when the idea was beginning to filter into the mainstream) can be found at "Data, Data Everywhere," *The Economist* (February 25, 2010), http://www.economist.com/node/15557443, accessed 15 May 2017.

> consider its impact, value and use. The global economic decline that began in 2007 has led to serious cuts in funding for almost all humanities and cultural heritage initiatives, including the development of, and support for, digital collections ... This economic 'austerity' has created significant institutional and societal pressures on cultural heritage and higher education organizations. Partly as a consequence of the reduction in funding, we have seen a sharper emphasis on the need to demonstrate the 'impact' of publicly funded resources and research, as a means of quantifying the value of the investment in their creation (Hughes, 2012, p. 2).

Later, Hughes et al. (2015, p. 186) argued that measuring and documenting impact is "a means of demonstrating value of digital collections." Gathering web metrics is generally accepted as one of the first methods to use when trying to gather information about the use and impact of digital resources, an approach presumably taken because it developed amongst information scientists as a means of finding out about "information seeking and usage behaviour" of digital resource users (Clark, Nicholas, & Jamali, 2014, p. 185). This is a *realpolitik* approach that reflects the fact that quantitative methods, such as web metrics, are widely used by governments and independent funding bodies to measure and evaluate the effectiveness of funding and policy decisions:

> [w]e ... live in an environment where Governmental measures default to quantitative performance indicators in terms of public value and accountability where very basic metrics and monetary value remains pre-eminent as proxies for qualitative experiences (Tanner, 2012, p. 26).

Use of web metrics is also a reflection of a monoculture that permeates digital environments, certainly so if you accept the contention that:

> [i]n our so-called post-ideological society, software sustains and depoliticizes notions of ideology and ideology critique ... It has also fostered our belief in the world as neoliberal: as an economic game that follows certain rules (Chun, 2013, p. 92).

Digital humanities, as a discipline, operates within, and has its reason for being, because of digital environments. It follows, then, that gathering usage statistics (and assumptions around the methodologies used to do this), as well as demonstrating impact and "value" (or even the desirability of doing so) are processes that are rarely critiqued or problematized in digital humanities because it exists within and is shaped by the digital environment in which it exists.[38] While this is a reflection of the *digital* focus of digital

[38] In contrast, Belfiore and Bennet suggest that research into "the arts impact debate… has often focused on asking *how* the (presumed) positive social impacts of the arts might be measured, rather than asking *whether* the arts have social impacts, *if* these impacts can be expected to be positive and, more generally, *whether* people's responses to the arts are amenable to measurement and generalization" (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010, p. 137).

humanities, it disappoints the *humanities* aspect of digital humanities, since the humanities are seen as valuable precisely because they "put pressure on how governments commonly understand use, especially the prioritization of economic usefulness and the means of measuring it" (Small, 2013, p. 4). The widespread acceptance of a need to gather "cultural statistics" within digital humanities is one facet of a recognised difficulty with the discipline, that is, its tendency to place too much emphasis on quantitative techniques (Prescott, 2012, p. 68).

In contrast, there has been a long-standing tension between policy makers and cultural practitioners:

> [t]ension between the "instrumental" policies of governments and their adoption of econometric measurements systems and advocates within the cultural sector, who argued for more holistic systems of measurement encompassing 'intrinsic' values and admitting qualitative data gained momentum in the early years of this millennium (Scott, 2014, p. 79).

This tension developed because the concept of impact acquired a "narrow and technocratic scope" (Belfiore, 2015, p. 96). Holden, for example, argues that "[a]udience numbers and gallery visitor profiles give us an impoverished picture of how culture enriches us" (2004, p. 21).[39] These ideas have apparently also seeped into digital humanities, as there is now a widespread and evolving idea amongst digital humanities practitioners that impact and value should not be judged solely through the use of quantitative measures. This growing appreciation for qualitative methods is reflected in projects such as LAIRAH (Log Analysis of Internet Resources in the Arts and Humanities), which started using quantitative results (log analysis), but which followed these up with subsequent qualitative work (see Warwick, Terras, Galina, Huntington, & Pappa, 2007; Warwick, Terras, Huntington & Pappa, 2008; and Warwick, Terras, Huntington, Pappa, & Galina, 2007). Indeed, despite the initial concentration of quantitative methods, Warwick (2012) describes the user studies approach at UCLDH (where research for the LAIRAH Project was carried out) as primarily qualitative:

> [o]ur approach at UCLDH has been to use a variety of methods, most of them designed to be as naturalistic and unintrusive as possible … We have used interviews to determine what scholars like and dislike about digital resources and how they use information, and we have observed them using existing digital resources. We have asked them to keep diaries of their use of information and digital technologies … We have used surveys and questionnaires … We have interviewed the creators of existing, successful resources to see whether it is possible to identify any common features, in terms of design, creation or

[39] Scott (2014, 79) argues that this latter perspective has been one that has grown in influence over the past decade or so.

> documentation … All of these methods allow us to build up a picture of what users like and dislike, what they want to do and what they currently cannot achieve. This is then fed back to design teams to inform initial design and prototype ideas (Warwick, 2012, pp. 4–5).

Other projects concerned with impact and value within digital humanities (the Toolkit for the Impact of Digital Scholarly Resources, or TIDSR, for example) also emphasise that qualitative methods should be used as well as quantitative ones.

Projects like LAIRAH and TIDSR acknowledge and recommend the use of qualitative methods, but their advice and guidelines only take qualitative analysis to a certain point, and then do not move beyond it. For example, researchers for the TIDSR project indicated that the interviews they carried out "mainly allowed the researchers … to build a more comprehensive understanding of the context within which the overall impact of the projects can be understood" (Meyer, Eccles, & Madsen, 2009), and chose a small selection of excerpts to illustrate how insights could be gained from focus groups and interviews. The researchers who wrote the TIDSR guidelines are, however, not qualitative researchers by formation: the list of resource documents for those who wish to carry out interviews includes topics such as "What are interviews?" "Why should I conduct interviews?" "How do I conduct an interview?" and "Interviews: a short bibliography."[40] These are basic questions about practice and method, but not about analysis of the results. In contrast, the lists of resources for quantitative methods includes analytical resources, such as pointers to things that you should look out for in your results when you gather quantitative information, for example, "Understanding analytics."[41] The TIDSR final report states that only:

> tentative conclusions regarding the interview data are possible at this time. Further analysis awaits the final transcribing of the interviews, which will take several months beyond the end of the project. Once that data is available, it will be analysed and published, including a report on the project website (Meyer, Eccles, Thelwall, et al., 2009, p. 107).

However, almost eight years later (early 2017) these results have never materialised on the TIDSR website, despite the fact that, while the main funding for the project is over, the site is occasionally updated.[42] Rather than being a criticism, this observation serves to indicate

[40] See http://microsites.oii.ox.ac.uk/tidsr/kb/interviews, accessed 3 February 2017.

[41] See http://microsites.oii.ox.ac.uk/tidsr/kb/kb/analytics, accessed 3 February 2017.

[42] The TIDSR webpage (see http://microsites.oii.ox.ac.uk/tidsr/about-toolkit, accessed 3 February 2017) indicated (in February 2017) that the site had not been completely updated since 2013 but case studies and lists of publications and references have been added since that time. The most recent dated addition to the toolkit is a case study from February 2016 (see http://microsites.oii.ox.ac.uk/tidsr/case-studies, accessed 3 February 2017) and the most recent reference to the toolkit (by Hughes et al. 2015) is from 2015, (see http://microsites.oii.ox.ac.uk/tidsr/selected-references-toolkit, accessed 21 August 2017).

that it is difficult, and time-consuming, to become enculturated into the processes of qualitative analysis, particularly if your formation has been heavily influenced by quantitative methods of analysis, which appears to be the norm in digital humanities.[43] Clement (2016b) argues that " most digital humanists do not employ … qualitative methods of data gathering" and suggests that "perhaps the absence of these methods indicates that digital humanities it is still not clear where such methods might fit within the epistemological landscape of the humanities."

However, despite some uncertainty about how to analyse qualitative results, there is undoubtedly now an acknowledgement within digital humanities that ideas about what value and impact are should extend beyond hit counts:

> [t]he creators of digital resources need to develop a more inclusive view of the 'value' and 'impact' that extends beyond numbers of users to a more qualitative understanding of the way that this content is having a transformative effect on scholarship and public engagement (Hughes, 2013, p. 422).

This implies that part of the value of digital humanities resources is not to be found in the number of hit counts but rather in the way digital humanities resources are used in scholarship, and also by the general public (in particular as a form of public engagement). The suggestion, therefore, is that digital humanities practitioners envisage a digital audience that is not solely academic, but also includes members of the general public. However, the prevailing rhetoric when discussing *users* within digital humanities tends to emphasise and focus on an academic audience; it is about the creation of digital resources for research, and the audience is often assumed to be scholarly: for example, Warwick (2012, p. 1) suggests that "[i]t was often assumed that the resources created in digital humanities would be used by humanities scholars."[44]

There is some acknowledgement of the academic focus of the discussion, for example Tanner (2012, p. 21) notes that digital humanities research into digital resource creation "mainly focused upon the academic perspective." In addition, resources such as TIDSR are specifically targeted at academics (it is a toolkit for those looking at the impact of scholarly resources). In this scenario, the value or impact of a digital resource accrues through

[43] Kelly et al. (2012) call the process of moving from positivist quantitative methods to qualitative research a "difficult journey."

[44] Warwick's main argument here is that the humanities researchers who were the users of digital resources were assumed to be luddites "Thus, there was little point asking them what they needed, because they would not know, or their opinion about how a resource functioned, because they would not care." (Warwick, 2012, p. 1). My point is that this view of the user of the digital humanities resource fails to take into account that users can also come from outside academia.

engagement and use by a researcher, the end user. While this preoccupation is understandable (academia is the local environment for most digital humanities practitioners), it means that a lot of digital humanities writing concentrates on academic resources, whereas many projects that could be described as part of the digital humanities are created in environments with less technical and institutional support (Terras, 2010a includes several examples of digital "museums" created by volunteers and non-experts, many of them subsequently used by researchers).[45] All of this suggests that, despite lip service, there is relatively limited attention paid to how "audience" extends beyond the scholarly community: "[w]e are making digital projects more frequently, but what impact do the projects have beyond discipline-specific scholarly audiences?" (Ridolfo, 2015, Chapter 4).

2.5.3 Some awkward questions of cultural authority

Belfiore (2015, p. 107) suggests that the value and impact question is loaded with "awkward questions of cultural authority and power at the heart of both contemporary arts and educational policies." Within digital humanities I submit that this sense of "cultural authority" may manifest as a blindness to, or ignorance of, digital resources created by and for non-scholarly audiences. This seems like a paradox, in particular for a discipline such as digital humanities that sees itself as developing tools and resources that "have a radical, open, democratic aspect that is linked to mass literacy movements, making scholarly materials widely available to populations that had not previously had such access" (Chun, Grusin, Jagoda, & Raley, 2016). Notwithstanding this, Brennan (2016) felt the need to point out that:

> projects and research may be available online, but that status does not inherently make the work digital public humanities or public digital humanities. Public ... humanities practices – in either digital or analog forms – place communities, or other public audiences, at their core.

Brennan is here implying that some scholars may call their work public humanities but, other than providing access online, the scope of public engagement is relatively limited. This is an important consideration for the CFP, which sees itself as an embedded community organisation, where the relationship between the organisation and the community really matters, and where decisions about what to put online, and what to leave in the archive,

[45] Terras (2010a) looked at "amateur" (voluntary) digital resource creation but there has been little follow-through on this aspect of the work (i.e. the creation of resources by non-experts). Most citations of the article listed in Google Scholar are about crowdsourcing: twenty-six citations are listed, eight mention crowdsourcing in the title, a further three in the abstract and another seven in the main text. (Figures checked 13 October 2016.)

impact upon and are predicated on the quality of that relationship with and within the community:

> it is important to consider carefully the quality of the relationships that the Project establishes within the community, in terms of the processes of negotiation of a sense of ownership and authorship that speaks to the collective while acknowledging and valuing each individual in a communal and representative archive (Desplanques, 2015, p. 25).

The Cork Memory Map and the successor digital projects that are detailed within this thesis are built with a consideration of the community relationship, as well as the idea of public humanities (in particular public folklore) to the fore. This is the case for all of the work carried out by the CFP, with the entire spectrum of the activities of the project being seen by their practitioners as an example of "engaged folklore." This is particularly the case for the "provision of long-term community access to ethnographic materials gathered, and the relatively unmediated (re)presentation of the voices, activities and creative production of contributors," all of which "brings resources into being that may be drawn upon again and again by a range of actors in the imagining and re-imagining of communities and modes of life" (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 24).

What follows is a narrative account of my experiences of working with the CFP, building and using digital projects that were supposed to be both a way of creating "value" for and within the project, but also, and at the same time, were tools of public engagement, built and maintained with the idea of community relationships always at the forefront. My work with the CFP, and this narrative account of that work, is suffused throughout by considerations of community relationship, duty of care, problems of representation and (dis)empowerment as these questions and problems characterise oral history methodology and theory, and as they apply to digital humanities projects. The starting point for my narrative is a consideration of the original Cork Memory Map (outlined in Chapter 3), and how this was being used in the CFP as I started my research in September 2013. Later, in Chapter 7, I take up the idea of value and impact again, with specific reference to my digital work with the CFP.

3 Expertise required: the pitfalls of online longevity and black-boxing

> *… the changeable nature of web delivery means that a static resource produced at the end of a research project will become outdated relatively quickly and may become unusable, although project creators appear not to realize this.*
>
> - From "The master builders: LAIRAH research on good practice in the construction of digital humanities projects" by Claire Warwick, Isabel Galina, Melissa Terras, Paul Huntington and Nikoleta Pappa (2008, p. 393).

> *… an open process of scrutiny is one of the pillars of scholarship and, in the end, scholarship's claim to social legitimacy. Technological black-boxing may therefore prove to be a major issue if digital methods become more widespread.*
>
> - From "Digital methods: five challenges" by B. Rieder and T. Röhle (2012, pp. 75–76). (Published in *Understanding Digital Humanities.*)

3.1 Introduction to Chapter 3

This chapter provides an overview of some problems that often impact upon digital projects, particularly for "older" websites that have been available for a number of years, which typically encounter problems of "digital decay" (see Griffin, Herzinger, & Sasser, 2013, p. 630). These problems mean that "[s]ustainability is an area of huge concern for the digital humanities community" (Terras, 2012b, p. 178). The chapter documents everyday activities associated with the original Cork Memory Map, a relatively small-scale project by the CFP that was, nevertheless, ambitious within the context in which it was created (in terms of resource allocation, i.e. personnel and time, and the availability of technical expertise). This makes it a good case study for an exploration of issues around the maintenance and digital assessment of small scale, community digital humanities projects, including whether it is appropriate to gauge the digital audiences using website metric tools. Problems that emerged during this work suggest that expertise is a key requirement in digital project work and the activities documented in this chapter were suffused with technical, organisational

and human difficulties.

3.2 Case study (the original Cork Memory Map)

3.2.1 Background to the original digital project

The original Cork Memory Map is a CFP digital project that documents "the personal memories, folklore, occupational lore, characters and stories associated with different areas of the city" (O'Carroll, 2011, p. 184).[46] This digital project (see Figure 3.1) was initially used as a way of concentrating everyday work at the CFP, the map providing a focus for the collection of place-based stories about Cork.[47] This project was greeted with enthusiasm "even before its existence as an online Map" because it was a concept that was easy to grasp for potential interviewees (O'Carroll, 2015, p. 45).

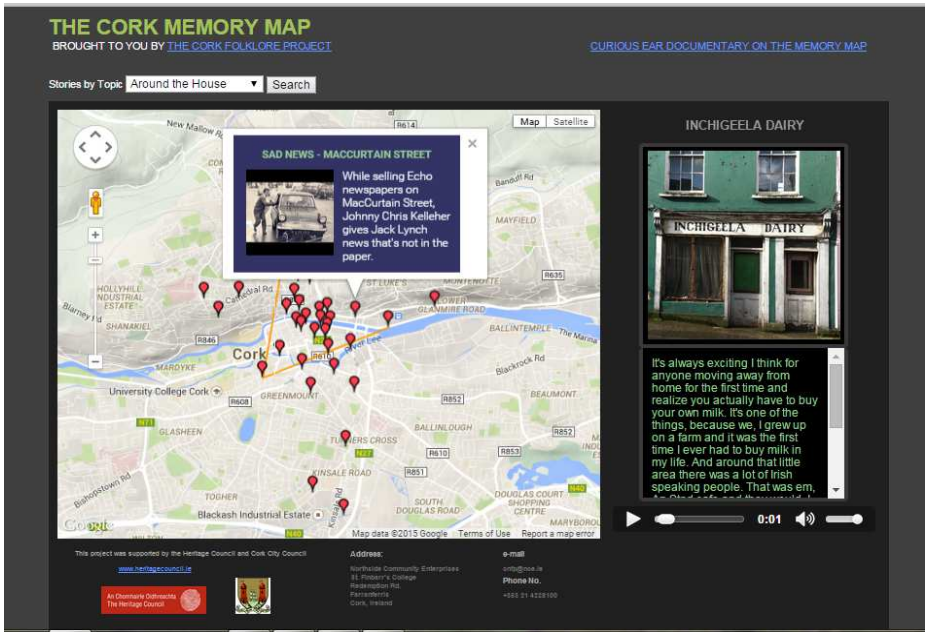


Figure 3.1: Screenshot of the original Cork Memory Map, when it worked in January 2015.[48]

The Cork Memory Map was inspired by a digital project called the City of Memory, a New York video and audio stories project that is based on a map of that city.[49] The City of

[46] See https://www.ucc.ie/research/memorymap/, accessed 23 May 2017. The appearance of the site has changed since late May 2017, see the section 3.2.3 in this chapter.
[47] Personal communication, Dr Clíona O'Carroll, the CFP Research Director.
[48] From http://www.ucc.ie/research/memorymap/, accessed 16 Jan 2015.
[49] See http://cityofmemory.org/map/index.php, accessed 23 May 2017.

Memory includes specially curated stories as well as those that have been uploaded by site users (contributions that are moderated). This was considered one of the most accomplished online story mapping projects available at the time when the Cork Memory Map was being created (O'Carroll, 2011, p. 185).

The original iteration of the Cork Memory Map was developed by Cheryl Donahue (in association with the CFP) as part of her MSc in Interactive Media in 2011 (Donahue, 2011). It was an ambitious step forward for digital projects at the CFP:

> [a]lthough the Project has showcased some of its film, audio slideshow and print work on the website, and selected extracts from our radio programmes were accessible from the year of their production (2005) along with their transcripts, the Memory Map represented a shift and growth in online representation and digital dissemination (O'Carroll, 2015, p. 44).

Subsequent one-off grants from The Heritage Council and Cork City Council (in 2012) facilitated further work on the website after the completion of Donahue's MSc.[50] This work was promoted in the CFP's annual magazine, *The Archive*, (see Cork Folklore Project, 2011, pp. 14–15; O'Carroll, 2012, p.14), in academic journals (see O'Carroll, 2011, 2013), on a radio documentary *The Curious Ear*,[51] as well as at public presentations and conferences. It was, therefore, already well-developed and had been widely publicised when my PhD research began in September 2013.

The original Cork Memory Map was developed using a background digital map (Google Maps). Audio stories and anecdotes (all taken from oral history interviews in the CFP archive) are pinned to places or points on the map. The excerpts are accompanied by short transcripts of the audio, as well as images (usually either a photograph of the narrator or an image associated with the content of the excerpt). These combine to build a multi-layered narrative, composed of different media (audio excerpts, photographs and texts) and associated with points on the map of Cork city (see Figure 3.1).

The aim of the Cork Memory Map is to create an oral history-based story map that allows users to explore different layers of narratives and stories associated with the landscape and "culturescape" of Cork city, the idea being to present oral history to online users who can then "access the rich tapestry of memory and informal histories that overlay the city" (O'Carroll, 2011, p. 184). Creating a story map that juxtaposes excerpts from many

[50] See http://www.heritagecouncil.ie/content/files/grants_2012_745kb.pdf for details of the Heritage Council grant (accessed 23 May 2017).
[51] The radio documentary is online at http://www.rte.ie/radio1/doconone/2011/0816/646858-curious-ear-doconone-cork-city-memory-map/, accessed 25 January 2017.

different people, of various backgrounds, should allow users to explore spatial stories and to imagine and evoke the city as it was, as it is, and as it has the potential to be. This is particularly the case for stories from those with experiences and opinions of the city that diverge from or are at variance with official and mainstream narratives. Ideally, the map should reflect the diversity of the CFP's archival holdings, which includes oral histories of marginalised and outsider groups, as well as more traditional interviews of the everyday lives of residents in Cork city:

> [t]he Project maintains a critical engagement with the question of who our communities of contributors and resource users might be, and how they might be meaningfully represented, served and/or challenged. In contrast to public expectations of folklore practice, we eschew an idea that older native members of the community would be the only, or best possible, contributors to an investigation of a living urban culture, and have worked with a broad range of people as contributors and researchers (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 25).

The idea is to create a digital representation of the city that is simultaneously familiar and other. Such a multi-layered map, deep in content, would help to reflect the mission of the CFP as an archive of oral histories collected by and for community members, and reflecting the diversity of the city of Cork in the range of its archival holdings.

The original memory map was devised with a number of different users in mind. The concept was initially identified as one that could be suitable for tourists visiting Cork, although in practice the content is possibly more suitable to people who are already somewhat familiar with Cork city. Other users could include schools who want to carry out local history studies, adult literacy groups (the audio and the transcript is available on the map, and the audio stories are told in familiar, everyday language) and non-native Cork residents who wish to investigate the city in more detail, as well as native Cork residents who want to listen to stories associated with their city.

3.2.2 Technical difficulties and issues of sustainability

The main structural elements of the original Cork Memory Map (interface, underlying databases and forms for contributing to the database) were completed by 2011. The main person responsible for creating the site moved on to work elsewhere, but one member of the staff at CFP continued to upload new content to the map. However, technical difficulties began to emerge after a short period of time. I was shown all the steps necessary to upload

content to the Cork Memory Map in September 2013 (using the form pictured in Figure 3.2). It was at this point that problems with the original Cork Memory Map were first noted.[52]

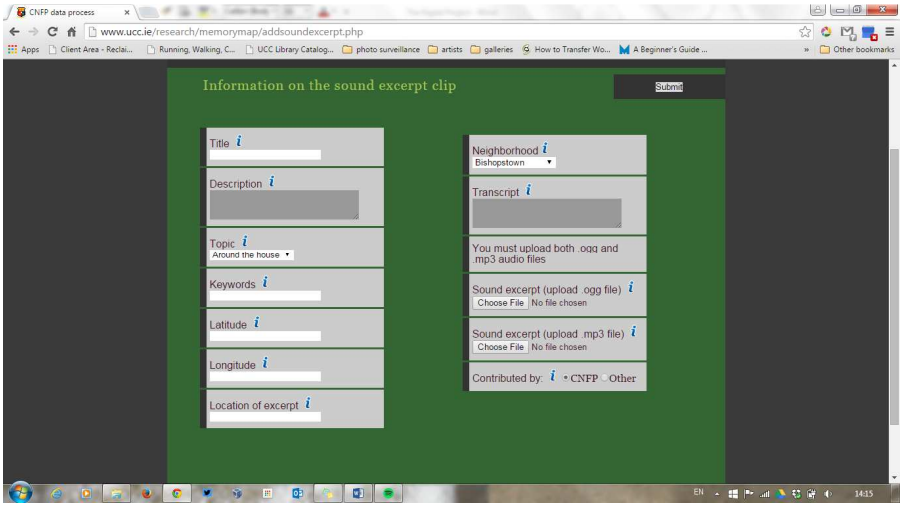


Figure 3.2: Screenshot of the form used to add content to the original Cork Memory Map.[53]

This problem coincided with a software upgrade across platforms hosted by UCC. This was identified as the source of the Cork Memory Map problem at a meeting on 12 November 2013.[54] My diary from this meeting notes:

> [p]roblems (current) with uploading to Memory Map are caused by difficulties accessing the system due to new security measures associated with UCC server. (Excerpt from my ethnographic diary, 12 November 2013.)

This is not an unusual phenomenon. Many leaders of digital humanities projects surveyed by the LAIRAH project "seemed unaware that updating is vital in order for a resource to remain functional despite possible changes in software systems and delivery interfaces" (Warwick, Galina, et al., 2008, p. 392). These updates are necessary because "[e]nsuring that digital scholarship is presented and made sustainable over a long period of time requires resources to undertake the curatorial activities of selection, maintenance, and updating" (Prescott, 2016, p. 462).

---

[52] This was described in my ethnographic diary (at the very start of my research), noting that it was only possible to add text for input into the form. 25 September 2013 my diary says "Problems with images not displaying. Filesize? Dimensions? ... Also problems with loading audio."

[53] See http://www.ucc.ie/research/memorymap/form0.php, accessed 18 August 2015; the link for this form was still accessible in August 2017, almost four years after the first problems uploading content were noted.

[54] This was a meeting between Dr Cliona O'Carroll, the CFP Research Director, Mary O'Driscoll, the CFP administrator, Colin McHale, part-time technician in the Department of Folklore and Ethnology at UCC, Annmarie McIntyre, a CFP researcher and student on the UCC MA in Digital Arts and Humanities programme, and Penny Johnston.

My diary also notes that this problem was, in part, caused by the fact that the Memory Map was not designed with longevity and simplicity in mind:

> [a]rchitecture of Memory Map is too complex – have to keep referring back to original creator, now in US, to make changes. (Excerpt from my ethnographic diary, 12 November 2013.)

Attempts to resolve this (between December 2014 and April 2015) were unsuccessful, largely because of the difficulties involved in maintaining a bespoke, small digital project within an institutional setting. The original Cork Memory Map is hosted on university servers and managing such a bespoke project requires interactions with IT support staff who, understandably, need to concentrate on delivering support to the widest number of stakeholders, rather than spending time helping to develop small projects. This is a problem common to bespoke digital humanities projects:

> many DH projects require customized support, or at the very least, server-level access for collaborators … requesting this kind of access or support from already overstretched system administrators is not an exercise for the faint of heart (Posner, 2013, pp. 47–48).[55]

In addition to this, there is limited provision of technical support within the Department of Folklore and Ethnology. Lack of institutional support is not the only issue, however, as the working practices of a small cultural heritage organisation like the CFP mean that there is often no capacity to actively seek the necessary support (in terms of time but also in terms of the know-how and, critically, the language necessary to communicate needs to technical specialists). This combination of technical and communication factors mean that it has not been possible to add images to some of the entries on the original Cork Memory Map (see Figure 3.3), and the digital project has languished since 2013 as a result. While this may seem disheartening, it is important to stress that this is not uncommon:

> [w]hile every oral history program and web project is different … there are important lessons to be learned with regard to both the issue of institutional support for web projects and the effects of rapidly changing technology … Our experience … points to serious questions about where and how projects are institutionally located and even their ability to be assured ongoing support (Gluck, 2014, p. 45).

The experience with the original Cork Memory Map has highlighted the impact that the lack of expertise can have on technical sustainability. It is also perhaps true that sustainability is not as widely discussed as it should be. Despite the fact that "sustainability is an area of huge concern" (Terras, 2012b, p. 178), it is often an issue that is discussed

[55] This is a view from the United States.

superficially, rather than in depth (see Eschenfelder et al., 2016), making it difficult for the non-specialist to identify this as a potential pitfall when planning a project.

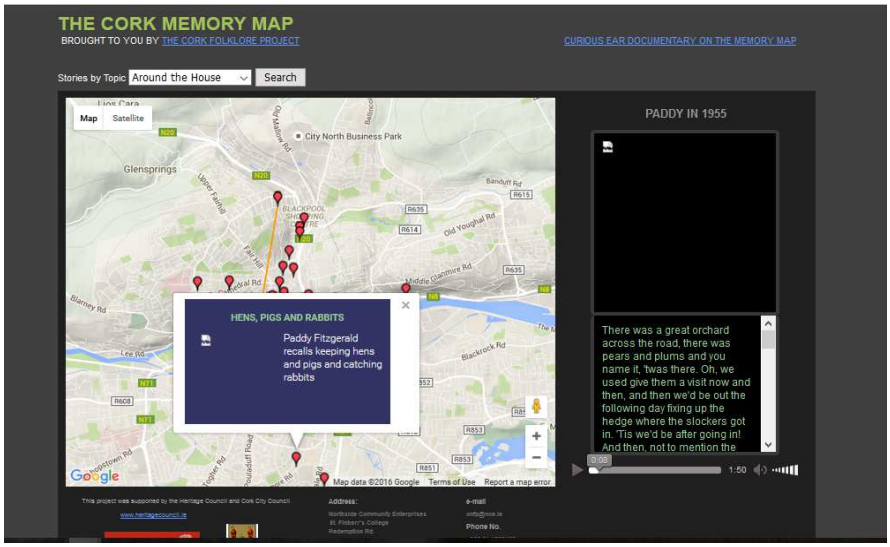


Figure 3.3: Screenshot of entries that did not work on the original Cork Memory Map (here photographs were not uploaded for entries made in late 2013).[56]

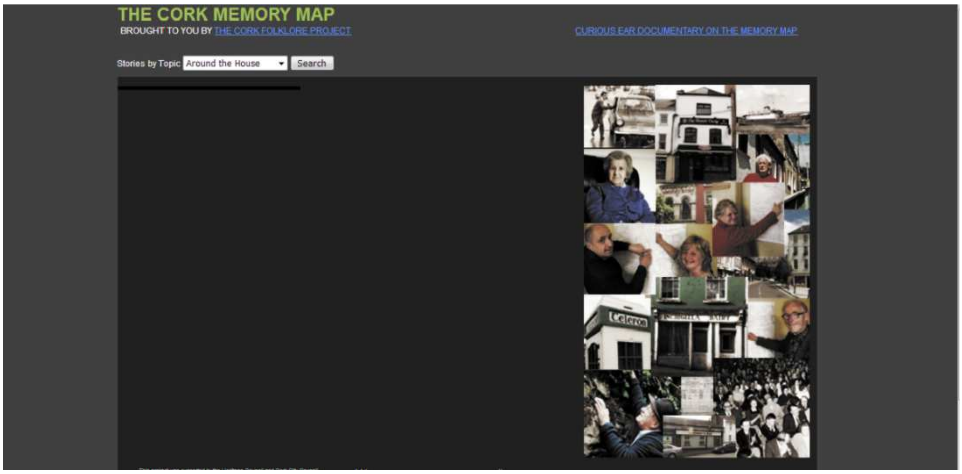


Figure 3.4: Screenshot of the Cork Memory Map in May 2017, when most content no longer displays.[57]

3.2.3 Further difficulties

Late in May 2017, as I finalised this thesis, a further difficulty with the original Cork Memory Map emerged. Google Maps no longer displays in most browsers (Figure 3.4). This

[56] See http://www.ucc.ie/research/memorymap/, accessed 17 May 2016.
[57] See http://www.ucc.ie/research/memorymap/, accessed 29 May 2017.

is further evidence of the necessity for updating and maintaining digital projects.

3.3 Web metrics

Despite the early difficulties with the Cork Memory Map the site was still live and available to the public online between September 2013 and May 2017. This meant that even when it existed in a form where it was not possible to add new content, it was still possible to monitor the digital audience for the site. The following is an account of my work with website metrics which, in common with digital humanities practice (see Chapter 2.5.2), were used as a standard way of assessing use of the original Cork Memory Map project. The idea behind this practice was that this would provide insights that would help develop the project for a wider audience.[58]

3.3.1 Using quantitative tools (results, problems, insights)

Tools to measure website metrics were used to gather basic empirical data about use of the site, with the underlying assumption of this approach being that this would indicate how the original Cork Memory Map was being accessed and used by a digital audience. I selected Google Analytics as a tool using a special "toolkit" developed by the Oxford Internet Institute at the University of Oxford, known as TIDSR or Toolkit for the Impact of Digitised Scholarly Resources (see Chapter 2.5.2).[59] TIDSR was designed to guide and inspire scholars to use a variety of different digital and non-digital tools to track the use and impact of their research. It also lists a variety of other forms of metrical analyses, including analytics, webometrics, log file analysis and scientometrics. These are all recommended as useful quantitative tools for judging use and impact of digital resources, but they were not used in this analysis because they were inappropriate for the case of the Cork Memory Map (see Appendix II for the full explanation of the choices made when selecting tools for this study).

Analytics are a method that aims to help website managers optimise and improve their sites (see Fang, 2007). First introduced in 2004, Google Analytics:

> tracks web usage not by inferring page-views from page requests, but by sending a tracking tag signalling that the page has been displayed. The recording

[58] My research proposal, submitted to the Irish Research Council in March 2013, asks "How can we encourage better access for audiences that exceed the usual researcher base … ?" The original idea was to follow common digital humanities practice and monitor website usage using website metrics to track how these changed as we promoted the site online and at various events.

[59] See http://microsites.oii.ox.ac.uk/tidsr/, accessed 8 September 2016.

> is at the endpoint rather than the start of the usage cycle. And, because the tracking is collected by Google rather than the individual website, this gives both Google and, to a lesser extent, the website operator – in theory anyway – a more complete picture of user behaviour (Clark et al., 2014, p. 188).

Google Analytics has both a free version and a premium package. In the free version, limited information is made available to the website administrator about the users and use of their website. The premium version provides more detailed information about the demographics of the website visitors and the ways that they are accessing the website (for example, whether they are using desk-based or mobile devices). Google Analytics is one of the most widely used tool for metrical analysis of web usage (Dragoş, 2011, p. 114). It has been considered an industry norm amongst information scientists since 2011 (Clark et al., 2014, p. 192). For these reasons, as well as the fact that it was a no-cost option, the free version of Google Analytics was chosen as a trial method of gathering quantitative data about the users of the Cork Memory Map.

To implement Google Analytics a snippet of java script code was added to the original Cork Memory Map website to create page tags. These were then used to collect information processed by Google servers. Google first party cookies, set on each visitor's computer, were also used to collect information. This tool allowed me to collect information about several facets of usage of the original Cork Memory Map, including the number of page views, the number of unique browsers, the average daily unique browsers, the number of page impressions, number of visits, the visit durations and the bounce rate (all of these data points are explained in Appendix II, a technical report that presents the Google Analytics results in detail). These are the standard criteria that should be used when reporting the results and data gathered about website metrics, according to the Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC, 2015), the British advertising and media industry's independent "stamp of trust."[60] Because one of my research interests is the use of local, niche cultural heritage online resources, I also used Google Analytics to collect data about where the site was accessed from, i.e. the geographical location of the users. I present a short account of the results from Google Analytics below, including summary statistics based on data collected by Google Analytics during the period between March 2014 to March 2015. The detailed results are presented in Appendix II.

[60] See https://www.abc.org.uk/, accessed 23 May 2017. ABC tries to build consensus about how website metrics are measured to ensure that the information is presented in a standardised way within their trade. They offer an easy to access guides on how website metrics should be collected (see http://www.abcstandards.org.uk/images/ABCWebTrafficReportingStandards.pdf, accessed 21 September 2015).

3.3.2 Summary of results

Google Analytics statistics indicate that the number of unique browsers and page impressions (a record of the number of requests for a web page) were generally modest but steady between March 2014 and January (and into February) in 2015 (see graphs Figures 3.5 and 3.6). These results increased dramatically in March 2015, when the Cork Memory Map Google Analytics was affected by "referrer spam" (explained below in section 3.3.3 in this chapter).

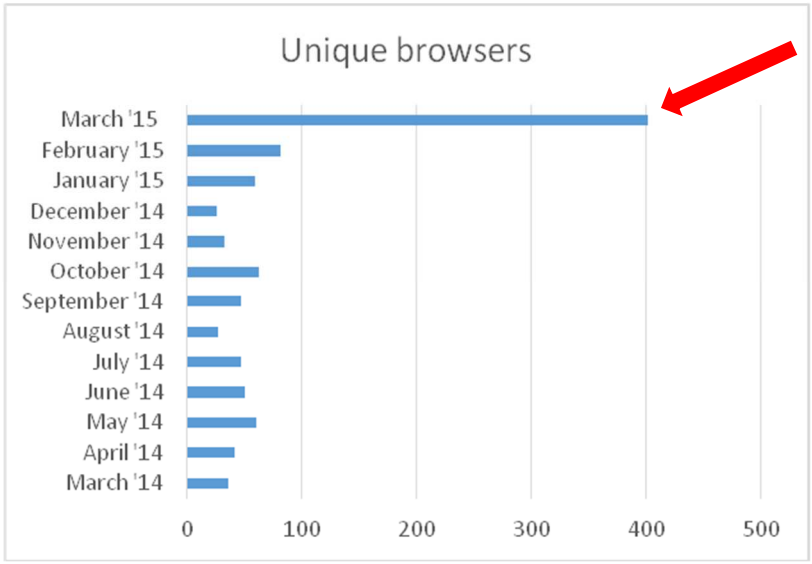


Figure 3.5: Bar graph of unique browser results for the Cork Memory Map (March 2014–March 2015), with arrow showing referrer spam spike.

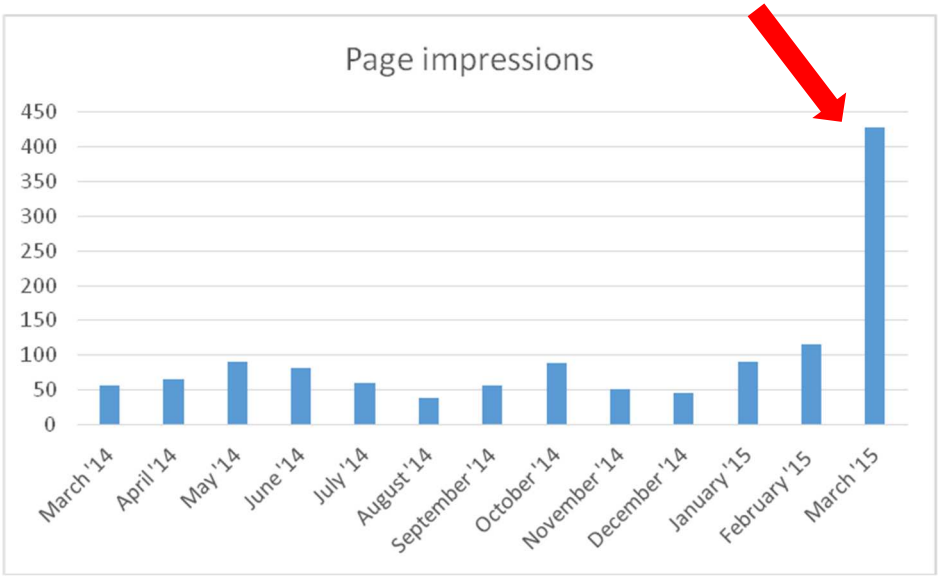


Figure 3.6: Column graph of page impressions for the Cork Memory Map (March 2014–March 2015), with arrow showing referrer spam spike.

The number of visits were somewhat more variable than the unique browsers and page impressions. Approximately 50 visits per month were recorded, but the results indicate higher numbers of visits in some months, particularly May and October 2014 and January 2015. Referrer spam also affected recorded visits, with the numbers spiking after February 2015 (see Figure 3.7).

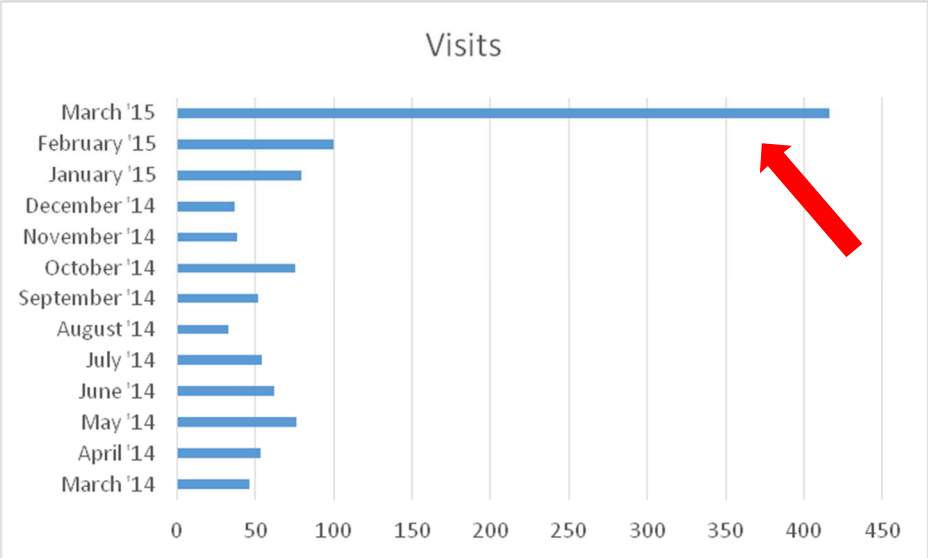


Figure 3.7: Column graph of visits to the Cork Memory Map (March 2014–March 2015), with arrow showing referrer spam spike.

Visit duration is one of the key metrics for a site such as the Cork Memory Map, as it demonstrates whether users are actually staying on the site and reading or listening to content. The Cork Memory Map results do indicate some engagement ("stickiness"),[61] with the average time on the site usually recorded as between three and eight minutes. The average session durations are usually between two hundred and five hundred seconds (see Figure 3.8). Because the length of time it takes to play an audio excerpt on the original Cork Memory Map ranges from twenty-nine seconds to three minutes and eighteen seconds, this

[61] Previously, web usability experts such as Jakob Nielsen advised that a good site with good content should be sticky, i.e. users would stay there a long time. Search engine advances have changed this advice, and in an "information foraging" environment, they now advise that sites should "be a snack," i.e. should be suitable for short visits, should encourage return visits, and should work on search engine visibility (see https://www.nngroup.com/articles/information-scent/, "Information Foraging: Why Google Makes People Leave Your Site Faster" by Nielsen, J. (2003), accessed 25 January 2017). Nielsen and his consulting team advise commercial companies about their web content, but he is also widely cited in digital humanities texts, particularly in early ones, because he identified a pattern in the way people read text on screens (for example, see Hayles, 2010, p. 66). He has also written usability textbooks such as *Designing Web Usability* (Nielsen, 1999) and *Prioritizing Web Usability* (Nielsen & Loranger, 2006).

suggests that most users listen to more than one of the audio clips.

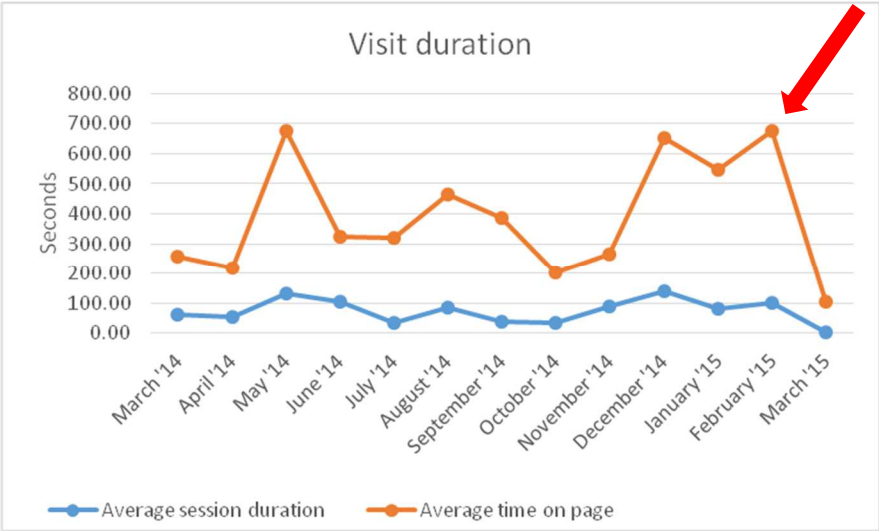


Figure 3.8: Line chart showing visit duration for the Cork Memory Map (March 2014–March 2015), with arrow showing referrer spam plunge.

Referrer spam also had an impact on these results since the automated "hits" recorded by referrer spam had no duration, and therefore the average visit duration decreased (referrer spam made the number of visits go up, but the overall average duration of visits went down because of this).

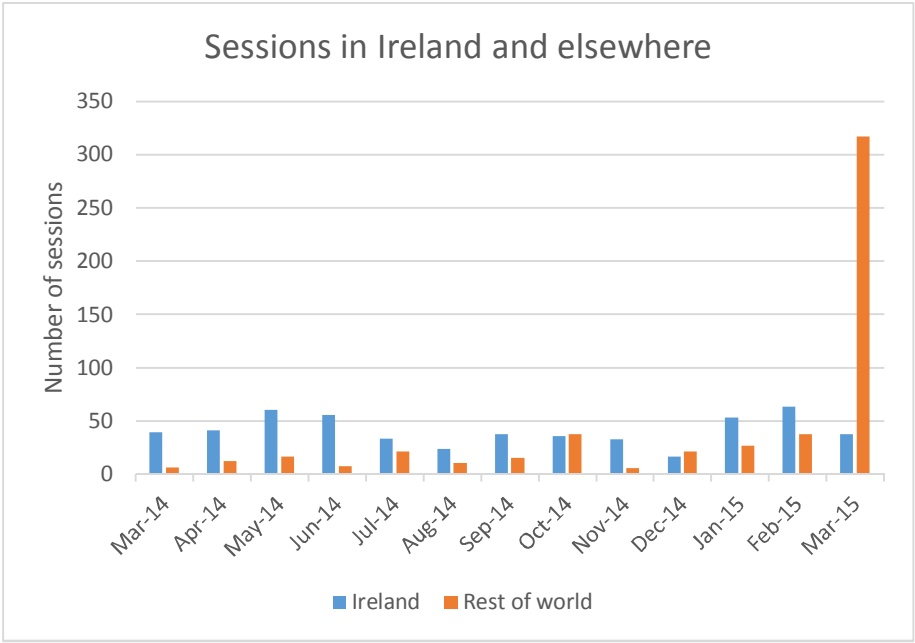


Figure 3.9: Column graph showing geographic origins of sessions on the Cork Memory Map (March 2014–March 2015).

Information about the geographic location of users indicated that Ireland, as might be expected, is the most common place where users access the site, with session numbers from other locations often being comparatively low (Figure 3.9). Visit duration from locations outside Ireland was also often very short, suggesting that many users from the rest of the world were accidental visitors.

3.3.3 Technical problems with the results

Several technical difficulties had an impact on the data from Google Analytics, with referrer spam being the most obvious problem to influence the collated results. Referrer spam occurs when web crawlers are created to visit selected websites, and where each visit, instead of leaving a referrer field blank, inserts a link to a targeted web page (Chandra & Suaib, 2014, p. 637). This creates a false "hit" within the Google Analytics account, usually designed to create a link back to a spammer's own website to promote site ranking within Google. Referrer spam had an impact on all of the figures collected from Google Analytics from late February 2015 and into March 2015 (the figures from these periods and after are unreliable).

A filter was implemented in order to re-establish reliability in the data (details are found in Appendix II). However, it was unclear whether this was unnecessarily restrictive (i.e. whether it filtered out hits from genuine sources, as well as referrer spam) and therefore there was no way to establish whether the same type of data was being collected pre-referrer spam and post-implementation of the filter. There was also no way to "clean" the historic data to eliminate the referrer spam hits.

Problems with data gathering for the analysis of website metrics are not uncommon. For example, one of the resources studied in the LAIRAH project (outlined in Chapter 2.5.2) did not maintain its own logs, due to lack of technical support, and therefore only limited data was available (Warwick, Terras, et al., 2008, p. 87). Research by the TIDSR team (see Chapter 2.5.2) also encountered difficulties when complications emerged during a webometrics study, including problems with supposedly straightforward information gathering tasks such as URL selection (Eccles, Thelwall, & Meyer, 2012, p. 516).

Other difficulties using Google Analytics emerged as a result of the way the Cork Memory Map was set up. The original Cork Memory Map is a single html file that calls images, audio and text from different locations using javascript and php. This means that most hits at the site are recorded as a single visit, and they are therefore generally seen as a "bounce"

because Google Analytics records single visits to the site (with no multiple page views) as bounces. Google Analytics, and web metrics in general, tend to interpret a high bounce rate as a bad thing because it either indicates many accidental visitors, or that the site is not constructed with a view to collecting accurate statistics in Google Analytics (see Dragoş, 2011, p. 117). The latter is true for the original Cork Memory Map, suggesting that this bounce rate should not necessarily be constructed as a negative:

> there is a difference between a visitor who lands briefly on a page and one who spends time reading it. If that one page visit is exactly what the visitor wanted it makes no sense to discount it just because it is also a bouncer (Clark et al., 2014, p. 190).

3.3.4 Narrow views of online usage (tools with commercial origins)

The overall conclusion, after my experience of using Google Analytics, is that the tool, and perhaps web metrics in general, are inappropriate for websites that are constructed to encourage users to engage deeply with the content, in particular where they spend a lot of time on one page. Dragos (2011, p. 113) points out that this is a problem with use of Google Analytics in analysing results from e-learning sites, and a similar argument applies for the original Cork Memory Map, where it is hoped that users will engage with the rich content excerpted from the CFP's oral history archive and therefore spend a lot of time on one item from the site.

One of the reasons why Google Analytics might be unsuitable for public engagement, academic and e-learning websites is because it was developed as a tool for corporate website use, and specialises in analysing the reach of the website particularly in relation to the amount of money that a website can make from online advertising (Dragoş, 2011, p. 113). Because of this, it is:

> very much bound to a marketing perspective of online behaviour ... This narrow view of what online usage is for, of what the [*sic*] both the user and site operator needs and desires, may limit the relevance and effectiveness of the service when applied to the study of other kinds of online usage (Clark et al., 2014, p. 188).

Because web analytics tools are generally built for e-commerce, they are frequently used by web managers to report on how much (and how) the website is making money (how clicks are converted into cash). For non-commercial websites, different heuristics apply and web usage patterns appear to be more difficult to quantify for those trying to measure other,

non-commercial uses of websites and digital resources (Dragoş, 2011, p. 113).[62] The ideological tension between the commercial origins of many tools used in digital humanities, and the non-commercial aims of carrying out humanities research, is a feature of much work in the discipline:

> [f]or all of its vaunted innovation, the digital humanities actually borrows a lot of its infrastructure, data models, and visual rhetoric from other areas, and particularly from models developed for business applications. In some ways, that is inevitable, because the business market is just so much bigger, and so much better funded, than the market for weird, boutique humanities tools (Posner, 2016b).

3.3.5 The perils of black-boxing in humanities research

Another problem with Google Analytics (and other web analytics tools) follows from the fact that unknown and invisible algorithms operate within the tools. In terms of gathering data and results for scholarly research, the invisibility of the algorithms essentially means that the tools produce results without the researcher necessarily knowing what operations have been carried out on the collated dataset (or even how the dataset was gathered in the first place). The apparent simplicity of the tools suggests to the users that they navigate and control the software, but this is not necessarily so: the "interface is 'haunted' by processes hidden by our seemingly transparent Graphical User Interfaces (GUIs) that makes us even more vulnerable online" (Chun, 2013, p. 60). This was demonstrated in research that was carried out by a group of scholars who used the Google Ngram (Jucker, Taavitsainen, & Schneider, 2012). Their research examined changes in the frequencies of words associated with politeness and courtesy from a large corpus of digitised English texts. The results noted a change in use of words and expressions over time, and the researchers published an article based on their findings. However, in the time between carrying out the research (2009) and the time when the article was published (2012), a change was made to the algorithm governing the results from the Ngram. This meant that a significant addendum had to be added to the article, explaining why results presented in the research could no longer be reproduced using the standard Ngram tool. The authors had to use filters in order to work around these changes and to replicate the dataset that they used in their original study, and

[62] There are also other problems with Google Analytics; some users/browsers block the javascript code that Google Analytics relies upon, preventing traffic from being recorded, some users may delete and/or block cookies, meaning that they are not tracked as a returning visitor. In fact, these problems apply to all web analytic tools that use page tagging to collect user data (Dragos, 2011, 114).

the necessary use of filters cast doubt on the robustness of their findings.[63]

This case illustrates some of the problems with using software tools as a "black box," which LaTour (1987, pp. 2–3) defined as when a given piece of machinery, set of commands, software or algorithms is simplified by drawing a box around it, assuming/deciding that it is only necessary to know about inputs and outputs, rather than understanding about how the processes within and the results produced by the black box are arrived at. Such use assumes that software tools are "stable, settled artifacts that can be passed from hand to hand and used as is, by anyone, anytime, and anywhere" (Orlikowski & Iacono, 2001, p. 123). This is problematic because "an open process of scrutiny is one of the pillars of scholarship" (Rieder & Röhle, 2012, p. 75).

Jucker et al.'s research demonstrates some of the potential pitfalls in assuming that software research tools are stable in terms of both their algorithms and the datasets that they rely on. In reality, websites and software tools presented online are rarely stable. The algorithms used (generally not programmed by the researcher) have an impact on how results are created and, as a consequence, on how new empirical knowledge is formed (Hsu, 2014). Because these changes to algorithms and to datasets usually work "behind the scenes" in websites and tools, scholars may be unaware of the way that their datasets and results are being formed by forces external to or beyond their research. For any given dataset, researchers "need to understand – and publicly account for – not only the limits of the data set, but also the limits of which questions they can ask of a data set and what interpretations are appropriate" (boyd & Crawford, 2012, pp. 669–670).[64]

While I was aware of some of the critiques of Google tools before commencing this research (in particular, I was aware of the commercial nature of Google's technologies), nevertheless, the ubiquity of use of Google Analytics suggested to me that it could be used in this work. However, the problems that I encountered as I used Google Analytics (in particular the problems with referrer spam) made me aware that the results from Google Analytics are not necessarily a pure representation of what happens on a webpage, they are themselves dependent on other (human and cultural) factors. These include the way the site is built, as well as the fact that the website's access data can be targeted by spammers. My

[63] See the Addendum to Jucker, Taavitsainen and Schneider (2012) at http://www.helsinki.fi/varieng/series/volumes/11/jucker_taavitsainen_schneider/, accessed 29 Jaunary 2014.
[64] Please note that the lowercase spelling of the first author's surname in this reference is not a typographical error, it is a deliberate choice by the author in question (see the author's personal website at http://www.danah.org/, accessed 17 May 2017).

research results made me realise that even automated data collation such as web analytics can become the sites of fuzzy interactions, for example because of the malicious activity of spammers, but also because the data gathering process, and the algorithms that filter the way that data is presented, are not straightforward, and nor are they stable.

The interface of Google Analytics (and many other forms of software) gives the impression, through the apparent simplicity of the GUI, that it is possible to navigate or control through the interface, whereas its appealing ease of use could actually dampen critical engagement with the data and with how it is gathered. This is a problem that permeates digital work in general:

> many of the qualities of computer interfaces that we have prized, qualities like transparency, seamlessness, and flow, privilege ease of use ahead of any kind of critical engagement (even perhaps, struggle) with the material at hand (Posner, 2016b).

Despite the beguiling simplicity of its interface, Google Analytics is, like all software, participating "in structures of knowledge power" (Chun, 2013, p. 21). Instead of a technology that democratises and opens up forms of big data analysis to non-specialist users, it operates instead as a technology that, when problems occur, the requirement for expertise is exposed.

Rieder and Röhle (2012, p. 75) suggest that increasingly frequent use of computational methods in the humanities generates questions about the technological underpinnings of the methods used "and how humanities scholars relate to them." My experience of using Google Analytics suggests that it is not often appropriate that "black box" tools are used for scholarly research unless the research team has good algorithmic knowledge (and can understand and account for the way the results have been produced). Working within a small heritage organisation, it is likely that this knowledge will only be available in very rare circumstances (and as a result of serendipity rather than design).

Tools like Google Analytics, used in association with small scale digital projects, may appear to offer those managing a digital project a cheap (or free) and easy to use means of gathering data about how the site is being accessed and used, but in reality this will only be the case if the site has been specifically optimised to work in tandem with these tools, and if the data-gathering is regularly monitored and managed to eliminate problems such as spam (a process that depends on expert knowledge). In fact, tools such as Google Analytics appear to be more appropriate for professional webmasters tasked with the commercial

optimisation of websites, as opposed to the assessment of the impact of digital cultural heritage within small community organisations.

3.4 Lessons from experience

Hughes (2013, p. 422) suggests that people and organisations involved in the creation and maintenance of digital resources:

> need to develop a more inclusive view of the 'value' and 'impact' that extends beyond numbers of users to a more qualitative understanding of the way that this content is having a transformative effect on scholarship and public engagement (Hughes 2013, 422).

The findings from this study support the view that website metrics cannot be seen as the only means of collecting data about impact (and therefore value) of digital projects, and suggests that in some cases it is possible that they may be entirely unsuitable. It is also appropriate to question the validity of using black-box tools for scholarly research, specifically when those tools have been developed for the commercial optimisation of any given website, rather than with its cultural, social or public engagement goals in mind.

The fact that referrer spam skewed the Google Analytics results from the original Cork Memory Map also made it clear that using these tools (and any other tools for collating website metrics) requires an investment in (or the development or cultivation of) a combination of technical skills and domain knowledge. Where this is achieved it may be possible for the website manager to use Google Analytics as "a powerful tool for deep access to observe complex online behaviour" (Clark et al., 2014, p. 193). This wide range of technical knowledge is unfortunately not available in my case, or amongst the staff at CFP (at least not during the period of my work with the Project). It is likely that this gap in knowledge is common in most small cultural heritage organisations. It is therefore only right to question whether the unqualified use of website metrics or similar tools, without awareness or understanding of their drawbacks, is appropriate. If tools like Google Analytics are going to be used as a "black box" without an underlying appreciation of how the data is gathered and processed, the statistical outputs cannot be a proof of the way a site is used because the process is not transparent, and it is not possible "to understand the method, to see how it works, which assumptions it is built on, to reproduce it, and to criticise it" (Rieder & Röhle, 2012, p. 75).

These insights have implications for how other software tools are approached and used. In this research there are two separate end goals to software use, the first being the creation of a digital resource (the Cork Memory Map, for example), the second being the gathering of automated data about how it is used (in this case, using Google Analytics). My experience of naive use of data gathering tools has exposed the lack of transparency inherent in automated interactions:

> even in settings where software tools are used to generate new representations and ideas, technological black-boxing remains a problem: every form of automated analysis is one interpretation among others and there is an epistemological proposition, a *directedness*, to every tool we use (Rieder & Röhle, 2012, pp. 76–77).

This experience emphasises the importance of questioning every tool that is used in digital humanities, and, just as tools shouldn't be assumed to be transparent, they also should not be assumed to be easy to use. Verhoeven (2014, p. 209) discusses this in relation to databases, pointing out that "even off-the-shelf systems that encourage us to take the work of databases for granted rely on expertise, discipline, coordination, and large-scale resources to establish their infrastructure." This is true of all kinds of digital tools and there is a tension between the appearance of simplicity that many digital tools offer (to scholars and to others) and the frequent requirement for technical and data expertise in order to implement, manage and maintain them.

This challenges the idea of "participation without condition" in digital humanities (see Presner, 2015, p. 60). This is an important message for those outside (or on the outskirts of) digital humanities looking in. Posner cautions those starting on digital humanities projects to beware of projects that appear too "flash" saying:

> [t]here are some great projects out there that are really eye-catching and big and cool. But for the most part, I do not think these projects are the right choices for places that are just starting out (Posner, 2016a).

Posner suggests instead that it is most important to foster a community of people who learn, trust and support each other in their digital endeavours.

Many digital humanities projects are carried out by relatively isolated researchers. One of the findings of the LAIRAH project was that many research assistants hired to work on digital humanities projects were hired for subject, rather than technical expertise, and that they had to devote time to teaching themselves aspects of necessary technical

knowledge (Warwick, Galina, et al., 2008, p. 387 and p.388).[65] My work is comparable, in that I had to develop my own expertise as a research student working on digital material, and a lot of my technical expertise was self-taught and learned on-the-job. Working around technical issues with the original Cork Memory Map and the data-gathering tools for website metrics, my experience has taught me that it is important to document and describe these practical difficulties. They should not be glossed over, and it should not necessarily be assumed that each new tool is desirable (as a definitive answer to a problem or a "proof" of value).

This narrative has presented an account of shortcomings and failures in digital humanities work on the original Cork Memory Map, work that has exposed the requirement for expertise that is frequently the case for digital humanities projects. Awareness of potential difficulties is important knowledge to have at the planning stage of any digital project (particularly for small organisations that have limited resources and expertise), so that they can begin with a realistic sense of the scale of the task ahead, as well as its potential pitfalls.

3.5 Summary of Chapter 3

In this chapter I discussed the original Cork Memory Map, its background and early success, followed later by issues of sustainability and maintenance. I have emphasised that these complications, particularly those associated with sustainability, are difficulties that many digital humanities projects encounter. However, while it is a common problem (a 'thorny issue' after Terras, 2012b, p. 178), sustainability is often only discussed at a superficial level. This means that many researchers and funding bodies who wish to create/fund digital humanities projects fail to look beyond implementation, neglecting maintenance and longevity, possibly because they are unaware that these are major challenges rather than minor difficulties.

This is a problem for small cultural heritage organisations. There is an expectation that they will have an online presence and that they will make at least some of their archival holdings/information available online (see Chapter 2.5). However, "once an institutional

[65] This situation, operating in a relatively isolated environment and with minimal support is more common than is generally acknowledged in much digital humanities literature, where collaborative teams are considered the norm; for example, Burdick et al. say that "[i]t is not uncommon for dozens of people to work on a Digital Humanities project" (2012, pp. 49–50).

website is created, it is often left to its own devices, with little sustainability funding made available to allow the regular upkeep and maintenance" (Terras, 2010a, p. 432). While there might be funding available to start this kind of digital work, there are rarely contingency plans or support to help them out when things go wrong: "there are real questions about sustainability of digital projects, such as: who will pay to maintain the digital resources?" (Berry, 2011, p. 23). A study of digital humanities projects by Maron and Pickle (2014) suggests that the work does not have a natural "home" in terms of where data and computation are managed within universities (see also Prescott, 2016, p. 472). The structure of research funding models, at least in the humanities, has not developed for an era of digital scholarship.[66]

Public perception of websites that do not work properly tends to be negative, so this can have repercussions for the perception of the organisation (and may have an impact on the organisation's ability to attract future funding). If digital projects are to be made more sustainable it is crucial that people (project instigators as a well as funders) are aware of issues about updating, sustainability and digital longevity. But this can only happen if those involved in the creation and maintenance of digital projects talk about the problems of sustainability, rather than glossing over them. This chapter is an attempt to expose such problems for the purposes of awareness, a contribution to future discussions of sustainability.

Another area where expectations impinge on the everyday digital practices of small cultural heritage organisations is in the issue of assessment of digital projects once they are up and running. This is usually assumed to take the form of gathering and analysing website metrics. This chapter has described how the data collecting tools for website metrics for the Cork Memory Map dataset was hit by referrer spam, and my attempts to resolve this issue exposed the extent to which the tool that I was using was a "black box," and therefore unsuitable for my research project.

The difficulties that I have described in this chapter have strengthened a conviction that digital projects are best carried out in situations where technical expertise is available. While the logical extension of this idea is that this expertise must also be available on an ongoing basis in order to create sustainable digital resources, this is not always possible or practical within a small cultural heritage organisation. If professional skills and expertise are

[66] Whereas in scholarship where print is the primary output, for example, a book, a journal article or a report, libraries and archives make these sustainable and accessible in the long term.

always required to engage with digital project creation, then this is a threat to the ideal of a democratised participation in the *making* (rather than the *consuming*) of cultural heritage.

As an antidote or remedy for this situation, I decided to create a non-specialist environment for creating and maintaining digital humanities resources. I discuss my process in the following chapters, as I worked around actual limitations and barriers to participation in digital humanities resource creation within the context of the CFP archive. My account in the following chapters includes the creation of a pilot project called "Cork's Main Streets," a new digital oral history map that aims to be a technically sustainable project, but one that is also sustainable within the context of the work practices within small organisations (the CFP in particular). The aim throughout has been to work against the suggestion that expertise is required, to attempt to demonstrate that knowledge can be acquired and passed on relatively easily, even for those with few or limited digital skills.

4 Users and content creators: qualitative studies behind the scenes

> *The idea of practice-based research, long integrated into the sciences, is relatively new to the humanities … Involved are embodied interactions with digital technologies, frequent testing of code and other functionalities that results in reworking and correcting, and dynamic, ongoing discussions with collaborators to get it right.*
>
> - From *How We Think: Digital Media and Contemporary Technogenesis* by N. Katherine Hayles (2012, p. 19).

4.1 Introduction to Chapter 4

This chapter details the next stage of my practice-based research, which involved iterative testing of software and interface designs for a new digital oral history site, a pilot project called "Cork's Main Streets." After the legacy technical and structural issues that beset the original Cork Memory Map (as described in Chapter 3) this pilot project aimed to test more sustainable software that would be suitable to use within the context of ongoing dissemination work at the CFP. Another aim was to ensure that the back-end environment for the new project was suitable for non-specialist digital resource creators, such as members of staff at the CFP. The chapter below describes how this new iteration of a digital oral history map was developed, covering the creation of the map using new software platforms (Omeka and Neatline).[67]

As it was important to design a site and to use a back-end environment that the CFP staff was happy with (and were happy to use) I organised user studies sessions to gather qualitative data about how people responded to the site and the software. This chapter also outlines the main themes that emerged in the responses from staff members at the CFP, as well as describing some of the changes that were made to the site as a result of their feedback. I weave themes from oral history theory and methodology (e.g. ideas about orality/aurality) throughout this account, since these had an impact on how the site was designed and constructed, with one of the interesting themes emerging from the user

[67] These software platforms have been briefly described in Chapter 2.2.5, and further details about each platform is provided in this chapter.

studies sessions being that of a slight disjunction between oral history theory and the practice of online publishing (with particular reference to a reliance on images and text).

The aim of the work involved in the development of Cork's Main Streets and the subsequent user studies sessions was, firstly, to create a new site that had the potential to replace the original Cork Memory Map and, secondly, to ensure that key CFP stakeholders were happy with this new platform (i.e. that those working on the everyday activities of the CFP "bought in" to the concept of the new Memory Map), and would be prepared to use it in the future.

From the point of view of my research, carrying out user studies afforded me an opportunity to examine the tensions that emerge when digital humanities and oral history practices collide (i.e. when oral history is used to create digital humanities projects), since there could be sources of friction between the cultures and ethics of both disciplines. The fact that I recorded the user studies sessions means that I can present here not merely my own reflections on the issues of practice, but also those of many CFP staff members whose everyday work practices centre around the practice and dissemination of oral history.

4.2 Refining the wheel (building a new memory map, using a new platform)

The problems associated with the original Cork Memory Map emerged because it was built using a bespoke system where only a small handful of people had access to the back-end of the site. It was not easy to update the software because of the way this infrastructure was set up (as described in Chapter 3.2.2). These problems meant that, in order for the Memory Map to survive, it had to be replaced using a new architecture/framework. Superficially this seems like an exercise in reinventing the wheel, building a whole new digital project from scratch. However, I would argue that instead it was an exercise in *refining* the wheel, since I concentrated on changes that made the project more sustainable and easier to maintain. [68] Since "making choices about code, platforms, and infrastructures is an expression of particular values" (Losh, 2015, p. 439), I chose open source software technologies as the new platform. These are free, readily available, and are usually reliable

[68] The problems with the original Cork Memory Map have provided a clear rationale for focusing on constructing a project that is sustainable, easy to use and extensible (i.e can be built upon). I chose not to build a mobile application, but concentrated instead on delivering oral histories via a mobile friendly website. This is arguable more sustainable and scalable than a mobile application. It also ensures that mobile devices can be used to access the new Cork Memory Map sites, even if these are not accessed as downloadable applications.

and extensible:

> [t]he underlying sense here … emphasizes the fact that these emergent open-source technologies software and standards are free but also that their robust user communities make them common and thus more communities will work to sustain their use; they are vetted by users who are knowledgeable and experienced and publish and discuss their findings; and they are constantly in development since no one must reinvent the wheel, the wheel becomes more and more refined (Clement, Hagenmaier, & Knies, 2013, p. 126).

I also hoped that the new digital oral history map could be built in a way that made it easy to use for staff at the CFP, researchers who often had relatively limited technical experience. By seeking feedback and collaboration from CFP researchers I hoped to ensure that the project could be maintained into the future by a "robust" community of users who would help sustain the project in the long-term.

4.2.1 Selection criteria (cost, sustainability, compatibility)

Selection criteria that influenced the choice of software used included cost, sustainability and compatibility (in terms of hosting options).[69] Cost is important to a small organisation like the CFP, in particular since there is no large running budget. The chosen technologies, Omeka and Neatline, are both free and open source and there was no cost involved in obtaining them.

Omeka is a free software created by the Roy Rosenweig Centre for History and New Media at George Mason University (see Chapter 2.2.5). Other software used included a widget for Neatline (Waypoints), as well as a special Omeka theme (Neatlight) for creating attractive exhibits. Most of the software (Omeka, Neatline and Neatline Waypoints) can be downloaded from the Omeka download and plugins pages.[70] These can also be downloaded from Git Hub,[71] the largest code repository in the world that has become a flagship for open source development (Gousios, Vasilescu, Serebrenik, & Zaidman, 2014, p. 384). The Omeka

[69] This is a reference to CFP's ability to control its own hosting arrangements so that it can install software platforms (such as Omeka and Neatline) that may not be automatically offered by IT Services within the University. University IT Services need to focus on providing appropriate platforms for the entire university, and do not really have time to engage with small, bespoke digital projects that are the most appropriate way of disseminating CFP material).

[70] Omeka can be downloaded from http://omeka.org/download/, Neatline can be downloaded from http://omeka.org/add-ons/plugins/neatline/ and Neatline Waypoints can be downloaded from http://omeka.org/add-ons/plugins/neatlinewaypoints/.

[71] In Git Hub, Omeka can be downloaded from https://github.com/omeka/Omeka, Neatline can be downloaded from https://github.com/scholarslab/Neatline and Neatline Waypoints can be downloaded from https://github.com/scholarslab/nl-widget-Waypoints.

theme, Neatlight, can also be downloaded from Git Hub,[72] but not from the Omeka page, as it is not supported on an ongoing basis.[73]

As open source software, both Omeka and Neatline have good potential for technical sustainability; both tend to have been widely promoted amongst the digital humanities community. Omeka also has a wide community of users who post questions about the software to online fora, as well as many scholars who freely distribute their tutorials and guidelines about how to use the software online.[74] A community of scholarly developers has coalesced around Omeka, investing time in developing plugins that add functionality. Neatline is one of these plugins and its creators have outlined how, by using Omeka for content management functionality and subsequently sharing source code for several Neatline related plugins with Omeka's developer community, they made "advancements in the core code of Omeka itself … benefiting a far wider audience than anticipated" (Nowviskie et al., 2013, p. 693). Similarly, another online oral history map, Cleveland Historical claims that their use of open source software allowed them to create a more sustainable project because it could be easily reprogrammed and re-imagined, if necessary, to "meet emergent project obstacles" (Tebeau, 2013, p. 33).[75]

This kind of community support indicates sustainability and support for the immediate future and the medium term for Omeka and Neatline. Omeka in particular has already demonstrated its longevity (in digital terms) since it has been available since 2008.[76] Neatline was released in 2012 and has gathered a lot of support as a mapping tool for humanities

[72] Neatlight can be downloaded from https://github.com/scholarslab/neatlight.

[73] For example, checking Git Hub on 16 February 2017 Omeka was last updated 14 days ago, Neatline was last updated on 16 December 2016 (i.e. 2 months ago), Neatline Waypoints was updated on 9 November 2014 (i.e. 2 years and 4 months ago), while Neatlight was updated on 10 July 2013 (i.e. 3 years and 7 months ago) and has not been developed since that time.

[74] Examples include:

- Up and running with Omeka (http://programminghistorian.org/lessons/up-and-running-with-omeka, accessed 17 November 2016).
- The Omeka Forums (http://omeka.org/forums/, accessed 17 November 2016).
- Getting started with Omeka (http://libguides.library.cofc.edu/c.php?g=230905&p=1532681, accessed 17 November 2016).
- Neatline documentation (http://docs.neatline.org/, accessed 17 November 2016).
- Omeka Exhibit Building: Neatline (http://guides.library.ucsc.edu/omeka-exhibit-building/neatline, accessed 17 November 2016).
- Spatial Humanities Omeka and Neatline workshop: (http://ryancordell.org/research/spatial-humanities/omekaneatline-workshop/, accessed 17 November 2016).

[75] The Cleveland Historic website can be found at https://clevelandhistorical.org/, accessed 6 November 2016. There is also a short description of Cleveland Historical in Chapter 2.2.6.

[76] See Cohen, D. (2008). Introducing Omeka. (Retrieved from http://mars.gmu.edu/handle/1920/6089, accessed 17 November 2016).

projects, particularly with reference to the fact that it allows users to create displays quickly and effectively (see Robertson, 2016, p. 1065; Proctor et al., 2015, p. 8).

Another important reason for choosing Omeka and Neatline for the pilot project was the fact that Omeka was already in use at CFP when I began building Cork's Main Streets. This is because it was being used to develop a digital catalogue of the CFP archive, which was intended as a research resource that could open up and reveal the research potential of the CFP archive to internet users.[77] This work was ongoing but was not completed or publicly available at the time when I was working on Cork's Main Streets (the catalogue is discussed in some detail in O'Carroll, 2015). The fact that Omeka was already in use at CFP meant that some staff members were already accustomed to using the interface. This was a benefit, not only because it meant that staff members would be able to adapt to the new memory map software in a relatively short space to time, but also because it was already clear that the Omeka interface was suitable for the level of skill already existing and generally prevalent amongst the CFP staff.

My aim in using Omeka for the new CFP memory map was that the software should be relatively easy to install and use, even when specialist technical staff and large budgets were not available. Scholarly literature suggested that Omeka was ideal in this situation, particularly for small organisations, where access to both financial resources and technical expertise are limited. In these scenarios, Omeka has been found by others to have "great potential to effectively and efficiently support small and medium-sized digital collection building and online exhibitions for libraries and archives" (Kucsma, Reiss, & Sidman, 2010).

Of course, compatibility is not just about the suitability of the software and ease of use (although these are important factors), there is also the issue of technical compatibility. Combining both the new Cork Memory Map and the online catalogue of CFP interviews within a single compatible platform is a goal for the future, and using Omeka for both projects makes it more likely that this can be achieved with relative ease in the near term. Omeka and associated software (plugins such as Neatline) were therefore always at the top of the list of choices when it came to testing new types of software to use for new projects. As early as 12 November 2013, notes in my ethnographic diary ("[c]onsidering possibility of migrating Memory Map to Neatline – test run") indicate that, even at this early stage, the

[77] Another open source, no-cost cataloguing software called Collective Access was also considered when software selection decisions about the archive catalogue were being made, see (O'Carroll, 2015, n. 7). However, one factor that affected the decisions about what tool to use was ease of data entry, and in the end Omeka was the chosen tool.

discussions that we were having at CFP were already leaning towards moving the Cork Memory Map to Omeka and Neatline.

4.3 Piloting new software

Cork's Main Streets[78] is a digital oral history map that uses interviews from the CFP archive, in fact a selection from a discrete sub-collection that focuses on North and South Main Streets in Cork. (These were originally recorded in 2014 and 2015 as part of a collaborative documentation project initiated by Cork Civic Trust.) The North and South Main Streets interviews describe an area of Cork city that has changed over the centuries from being the principal route through the medieval city, to the periphery of commercial activities in the city. In the early twentieth century the streets were full of family businesses, supported and supporting the high-density inner city population that lived in the surrounding tenements. More recently, the area has become much quieter, making it harder to sustain the businesses (some of them multi-generational) that line the streets. One of the themes that emerged from the oral history interviews was a sense of decline, that the vibrant life and culture of these streets was on the wane.

An important reason for choosing this collection of oral histories from the archive was the emphasis on place in both the oral histories and in the digital project: the focus of the oral history interviews was North and South Main Streets, past and present, and the pilot digital projects were map-based and therefore inherently place-based. This, like other digital oral history mapping projects "builds on more than two decades of scholarship premised on the argument that 'place' matters" and stressed "the complex ways that place emerged from lived experience and everyday life" (Tebeau, 2013, p. 27).

4.3.1 Architecture and Installation

In Cork's Main Streets, Omeka operates as a content management system for the audio files and images that form the individual entries in the digital oral history map, while the map interface is displayed using Neatline. Omeka is described by Fitzpatrick (2011, pp. 102–103) as:

> a simple but extensible open-source platform that, once installed, enables the creation, organization, and publication of archival materials in a wide range of

[78] See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets, accessed 13 February 2017.

> formats, producing sophisticated narratives by combining digital objects with text about them.

However, the "once installed" qualification is important. Despite the fact that online documentation about how to install and use Omeka abounds, the actual process of creating an Omeka installation from scratch is not always an easy task:

> [t]hough online documentation is plentiful, installing Omeka and learning metadata curation is a nontrivial task, best undertaken with the sustained help of a library metadata specialist and a few hours of installation help from a programmer or MySQL specialist (Hankins, 2014, p. 84).

Some technical expertise is certainly required to set up the software: "[f]or a user comfortable with setting up LAMP applications, an Omeka installation can be efficiently accomplished in a very short amount of time. For novice web developers installation may be more challenging" (Kucsma et al., 2010).

My experience of using Omeka echoes the estimation of installing the software as a "nontrivial task." In early 2014 I successfully installed an early version of Omeka using a Windows laptop, but in a virtual server environment (Virtual Box) and using Ubuntu, a Linux-based operating system. To do this I followed step-by-step instructions in online videos. By September 2014 Omeka had been updated and my attempts to repeat this process on a new computer were unsuccessful (my ethnographic diary notes that it caused "a few headaches"). Eventually, I realised that this was costing me many hours of time, and I gave up trying to install my own version of Omeka and instead used a Reclaim Hosting account that provides an easy-to-use domain and web hosting for those working in the academic sector, with an emphasis on placing ownership and control of the webspace in the hands of the individuals and organisations and not in the hands of an IT Services department within a university.[79]

Reclaim Hosting grew out of a project called "A Domain of One's Own," based at the University of Mary Washington in the US, where the aim was to encourage students to set up personal cyberinfrastructures where they could "choose what type of content, code, and functionality will run on their web space and make changes during and after their college careers" (Kehoe & Goudzwaard, 2015, p. 350). To facilitate this flexibility, Reclaim Hosting have created an infrastructure that is highly adaptable, with one of the benefits being that there is an option to install Omeka using an application called "Installatron," a piece of software that allows users to install web applications by one-click on an icon (this is a very

[79] See https://reclaimhosting.com/about/, accessed 22 February 2017.

useful alternative to typing in lines of commands at the Linux command prompt).[80] I overcame my problems installing Omeka by using this low-cost, paid-for hosting facility where I could install Omeka in my server space using the one-click Reclaim Hosting "Installatron."[81] This paid-for hosting solution, though low-cost, in effect involved the purchase of technical expertise from the Reclaim Hosting staff.

The map interface of Cork's Main Streets was displayed using Neatline, a software specifically designed to allow users to browse humanities datasets using a graphical interface (such as a map), and aimed to facilitate researchers wishing to explore geotemporal and visual aspects of humanities datasets:

> each use of Neatline is imagined as a carefully designed narrative or exhibit – a subjective story told through small-scale interpretive decision making, rather than (as is commonly pursued in our era of 'big data' visualization) a more passively derived algorithmic output. In the broadest terms, Neatline is conceived as a contribution – in the visual vernacular – to multidisciplinary place-based interpretive scholarship using primary humanities sources (Nowviskie et al., 2013, p. 692).

A degree of flexibility is deliberately built into the platform, so that the displays can be created as "interpretative expressions" that are "sensitive to ambiguity and nuance" and allow humanities researchers to produce their interpretations visually, and to display these as "something created minutely, manually, and iteratively, to draw our attention to small things and unfold it there" (Nowviskie, 2014). For example, one of the reasons that this software appeals to humanities scholars is because users have the ability to combine map and text and are allowed to annotate entries: Neatline becomes "not only a tool for exhibition and display but also for experimentation and discovery" (Evans & Jasnow, 2014, p. 324). Hankins (2014, p. 83) described Neatline as "perhaps the most useful tool for modernist scholars interested in combining the visualization of movements, presses, and institutions with complex long-form scholarship."

According to Neatline's creators, the process of building digital projects is a process of interpretation, where arguments are built as the tool is being used; the process of working with the digital tool is seen as an integral part of the process of research and interpretation

[80] See http://installatron.com/, accessed 22 February 2017.

[81] Christen felt that a similar "one click" facility for the installation of another Content Management System (Mukurtu) was a crucial factor in making the software accessible: "we pushed to have a 'one-click' solution—that is, a 'get Mukurtu' button on our website that allowed anyone to download the software. We needed to slow down the process of software development by emphasizing case studies and successful installation models, and by continuing to ground our development in the dynamic needs of our users." (Christen, 2015a, p. 66).

(Nowviskie et al., 2013, p. 693). From the outset, this seemed like an ideal philosophy for an oral history project where the aim is to continually add stories and entries over the years. As more oral histories are collected and added to the site, this framework has the flexibility to incorporate a changing and developing overall narrative that is nuanced and layered.

4.3.2 Interface for Cork's Main Streets

The landing page for Cork's Main Streets (Figure 4.1) comprises a backdrop digital map. In contrast to the original Cork Memory Map, which used Google Maps, I chose Open Street Maps (© OpenStreetMap contributors) as the backdrop for the new site (this is labelled as "A" in Figure 4.1). Open Street Maps is an open data project (Haklay & Weber, 2008, p. 13) with an open ethos aligned to that of the open source software movement, similar to Omeka and Neatline. This also fits in with the open philosophy of digital humanities in general, as well as the principal of sharing that is epitomised by digital projects like those created by the CFP.[82]



Figure 4.1: Screenshot from the Cork's Main Streets landing page.[83]

This screenshot (Figure 4.1) shows the Open Street Maps backdrop (label A) of Cork's Main Streets, the "table of contents" that is created by using the Neatline Waypoints plugin (label B), and the sidebar that displays a static text as different stories in the oral history map are perused – created using the Neatlight theme for Omeka (label C).

[82] The CFP Research Director, Dr Clíona O'Carroll, was also interested in using Open Street Maps for the original Cork Memory Map. However, in 2010 Open Street Maps had not yet accumulated enough data and detail about Cork and Google Maps was selected in the end.

[83] See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets, accessed 17 February 2017.

Points on the map indicate locations on North and South Main Streets that are associated with an oral history excerpt or a short narrative. In some instances the map location is very general, for example the story about "The lanes of old Cork" (see Figure 4.2) is placed at the end of an existing lane (Coleman's Lane) but it refers in general to the many lanes that led off North and South Main Streets in the past.



Figure 4.2: Screenshot highlighting the story "The lanes of old Cork" (the location of this story is shown in red, while all the other stories are in blue).[84]



Figure 4.3: Screenshot of "Where South Main Street ends and North Main Street begins."[85]

[84] See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/21, accessed 17 February 2017.

[85] See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/31, accessed 17 February 2017.

The location on the map is specific in other stories, for example in the story "Where South Main Street ends and North Main Street begins" (Figure 4.3) the location is the point of the story (since many people think that the boundary between the streets is in a different place). Users can access the excerpts by clicking a point on the map. They can also listen to the stories by clicking a scrollable list that is overlaid on the map (see Figure 4.1, label B). This list is created using the Neatline Waypoints plugin. Waypoints is similar to a "Table of contents" for the map, and it is possible to arrange the items in the display so that an ordered, linear path through the oral histories can be plotted (although the items in this collection are not organised in this way).

The Neatlight theme for Omeka was used to give the project a distinctive interface and to facilitate the display of static text at the side of the display (see label C in Figure 4.1). This includes background information about the oral histories, copyright information and links to the Cork Folklore Project. The use of the Neatlight theme means that the copyright information for the oral histories is always displayed, irrespective of which story the user has selected to view/listen to. It also made it easy to "brand" the site as a CFP initiative, by including a CFP image or logo.

4.3.3 Populating the map and selecting narratives for oral/aural qualities

For a variety of reasons to do with duty of care towards narrators, the CFP chooses to only disseminate short excerpts from oral histories online and never, or perhaps only rarely, the full interview: "[w]e have no plans to make full interviews from our existing collection, apart from perhaps a sample of five or so, openly accessible online in the near future" (O'Carroll, 2015, p. 46). This means that any digital project will, of necessity, be based on short clips from audio files. All the excerpts used in the Cork's Main Streets project were extracted from much longer audio interviews.[86]

Oral history discussions in the pre- and early digital period focused on the development of an idea within oral history literature, that the "primary document" of oral history was the audio recording (and not a transcript of the recording): "oral historians have generally come to agree that the recorded interview– not the transcript of it– is the primary document or source" (Shopes, 2012b).

[86] The audio files were initially edited using an open source audio editing suite, Audacity. User feedback about audio quality meant that the excerpts were re-edited using a proprietary software, Adobe Audition (this made it easier to master the audio files and to filter out some background noise).

This has changed the focus in oral history from text to orality/aurality (Shopes, 2011, p. 454), defining orality as the quality that set the discipline apart from more established disciplines such as history:

> [o]ral sources are *oral* sources. Scholars are willing to admit that the actual document is the recorded tape; but almost all go on to work on the transcripts, and it is only transcripts that are published (Portelli, 1981, p. 97, emphasis in the original).

This is an issue for oral historians because, as humanists, they are interested in meaning-making and, while words (as portrayed in a transcript) carry meaning, many other aspects of speech also carry meaning. Again, Portelli expounds on this topic:

> language is also composed of another set of traits, which ... are also bearers of meaning. For instance, it has been shown that the tonal range, volume range, and rhythm of popular speech carry many class connotations which are not reproducible in writing ... The same statement may have quite contradictory meanings, according to the speaker's intonation, which cannot be detected in the transcript but can only be described, approximately (Portelli, 1981, p. 98).

Publishing oral histories digitally has allowed practitioners to begin to overcome and transcend the reliance on the transcript for the first time.

However, working in a digital medium raises (or creates) other problems, in particular in relation to the increasingly visual and multi-media nature of the web. The difficulty here is that web publishing reintroduces an emphasis on the visual, whereas, since the 1970s, oral historians have discussed how to capture voices, that is, how to "preserve the complex performance of our oral history narrators with their inflections, pitch, pace, and rhythm" (Gluck, 2014, p. 36). Oral historians working on digital projects have been heavily influenced by the discussion of orality, as Tebeau outlines when he discusses the development of the place-based oral history map, Cleveland Historical:

> we sought to recover those sensory experiences, especially sound, by curating the city through voice, as well as text. Cleveland Historical is premised on the core of oral history; we have eschewed the overemphasis on the visual – both image and text – employed in many digital endeavors. Instead, wherever possible, Cleveland Historical emphasizes oral history as the key component of the interpretive process (Tebeau, 2013, p. 28).[87]

I used this concentration on orality/aurality as guidance as I selected material to be included in the website, preferring to select excerpts not from the transcript, or from pieces of text suggested to me by researchers at CFP, but by careful listening to each interview. This

[87] See Chapter 2.2.6 for further information on Cleveland Historical. The site is available at https://clevelandhistorical.org/, accessed 29 August 2017.

method was designed to ensure that the oral history material published (or broadcast) on the site was selected because of its aural, rather than textual qualities.

4.3.4 Keeping editing to a minimum

Most excerpts on the Cork's Main Streets site were edited by picking the start and end point of the excerpt, that is, simply choosing where to cut. In general, all of the intervening material was left un-edited (in terms of content and pace). I adopted an editing approach that reflects the original narratives as faithfully as possible. This is important in an organisation such as CFP, firstly because of the Project's origins as an organisation that sees the narrators as the experts in their own lived experiences (see Chapter 2.4.2) and secondly, minimal editing reflects the value that the CFP places on "the community's ownership and control of the production of knowledge" (Desplanques, 2015, p. 30). Careful consideration of how contributors are represented is essential in order to maintain good relations with the community. However, in one case the narrator went off on a long tangent unrelated to North Main Street. In this case I made an exception and edited out the tangent for the purposes of a project about North and South Main Streets.[88] Such editing was avoided wherever possible in order to maintain the integrity of the story as an extract from an oral narrative, rather than a heavily edited audio piece.

4.4 User studies (testing online representation)

During the creation phase of building a digital resource, Nowviskie describes how the internal audience (or "stakeholders") help to advance the project:

> [t]he transition from development to testing- or staging-environments happens so that other stakeholders … can contribute to the advancement of the system in a number of ways. These include banging on it, identifying bugs, defining additional needs, assessing the usability and general success of existing functions, and (more abstractly and administratively) by helping to forge agreements about what form a public release will take and how its affordances will be communicated and supported (Nowviskie, 2013, p. 54).

I carried out user studies with stakeholders at the CFP for the purposes of advancing the Cork's Main Streets project in a collaborative way. In the account of user studies sessions

[88] This refers to and interview with Tom Spalding from the CFP archive (CFP: SR00538, Tom Spalding, 19.01.2015). The Neatline entry is "Some features of North Main Street" (http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/32, accessed 20 May 2016).

below I document the issues that arose as CFP staff looked at the early versions of the Cork's Main Streets digital oral history map, with many of the contributions from stakeholders falling into Nowviskie's category of "defining additional needs." I discuss these below with particular reference to how considerations about presentation and display intersect with issues in oral history and digital humanities discourse. The input from stakeholders helped ensure that the site was built in accordance with the principles and aims of the CFP and of oral history in general.

At CFP, monitoring digital content and its appropriateness (for example, ensuring that the content that is published online adheres to CFP duty-of-care to its contributors/narrators) tends to be carried out as an ongoing discussion; staff members are made aware to their responsibilities as part of their training and the CFP Research Director and Project Co-ordinator are both oral historians who are acutely aware of current debates around ethics within oral history. All of the staff at the Project were familiar with and committed to the values of the oral history archive, with most members of staff carrying out interviews and contributing new material to the CFP archive. They were also familiar with how audio material can be stored, reused and redistributed in a digital context, and the implications that this can have for narrators. I conducted user studies with these staff members so that I could reach an informed consensus about how the oral history excerpts should be displayed and used on the Cork's Main Streets website, and to make sure that the principles of practice within the CFP archive are adhered to and safeguarded on all the CFP websites. User studies sessions were a means of eliciting feedback about Cork's Main Streets as I was building it, and also a way of ensuring that CFP staff and stakeholders were satisfied that the oral history material was being disseminated in a way that reflected the ethos of the CFP.

4.4.1 User studies method

User studies were carried out as Cork's Main Streets was being built. They were carried out in two separate stages:

- In the first stage I showed CFP staff a very early draft of the site (I did three of these demonstrations with two members of staff in each session). I asked for their comments and their feedback. This took place on the 4th May 2015.

- In the second session I conducted a focus group with seven members of CFP staff (including three of the six people who had given their initial responses in 2015, as well as four new CFP staff members).[89] Participants were asked to consult the map before the session and to contribute to a discussion that I facilitated. This took place on the 17th February 2016.

All sessions were recorded and subsequently transcribed, an exercise which primarily acted as an *aide-mémoire* for me. The audio files and the transcripts are difficult to understand on their own; they record people consulting, clicking on and trying out a website, but without associated visual cues to explain what people are talking about. This is particularly the case for the first session of user studies, where staff were getting their first glimpse of the website. For the second session, the audio files record a discussion between eight people. In several places during the discussion many people were talking at once, occasionally making the recording difficult to understand. Excerpts from the transcripts are presented within the text below to illustrate and support the assertions that I make during this discussion.

Each of these sessions generated feedback from staff members, and changes were made to the site as a result. The first session of user studies was carried out when Cork's Main Streets was at a preliminary stage of its development, and many of the entries were incomplete "shells." These entries were pinned to locations on the map and although they included audio excerpts, there were very few images and many entries did not have transcripts. The main focus of my work at this point had been to listen, select and edit audio excerpts, and to add these to a basic framework of the Cork's Main Streets digital oral history map. (Even within this limited scope of work the entire selection of interviews had not been excerpted and edited at this stage.) The user studies in this session were conducted with small groups (three sets of pairs). Each pair was introduced to the site, and was then asked some questions about the digital project and their opinions on the site; what worked, what should stay and what should change. These sessions were initially planned as an exercise in behaviour mapping, where participants would interact with the digital resource while the researcher watched, all the time noting how people browsed and used the site. It was immediately clear that this approach would be problematic, as the people using the site were reticent about giving a forthright opinion, possibly because the site was clearly in an

[89] Dermot Casey, Louise Madden O'Shea and Tara Arpaia Walsh were all present for both user studies sessions. Aisling Byron, Stephen Dee and Margaret Steele were present at the first sessions, but not at the second. Laura Murphy, Michael Moore, Tim McCarthy and Tomás Mac Conmara were not present for the initial sessions, but were present for the second session, the focus group.

unfinished state (largely without images and transcripts), and also probably because they were being polite; they were all aware that I was the site's creator, and they did not want to say too many negative things about the site, or they were unlikely to be overly critical of the work while I sitting beside them. Instead, I decided to introduce the site with some critical comments, so that participants would feel more comfortable saying negative as well as positive things about the site.

The second session (the focus group) was carried out when the oral history map was at a much more advanced stage of development and when many of the changes suggested during the first session had been made. For this session I facilitated a focus group, circulating a URI of the development site before the session and asking CFP researchers to look at the site and to consider a series of questions (outlined in a prompt sheet, see Appendix III). These questions were used to generate discussion about the digital resource within the group. The discussion lasted approximately three-quarters of an hour. This focus group was recorded and all participants were asked to give their consent on the tape.

4.4.2 Results and responses

The initial responses during the first session of user studies were often characterised by confusion, in particular because so many of the entries included in the site at this stage were unfinished. When it was explained that only one or two of the entries followed the template that I envisaged for all future entries, and when that template was shown to stakeholders, this made the site much clearer to users:

> **PJ** So in terms of the setup of this little window that you open up with the, with the audio and stuff. [...] the only ones that I actually have, like, picture and transcript in are probably Clive Davis's one about [...] The Other Place burning down, so.
>
> **SD** OK. Let's just find them. [...] The Other Place burns down, oh yeah. Yeah the pic, oh yes the picture, yeah, that really adds to it. [...] It really just adds to the visual. [...] And having the transcript is really. [...] yeah as a finished product that really adds more.
>
> (LVWC_SR003_040515_MaddenOSheaDee: Penny Johnston and Stephen Dee 4 May 2015 at Cork Folklore Project)

One of the interesting themes that emerged during these sessions was the importance of visual aids to accompany oral history excerpts; these included both images (generally photographs) and text (in particular transcripts, but also contextual information). Pictures were particularly important, as they were seen as making the site more visual, and therefore more appealing:

> **SD** But, no, it's really good and it would be great if you did have the transcript and the a photo to go with it, every one, because it's just more visually appealing.
>
> (LVWC_SR003_040515_MaddenOSheaDee: Stephen Dee 4 May 2015 at Cork Folklore Project)

> **AB** That would look fantastic. The visual does add an awful lot.
>
> (LVWC_SR004_040515_WalshByron: Aisling Byron 4 May 2015 at Cork Folklore Project)

However, obtaining appropriate pictures to suit each entry proved difficult (see Figure 4.4 for an example of an entry without photographs).

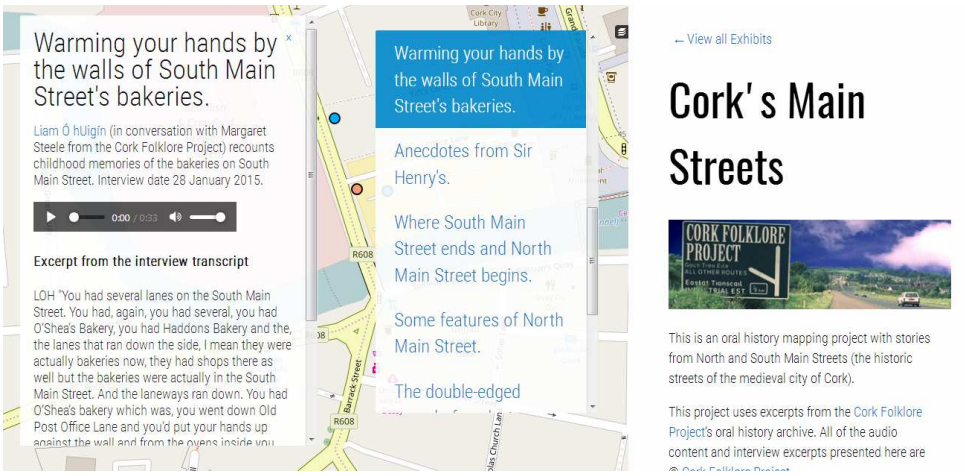


Figure 4.4: Screenshot of "Warming your hands by the walls of South Main Street's bakeries."[90]

[90] See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/22, accessed 30 May 2017. This is an illustration of an entry in Cork's Main Streets that does not include a photograph/image.

Much later, when the focus group was carried out and at a relatively late stage in the development of Cork's Main Streets, I was still having problems illustrating the entries:

> **PJ** That was another thing, like I think there are twelve entries without photographs. Do you know how difficult it is to collect photographs! [Laughs] Every time I go down North Main Street I'm there with my camera snapping away trying to think how do I, you know, try to get another photograph […] so I'm gradually building them up.
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Penny Johnston 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

This is likely a common problem for online oral histories because web publishing is generally very visual. Charles Hardy discusses his own "media myopia" when he describes how he and his research partner forgot to take or ask for pictures to go along with oral histories that they later published online:

> [t]he paucity of photographs, however, remains to this day a source of tremendous personal embarrassment and a humbling reminder of the need to follow one's own advice. For years, I had been advising students and workshop attendees to take good photos of their oral history interviewees (Hardy, 2014, p. 71).

While Hardy sees the visual limitations of his work as an embarrassment, in my case the visual limitations were partly the result of a deliberate decision to focus on the audio (at least in the period before the first session of user studies), in order to test and emphasise the primacy of the oral/aural in oral history.[91] The responses from CFP staff, and Hardy's own reflections on his early digital work, suggest that this approach is either unsuitable, or is difficult to achieve in the visual medium of the web.

Text was also clearly important to the users that I interviewed, with several commenting on the importance of an accompanying transcript to supplement the audio file. Of note here is the fact that most of the respondents were working with oral histories throughout their working days, and spending a significant portion of their time transcribing

[91] The CFP's archival collection is characterised by a shortage of visual material. Although CFP staff are asked to take photographs of their narrators when they conduct interviews, they often find this difficult to do, partly because they are concentrating on getting the audio recorded, but also because they are shy about asking narrators if they can take a photograph. However, my image strategy for Cork's Main Streets was to use my own, rather than images from the CFP collection, and to concentrate on street images (partly because this was a place-based project). In the period before the first session of user studies I had focused almost exclusively on working with audio files, rather than images. However, even after many photographing trips to the streets I still found it difficult to produce a wide range of visual accompaniments to the site. To me, this has emphasised the heavy reliance that online publishing places of digital images.

interviews. Their everyday activities were therefore heavily focused around issues associated with transcription. This interest and preoccupation is evident in the following exchange, where I explain that I have not yet had time to add the transcript text to all of the entries:

> **MS** While I was listening I was playing with this [...] And trying to see to the rest of it. I mean I don't think it's quite easy to hear. I mean you wouldn't even have to have the transcript necessarily, but I know we kind of like doing that and there's good reasons for it.
>
> **PJ** I just haven't got around to putting the transcript in there yet.
>
> (LVWC_SR002_040515_CaseySteele: Margaret Steele and Penny Johnston 4 May 2015 at Cork Folklore Project)

Other texts were also seen as an important addition to the online oral history material, a fact that emerged in particular during the second focus group (when the overall site was more complete than it had been during the first session). During the second focus group the CFP project co-ordinator repeatedly reinforced the need for more context in the website, and the only way to introduce this was through writing more text. (These comments were made when all of the audio entries were already associated with written transcripts and each entry included a textual introduction with a title, and a note about who the narrator is, and who conducted the interview.)

> **TMac** I felt in some of it, like, very little, but there might be a need for a little bit more interpretation when you're introducing it about the individual [...] then the context of it is set. [...] I just feel there might be a need to have a note made of it for the individuals themselves, maybe a little bit more interpretation. I'm not talking a big spiel but just to explain who the person is, where they're situated. And the other thing was about time, cos place is key but also time is. So when they're reflecting, they're reflecting a particular time in their memory. So it might be just worth mentioning that, you know, Liam is speaking about the nineteen forties or the nineteen sixties or whatever it is. So that you've a very clear impression as to what's actually being spoken about and what time.
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Tomás Mac Conmara 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

4.4.3 Actions taken after user studies

The following actions were taken as a result of the user studies sessions:

- I removed a series of links from the static text in the side panel of the site; these had linked themes in the text to specific audio excerpts/points on the map, but they were judged by users to be very distracting and unnecessary.
- Transcripts for all the excerpted audio stories were added to the entries so that these could be read as the audio played.
- I inserted quotation marks around all the transcription text when it was directly quoting a narrator.
- I took more photographs and added these to the entries; eventually almost all of the entries were associated with images (generally taken specifically for the North and South Main Street project).
- Issues of "branding" were discussed during the focus group. For example:

> **TMac** Can we just work in, whatever way it eventually turns out, work in a you know a visible presence of Cork Folklore Project whether it's a way of having the logo present?
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Tomás Mac Conmara 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

To address these concerns, a CFP image was added to the side panel of the site, a thumbnail CFP logo was added at the base of each entry, along with the CFP catalogue number, a biographical note about each narrator and the CFP logo (see Figure 4.5).

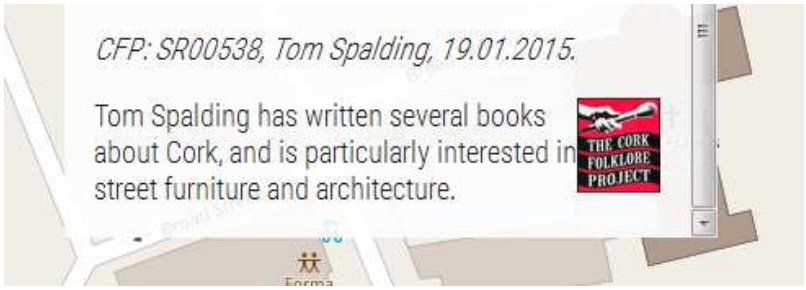


Figure 4.5: Screenshot showing the thumbnail CFP logo placed at the bottom of each entry in Cork's Main Streets.[92]

[92] See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/35, accessed 30 January 2017, showing text that refers to the CFP archive accession number and gives a short background to the narrator.

A note specifying that the interviewers were staff from CFP was added to the introductory text for each excerpt (see Figure 4.6). A link to relevant information about the interview was also included where relevant (see Figure 4.7).



Figure 4.6: Screenshot of some introductory text at the start of Cork's Main Streets entries.[93]



Figure 4.7: Screenshot showing link to relevant additional information about the interview.[94]

- Very short excerpts were removed from the site. This was a consensus arrived at during the focus group:

> **PJ** And how do you think about this idea of [...] you know some of them are really short. I just thought Noreen Hanover has some, these *gems* that she came up with but they're, like, in little tiny excerpts and not in a big block. Should I amalgamate them all together?
>
> **MM** I prefer the long things, personally. [...] I think it draws me in. Thirty, forty, fifty seconds I can just

[93] See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/13, accessed 30 January 2017, showing text that outlines when the interview took place and emphasises that the interviewers are from the CFP.

[94] See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/10, accessed 7 February 2017. The excerpt in this entry is taken from the CFP's LGBT oral history archive, a link to the relevant webpage is included at the bottom of the entry.

> feel myself getting into the world, like, you know. Whereas with the ten, twelve seconds. I know what you are trying to do, but for me it was just "Aw, that's it," like.
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Penny Johnston and Michael Moore 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

All excerpts featuring audio clips shorter than twenty seconds were removed from the site. This made the site more focused, firstly because the map itself was less cluttered and secondly because the remaining interview excerpts included content that made the project much more focused on some key issues, including the past of the streets (and how this can be identified in elements of the street today), changes that have occurred in recent decades and the challenges of the future. This narrowing down of the content of excerpts made the overall narrative of the site clearer, since the previous version had included more abstract, less contextualised excerpts.

- Context was added as a response to a critique by Tomás Mac Conmara, the CFP Project Co-ordinator ("there might be a need for a little bit more interpretation when you're introducing it … then the context of it is set," LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Tomás Mac Conmara 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project; excerpt quoted at greater length above). As a response, I added information at the end of each transcript, including the CFP catalogue number, the name of the narrator and the date of the interview, following CFP guidelines for how to cite material from the archive (see Figure 4.5). This highlights the fact that the excerpts on the digital oral history map are taken from a larger research resource, a full-length oral history interview. A short biography of each narrator was also included (see Figure 4.5). In addition, links to information pages about sub-collections within the CFP archive were also included for relevant interviews (see Figure 4.7).[95]

4.5 The social production of messages for a specialist audience

Some of the features that I built into the website, even before any user studies were carried out, are a direct result of my reading of oral history literature, including the

[95] Other, simpler, actions included adding biographical text about the narrator and the interview date to each excerpt. A note, indicating that these were street recordings and sometimes included background noise, was added to the static text on the website.

understanding of how the dynamic of the interview works:

> all interviews are shaped by the context within which they are conducted … as well as the particular interpersonal dynamic between narrator and interviewer: an interview can be a history lecture, a confessional, a verbal sparring match, an exercise in nostalgia, or any other of the dozens of ways people talk about their experiences (Shopes, 2012a).

In the Cork's Main Streets website I included an introductory text that named the interviewer(s) as well as the name of the narrator, an acknowledgement of the oral history interview as an interpersonal event where both narrator and interviewer co-produce the end result.[96]

As every exhibition is created, it is done with an imagined audience in mind. However, actual visitors do not generally behave in the ways the originators envisaged, as Macdonald notes with reference to museum exhibitons: "visitors refuse in various ways to conform to the visitor model that the exhibition makers construct" (Macdonald, 2002, p. 157). A review of the choices I made as I created the first iteration of Cork's Main Streets suggests that I was building the site with an oral history audience in mind, an expert audience. This conclusion is based on my choices about how I presented material on the site (my neglect of visual material for example, and my concentration on ideas of orality). I was deliberately trying to adhere to principles within oral history literature.

These insider audiences are important and, although only sometimes acknowledged, they nevertheless shape knowledge construction. In their anthropological study of the construction of new social history at Colonial Williamsburg (an outdoor museum that replicates a town and community from the period of the American Revolution), Handler and Gable traced the social production of museum messages as they move through different groups within the organisation, from professional historical researchers, to interpreters who interface with the public at the museum, and then to the public (who also play a role). They identified the museum interpreters as an internal audience who were both consumers and producers of the museum's messages (Handler & Gable, 1997, p. 13) and noted that "during our fieldwork we gradually came to understand that internal audiences are at least as important as the visitors who are conventionally thought to be the museum's audience" (Handler & Gable, 1997, p. 11).

Similarly, in her ethnographic study of exhibition construction in the Science Museum

[96] An acknowledgement of the interviewer's work is also modelled in the way CFP archival interviews are referenced in a 2014 article in the journal *Béaloideas* (see, for example, O'Carroll, 2014, n. 1), one of the purposes of this being to acknowledge the contribution of the CFP staff (Dr Clíona O'Carroll, personal communication).

in London, Macdonald (2002, pp. 159–160) noted that the exhibition that emerged was partly influenced by the idea of imagined visitors and imagined critics, and that these were often an internal audience of colleagues; "[m]ost often … imagined critics were other Museum staff, especially other curators … and indeed it was often said in the Museum that 'exhibitions are made by curators mainly for other curators.'"[97] The reasons for this were interpreted by Macdonald as a concern or anxiety about accuracy and authority: "to have a visitor … point out an error in the finished exhibition would be very embarrassing" (Macdonald, 2002, p. 159). This case illustrates how the imagined audience can be shaped by an insider audience and how this can create an anxiety about the material that is being disseminated. This may explain why my early attempts at site construction were deliberately minimalist and influenced by my reading of oral history theory (emphasising orality/aurality and privileging the audio file), rather than, for example, web usability. I was concentrating on presenting material suitable for people who were well-informed about aspects of oral history. It was possible to take this experimental approach when building a pilot project like Cork's Main Streets. However, the responses to the site (requesting more visual material and more text) suggest that emphasising the aural experience of online oral history is not necessarily adequate in the context of online publishing.

This kind of collaborative feedback is important because, as they were coming to the site fresh, the CFP staff were more aware of the end user audience, viewing the site as if an outsider, and provided feedback on this basis. This reviewing process is part of the "path to production" for a web project that involves:

> a steady migration of new features and systems from invention into practice. Code is walked from experimental environments that remain in the full control of their creators, to separate, communal spaces for dedicated testing and pre-release Web site staging (Nowviskie, 2013, p. 54).

Responses to Cork's Main Streets from CFP staff were characterised by the desire for more material; pictures for visual effect (and to conform to conventional norms in terms of website design) and text for content and background information. They pointed out that additional context was an important asset for end users, a critique that had also been applied to the original Cork Memory Map:

[97] I use these examples here since the field of Museum Studies includes some of the most appropriate comparative ethnographic accounts of how these public-facing displays are created. In some respects, the process of creating digital humanities projects is akin to that of developing a museum exhibition, because of similarities such as the fact that the aim is to create a publicly accessible display that contains a message, for example about heritage. In the case of Cork's Main Streets it is even termed an "exhibit" within the Omeka software platform.

> [a] central drawback of the map was a lack of contextualisation for the individual stories. Due to a lack of capacity to link the individual excerpts to the full interview or its contextualising information (such as the catalogue entry, biographical note on the contributor, or archival summary), the stories existed in isolation. This not only severely restricts or nullifies their usefulness as a research resource, it also very much narrows the experience of the browsing user (O'Carroll, 2015, p. 45).

It is significant that in both cases where lack of contextualisation has been pointed out, the issue was raised by academic oral historians (Dr Clíona O'Carroll and Dr Tomás Mac Conmara), and that (as in the critique of the original Cork Memory Map, above) this was specifically noted as a hindrance to use of the site as a research resource. I have responded to this by changing the entries in Cork's Main Streets to make them context-rich by adding both content (textual and pictorial context) and hyperlinks. The aim is to build a site that can gradually become a gateway to a research resource, by, for example, linking the CFP catalogue reference number to an entry in an online catalogue.[98] This makes the site more than a public engagement project, building on the initial intentions for the original Cork Memory Map: "[w]e are delighted at the opportunities presented by the Cork Memory Map to enhance *public and researcher access to our collections*" (O'Carroll, 2011, p. 185, my emphasis).

In these user studies sessions I have focused on "users" who are not so much end users of the site, but instead who will become the users of the software that the site is built upon. My user studies sessions focused primarily on the content creators within the CFP who will be the stewards of the site (or, in this case, in the successor site that is built as a result of this pilot) in the future. The people in this insider audience are important stakeholders in the project and they should be the first line of enquiry in user studies for digital projects since they are the people whose work (collecting content, adding content, promoting the site) will decide whether the project has any long-term impact or success.

4.6 Current status of Cork's Main Streets

The Cork's Main Streets digital project currently comprises thirteen audio excerpts (taken from seven oral history interviews in the CFP's archive). This site has now served its purpose (as a pilot project to test open source software) and it is currently in stasis at a

[98] A catalogue that is in development, see (O'Carroll, 2015) and Chapter 2.4.1.

development site.[99]

As a result of creating this pilot project and conducting user studies, Omeka and Neatline were selected as platforms for building the new Cork Memory Map, using the name Stories of Place.[100] The process of building this project, and trying to engage CFP staff in the build process so that this would be a CFP digital project, rather than something that I was exclusively responsible for, is detailed in the following chapter. Carrying out user studies was, from the start, a process of engagement with CFP staff, to ensure that they "bought in" to the project. Allowing content creators within an oral history archive to have a say in choices about platform, interface and the final "look" of entries on a new Memory Map, as well as the content they should include, was an attempt to foster a sort of group ownership of the digital project. The aim, in this, was to avoid repeating mistakes made in the past, when a digital project was the preserve of just one person's effort. The success of this endeavour was, in my opinion, integral to the long or medium-term sustainability of this digital project.

4.7 Summary of Chapter 4

This chapter presents an account of how Cork's Main Streets (a digital oral history map pilot project) was built, what technical architecture was chosen and why, and the reasons for certain features of the site (for example, audio was selected based on orality/aurality and minimal audio editing). User studies were subsequently carried out with an "insider" audience at the CFP. This was an important part of the process of building the website; I wanted to ensure that CFP staff were happy with the site because they would be working on and contributing to potential successor site(s). These feedback sessions indicated that it was important to include visual material in the online items of content that were created (despite the heavy focus on audio in oral history), as well as the fact that staff felt that the transcript was an important added bonus to include with the audio. Adding context to the oral history material was also emphasised as an important aspect of the digital dissemination work.

The user studies sessions were important for the development of the site and I took a number of actions based on the feedback that I received. Working through these changes gradually led to a realisation that I had been building a website for my own idea of an audience, and likely a largely oral history audience, because of my adherence to theoretical ideas in oral history. The idea of the internal audience is acknowledged as an important

[99] See http://www.pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets, accessed 20 July 2017.
[100] See http://www.cork.storiesofplace.org, accessed 20 July 2017.

influence in anthropological studies of museum exhibits, because it shapes the way that knowledge is constructed; my experience demonstrates that the envisaged internal audience also shapes the way a website like Cork's Main Streets is constructed.

This "trial and error" phase of building Cork's Main Streets as a pilot project was an iterative process, developing, testing, changing, re-testing. The aim was to create a platform that could act as a replacement for the original Cork Memory Map. In the next chapter I present an account of how this replacement website, Stories of Place, was created, and the new issues that arose as it was built and then handed over to the CFP for long-term management and curation.

5 Handing over the reins: fostering long-term stewardship of digital projects

> *Production is, ideally, a place where code, content, and expectations have been managed, and where the development team's product is put into real-world use. Ideally, the quotidian care and feeding of this product becomes the direct responsibility not of its original developers, but rather of its long-term stewards.*
>
> - From "Skunks in the Library: A Path to Production for Scholarly R&D" by Bethany Nowviskie (2013, p. 54).

5.1 Introduction to Chapter 5

The ideal course of production for digital projects should move from a messy development and consultation stage to a more controlled phase of work where the management of the project can be taken over by those who are to be the long-term stewards of the site (Nowviskie, 2013, p. 54, see quotation above), a metaphorical handing over of the reins. I envisaged the Cork's Main Streets pilot project (as described in Chapter 4) as the messy/iterative stage of the work in this idealised situation, with the new site that developed from this (Stories of Place, described in this chapter) as the phase where, after a short period of training, others at the CFP would take over and add content to the site. This was a pipe dream. The reality of digital humanities work is that it has increasingly become a never-ending task: "practitioners see no *Last stop! Everybody off!* on our present track" as Nowviskie says (2013, p. 55, emphasis in original).

In this chapter I present an account of the production of a new digital oral history map, Stories of Place, a site that was built in collaboration with staff members at the CFP. The account includes a description of how the new website was constructed during a series of training workshops at CFP, as well as a discussion of a "Guidelines" document which was written to facilitate others who wish to build similar projects from scratch (or indeed, to facilitate re-building of Stories of Place if this ever becomes necessary). However, although we do have a presentable new website that is a credible and sustainable replacement for the original Cork Memory Map, this is not an entirely triumphant account of the working process. I identify some gaps in current practice within CFP, primarily attributing these to issues of project "ownership," which I have not successfully distributed to my collaborators within the

CFP. I suggest remedies for this, particularly asserting the importance of integrating digital project work into the mainstream and everyday activities of an organisation, thereby ensuring that collaborative work is facilitated and motivated in order for the project to succeed and to develop a meaningful digital identity.[101]

5.2 Full scale implementation (creating Stories of Place)

Cork's Main Streets (described in Chapter 4) was a pilot project, testing the suitability of new software within the context of work at the CFP. The success of the pilot project meant that it was time to move to a larger scale of implementation to produce a digital oral history map of the entire city, Stories of Place, replacing the original Cork Memory Map.[102] Like the original Cork Memory Map, Stories of Place uses excerpted interviews from the CFP archive, concentrating on anecdotes and stories that are place-based and representing material from across Cork city (see Figure 5.1).

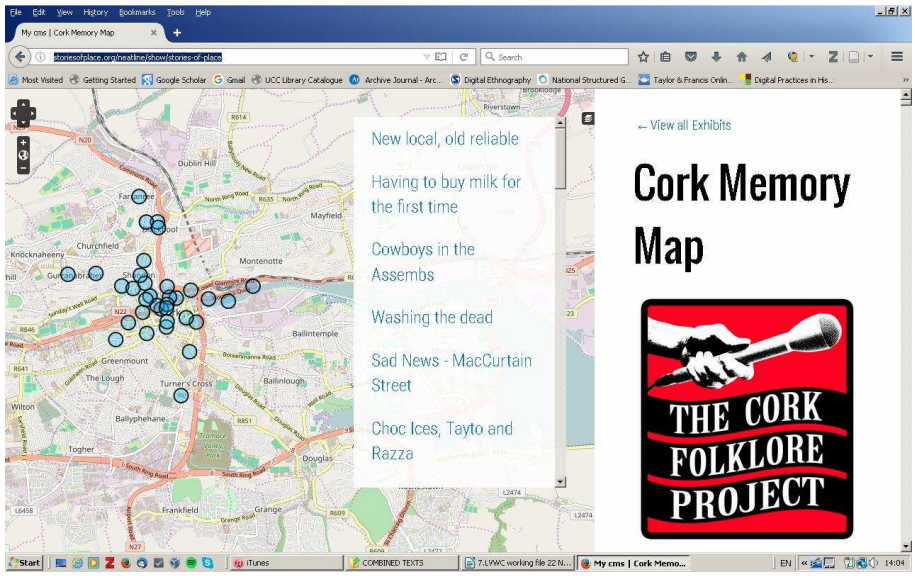


Figure 5.1: Screenshot of the Stories of Place landing page; the points on the map demonstrate that the excerpts in this project are dispersed across the city.[103]

This project was built using Omeka, Neatline, Neatline Waypoints and Neatlight, replicating the architecture of Cork's Main Streets (see Chapter 4). This software architecture

[101] Terras (2012b, p. 178) talks about the importance of digital identity for digital humanists; "[i]If we are going to be in the business of producing digital resources, we have to be able to excel at producing digital resources, and be conscious of our digital identity and digital presence."

[102] See http://www.cork.storiesofplace.org, accessed 7 June 2016.

[103] From http://storiesofplace.org/neatline/show/stories-of-place, accessed 23 November 2016.

was installed by CFP staff members using a series of instructions that I compiled as I built the pilot site (these were later developed into a series of guidelines suitable for general users, see section 5.2.1 below for details). The new Stories of Place website rests on the foundations of the technological and design lessons that I learned when creating Cork's Main Streets, and it has been designed taking feedback from CFP staff (Chapter 4) into consideration.

5.2.1 Leading by the nose (training and documentation)

My purpose in building Stories of Place was to produce a website that, learning from experience, was technically sustainable. As well as this I was concerned to ensure that the CFP was well-equipped to deal with potential problems in the future. Gibbs and Owens suggest that some "leading by the nose" is appropriate to encourage digital tool use:

> [m]any tools now seem to downplay the importance of the user interface and documentation with the implicit rationale that people who are really interested in using the tool will figure out how to make the tool relevant to their own work. Our survey and discussion shows that this is often not the case…some leading by the nose is not only helpful, but also necessary (Gibbs & Owens, 2012, para. 33).

Because of this, I decided to conduct a series of workshops that trained people how to add content to the site. I also collaborated with Laura Murphy, a member of staff at CFP, to produce a series of guidelines, or a "how to" document, that outlines how to rebuild the site that will be useful in the event of any catastrophic failure in the future.

Most of the content on the Stories of Place website was added to the site during a series of workshops (on the 6th, 20th and 27th of April and the 15th of June 2016). Most members of the CFP team attended a workshop and contributed at least one record to Stories of Place. This meant that knowledge about how to add new audio stories to the map was spread throughout the organisation.[104] The workshops were also a way for me to demonstrate that adding content to the websites was a relatively simple task (in particular for some of the staff members who were nervous about technology).

Workshops were conducted using a series of basic instructions that I compiled as I created Cork's Main Streets. These instructions comprised screenshots showing most of the

[104] I felt that this element of distributed knowledge was important because of the high staff turnover at CFP: if only one member of staff was the selected contributor to the new memory map, what would happen if that individual left suddenly? It could potentially take a lot of time for a new staff member to be trained up again and in that time significant momentum in the digital project would be lost.

steps involved in the process of creating the oral history map. The first workshop exposed several problems with these instructions, and the guidelines were modified and improved as the series of workshops progressed.[105]

This process of testing the guidelines was very useful later on when assembling a comprehensive set of instructions (a "Guidelines" document) explaining how to create the digital oral history map from the beginning. This document has now been repeatedly tested by new CFP staff (those who did not attend the workshop) who worked on their own, in isolation, to see if the instructions provided enough clarity for all staff members to create their own versions of the map from the very start.[106] This document is written in a generic manner so that other cultural heritage groups like the CFP, who have limited technical knowledge but want to create a similar digital project, can follow the instructions and build their own site. A generic version of the documentation about how to build a digital memory map ("How to create an online oral history map using Omeka and Neatline") is distributed online as a pdf, linked to from the Stories of Place website.[107] The document is also reproduced in Appendix IV.

5.2.2 Stories of Place interface

The landing page for Stories of Place (Figure 5.1) comprises an Open Street Maps backdrop (© OpenStreetMap contributors), a list of all the stories on the site and a sidebar with static text about the CFP and the Cork Memory Map. This mirrors the layout of Cork's Main Streets (as described in Chapter 4).

The static text in the sidebar includes a CFP logo, a welcome note, links to the CFP website, a copyright notice and an acknowledgement of the contribution of the oral history

[105] One of the main problems with the initial documents was that CFP staff found the guidance for creating metadata very confusing. The process of carrying out the workshop allowed me to refine and simplify the instructions, eventually ending up as a table in the Appendix of the "How to Create a Digital Oral History Map," see Appendix IV. This finished "Guidelines" document was based on material created for the training workshops.

[106] The documentation has been repeatedly tested by members of CFP staff, including James Furey, who used it as an initial guide when building an Omeka project for his MA in Digital Arts and Humanities (http://corktagged.com, accessed 21 February 2017) and the instructions were subsequently tested by new CFP staff (Mark Treacy, David McCarthy and Kieran Murphy) who had not attended workshops in April and June 2016. All testers successfully worked their ways through the steps outlined in the documentation and built their own (empty) map sites.

[107] See http://storiesofplace.org/files/original/2b862bf59160f1216ef2885198a3eec6.pdf, accessed 4 July 2017.

narrators.[108] Finally, there is a statement that stipulates that the end user must treat the oral history material presented on the site with respect.[109]

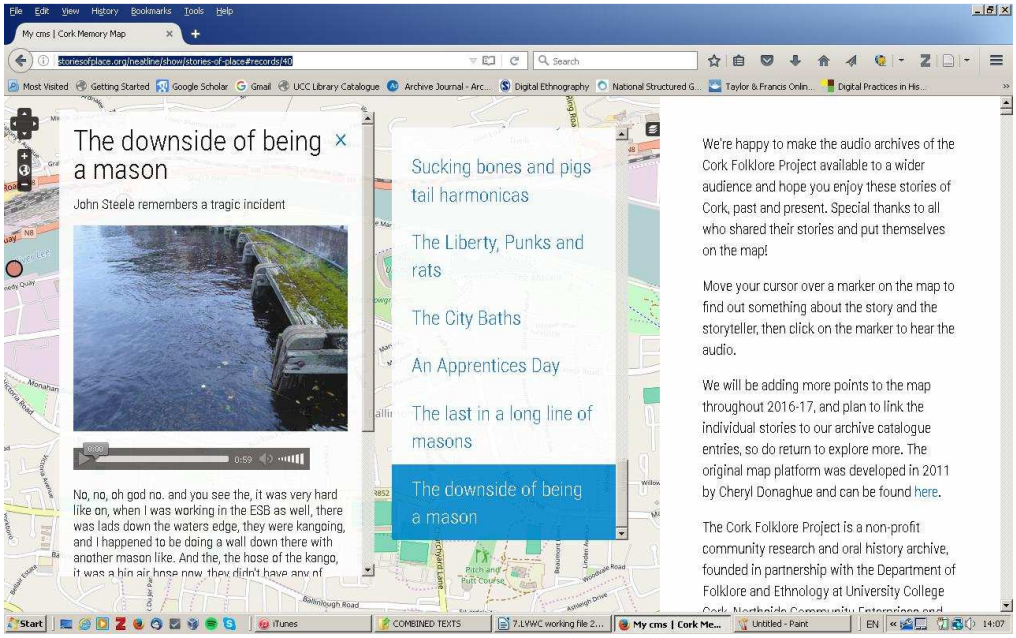


Figure 5.2: Screenshot of an entry on the new Stories of Place website.[110]

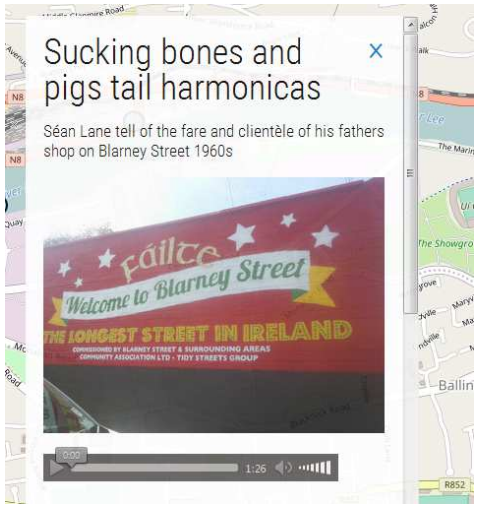


Figure 5.3: Screenshot of one of the new entries on the Stories of Place website.[111]

[108] This text originally contained some details about the original Cork Memory Map and a link to the original site, but this has been removed since the old site no longer works (the text on the website was changed at the end of May 2017).
[109] The text reads "By clicking to enter the site you agree to treat the material with respect," see http://storiesofplace.org/neatline/show/stories-of-place (accessed 4 April 2017).
[110] See http://storiesofplace.org/neatline/show/stories-of-place#records/40, accessed 23 November 2016.
[111] See http://storiesofplace.org/neatline/show/stories-of-place#records/33, accessed 24 February 2016.

The first items entered into the Stories of Place website replicated the material on the original Cork Memory Map, where the amount of contextual detail provided with each excerpt was minimal. This means that each entry in Stories of Place includes a title, a short introductory text that includes the name of the narrator, an image, an audio clip and a transcript of the excerpt (see Figures 5.2 and 5.3).

5.3 Similarities between Stories of Place and Cork's Main Streets

> **SD** You know what straight away this is so much simpler than the Memory Map. You know it's much clearer […] if you could get the Memory Map into this exact same style that would be brilliant.
>
> (LVWC_SR003_040515_MaddenOSheaDee: Stephen Dee, 4 May 2015 at Cork Folklore Project)

In this section I examine the similarities and differences between Cork's Main Streets and Stories of Place and, through this, tease out matters of website authorship and co-creation, concentrating on ways to promote and foster collaboration in the future so that the website becomes an integral part of CFP's everyday workflows.

Stories of Place uses the same software platforms as Cork's Main Streets and, unsurprisingly, both sites appear similar at first glance. The main difference is that the landing page of Stories of Place (Figure 5.1) shows a broader view of the map of Cork city (rather than being centred solely on North and South Main Streets, as is the case for Cork's Main Streets). In addition, the static text in the sidebar (see Figure 5.4) is more general than in Cork's Main Streets, offering an introduction to all the oral history excerpts found on the Memory Map. These are drawn from the entire CFP oral history archive. In contrast, the static text for Cork's Main Streets presented a short introduction to a very place-specific (two streets) collection of oral history excerpts. Both of these texts, however, emphasise the importance of treating the material with respect and the fact that the interview excerpts are the copyright of the CFP.

My early plans for the Stories of Place website were that the landing page would *not* be similar to Cork's Main Streets. For example, I felt that the installation process for Neatlight (the Omeka theme that allowed me to display static text at the side of the map in Cork's

Main Streets) was complex and, as a consequence, I was reluctant to use the theme for Stories of Place because I was trying to make the process as simple as possible so that CFP staff would be able to replicate it without my help.

> **PJ** And that's kind of, actually quite complicated to install, so actually that's one of the things that when we do our own one I was thinking of not having […] you could have just a whole separate home page and then click here for the map.
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Penny Johnston 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

However, CFP's co-ordinator, Tomás Mac Conmara, was concerned that when the white space at the side of the map was removed there was no way to ensure that the content on the website was clearly marked as the work, and the copyright, of the CFP.

> **TMac** Can we just work in, whatever way it eventually turns out, work in a, you know, a visible presence of Cork Folklore Project? Whether it's a way of having the logo present?
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Tomás Mac Conmara 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

It was difficult to have a static text (with space for a logo and a CFP copyright notice) without the Neatlight theme, and so in the end Neatlight was used for the Stories of Place site as well as for Cork's Main Streets. A comparative view of the site as it is now, and as it would appear without Nealight, are shown in Figures 5.4 and 5.5.

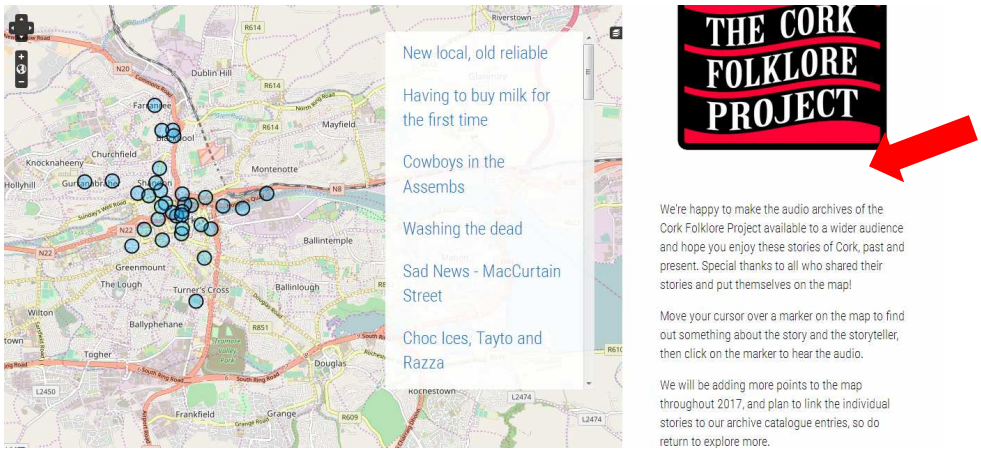


Figure 5.4: Screenshot of the Stories of Place landing page. The arrow shows the white space that is displayed when Neatlight is installed, and where static text can be added to the website.[112]

[112] See http://cork.storiesofplace.org/, accessed 7 June 2017.

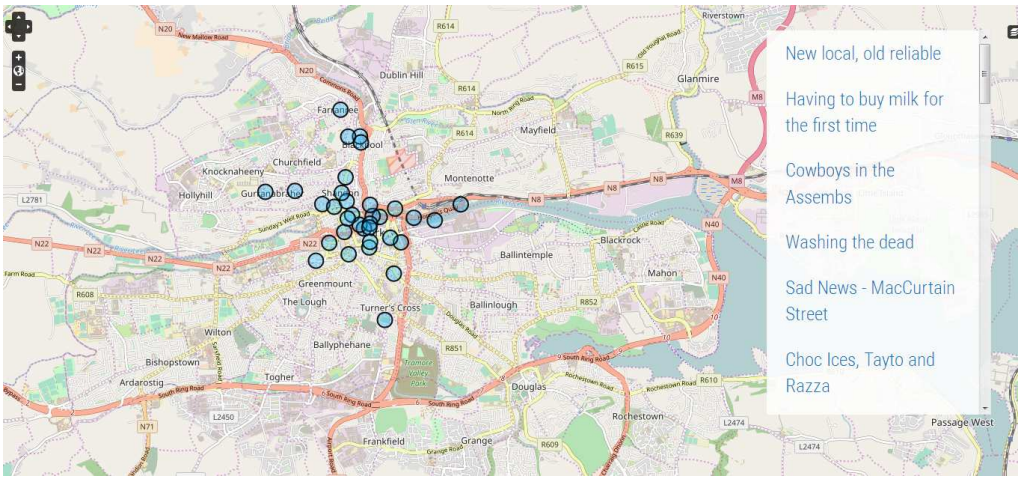


Figure 5.5: Screenshot of the Stories of Place website as the landing page would appear if Neatlight was not installed.[113]

Another similarity between the sites is the fact that the default map backdrop for both is Open Street Maps (© OpenStreetMap contributors). Open Street Maps is an open data project with an ethos that is generally aligned with that of this project, where the CFP aims to share the material within its archive with as wide an audience as possible, and where open source software has been used for the architecture of the website. While there has been some academic concern over the accuracy of the geospatial data presented on Open Street Maps (see Pourabdollah, Morley, Feldman, & Jackson, 2013), the data on the site is adequate for the purposes of an oral history map. As well as all these reasons, user response to Open Street Maps was generally positive. For example, initial feedback on Cork's Main Streets from undergraduate students in the Department of Folklore and Ethnology was that Open Street Maps was a good choice.[114]

The staff at CFP also commented on this during the focus group about Cork's Main Streets:

> **PJ** […] I can choose to put up Google Maps as the default which is what it is on the original, I put Open Street Maps up for now but we can change it.

[113] See http://storiesofplace.org/neatline/fullscreen/stories-of-place, accessed 8 June 2017. This is a "full screen" view that shows the site as it would appear if Neatlight was not installed; there would be no static text explaining the origins and context of the site.

[114] One student commented in particular on the use of Open Street Maps and mentioned the fact that she liked this, as opposed to Google Maps. Recorded in my ethnographic diary, 25 November 2015.

LMOS No I like the Street Map because you can kind of focus on where. […] I know where Tony's Bistro is on North Main Street or I know where Redz used to be […] often the Google Map map image doesn't match to what's actually there today because of the constant change.

LM I think as well it's actually nice to have a slightly different, as somebody who uses Google Maps all the time, it's just nice to have a different, a different picture.

[…]

LMOS And the streets are all nicely coloured so that you kind of see where the main ones are

[…]

DC It feels kind of customed for that then […] Whereas everyone knows Google Maps.

(LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Penny Johnston, Louise Madden O'Shea, Laura Murphy and Dermot Casey, 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

The consensus around display (in terms of layout and the choice of default map) emerged during the focus group. It means that the superficial similarities between the Cork's Main Streets site and Stories of Place are inevitable, and perhaps largely emerge because people find it easiest to work with displays that they are already familiar with. Other similarities are the result of the way that I built the site, for example because I wrote some basic HTML for each Neatline entry in Cork's Main Streets (this allowed me to insert images and an audio player into the entry, rather than just simple text). A simple version of this HTML was also used for the Stories of Place website (I distributed the code as a text file that could be opened in Notepad and copied and pasted into each entry as it was created). The entries for Cork's Main Streets are slightly more complex than those for Stories of Place because I developed extra features for the Cork's Main Streets entries as I responded to feedback about the site (in particular the request for extra context). However, this code has not yet been implemented for Stories of Place and to do so would require additional workshops with CFP staff.

5.4 An authored space?

Hine (2015, 136) says that all websites are a "form of authored space" with "a clear process of purposive authorship on behalf of a single entity." I feel that the similarities

between the two new sites demonstrates this point clearly, the look of the website has been "authored" by me, as I created the Cork's Main Streets website, although I was trying to create a site that represented "a single entity," that is, the CFP. Once staff saw this interface they leaned towards using the same interface (for reasons of branding as discussed above, but also probably because of a sense of familiarity). While the similarities between the sites are not problematic in a practical sense, I feel that if there were clearer superficial differences between the two sites this would make it easier for people within CFP to see the Stories of Place site as a project that was owned and authored by the CFP, that is, that it would be recognized more as a site of co-creation, rather than being "Penny's project."

During the process of building and assessing Cork's Main Streets I tried to emphasise to CFP staff that the next project, the new memory map, would not be my work, but instead would be a collaborative work, with CFP having direct input into the material that was included in the new map. During the focus group in February 2016, I suggested that staff members start thinking about the content that should go into the new site:

> **PJ** […] think about what sort of stuff you want to put on there […} do you wanna be, like, a bit more in depth? You know, I suppose that's something to think about when you're doing your interviews and selecting material for the new one [i.e. Stories of Place] because like […] I'm kind of ready to start teaching people how to put new stuff up. So you have to maybe, kind of, think about what sort of stuff you want to put up.
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Penny Johnston 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

Workshops were also designed to give staff some autonomy over the site; login details were provided for each participant and they were taught how to add material to the site, giving each individual some autonomy over the site's content (if not over its appearance).

In trying to establish Stories of Place as a site of co-creation, where I, as the original designer of the website, sought to share and distribute knowledge about how to build digital projects, I was trying to encourage staff members to take over stewardship of Stories of Place, so that the work would be continued after the practical work for my PhD ended. This is a normal expectation for most software projects. Nowviskie describes the "path to production" (2013, p. 54) for web application design during which "[c]ode is walked from experimental environments that remain in the full control of their creators" to the

responsibility of the people who will act as the long-term stewards of the site. This means that it is important that the people who are supposed to be the long-term stewards of the site (in this case the staff at CFP, rather than the developer) have "bought-in" to the idea that they have some sense of ownership of the site. Despite my attempts to foster co-creation of the latest iteration of the Memory Map with CFP staff, I still felt that the view of the site amongst staff was that it was "Penny's project."

Unfortunately, this has led to a situation where, at the time of writing, (02 March 2017) Stories of Place is in stasis. Once the training workshops were completed (June 2016), Stories of Place replicated the entries on the original Cork Memory Map. One staff member continued to add new content to the site from more recent interviews; this concentrated in particular on material collected by current staff (for example, an excerpt from an interview with John Steele, carried out by Michael Moore, from an oral history project about stone masons, see Figure 5.2).[115] In October 2016 this new website, with old and new content, was publicised at the Oral History Network of Ireland annual conference during a collaborative presentation with CFP staff.[116] However, once I stopped putting pressure on staff to add material to the site (when I stopped visiting CFP regularly, and when there were no longer any public events where the Stories of Place website would be on show, i.e. after the Oral History Network of Ireland annual conference in October 2016), members of staff stopped adding content to the site.

While this is (hopefully) a temporary situation, it nevertheless illustrates a key problem in developing these kinds of digital humanities projects, i.e. it isn't possible to simply spend a lot of time developing a nice digital project, launch it, and then expect it to take on a life of its own. Someone needs to take responsibility for managing and maintaining the site and continuing to add new content to it.

This illustrates the "If you build it" mentality of many software and digital humanities projects, where there is a belief that the value of the digital project is so inherent and obvious, once it is provided surely people will use it (see Rimmer, Warwick, Blandford, Gow, & Buchanan, 2008, p. 1376). One of the big lessons learned from the Mukurtu project (see

[115] See http://storiesofplace.org/neatline/show/stories-of-place#records/40, accessed 30 November 2016.

[116] Furey, J., Murphy, L., & Johnston, P. (2016, October). Stories of Place: a new memory map of Cork city. Presented at the Oral History Network of Ireland conference: People and Place, oral history in Ireland, University College Cork. See the Oral History Newtork of Ireland conference website at http://www.oralhistorynetworkireland.ie/2016-conference/2016-conference-programme/, accessed 30 November 2016. Slides are presented at my website http://pennyjohnston.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/OHNI-Memory-Map-Project-Showcase_Group.pdf, accessed 30 November 2016.

Chapter 2) was that this belief was misguided:

> [t]he biggest lesson we learned was that the "build it and they will come" model of software development is hype. This mentality privileges an elite few who have the time, resources, and knowledge to configure and customize a robust content management system (Christen, 2015a, p. 66).

This is because Mukurtu had difficulties reaching its target users (Senier, 2014, p. 401); as a result, Christen, the principle researcher working on Mukurtu, decided to change the focus of her work from software development to the "training, support, and outreach necessary to empower users" (2015a, p. 66).[117] This decision highlights the need to focus on training and facilitation as a means of improving use.

The reluctance to work and add content to the site demonstrates that staff at the CFP have not really taken ownership of the site. My failure to harness enthusiasm amongst CFP staff, so that they took up the mantle of creating material/adding content themselves to Stories of Place is perhaps a reflection on my role within the organisation. I was an accepted participant in the CFP, with a designated role of expertise within the organisation (digital projects). While I thought that I was sharing this expertise, others at CFP clearly felt that the new iterations of the memory map were my domain and my responsibility. In retrospect, I feel that these perceptions, in particular that Stories of Place is "Penny's Project" were understandable because much of the work was done at my instigation, I was the "driver" of this project. This has partly been because of the fact that I was under pressure to produce a digital artefact for my PhD, whereas no one else at CFP faced these demands. In addition, my experience with the original Cork Memory Map (see Chapter 3) had emphasised the importance of sustainability. This meant that I had to research and try out sustainable alternatives (Chapter 4) and the experience and knowledge I gained during this process may have caused me to adopt a top-down approach to getting the Stories of Place up and running. This is not an ideal atmosphere in which to create and sustain a spirit of co-creation and shared authority, partly because, as Flinn and Sexton reflect when examining their own attempts at running participatory research projects, I was simply providing training when I conducted workshops, instead of truly engaging in the co-development of a website:

> [f]or various reasons … we may have been more often offering access to skills and expertise rather than truly engaging in the co-development of new and innovative community-based heritage research (Flinn & Sexton, 2013, p. 7).

[117] Senier says that the "community uptake of these tools has been relatively slow, generally dependent on someone with a salary (usually a university based scholar) to keep them going." (Senier, 2014, p. 401).

My work with Stories of Place, and with Cork's Main Streets before it, have been applied projects, concerned with concrete practice, while also attempting to merge and tie this in with existing theory (see Chapters 4 and 6). However, the extent to which it has been participatory, or an example of a co-created website, is unfortunately limited. Nevertheless, this reflective account of the process of building a new website and digital resource within a community archive or a cultural heritage organisation highlights the *practical* difficulties of co-creation and co-production. Below I consider some of the lessons from digital humanities projects (specifically from crowdsourcing projects) that might be applied to Stories of Place in the future in order to overcome its current sense of stasis and to help maintain momentum for the site.

5.5 Encouraging participation in digital humanities projects

This discussion of my attempts to get non-expert users at CFP interested in and involved in the continued maintenance of Stories of Place are akin to discussions in digital humanities literature about recruiting volunteers to crowdsourcing projects. The aims in both cases are to get people motivated so that they can create interesting and dynamic digital projects. This is because crowdsourcing, like building and maintaining a community website, "requires an understanding of the motivations for initial and on-going participation" (Ridge, 2014, p. 2). In the case of Stories of Place, the initial motivation for participation was the fact that I, to some extent, had a captive audience who attended my workshops. Once they were no longer in the workshop setting it is perhaps unsurprising that few people had the motivation to continue adding content to the site (they were no longer under pressure to do so). Feedback and acknowledgements of contributions were a key element to retaining volunteers in the Transcribe Bentham crowdsourcing project:

> volunteer enthusiasm can noticeably fall away when feedback and acknowledgement are not given … This suggests that project staff must devote time to answering queries from users … otherwise the project can appear dormant, and volunteers may lose interest or feel disconnected and exploited (Causer & Wallace, 2012, para. 60).

Any organisation that wants to engage in the creation of digital projects needs to situate the kind of work that is involved within their broader practice; how will the work be carried out within the everyday activities of the organisation? These kinds of projects can enrich broader practice but only if they are integrated with it; they will founder or decay if they are not.

Ridge has noted that some of the requirements for deep engagement in cultural

heritage crowdsourcing include “a clear goal, immediate feedback on the success of your attempts to reach that goal, and a good match between the skills of the individual and the challenges faced” (Ridge, 2013, p. 443). My work with the CFP suggests that this is true of any digital work in cultural heritage where the stewards of the project are not experts: defining a goal, giving feedback during the process of the work and after, and facilitation of the workflows so that they match the skills of the individuals that is carrying out the work, and help them to overcome any potential barriers, are important.

These insights suggest that important features of the work include maintaining good relations with contributors and the importance of communication and timely responses to queries. These are human, rather than technological factors and, from the Stories of Place perspective, they suggest that it is worth investigating human factors that may act as a barrier to creating content for the site. Once these are identified it should be possible to start suggesting ways that these can be overcome.

Within the context of the CFP, there are numerous potential barriers to completing this work, some of which are built into the structure of the workplace. These include the short working week (two and a half days) where it can feel as if work is just getting started when the workflow is disrupted again. A relatively quick staff turnover also means that the organisation is engaged in an almost never-ending process of training new staff (in interviewing, in audio technologies, in interview documentation as well as the training necessary to create new entries for the digital oral history map). Another potential barrier is the fact that at each step along the way there are decisions to be made, for example, decisions about which audio stories to select and where the excerpt should be started and stopped, selecting a title for the piece and making decisions about where to place this on the map, as well as decisions about what image to put with it and decisions about how to describe the piece.

While the Guidelines document outlines a relatively straightforward set of steps to work though in order to create metadata, it does not (and cannot) make the decisions about what title to choose for each entry, or how to describe the excerpt, it can only provide a template. The fact that there are so many decisions to make in order to accomplish this kind of creative work means that it can be a daunting task and, when not facilitated, people feel that it is easier to leave it to the side rather than to press through, in particular as they require support from other members of staff and management when it comes to making decisions

about the appropriateness of the content and duty-of-care.[118] One way of making the task seem less daunting is to describe a workflow that provides a clear set of stages that each individual can work through in order to select new material for the digital project, and, with approval, then add it to the site. This will also help to demonstrate how using and creating new digital content can be beneficial for the organisation.

Leaving aside the generation of the oral history interview (covered in texts such as, for example, Morrissey, 2007), I present below a potential outline of a workflow that could be integrated into the everyday work practices of the CFP:

- Set a defined goal or target for each person depending on their workload and other duties (selecting, for example, a personal target of editing and adding one excerpt to the digital oral history map per month).
- Select an oral history interview from the archive and listen to it, noting down the time stamps (beginning and ending) for content within the interview that may be suitable for dissemination within the digital oral history map. (Bear in mind that this is an oral history *map*, and therefore it is a good idea if the story is somehow associated with a place that can be pin-pointed on the map.)
- Have a listening session with other members of staff, where selected excerpts can be played and discussed, to generate consensus about the type of context that it is appropriate to disseminate.
- Once a final selection has been made, edit the excerpt in a digital audio workstation (such as Audacity, Adobe Audition, Logic Pro or Avid Pro Tools).
- Source an image to accompany the audio excerpt.
- Select/edit text from the finalised transcript of the interview and ensure that it tallies with the content of the audio excerpt.
- Log into the Content Management System (this is covered in the Guidelines document, Appendix IV).
- Fill in the metadata associated with the content (see details in the Guidelines document in Appendix IV). This includes work that is creative (choosing an appropriate title, creating a good description) as well as more mundane

[118] This highlights the collaborative nature of dissemination work at the CFP.

documentation (copyright details, date, etc.). It is added value for the content because it makes the material more accessible and discoverable.[119]

- Create the entry in Neatline (using the step-by-step instructions in the Guidelines document).
- Once published, share the new entry on the CFP's social media channels. (Links to new stories on the map could also be included in the CFP newsletter, a digital document that is distributed by email.)

This workflow emphasises a collaborative process, which is at the heart of the kind of work that is carried out at the CFP. This process, in particular the fact that there are general listening events facilitated by management where duty-of-care is discussed, will help to foster a true spirit of co-creation in the future.

As it stands, my work has trained people to do the basics within a Content Management System but further documentation is required to outline the next steps. On top of this, because this work has highlighted the need for constant encouragement and facilitation of engagement with digital projects, this facilitation will also be necessary to encourage the creation of content that can then be added to the site.

To date, my work on training and documentation has provided guidance on how to use the Content Management System, and has helped to establish some basic technological sustainability. However, the long-term success of the project hinges on both the development of the site (my role as carried out to date) and the facilitation of staff within CFP so that they are encouraged to create and add more content to the site. These two roles are interdependent since my work, creating a framework to disseminate excerpts within an oral history map (and the associated documentation that outlines how to do this), would not come to fruition without a facilitator to generate content and associated metadata. Likewise, without my applied digital humanities work creating the platform and the guidelines for dissemination of content, the work of the facilitator would stall without an outlet. This collaborative and interdependent work is valuable, as is its documentation, because it is necessary to foster the development of a common language between cultural heritage and

[119] Because digital access to sound files rarely goes beyond the ability to play and stop the recording, Clement (2016a, p. 349) describes the addition of metadata to audio files as a fundamental aspect of humanities work, since access to sound collections often "include[s] basic functionality such as pressing 'play' and 'stop,' and sometimes, the juxtaposition of audio with accompanying textual transcripts and metadata [which] affords a few free and open-source means to do what John Unsworth calls the 'primitives' of humanities scholarly inquiry." Unsworth (2000) has described these primitives as "discovering, annotating, comparing, referring, sampling, illustrating, and representing."

digital humanities so that they can talk to each other, so that cultural heritage practitioners are not bamboozled by the jargon of experts, and so that they can be their own advocates, actively seeking to explain the specificity of their content and method to and within the digital world.

5.6 Layering, linking and social media

Stories of Place remains "under construction" with the intention being that excerpts will be gradually added in the coming months and years as the CFP archive expands. If the site grows in this way it will become embedded into the everyday practices of CFP, while also accumulating many different stories that build to create a dynamic multi-layered site, as was envisaged with the original Cork Memory Map, "so that those using it can access the rich tapestry of memory and informal history that overlay the city" (O'Carroll, 2011, p. 184; see also Chapter 3).

Stories of Place is also a valuable addition to CFP everyday activities in a more practical/everyday sense since this digital project allows users to create links to individual oral history excerpts within the map. Once the entries for Stories of Place are created in Neatline each oral history excerpt has an individual URI (these are automatically generated). These individual URIs are an important way of building Linked Open Data (LOD) and the Semantic Web, the main concept of which being "…that all resources published on the Web are uniquely identified by a Uniform Resource Identifier (URI), and typed links between URIs, also identified by URIs, are used to semantically connect resources" (Gkirtzou, Karozos, Vassalos, & Dalamagas, 2015, p. 111). This kind of interoperability between different resources is seen as "one of the key benefits of machine readable data and the rationale behind most metadata standards in the library and archival sciences" (Gartner, 2015, p. 297). Providing linkable entries within this project means that individual records can be linked to from other interested resources, without necessarily linking to all the records (or to the homepage). In fact, the Stories of Place entries themselves are the product of linked data as the audio and image elements within the entries are created using HTML 5 and linking (using URIs) to audio files and images that have been uploaded to an Omeka archive, and each individual item within Omeka is associated with standardized Dublin Core Metadata.[120]

[120] Sample metadata is listed in Appendix B of the "How to Create an Online Oral History Map using Omeka and Neatline" guidelines, see http://storiesofplace.org/files/original/2b862bf59160f1216ef2885198a3eec6.pdf, accessed 18 July 2017 (or see Appendix IV).

The availability of URI's for entries on the Cork's Main Streets map means that each individual story can be linked to. This was not possible in the original Cork Memory Map because of the way the code was written in the original iteration of the map (and because it was not possible to edit and alter this at a later date).

> Another issue arose from the fact that the individual map points and their 'pop-up' interfaces did not have separate URLs. This meant that we could not link to them individually … and so could not use any Web 2.0 technology, such as Facebook posts or tweets, to alert potentially interested parties when new map points and stories were added (O'Carroll, 2015, p. 45).

The staff at CFP use Facebook and Twitter to communicate information to the general public about the oral history collection, to tell people about folk traditions, to share information from like-minded organisations and individuals and to keep people informed about the activities of the Project (for a short discussion of CFP's social media strategy, see Johnston, 2015, p. 26). The availability of URIs for individual entries in Stories of Place is an important contribution to the everyday activities of the Project because it allows new stories to be promoted via social media as they are added to the site, something that has not been possible up to this point.

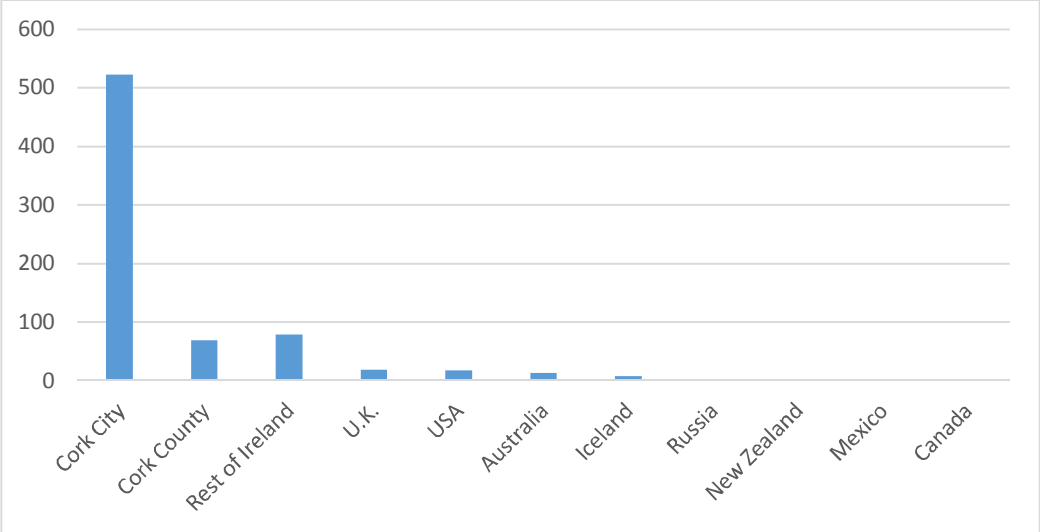


Figure 5.6: Column graph of Cork Folklore Project Facebook followers by place (based on data gathered from the CFP Facebook account in February 2015). Most followers are from Cork City, but the variety of different locations lists shows the potential for global outreach.

The user statistics from social media (Facebook) show that the CFP's followers are predominantly from Cork City (Figure 5.6). The strong Cork following does suggest that the

CFP is not making the most of the global potential of digital communication. Stories of Place may help mitigate this in the future, since CFP can now share new, individual stories, thus highlighting real oral history material from the archive. These links to actual archival content may help to extend the wider interest in the activities and the archival holdings of the Project in the future. This means that the development of Stories of Place may help the CFP to leverage the worldwide power of the internet more effectively by allowing them to distribute distinctive (and unique) content over their social media channels.

5.7 No end-of-the-line (ongoing work in digital humanities)

Like many issues in digital humanities (as well as oral history), the real issues faced in this chapter are about people rather than technologies. My experience of carrying out this work suggests that future digital projects with small cultural heritage organisations should begin with a consideration of what the organisation is hoping to achieve at the end from their digital project, a polished but static site (which will not be sustainable in the long term), or a sustainable project that is an ongoing work-in-progress? The latter is the most likely case since digital scholarship is open-ended and digital projects "resist completion" (Edmond, 2016, p. 61). Long terms needs should be considered in terms of facilitating both technology and humans. In most digital projects there is now no end point:

> [d]igital humanities … practitioners see no *Last stop! Everybody off!* on our present track. If there exists an end-of-the-line, where key players in scholarly communication can mostly disengage, we have not reached it yet (Nowviskie, 2013, p. 55)

Because this kind of work is becoming an ongoing process, rather than a project with an end-date, there are challenges that were not there in the past. Ongoing digital humanities work:

> necessarily create[s] a challenge for any organisation and funders used to regarding the website launch as the end of the active engagement with a project. The resources and workflows required for community management … and maintaining the supply of content are relatively new for many organisations (Ridge, 2014, p. 7).

This is also true of community and participatory work in general, with research suggesting that this kind of public engagement and participatory research often takes place in cycles. For example, Durie et al. (2012, p. 5), note that many projects need both "lead-in" and "follow-on" periods, and emphasise the necessity for a flexible, rather than a time-bounded approach to community research. It is easier to meet these challenges if the digital project is envisaged as being central to the everyday work practices of the organisation, incorporating

and augmenting these. It can give a boost to the organisations work practices, but this will probably only happen if it is taken on as an ongoing activity central to the collaborative work of the organisation, not a side project.

5.8 Summary of Chapter 5

This chapter chronicles the work that has already been carried out on Stories of Place, detailing the documentation of its construction and development, and identifying where improvements need to be made in the future. My practice during my PhD has been placed here within the context of a cycle of engagement that includes critical reflection on my own work and interactions, and suggests that an environment with more time flexibility could, in the future, help to develop a digital resource that facilitated the everyday work of the organisation and therefore is more sustainable; a resource that contributes to and is integrated into the everyday activities of the CFP, its host organisation.

In this chapter I have outlined that digital project work now tends to be an ongoing process, and I have described how this involves management of human factors just as much (if not more) that technological ones. In the following chapter I will discuss some more of the issues that make digital oral history work an ongoing and enduring endeavour (these include choosing appropriate content and assessing responsibilities about duty of care, which have only been touched on briefly in this chapter) and the somewhat conflicting ideas about openness and access in oral history and digital humanities.

6 Exploring points of tension: ethics and openness

> *... distinctive qualities essential to oral history persist into the new age. Many of these characteristics exist in tension with the overall character of the digital information pool. Exploring points where these tensions lie, especially related to features at oral history's immutable core, reveal what is distinctive and essential about the methodology for the new age.*
>
> - From "Swimming in the exaflood: oral history as information in the digital age" by Stephen M. Sloan (2014, p. 179). (Published in *Oral History and Digital Humanities.*)

6.1 Introduction to Chapter 6

In this chapter I discuss oral history literature that deals with the ethics of dissemination and explore points of tension between the stance taken by digital oral historians and digital humanists. These emerge particularly in relation to debates about openness on the one hand, and restricted access to information on the other. I address some of the most pertinent oral history discussions about ethics as they relate to digital publishing, with particular reference to two main areas of concern. Firstly, I discuss editorial control of the narrative, the potential for interpretative conflict (which, along with the idea of shared authority, is an important aspect of the oral history ethics conversation). Using an example from my practice I demonstrate how it can be tempting to exercise editorial control even in contexts where this may not always be appropriate. This illustration leads on to a discussion of the impact of widespread accessibility on self-image and self-representation (and privacy) in oral history, particularly pertaining to digital dissemination. Concerns about this can often lead to highly curated approaches to dissemination in digital oral history practice. I go on to suggest that there is a difference in ethos between oral history and digital humanities when it comes to digital dissemination. I associate this with discussions about ethical practice in indigenous digital archives (in particular with the Mukurtu Content Management System, see Chapter 2.2.4). I draw on literature from oral history, digital humanities and anthropology, each of which, despite offering different approaches, believe their own treatment of openness is based on ethical practice. My attitude is that these differences demonstrate that the ethics conversation in digital dissemination is *ongoing* and *relational*, that therefore best practice in digital ethics is a process, not a dogma, and that (taking practical limitations into consideration) it should be constantly under review.

6.2 The ethics conversation

Communicating to broad audiences is one of the attractions and the benefits of online publishing and this is an important reason why we create digital projects like the various iterations of the Cork Memory Map (described in Chapters 3, 4 and 5). However, there can also be downsides to publishing oral histories online:

> I worry that the technological ease with which we can produce oral history websites today makes some people less cautious … I think there is also a sense that the ethics conversation has already taken place and that everything has been resolved, but to my eyes, the questions have only evolved, not disappeared (Larson, 2014, pp. 161–162).[121]

In oral history, discussions about the pitfalls of digital dissemination have primarily centred around ethics and duty of care, and a concern that the conversation about ethics has been forgotten, or subsumed by a techno-utopian discourse that privileges openness over privacy and confidentiality. This is a difficulty for oral historians because their duty of care for narrators is of fundamental importance in practice and dissemination. Because ethics are relational, they are also an ongoing concern:

> [l]egal and ethical considerations permeate the practice of oral history … They are so central because oral history is fundamentally grounded in a relationship between two people, and like all relationships, it is framed by rules, norms and standards of behavior … Both … are social constructs, arising in relation to the particular historical circumstances within which the oral history has been practised. They are, accordingly, not fixed, but require the continuing attention of both the field and its individual practitioners (Shopes, 2007, pp. 154–155).

The discipline of oral history developed with the aim of giving voice to the voiceless, creating history "from the bottom up," largely motivated by a sense of social responsibility and a desire to challenge the intellectual and the social status quo (Ritchie, 2010, p. 4).[122] As the discipline developed and matured it began a more nuanced discussion about issues that emerge through practice. Frisch, for example, says that all his thoughts about authority in oral history were "worked out through concrete practice and applied projects" (Frisch, 2003, p. 112). Particularly relevant here are reflections on the disjunction between the ideal of oral history (the "voice for the voiceless") and the many editorial choices that go into publishing

[121] Larson's reference to the "technological ease" that can now facilitate the construction of websites has echoes of Chun's (2013, p. 60) argument about the haunted interface, as discussed in Chapter 3. Chun argues that the apparent (but not real) control we exercise through the interface, over content for example, increases our online vulnerability.

[122] Ritchie (2010, p.4) suggests that these disciplinary origins are particularly true for European oral history, but Sangster (2013, p. 59) notes that the influence of oral history praxis in north America was linked to "the energy and goals of social movements for justice and equality" from at least the 1970s.

and disseminating oral histories. These choices can change where the authority is located in an oral history, perhaps because the scholar or editor has taken control, or simply because the material can be "shaped, transformed, and translated (accurately or not) by the nature of its container or medium" (Larson, 2016, p. 318).[123] Issues to do with the editorial control of a narrative centre around the ways in which oral histories are mediated, how this can sometimes contradict, or vary from, the intentions of the original narrators and consequently have potential for interpretive conflict.

6.2.1 Who controls the text? The issue of editorial control

Distortion of the original oral narrative is a widespread concern amongst oral historians. For example, there is an extensive literature in oral history that discusses distortion at the archival stage, with the focus of discussion being on the way that transciption can distort orality. As Clifford (1986, p. 115) notes, "[s]ince antiquity the story of a passage from oral/aural into writing has been a complex and charged one." Issues around the distortion of oral and aural experiences include, for example, the problems of converting speech to text; Portelli (1991, p. 76) described transcription as "the qualitative betrayal of turning beautiful speech into unreadable writing."[124] The idea is that transcription is an act of re-creation where, gradually, the transcriber is editing out the original speech, and creating something new: "[w]hen we transcribe, we as much re-create as translate" (Dunaway, 1984, p. 116).

Converting voiced expressions to written text is not the only way that oral narratives can be distorted, however. Problems of interpretative conflict can occur at almost any stage of the oral history process, even from the very earliest stage of oral history research, during the interview itself. From that point on, every step along the way towards dissemination is a point at which misrepresentation can occur.[125] However, it is the discussion of the editorial stage, where oral histories are edited to create interpretations (and, therefore, potentially

[123] Larson quotes the Candian philosopher Marshall McLuhan who said that "the medium is the message. This is merely to say that the personal and social consequences of any medium … result from the new scale that is introduced into our affairs by each extension of ourselves, or by any new technology." (McLuhan, 1964, p. 23).
[124] There are more descriptions of the distortions that occur during transcription in Samuel (1998) and Portelli (1998).
[125] Frisch discusses the construction of authority and knowledge *during* the interview: "What is the relation between interviewer and subject in the generating of such histories – who is responsible for them and *where is interpretative authority located*? How are we to understand interpretations that are, essentially, collaboratively produced in an interview, whether the relationship is one of cooperation or tension? How can this collaboration be represented, and how, more commonly, is it usually mystified and obscured, and to what effect?" (Frisch, 1990, p. xx, my emphasis).

new meanings) that is most relevant to my discussion of the construction of a digital oral history map. The focus of my discussion here is therefore on re-use and dissemination. This editorial stage is sometimes seen by oral historians as "often the most shadowy stage of the process" (Mace, 1998, p. 397), since the contexts within which recorded oral narratives are re-used have the potential to misrepresent the original narratives.

Issues of editorial control that emerge at the editorial stage include the question of how oral history narratives are changed by the process of dissemination and whether or how changes can be acts of disempowerment, where the editor/researcher steps in and claims ownership of the narrative. Acts of disempowerment can take the form of control of language or meaning (and both can alienate narrators). This kind of conflict is not necessarily uncommon in oral history, emerging, as Gluck and Patai (1991, pp. 61–62) note, when oral histories are treated "either as unmediated and disembodied texts or as authoritative statements that preclude questioning and analysis."[126]

The work of Studs Terkel (an American author and historian who based much of his work on interviews) is often cited as an example of this kind of control of language and meaning: one of Terkel's narrators claimed that the words attributed to him had been reorganised and rearranged to the extent that he could no longer make sense of them (Perks & Thompson, 1998, p. 359; Ritchie, 2003, p. 128).

Interpretive conflicts can even arise in more collaborative endeavours: Borland (1991) describes her experience collecting an oral narrative from her grandmother and the disagreements that ensued when she sent her grandmother an interpretation based on the narrative. As Borland (1991, p. 70) sees it, the crucial question in oral narrative scholarship and research is "who controls the text?" This is as relevant for oral history websites as for print; where does the voice of authority in the finished work comes from, the researcher or the original narrator(s)? Whose voice is presented in a "finished" oral history website (work that incorporates narrative and interpretation/analysis)?

Most researchers in oral history and ethnography state quite explicitly that it is the researcher who takes controlling interest in the narrative: "[w]ith very rare exceptions it is the researcher who narrates, who 'authors' the ethnography" (Stacey, 1991, p. 114). Borland (1991, p. 64) argues that eschewing interpretation and letting the subjects speak in their own words is "an unsatisfactory if not illusory solution" and Ó Laoire (citing Geertz) acknowledges

[126] This is one reason contextualisation within a digital oral history project (discussed in Chapter 4.4.2) is an important aspect of the research agenda for oral historians.

that, when writing an ethnography, "I was responsible for producing the work and was therefore unavoidably saddled with the 'burden of authorship'" (2003, p. 128).[127]

Websites, like print, are "authored spaces" (Hine, 2015, p. 136) where narratives are created for dissemination. A digital oral history map, like any other work that uses and remediates oral histories is, of necessity, "a second-level narrative based upon, but at the same time reshaping, the first" (Borland, 1991, p. 63). Excerpting oral histories and pinning them to locations on a digital map is a process of creating a secondary narrative from the oral history recording:

> [a]s oral history is segmented and excerpted, it moves further away from the co-authored piece built by investigator and narrator. There is a tension between preserving the meaning the interview held for the co-authors and remaking it in a form that suits the preference of the user. In creating oral history, we are intentional about allowing the narrators to tell their own stories. We must match that commitment in the way we disseminate that information to others as digital object. When we do present segments or excerpts of oral history, we must think creatively and intentionally about the ways in which we preserve the context of the selection (Sloan, 2014, p. 181).

The purity of the original narrative itself (the original, embodied oral history interview) is in fact impossible to pass on. Instead, Portelli suggests that new narratives (and this can include websites) should be influenced and infused with the characteristics of the original narratives, advocating for oral history and narrative storytelling to be woven into the end product of oral history:

> [t]here is no question of not meddling with the form of the source … No, the problem cannot be faced in terms of purity – of saving the sources' "authenticity" from the "infection" brought by contact with the historian. Rather, we ought to work it the other way around: let our discourse be infected – hybridized, mongrelized, and "miscegenated" – by the novelistic quality of the narrators' storytelling (Portelli, 1991, p. 76).

An example of where these hybridized and experimental narratives have been published include the oral history project "I can almost see the lights of home–a field trip to Harlan County, Kentucky" published in 1999 in the *Journal for Multimedia History* by Charles Hardy III and Alessandro Portelli.[128]

Eliciting feedback from collaborators (for example in Chapter 4.4) is one way to try and ensure that a representative and ethical narrative emerges from the construction of a digital

[127] Despite the commitment to shared authority in oral history, many oral historians now wonder if this goal (though laudable) is attainable: Sitzia, for example, suggests that it is an "impossible goal" (Sitzia, 2003, p. 87).
[128] See http://www.albany.edu/jmmh/vol2no1/lights.html, accessed 20 July 2017.

oral history website, even when it is necessary to exert some form of editorial control. This means that the digital oral history website becomes a collaborative endeavour. Yet even here authorship is assumed out of necessity, so that *something* is produced (i.e. so that a finished work emerges from practice). In order for the CFP to disseminate any of the oral histories that are collected in the archive, some level of editorial authority must be assumed. However, for the sake of the organisation and its relationship with its "parish of interest" (after O'Carroll, 2013, p. 25) it is important that organisations are aware at all times of the potential for their work to act as an unintentional form of disempowerment.

> As we create, preserve, and share oral history, it is important that we hold fast to the form and function at the centre of oral history. These qualities must not be surrendered in the ardor to realize the enhancements digital tools can bring to oral history work (Sloan, 2014, p. 180).

This means that the author (or, as is more appropriate in the case of my work, the editor) has a responsibility to represent the narratives with integrity. One way to do this is through real world interactions such as listening evenings, where the community can give feedback on the way oral histories are prepared and disseminated. (The CFP occasionally hosts such listening events, where contributors and others give real world feedback about oral history excerpts.) The feedback for digital dissemination of oral histories also needs to be incorporated into the process of creating the projects, perhaps online but preferably in person-to-person situations. In the account below I discuss how one particular issue of editorial control emerged during my practice and, using this example as a starting point, I go on to discuss other ethical issues in oral history, and how these impact upon decisions about online dissemination.

6.2.2 Identifying and exercising editorial control (an example from user studies)

The account below demonstrates some of the editorial decisions that emerge during practice. I present excerpts from user studies and my ethnographic diary to illustrate the discussions (back and forth) that go on behind the scenes as an oral history excerpt is being prepared for online dissemination, demonstrating the micro-level considerations that can go into disseminated content and illustrating the many ways in which control can be leveraged throughout the dissemination process.

As I began my analysis of the qualitative data gathered during user studies sessions with CFP staff I began to take note of my own response to the issue of expletives within the oral histories. During the user studies sessions I was unaware of my response; it was only as

I listened back and transcribed my recordings that I noticed that one of the issues that I repeatedly brought up was the inclusion of expletives (I refer to this colloquially as "bad language" in the transcriptions quoted below), and whether this was appropriate to include in excerpts presented within a CFP digital project. Despite the fact that the use of this vernacular speech was relatively minor and everyday in the oral history recordings, its inclusion was clearly an issue for me as I worked on the material. The first user studies session that I carried out, with Margaret Steele and Dermot Casey, included a relatively in-depth discussion of expletives, and how they should be treated when disseminating online:

> **PJ** There's an interview about, one of Aisling's ones, about the Liberty Bar and there's bad language and stuff in it. Do you think I'll need to take that out?
>
> **DC** Flag it. You could put a parental advisory sticker on it. […]
>
> **MS** Yeah it's tricky. Maybe, I don't know do we have any kind of policy on it, but we usually wouldn't I suppose because it's for research purposes and people just want to know what's there, whereas this is dissemination, so it's a different kettle of fish. […] You could say, I mean you could put a little note there that says, just, you know. "Please note this excerpt contains, you know, some language," I don't know. [...]
>
> **DC** Even a beep would be, like, you'd hear that on TV and stuff.
>
> **PJ** I know. I don't like it though, do you?
>
> **MS** I don't like beeps either, no, it sounds a bit like, I don't know.
>
> **PJ** Censorial or something.
>
> **MS** It really draws attention to the fact that you're, that you're kind of not okay with what the person said, or something. I mean the other thing is that's just how someone talks.
>
> **PJ** Yeah I know. That's it. That is an actual representation of the way people speak, yeah.
>
> (LVWC_SR002_040515_CaseySteele: Penny Johnston, Dermot Casey and Margaret Steele 4 May 2015 at Cork Folklore Project)

In this session the immediate response from Dermot Casey was that by flagging the content as including some strong language, you had covered your responsibilities. Margaret

Steele pointed out that the normal CFP practice when transcribing was to leave everything as spoken, for archival purposes. However, she acknowledged that online dissemination was different. A discussion about how to erase or overlay the offending words ensued. However, there was never any question of not including the content. In fact, other members of staff, when asked about this, felt that this was only a minor issue, and that a disclaimer would suffice to warn people in advance that the language in some of the content was colourful:

> **PJ** Right. And how do you guys feel about, I was asking the others, how do you feel about the fact that, like, in some of the interviews there's a “fucking x” or a “fucking y”? You know, that kind of thing. It's the way somebody speaks.
>
> **SD** Ah yeah, well if it's the way someone speaks its out of your control.
>
> **PJ** Right.
>
> **LMOS** You could always put a disclaimer, that some of the interviews may contain language that you might find, object to.
>
> (LVWC_SR003_040515_MaddenOSheaDee: Penny Johnston, Stephen Dee, Louise Madden O'Shea, 4 May 2015 at Cork Folklore Project)

> **PJ** [...] some of the interviews have, am, bad language. [...] And we're kind of coming to the consensus that maybe we just need to put, rather than editing that out and putting a beep on it [...] maybe we just need to put a disclaimer.
>
> **AB** For bad language?
>
> **PJ** Yeah.
>
> **TW** Yeah, I think a disclaimer.
>
> **AB** I think a disclaimer […]
>
> **TW** Nothing's so bad that it hasn't been on the internet before.
>
> (LVWC_SR004_040515_WalshByron: Penny Johnston, Aisling Byron and Tara Arpaia Walsh 4 May 2015 at Cork Folklore Project)

Because of the consensus reached in the first session of user studies, I added a disclaimer to the relevant entries in Cork's Main Streets (see Figure 6.1).



Figure 6.1: Screenshot from Cork's Main Streets showing a disclaimer to warn users of the presence of expletives.[129]

Despite this, my reservations remained. Many months later, after adding the disclaimer, I brought this issue up again during the focus group.

> **PJ** That's another thing to think about like, what sort of stories are you putting online. Like say for example there's some bad language in some of the ones that I've included and I've put a kind of a note that there's strong language
>
> **LMOS** Yeah you do say it that there's strong language.
>
> **PJ** I don't, I'm not necessarily sure that that's really appropriate in terms of putting on our Memory Map, you know. [...]
>
> **TW** Yeah I was going to say, yeah. If there are school kids or if they want, I mean, look, it depends on how bad the language is I suppose. [...]
>
> **MM** That's it. If there's people under eighteen going to be looking at it, as you say school kids, you're going to have to, like it's an issue. But if it's just adults then you just put a disclaimer saying "Look."
>
> **TW** Who will know it all anyway. *[Referring to school children.]*
>
> **PJ** Course they know it but like, should you be the person who is, am, providing them with this material? [...]
>
> **TMac** Look, it's, it's a bigger decision for what we put

[129] See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/37, accessed 17 November 2016.

> up online but I mean I think if it emphasises an emotion I would never remove it. I mean if it's just “ah fuck it sure Jesus the fuckin'” you know then maybe [...] You know that's just something that doesn't add to it. But if someone's saying “Well I was fuckin' furious over that shop closing down,” you know then I think that that's part of the emotion and I wouldn't ever think that it would be good to remove that.
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Penny Johnston, Louise Madden O'Shea, Tara Arpaia Walsh, Michael Moore and Tomás Mac Conmara 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)
>
> [Note about the transcription: a lot of people were talking at the same time during this section of the focus group; this makes the conversation in the transcript appear quite disjointed, so I have edited confusing parts out here.]

The contrast between my concern and the relative nonchalance amongst staff members highlights firstly the idea of what constitutes acceptable speech. Expletives are an aspect of vernacular speech and may not even be noticed during normal conversation. For example, the fact that interviewers don’t react when a narrator uses expletives during an interview suggests that it is such a regular facet of everyday speech that its occurrence during a conversation is unremarkable. However, interviews are interpersonal events where the interactions between interviewer and narrator are to the fore. Once that interview is recorded and has become an audio file, it loses some of its interpersonal qualities, making the use of expletives more noticeable. At another remove from the original context, digital dissemination de-contextualises the interview and makes it less personalised. This can have the effect of making some aspects of language and speech more jarring than they would seem in face-to-face conversation.

Like digital dissemination, archives also remove oral history material from the context of the interpersonal conversation but in this case the impetus is to preserve even if the content jars. The staff at the CFP do not censor or flag the content of oral histories when listening back to interviews and preparing them for archival purposes. This is because the very purpose of the CFP archive is to capture aspects of the everyday. Margaret Steele expressly referred to the distinction between preparing content for an archive and preparing it for dissemination (they are a “different kettle of fish”) when discussing the possibility of cutting out expletives during a user studies session (see the excerpt from LVWC_SR002_040515_CaseySteele, quoted above).

All of this is to say that both expletives and shock itself are context dependent. This is emphasised by the fact that I was considering editing or redacting a perfectly normal conversation. This normality was pointed out during the focus group:

> **LM** Well I do think as well that if somebody's going in to listen to what the people of Cork sound like…
>
> […]
>
> **LMOS** And they find words, and they find completely clean every single interview they're going…
>
> **LM** That's not Cork! [Laughs]
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Laura Murphy and Louise Madden O'Shea 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

In some cases, the impulse to edit out expletives could be interpreted as an act of class disempowerment, a middle-class sensibility over-riding and editing out the everyday expressions of a working-class narrator. This is a recognised theme in oral history discourse (see, for example, Olson & Shopes, 1991), with the Popular Memory Group emphatically insisting that editing and interpretation were often carried out in the pursuit of cultural capital or power:

> [i]t is … *he* [the researcher] that produces the final account, *he* that provides the dominant interpretation, *he* that judges what is true and not true, reliable or inauthentic. It is his name that appears on the jacket of his monograph and his academic career that is furthered by its publication. It is he who receives a portion of the royalties and almost all the 'cultural capital' involved in authorship. It is his *amour propre* as 'creator' that is served here. It is his professional standing among his peers that is enhanced in the case of 'success'. In all this, at best, the first constructors of historical accounts – the 'sources' themselves – are left untouched, unchanged by the whole process except in what they have given up – the telling (Popular Memory Group, 1998, p. 85, emphasis in the original).

While my middle-class sensibility may be the cause of my anxieties about using material that contains expletives, I do not think that this particular incidence is a glimpse of an urge towards class disempowerment; the narrator in question was middle-class (and may even have been deliberately provocative in his use of expletives on the record, although this does not mean that it was not an everyday aspect of his conversation in general). In addition, I am not personally shocked by the word choices in the interview (I also think that expletives are part of everyday, vernacular speech). Instead, I feel my hesitation was born primarily from the concern I felt about how the use of expletives in dissemination material could affect the

way that people perceived the CFP (in particular, an online audience that had no other connections to the CFP, and therefore constitutes an impersonal audience far removed from the interpersonal event of the interview that they are listening to). I also felt tentative about including material with expletives because I was aware that there was a hope that, at some point, this material could be used for school projects.[130] Working in an editorial capacity it is, I think, always likely that there will be a tendency to be cautious, in particular if the disseminated material is supposed to represent an organisation that holds a position of responsibility.

It was not just my own sensibilities that caused some unease about disseminating excerpts with expletives. This became clear when James Furey, a new recruit to CFP, started adding content to Stories of Place in late summer/autumn 2016. While he had not taken part in the discussions and focus groups with staff about Cork's Main Streets,[131] one of the first things James called attention to when he described adding new content to the site was the fact that some of the entries contained expletives. He mentioned his reservations about publishing this online, referring in particular to the possibilities of school children accessing the site. I noted this conservation in my ethnographic diary, observing:

> [t]his made me think, was feeling uncomfortable about this part of the distinction between looking at someone else put up material online (not being responsible, therefore less sensitive about the material), and choosing the material yourself, […] and therefore being more sensitive and cautious? (Excerpt from my ethnographic diary, 23 September 2016.)

My conclusion, after listening to discussions during the focus group again, and having witnessed discussions amongst CFP staff as they prepare themselves for public presentation (for open evenings and listening events), is that caution is common when someone takes responsibility for content, but that even these same individuals may be more "relaxed" when someone else has to be accountable for these choices. Nevertheless, these feelings of unease and hesitation about what it is "right" to put online speak to both the middle-class sensibilities of people often carrying out oral history interviews (including the staff at CFP), sensitivities within different media (shock is context dependent), as well as to the sensitivities that are inherent within oral history training and practice.

If, during my practice working on Cork's Main Streets, I had decided to edit expletives from the audio clip, this would have been an example of disempowerment and suppression

[130] This has been mentioned at CFP staff meetings and in discussion with the CFP research director.

[131] James was present at later workshops that I conducted to train staff in how to add content to Omeka and Neatline, but was not present during the Cork's Main Streets user studies sessions.

of language. This discussion of expletives in oral histories, and my concerns about how to represent it online, highlights how even a project that began as an attempt to build a "purist" oral history website (see Chapter 4) struggles with ideals about cultural authority and editorial control, about moulding and remediating oral history content for new online narratives. There are also other ethical considerations in oral history that influence choices made about dissemination and in the next section of this chapter I consider anxieties about long term and widespread accessibility, before going on to discuss how the ethics conversation can have repercussions for how digital oral histories are often published.

6.2.3 What does widespread accessibility mean?

Online publishing of oral histories is a good in that it facilitates dissemination of the audio recording, the "primary document" of oral history allowing practitioners to focus on orality. This is a corrective to a concern in pre-digital oral history that Frisch provocatively called oral history's "Deep Dark Secret," namely, that few people consulted, listened to and used the primary sources of oral history, the recorded and archived audio interviews, because they focused their attention instead on the written transcripts (Frisch, 2008, p. 223).[132] Audio recordings of oral history are now more easily accessible and they can be represented in sound (and sometimes in video), rather than simply in print. Practitioners within the field of oral history have generally welcomed the potentials for dissemination that are offered by digital (and particularly online) media and have acknowledged the improvements digitized archives have made to the accessibility of audio oral history archives (e.g. see High, 2010).

Publishing oral histories digitally also broadens the potential audience and therefore democratises access, in keeping with oral history's traditional concerns about social responsibility (see Ritchie, 2010, p. 4). However, the other side of widespread accessibility is the question of how this has an impact on narrators in the long term:

> [w]hat does widespread accessibility really mean? How does this type of public presence impact narrators in the long run? And what is entailed with truly informed consent? (Larson, 2014, p. 161).

[132] See Chapter 4.3.3 for a discussion of this in relation to oral history and digital technologies.

The impact of digital publishing is generally seen as being greater (and with many more potentially negative consequences), than with print.[133]

Ideas about self-representation are crucial to an understanding of why oral historians are sensitive about the prospects of widespread dissemination "regardless of the narrator's agreement and/or intent" (Gluck, 2014, p. 43). These were also concerns before online dissemination. For example, Borland explained that she was:

> concerned about the potential emotional effect alternative readings of personal narratives may have on our living subjects. The performance of a personal narrative is a fundamental means by which people comprehend their own lives and present a "self" to their audience. Our scholarly representations of those performances, if not sensitively presented, may constitute an attack on our collaborators' carefully constructed sense of self (Borland, 1991, p. 71).

This is because the "self" is a fluid and contextual construction, since "there is no natural or unchanging life story: it is created and recreated through the telling" (Abrams, 2010, p. 53) and the life story itself is "a form of self-revelation that is constantly being revised" (Abrams, 2010, p. 50). Thus, because of the longevity of text and oral history archives (relative to conversations), an oral history recording becomes a more "stable cultural text" (after O'Carroll, 2013, p. 26). How will the longevity of this representation online, along with its accessibility (openness to all viewers) affect perceptions of self, as well as vulnerability to changing social, political and cultural mores?

While the idea of informed consent is central to the relationship of trust that is built around the oral history interview, oral history writing tends to acknowledge that truly informed consent can be difficult to obtain (see Perks & Thompson, 1998, p. 102). This is even more the case in the digital world than in the past, as it is not easy to predict the effects of online dissemination on individuals (in contrast, print media and access to archival holdings were more easily controlled). As a result, Gluck asks "what constitutes informed consent when we are talking about a quantum leap in distribution via the World Wide Web?" (Gluck, 2014, p. 42). The idea of informed consent could be said to be under reconsideration or renegotiation, as the meaning and effects of online dissemination (particularly in relation to exposure of private individuals) is being re-examined.

This makes it clear that ethical issues in digital oral history are emerging problems, and a consensus in terms of answers and acceptable workarounds have not yet been developed.

[133] This includes issues of privacy, but these concerns go beyond privacy to issues of self-perception.

This is not solely because of the digital contexts that these questions and issues emerge within, but because there are never definitive answers to emerging ethical issues:

> ethical problems emerge in concrete human contexts, contexts that are always specific and always material … these problems surface with special intensity in research with living persons because many of us sense that ethics is a matter not of abstractly correct behaviour, but of *relations between people* (Patai, 1991, p. 145, my emphasis).

These are important, evolving and ongoing conversations about ethics that are fundamental to the discipline of oral history. The ethical stances taken by oral historians, their concerns about the relations between people, have an impact upon the decisions that are made about form and the way that oral histories are represented online. The discussion of ethical considerations above demonstrates that these issues are not new to the era of digital dissemination and much of the cited literature pre-dates the internet, for example, Frisch (1990), Portelli (1991) and Borland (1991). However, digital dissemination brings these issues into sharper focus and they merit renewed interest and reflection from oral historians as they create digital oral history projects. Because the ethical conversation is not fixed, and because it is now evolving within the context of digital dissemination, these issues should also be important to disciplines other than oral history, including (and perhaps especially) digital humanities.

6.3 Living subjects, dead archives and different approaches to access

Ethical concerns are fundamentally grounded in interpersonal relationships. Borland (1991, p.71) specifies that sources in oral history are "living subjects" and Patai (1991, p. 145) emphasises the fact that oral history research is with "living persons." This is in contrast to the topics, materials and texts that are the usual focus of digital humanities scholarship, with the focus on texts (as discussed in Chapter 2.2.1), and a concentration often on older archival material that, if it refers to people at all, usually deals with individuals who are no longer living.

This is a fundamental difference between oral history and digital humanities and it has an impact on the approach that is taken in the dissemination of archival content. In digital humanities the emphasis has been one of openness:

> Digital Humanities have **a utopian core** shaped by its genealogical descent from the counterculture-cyberculture intertwinglings of the 60s and 70s. This is why it affirms the value of the open, the infinite, the expansive, the

> university/museum/archive/library *without walls*, the democratization of culture and scholarship (The Digital Humanities Manifesto, 2.0 2009, emphasis in the original). [134]

In fact, digital humanities writers suggest that embracing the ideal of openness (with openness the foundations for the democratisation of knowledge) are the values at the heart of digital humanities (see Spiro, 2012, pp. 24–25). And, again referring to the Digital Humanities Manifesto, this document states explicitly that the "digital is the realm of the open" and that "[a]nything that attempts to close this space should be recognized for what it is: the enemy" (The Digital Humanities Manifesto 2.0, 2009).[135] While I recognise that the Digital Humanities Manifesto is as a reaction primarily to copyright law, nevertheless, the emphatic (and hyperbolic?) nature of this statement could suggest a fundamental difference of opinion between the curated approach often adopted by oral historians (see below), and the ethos of digital humanities.[136] Utopian ideals about digital humanities exist and persist in spite of critiques that challenge the rhetoric that claims that the internet is democratic. As an example, Beer and Burrows (2007) strongly assert that the fundamental direction of development on the internet is commercial, rather than democratic:

> Web 2.0 has been ushered in by what might be a thought of as rhetoric of "democratisation." This is defined by stories and images of "the people" reclaiming the Internet and taking control of its content … This, we are led to believe, has led to a new collaborative, participatory or open culture, where anyone can get involved, and everyone has the potential to be seen or heard … This rhetoric demands detailed and critical interrogation … despite the rhetoric of "democratisation" Web 2.0 is a commercial and lightly regulated market. It is then also a space where a virulent form of consumerism can easily undermine "democratic ideals" (Beer & Burrows, 2007).

The approach to online dissemination in digital humanities heritage often contrasts with the strategy adopted in oral history, where the subjects are often still living, and may even be people that the oral historian has a personal relationship with. One response to ethical and privacy issues has been for oral historians to carefully curate the material that they place online, sometimes referred to as the "exhibit approach" (see Larson, 2014, p. 162). This typically focuses on selected excerpts from the interview archive: "[t]hrough the

[134] See http://manifesto.humanities.ucla.edu/2009/05/29/the-digital-humanities-manifesto-20/ accessed 11 March 2016.

[135] See http://manifesto.humanities.ucla.edu/2009/05/29/the-digital-humanities-manifesto-20/ accessed 11 March 2016.

[136] Prescott (2016, p. 464) suggests that the kind of utopian visions in the Digital Humanities Manifesto "are helpful insofar as they encourage debate about the nature and character of humanities scholarship, but are less useful as a blueprint for the exploitation of the potential of digital technologies to stimulate the production of innovative forms of scholarship."

construction of online digital exhibits a curator can control access to online interviews, create a meaningful online experience for the user, and still minimize privacy concerns in the short term" (Boyd, 2012).[137] All of the iterations of the Cork Memory Map are good examples of a curated approach. The specificity of the discipline of oral history means that curating material is an accepted aspect of the researcher's role, indeed Sloan (2014, p. 181) identifies the oral historian's role as curator as "an essential element that rests at the immutable core of oral history." However, the curatorial approach means that the oral historian becomes a gatekeeper, a role that operates in tension with the digital humanities ethos of openness and the democratisation of access.

These oral history concerns about duty of care, however, do not appear to be widely known or acknowledged within digital humanities.[138] Attitudes amongst digital humanists appear to be generally positive towards oral history, with little suggestion of a potential conflict of ethos. Discussing general applications of oral history within digital humanities, Tanner and Deegan (2011, p. 32) suggested that oral histories "are an especially powerful means of connecting personal stories with digitised content to create a wider contextual framework" and that "[l]ayering oral histories with other digitised resources is an effective means of delivering benefit and impact by engaging communities in rich resources" (Tanner & Deegan, 2011, p. 32). This reflects a certain excitement about the potential of oral history, recognising that adding voices to digital resources is a way of increasing their resonance with audiences, and suggesting that oral history is an "enormous" and "untapped resource" that has not yet been widely used in digital humanities projects (Tanner & Deegan, 2011, p. 32). However, although these statements may be the result of good intentions, they perhaps inadvertently suggest that digital humanities practitioners assume that oral history dissemination is theoretically and ethically unproblematic.[139] References to oral history within digital humanities literature suggests that the ethics conversation so pertinent to digital oral history practice has not permeated far beyond its discipline-specific boundaries.

The responses to another digital humanities project, one that developed from anthropological field work, demonstrates some of the difficulties that emerge as part of this

[137] In contrast, the repository approach presents full interviews online (see Larson, 2014, p. 162).

[138] In fact, it is generally probably the case that digital humanities is more or less unaware of the debt that it owes to disciplines that have a public engagement remit, such as oral history and public history, a trait that Leon suggests is "a significant blind spot in its framing of its roots" (2017, p. 1).

[139] This may also be a reflection of a difference of perspective based on proximity to the "coal face" of practice. Thomson (2008, p. 10) noted a similar difference between academic and community historians, saying that "[m]ost academic historians only have to deal with the relationships of history-making in the margins of their professional lives, but for community-based projects those relationships are central."

conversation, where there is a collision between the ethos of openness within digital humanities and the concerns of practitioners in different fields. The Mukurtu Content Management System (discussed in Chapter 2.2.4) was specifically built to limit accessibility to certain types of content and/or media, depending on the identity of the person accessing the digital archive. This was designed to allow indigenous communities to "control exactly what materials will be made visible on the Web, and under what conditions" (Senier, 2014, p. 396).[140] Projects like Mukurtu have been developed as part of an ongoing conversation about ethnographic collections within memory institutions, where certain collections are seen as a contentious aspect of the colonial past. Senier argues that Mukurtu provides a way of presenting ethnographic material, but with restrictions (see Figure 6.1), which in turn allows for the creation of an anti, or a post-colonial archive that allows "tribal relations, rather than the demands of the settler gaze, to structure this archive" (Senier, 2014, p. 399). Thorpe et al. (2016, p. 359) argue further that this kind of collaborative work is a way to "contribute to redressing some of the damage created out of past wrongs committed" in the colonial era, "such as the taking of knowledge and the generation of unauthorized histories."[141]

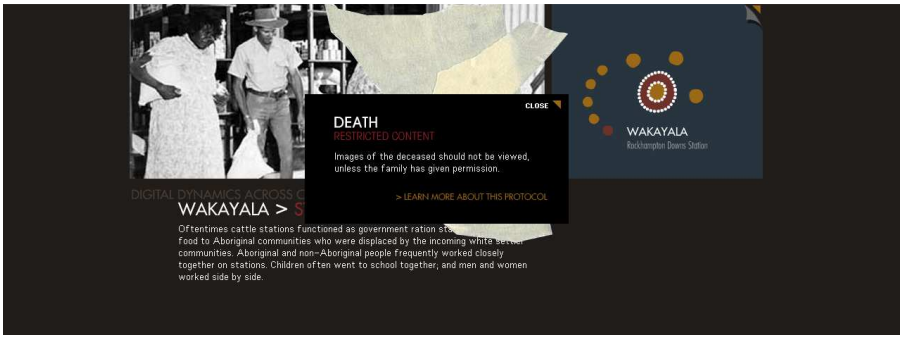


Figure 6.2: Screenshot from an early version of the Mukurtu archive published in the *Vectors* journal and demonstrating how access to information is guided by protocols (Christen & Cooney, 2006).[142]

[140] Interestingly, restricting access was not only an issue online, but also within the museum itself, where the ethos of the museum, like that of the web, is "based on a liberal academic tradition that privileges the notion of unrestricted access to information, which is directly in tension with the cultural protocols of many indigenous groups around information sharing" (Srinivasan, Boast, Furner, & Becvar, 2009, p. 273).

[141] There may eventually be more push-back against this: "It is possibly only a matter of time until restrictions related to the cultural-sensitivity of digital collections might also be criticized for not being sufficiently 'democratic'" (Brown & Nicholas, 2012, p. 311). Morphy also argues, on the basis of anthropological work with Yolngu people in Australia, that digital repatriation can be leveraged by indigenous communities to their own advantage and that "[p]articipation in national and global discourse may be a better way of correcting misunderstanding than shutting the world away" (Morphy, 2015, p. 102).

[142] See http://www.vectorsjournal.org/issues/3/digitaldynamics/, accessed 30 May 2017. The caption reads "Images of the deceased should not be viewed unless the family has given permission."

The purpose of Mukurtu was to imitate some of the "in group" protocols that constrained access to knowledge, despite the fact that the traditional context of transmission is gone when ethnographic material is presented online. Often this knowledge was sacred knowledge, and access to it was sectional; it could be structured by age, gender or clan (to cite some possible examples). Murkutu mimics some of these protocols by prompting the user when s/he attempts to access material that would be restricted in real life (Figure 6.2 shows a warning that Mukurtu gives when the user attempts to access pictures of dead people, since these should not be viewed without permission from the family of the deceased).

When Mukurtu was launched, the fact that it limited access to some content provoked some negative reaction, despite the fact that it was clearly stated that these restrictions were designed to take indigenous knowledge systems into account and were intended to foster a reimagining of "the intellectual property needs of local, traditional, and indigenous communities, libraries, archives, and museums as they seek to manage, preserve and reuse their digital cultural heritage" (Christen, 2015b). Some critics equated Mukurtu with Digital Rights Management (because it imposes limits on access). In response, Christen, the principal researcher responsible for the development of Mukurtu, critiques the notion that information should always be shared, tracing the idea that "information wants to be free" back to the open software movement in the early 1980s, a "reaction to corporate greed and the legal straightjacketing of creative works" (Christen, 2012, p. 2874). Christen argues that the binary choice that this offers, free or not free, results "in *a limited vocabulary* with which to discuss the ethical and cultural parameters of information circulation and access in the digital realm" (Christen, 2012, p. 2874, emphasis in the original). Contrary to the idea that Mukurtu is limiting the freedom of information to be open, she argues instead that it allows for a "a view of information… as already part of ethical systems in which it wants to be responsible" (Christen, 2009, p. 5).

These are powerful ethical arguments that augment the discussion in digital oral history and could be leveraged by oral historians when championing ideals of duty of care and the right to restrict access when publishing oral histories online. While in the past such issues have not been to the forefront, they are beginning to garner some attention in digital humanities. McPherson (2012) has discussed the dichotomy between approaches within (for example) film, literary and media studies, who "worked hard to instill race as a central mode of analysis" as opposed to theorists of new media, who "often retreated into forms of

analysis … intent on parsing media specificity and on theorizing the forms of new media while disavowing twenty-plus years of critical race theory, feminism, and other modes of overtly politicized inquiry." This is part of a tendency within digital humanities, as well as code and platform studies (where code refers to computer code), to conceptually bracket code as separate from culture:

> [t]his conceptual bracketing, this singling out of code from culture, is itself part and parcel of the organization of knowledge production that computation has disseminated around the world for well over fifty years (McPherson, 2014, p. 181).

In other words, the approach within digital humanities has traditionally tried to be apolitical, treating the tool as neutral rather than something that emerges out of culture and its various structural inequalities. There is, therefore, a fundamental difference in the culture of disciplines such as anthropology and oral history, when compared with digital humanities. Critics of digital humanities have, up until relatively recently, been able to ask questions such as Liu's "[w]here is the cultural criticism in the digital humanities?" Liu contended that digital humanities scholarship did not encompass cultural criticism and that it was as if:

> digital humanists just concentrate on pushing the 'execute' button on projects … all without pausing to reflect on the relation of the whole digital juggernaut to the new world order (Liu, 2012).

Critiques include arguments that "DH is too optimistic, present-centered, positivist, and simplistic" (Warwick, 2016, p. 540).[143]

However, the culture of digital humanities is gradually changing to incorporate new critiques and ideas from other disciplinary fields, and it now includes relatively frequent references to post-colonial studies and feminism, for example.[144] As Risam says:

[143] Warwick (2016, pp. 539–541) classifies some of the critiques of digital humanities as coming from outside digital humanities, (e.g. by post-modernist scholar Stanley Fish, who, she suggests, betrays "a certain level of anxiety that the next generation chooses to express an interest in a field in which he is not a central figure") and those who self-identify as digital humanists, but who have been strongly influenced by other fields, self-described as #transformDH. These latter scholars describe their work as "an academic guerrilla movement seeking to (re)define capital-letter Digital Humanities as a force for transformative scholarship by collecting, sharing, and highlighting projects that push at its boundaries and work for social justice, accessibility, and inclusion" (see http://transformdh.org/about-transformdh/, accessed 16 June 2017). (Although the importance of openness and accessibility in this transformDH mission is notable.)

[144] As an example, a special issue of the journal, *Digital Humanities Quarterly*, published in 2015, took on the theme of "Feminisms in Digital Humanities." The editor sees the articles as "powerful but partial *beginnings*" (Wernimont, 2015, para. 14, my emphasis). Risam (2017a, p. 345) talks of "the significance of postcolonial theory for theorizing the seeming absence of ethnic, national, or ideological considerations in digital humanities." These are both relatively recent developments within digital humanities.

> [w]hile digital humanities has grown, so too has the number of voices making the case for attention to race, class, gender, sexuality, ability, nationality, and other categories of identity in the field (2015, para. 1).

These are disruptive arguments that have generated heated debate within digital humanities (McPherson, 2014, p. 178). However, it is generally the case that increased engagement between and across disciplines should begin to redress former weaknesses in all disciplines that engage in the discussion. In oral history this engagement has, for example, re-emphasised the importance of ongoing discussion about ethical issues. This is a good thing for oral history because some researchers have sensed that there was "a decrease in the overall level of conversation on ethics" (Larson, 2014, p. 161) in the digital age. For the younger discipline of digital humanities, Warwick suggests that disagreements and debates have demonstrated the way that digital humanities is maturing as a discipline, where:

> [c]ertain methodological stances or approaches may become, or remain, dominant, but local variations and distinctive ways of doing the subject may develop, and indeed persist (Warwick, 2016, p. 548).

The changing nature of digital humanities as a field may mean that there is greater awareness of ethical issues in the future and the response to Mukurtu has suggested that there may be a gradual trend that problematises the idea of openness at any cost.[145] These changes could also support Boyd and Larson's assertion that oral history is placed "quietly in the middle of the conversation on the digital humanities," as it develops into the future (2014a, p. 10). However, it is also clear that this is a conversation that is only just beginning.[146] Digital humanities is beginning to learn that "it can be invigorating (and useful) to discover just how much can be learned from disagreement and lack of common experience" (O'Donnell, Walter, Gil, & Fraistat, 2016, p. 496). Negotiating the gap between the utopian ideal of open access online publishing, on the one hand, and a responsibility to living subjects and entire communities, on the other hand, will doubtless feature in the discussions to come. Like digital project work in general, the ethics conversation in oral history and digital humanities is work for the "long haul."

> This is so in part because such work must be fit within the constraints of often exceedingly complex lives – both our own and those of the people with whom

[145] As against this, however, it is notable that Christen's articles that critique the notion of openness at all costs tend not to appear in digital humanities journals. Instead, they have appeared in anthropological publications (*Anthropology News*), a book on museum studies (*Technology and digital initiatives: innovative approaches for museums*), a communications journal (*International Journal of Communication*) and an archival journal (*Journal of Western Archives*).

[146] Some argue that digital humanities is currently (2016 and 2017) going through a "transitional moment" (see O'Donnell, Walter, Gil, & Fraistat, 2016, p. 497). It is likely therefore that more of these conversations will emerge in the years to come.

> we collaborate – with multiple claims upon them; in part because external support is often limited or nonexistent; but mostly because collaboration requires the cultivation of trust and a working out of the rules of shared decision-making, and these simply cannot be rushed (Shopes, 2003, p. 105).

6.4 Summary of Chapter 6

This chapter has outlined discussions within oral history literature about the ethics of dissemination, concentrating in particular on issues of editorial control and interpretive conflict, and the implications of widespread accessibility. All were points of debate amongst oral historians (and allied disciplines such as anthropology and ethnology) long before digital dissemination was possible. This is because the process of dissemination itself triggers important ethical questions, about the duty of care that we have towards our narrators, about how they will view interpretations of their narratives, and about how these could be used and re-used by others. The researcher "cannot control how what he or she puts into print is read, let alone how it is publicly represented" (Brettell, 1994, p. 17). This means that there needs to be an awareness of "method and materials, the choices we face in using them, and how our decisions function as a mode of historical communication to broad audiences" (Frisch, 1990, p. 178).[147]

The problems associated with widespread accessibility have led some oral historians to restrict access to materials. Many practitioners (like the CFP) have chosen to disseminate their material online in a highly curated fashion, presenting the material as an exhibition rather than a fully accessible repository. This is a potential point of tension with digital humanities, where the ethos promotes openness as a means to the democratisation of access to research and knowledge. There is almost no discussion of this tension within digital humanities. However, the tension has been illustrated in the related field of anthropology, specifically with reference to the digitisation of ethnographic collections within museums, and the access protocols that are applied to digital surrogates, as illustrated by the conversations about the Mukurtu Content Management System. The fact that Mukurtu needed to be developed in the first place is instructive. In addition, some of the reaction to it, and to the fact that it limits access to some content, is also instructive. Mukurtu's creator, Kimberly Christen argues that there is a false binary "between freedom and sociality on the

[147] Frisch made this observation after some oral histories about the Vietnam War were re-used in a TV documentary, leading him to worry that some use (or re-use) of oral history "may have the effect … of reinforcing the power and authority of those its proponents so often imagine it to be challenging" (Frisch, 1990, p. 178).

one hand, and oppression and privacy on the other" (Christen, 2012, p. 2877).

Christen's experience of the "information wants to be free" meme appears to have left her half-hearted about digital humanities; "[f]or better or worse," she says, "Mukurtu has been lodged within the digital humanities" (2015a, p. 67). It is also possible that differences in ethos have prevented digital oral historians from self-identifying as digital humanists in the past (see Boyd & Larson, 2014a, p. 10).[148] However, my feeling is that the dogmatic digital humanities position on openness may change in the future as the discipline becomes more aware of different "accents" that result from the fact that digital humanities is now a "global phenomenon that brings with it a number of challenges, perhaps the most significant of which is negotiating practices that may look unfamiliar within prevailing definitions of DH" (Risam, 2017b, pp. 377–378) and where there is increasing recognition of the fact that "in a post-colonial world order … we cannot so neatly carve out the digital from the political and the historical" (Christen, 2012, p. 2877).

Each side in this debate (curated versus open) argues from an ethical position based on different sets of disciplinary values; duty of care to narrators and respect for indigenous protocols on the one hand, the importance of access to research and knowledge on the other. The positions illustrate that the ethics conversation in digital dissemination is not resolved or over; it has evolved and it is an ongoing dialogue that requires continued attention from practitioners (see Larson, 2014, pp. 161–162; Shopes, 2007, pp. 154–155). Best practice is therefore to be reflective about digital practice, constantly aware of and reviewing ethical positions.

In the following chapter I move from this discussion of values, to a more general but almost equally contentious discussion of the concept of value as it pertains to digital humanities projects, outlining how my research practice and a reflective approach to its documentation can contribute to the creation of a qualitative, reasoned model for the assessment of value as it pertains to many different stakeholders in cultural heritage in general, and to digital cultural heritage in particular.

[148] Boyd and Larson note that oral historians have generally not self-identified as digital humanists, but they do not discuss the reasons why this might be. It may be because of a tension between ethical practices in the two disciplines, and it may also be that the textual emphasis of digital humanities (see Chapter 2.2.1) has contributed to this.

7 Value

> *… do we now inhabit a public sphere so distortively geared to thinking in terms of economic profitability that we need a corrective input from the humanities to redirect our attention to human goods more variously described? I think we do …*
>
> - From *The Value of the Humanities* by Helen Small (2013, p. 10).

7.1 Introduction to Chapter 7

In this chapter I will outline a model for arguing for the value of digital cultural heritage projects using and adding to criteria from Helen Small's book, *The Value of the Humanities*. My argument throughout this chapter will be that value should be viewed from the perspective of the creators and makers of digital content, as well as from the perspective of the end user. This will be presented as an exercise in *arguing for* value, rather than in *measuring* it (the latter has been the more common approach in digital humanities up until relatively recently). These differences in approaches to value, (i.e. whether to argue for it or to measure it) arise because the concept of "value" itself is a difficult one to define, to pin down. Despite this, it is a theme that has been discussed within digital humanities literature since at least 2008, where it is usually tied to concepts of "use" and "impact" and, implicitly if not overtly, funding. It seems reasonable, then, to ask how value is understood within the discipline and to speculate on what a valuable digital humanities project might look like.

I begin this chapter with a brief account of value studies within digital humanities (including a recap of some of the background outlined in Chapter 2, sections 2.5.1 and 2.5.2). This is a prelude to a discussion of a new model for understanding the value of digital cultural heritage, one based the criteria outlined in Helen Small's book *The Value of the Humanities* (Small, 2013). Small is Professor of Literature at the University of Oxford and she uses her knowledge of literary criticism and philosophy to address wider questions such as ageing and the good life, as well as the public life of the intellectual.[149] Her work on the value of the humanities was motivated by a need to justify continued funding of the humanities in an era of scarce public funding:

[149] Small has moved on to work on modern cynicism but she remains interested in advocacy for the humanities, see http://www.english.ox.ac.uk/people/professor-helen-small, accessed 5 September 2017.

> [t]he most politically pressing question … is what the state thinks it is paying for, in the case of the humanities, and whether the people who make decisions about public spending can be helped to recognize the distinctive nature of humanities scholarship … and distinctive contributions to the public good (Small, 2013, p. 2).

Small's concern to justify public funding for research in the humanities mirrors those of digital humanists who began to cultivate an earnest interest in value and impact studies in the wake of the 2007/2008 economic decline and the subsequent funding cuts (for example, see Hughes, 2012, p. 2; see also Chapter 2.5.2). In both cases the arguments for value are being made for the benefit of funding bodies. Digital humanists have recognised a gap in the way that value has been discussed within their own field, identifying an overreliance on quantitative methods for assessing value. However, the application of qualitative methods has not always been successful in digital humanities.[150] This makes it clear that a different framework for discussion is needed. As a starting point for a new way of thinking about value, I use and road-test Small's philosophical and literary criteria in this chapter (sections 7.5–7.9). Rather than a definitive answer to the problems that have arisen in the discussion of value in the past, I see this as a starting point for further discussion in the future (see Chapter 8.5).

Small's criteria for arguing for value include considerations of the distinctiveness of the project, the ways that it can challenge expectations and norms, its usefulness, the ways that it can contribute to a sense of fulfilment and, finally, the ways in which the project has intrinsic value. To these criteria I have also added that value can be gained from work that makes a contribution to public engagement. All of these criteria are combined to form the basis of reasoned arguments for value. This is offered as an alternative to other methods of value assessment that have been used in digital humanities (see Chapter 2.5.2). It is an approach that is rooted in qualitative reasoning and relies on making arguments for value, rather than on measuring use.

As I examine value from the perspective of the process of creation as well as the perspective of end use, these arguments for the value of digital projects are inherently tied to the context of their development and creation. In this chapter, I apply the criteria for value to my work with the CFP (i.e. to the digital oral history maps that I have developed), while also discussing the context of the work; these arguments for value therefore also include a

[150] I use the failure of the TIDSR team to follow up their qualitative research and analyse the results as an example of how digital humanists, often from quantitative backgrounds, have found it difficult to adopt qualitative methods, see Chapter 2.5.2 for an outline. There is further discussion of this point in this chapter, section 7.2.

discussion of aspects of oral history practice in general, as well as the work of the CFP as a community archive, and the work involved in the creation of digital projects within the CFP.

This chapter includes some new empirical data, an interview recorded on the 24th Jaunary 2017 with Tomás Mac Conmara (Project Co-ordinator at the CFP) about the role of digital projects within the work of the CFP. However, I primarily refer back to the account of my practice that is outlined in the preceding chapters (in particular in Chapters 3, 4 and 5), and to the disciplinary literature of oral history and digital humanities. I use evidence gathered during my research to support value claims with qualitative reasoning and empirical data. In this, my approach is distinctively humanistic, since the humanities in general encourage:

> qualitative above quantitative reasoning; they place greater faith in interpretative than in positivistic thinking … they do not have a dominant methodology, and many of their truth claims are not verifiable as those of the natural sciences are verifiable; they tend, accordingly, to distrust proceduralism and to value independence of thought (Small, 2013, p. 57).

One of the underlying themes of this chapter is that digital project work is not simply about creating an end "product," a focus that leads to false comparisons with economic and commercial activities. Digital humanities project work is often a process of scholarly interpretative work in its own right and the *point* of the work, and its value, lies in working practices and creative processes. I have been able to make these arguments about the value of digital projects by examining value from the perspective of insiders (those who work behind the scenes at the CFP) as well as looking at the value of the digital projects for end users. My arguments for qualitative value combine, therefore, to counterbalance an un-reflective over-reliance on quantitative methods of assessing value, since the process and the interpretative work cannot be measured by hit counts and bounce rates.

7.2 Measuring value?

What do we mean if we discuss the "value" of a digital project? In digital humanities this question has often implicitly, if not always overtly, been linked to funding and to costs. Researchers working on the LAIRAH project (see Chapter 2.5.2), for example, note that during the short history of digital humanities:

> scholars have produced thousands of digital resources that have been funded by governments, philanthropic bodies, and universities. In the UK alone, over 250 digital humanities projects have been funded by the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC) since 1998. Yet, what happens to such resources after

> completion is very poorly understood … Anecdotal evidence suggests that some projects become well-known but others have been relatively quickly forgotten. This must be regrettable since the non-use of a resource represents a waste not only of the considerable intellectual effort and time expended in its production, but potentially considerable amounts of funding (Warwick, Terras, et al., 2008, pp. 85–86).

Cultural statistics, such as audience figures and the number of website visits, have emerged as a way for economists to measure some outcomes from cultural activities and policy (see Chapter 2.5.1). All grant-funded artistic endeavours and humanities research operates within funding and policy frameworks for assessment where statistics like these may play a role, whether or not they are appropriate. The result is that researchers and creatives seeking funding must adopt a practical, *realpolitik* approach to assessment exercises.

Value and impact studies within digital humanities, with its emphasis on the use of quantitative and computational techniques, have been able to apply the power of "big data" to the information that can be gathered about the use of digital projects and websites. (For example, information such as hit counts can be collated automatically.) Nevertheless, many digital humanists are wary of this and there is a widespread recognition that qualitative data should also be gathered.[151] There is, however, relatively limited work done on outlining how the qualitative data should be incorporated into an understanding of value and, in several instances, a relatively limited understanding of what to do with qualitative data once it has been gathered (see Chapter 2.5.2). Up until quite recently, it is likely that most scholars operating within digital humanities were primarily trained in quantitative methodologies, with limited access to qualitative training (see Clement 2016b for an outline of uncertainties about how qualitative research fits into the discipline).[152] The quantitative formation of many scholars in the discipline effects the kind of work carried out in digital humanities, and this likely explains the initial concentration of the discipline on collecting and analysing big data statistics for the assessment of impact and value.[153]

[151] This argument is also becoming current in the general conversation about cultural statistics, not just digital humanities (for example, see Thelwall & Delgado, 2015).

[152] The issue of the formation of digital humanists is important in this context because it is difficult to move from quantitative to qualitative forms of analysis. Oliver et al. (2013) discusses how two positivists, a chemical engineer and a medical microbiologist, learned to use qualitative methodology. The authors note that this was a time-consuming and difficult process. "Challenging disciplinary norms and deeply engrained ways of seeing the world is an uncomfortable process that takes time" (Oliver et al., 2013, p. 191).

[153] Although this quantitative slant may be changing now, as the discipline adjusts to becoming more mainstream (see Warwick, 2016 for a general outline of how the discipline of digital humanities is evolving).

However, even when qualitative understandings are taken into account, all of the approaches within digital humanities appear to be predicated on the idea that value is something that can be measured. Instead, Belfiore and Bennet (2010) point out that it may be appropriate to change the focus from asking *how* value can be measured, and to ask instead *whether* it can be measured:

> in the arts impact debate … research has often focused on asking *how* the (presumed) positive social impacts of the arts might be measured, rather than asking *whether* the arts have social impacts, *if* these impacts can be expected to be positive and, more generally, *whether* people's responses to the arts are amenable to measurement and generalization (Belfiore & Bennett, 2010, p. 137, emphasis in original).

Defining value is a philosophical endeavour, one that has been recently examined in-depth by the legal, moral and political philosopher, Joseph Raz, in a lecture series later published as a book titled *The Practice of Value* (2005).[154] Raz does not believe that value can solely be the result of taste or individual preference, and this is his preoccupation throughout the book. Small (2013, p. 181) suggests that Raz mounts "metaphysical objections, of an unhelpful purity, to value comparisons, requiring us … to defer deliberative reasoning indefinitely." Nevertheless, I find Raz's suggestion compelling when he says that the "test of whether something is valuable or not is *in argument*, using the full range of concepts, information, and rules of inference at our disposal" (Raz, 2005, p. 44, my emphasis). In suggesting below (section 7.5–7.10) that my work with the CFP has been valuable I do so using a series of reasoned qualitative *arguments*. However, for these to be effective, I first address the question of where value accrues when building and using digital projects.

7.3 Who benefits?

Value has generally been perceived as something that is determined through the actions of an end user in digital humanities value and impact studies. The prevalent use of web metrics (determined by end user actions) demonstrates this. Even when discussing qualitative work, the focus is usually on the end user. For example, qualitative research carried out to assess the use of the Stormont Papers website included workshops and interviews, all with end users (outlined in Hughes et al., 2015, pp. 193–194). The net result

[154] *The Practice of Value* demonstrates the slippery nature of the concept of value, even for philosophers, since alongside Raz's text it also contains commentaries offered by three other philosophers, who critique and expose flaws in his line of reasoning, one of these being, for example, that Raz allows the meaning of value to "slip around a bit" (Korsgaard, 2005, p. 67).

of this focus on end users makes digital humanities projects seem akin to "products," created to be consumed. As a result, there is little recognition of the value that can accrue through the creation/building process. For example, although the LAIRAH project interviewed the creators of digital resources as well as end users, the focus of the interviews with creators was not to investigate value but to "discover whether certain practices in the construction of digital humanities projects had an effect on its subsequent use" (Warwick, Galina, et al., 2008, p. 383). In other words, the emphasis here is, once again, on end use rather than on the making/creation process. This means that, in digital humanities, it is the actions of the end user that have become the deciding factors in discussions of value and utility. This approach seems to me to be incomplete, since it overlooks the many other stakeholders involved with and interested in digital projects. My approach in this research has been to take a wider view of who the "audience" is in terms of digital projects. In the discussion of the criteria for the assessment of value below I have considered not only the end users, but also those working behind the scenes, particularly the researchers within the CFP who worked with digital humanities software (for example, as a content creator for a digital oral history map or as stewards of the digital project, see Chapter 5). I also consider another "insider" perspective in discussing how digital projects can be valuable for the CFP, the host organisation (in particular with relation to public engagement, see section 7.10 in this chapter).

7.4 Small's argument for the value of the humanities

The model for qualitative value presented in this thesis is largely based on the arguments presented by Helen Small in her book, *The Value of the Humanities*. Small sees "the humanities" as a range of different academic disciplines "that study the meaning-making practices of the culture, focusing on interpretation and evaluation with an indispensable element of subjectivity" (Small, 2013, p. 4). One of the blind spots of Small's work is that, while discussing the humanities as a public good, she does so assuming that these incorporate a range of activities that are carried out exclusively within higher education. As a result, her book becomes, at least in part, a defence of the value of higher education itself and not of the humanities *per se*.

Nevertheless, the criteria that Small outlines are useful indicators that have been used historically to maintain that the humanities and humanistic practices have value. Small contends that these arguments "still have persuasive power" (2013, p. 3). However, on their

own, each argument is limited or bounded, and is therefore problematic. It is when the arguments are combined that they present "a pluralistic account of value" (2013, p. 176) because, synthesised together, they incorporate many different ways of thinking and reasoning about the value of work in the humanities.

Small's criteria for looking at the value of the humanities are very broad and they include: distinctiveness (value based on the distinctive kind of work that is carried out in the humanities); the ability to challenge expectations (or the "gadfly argument," the value of critical thinking); usefulness (the most common argument based on utilitarian ideas); fulfilment (or value because an activity contributes to happiness) and, finally, the "for its own sake" argument (or the claim that value is gained from doing something for the pleasure or knowledge it brings).[155] These are arguments, rather than measurements, and therefore do not lend themselves to cultural statistics or to direct cost comparisons with other projects.

My work differs from Small's approach in four key ways. Firstly, instead of discussing the value of a very broad range of practices within the humanities, I discuss the value of work within specific disciplines, namely oral history and digital humanities. Secondly, I apply the criteria for arguing for value to everyday practice (whereas Small tends to discuss the value of the humanities in the abstract). Thirdly, I discuss value in relation to activities carried out within the academy but also in the community beyond (this is not solely a defence of oral history and digital humanities practices carried out within a university, but within a community organisation that has links to the university). And finally, I have added my own argument to the list, suggesting that a digital project can be seen as valuable if it makes a contribution to public engagement.

7.5 Distinctiveness

Small sees the "distinctiveness" argument for value within the humanities as being a result of the fact that they:

> study the meaning-making practices of human culture, past and present, focusing on interpretation and critical evaluation, primarily in terms of the individual response and with an ineliminable element of subjectivity (Small, 2013, p. 23).

[155] Small presents these in the following order: distinctiveness, usefulness, contribution to happiness, gadfly argument and good in itself.

The work of the humanities "includes ways of attending to objects of study that are, variously, technical, aesthetically evaluative, curatorial" (Small, 2013, p.26). In the process of being aesthetically evaluative and curatorial the humanities are *selective*. For example, oral history and digital humanities are both disciplines that have strong links with archival practices, and archive formation and maintenance involve processes that are selective and curatorial. To collect material and to archive it is therefore a process that is already partly informed by ideas of distinctiveness; the point of the process is to preserve something of value for the future. Moving from the general to the specific, I will discuss the distinctiveness of work within an oral history archive, then refer specifically to practice within the CFP, before discussing how the Cork Memory Map and its successors can claim to be distinctive.

Distinctiveness is a feature of oral history archival practice since it preserves unique and distinctive voices for the future. In fact, distinctiveness is the point of the work. A frequently cited paper by Alessandro Portelli discusses "the ways in which oral history is intrinsically different " (1998 p.64), while Abrams (2010, p. 32) calls oral history a "peculiar practice," citing its "distinctiveness as a methodology, its marrying of practice in the field with interpretative analysis" and the ways that it is presented to the public (i.e. often as audio, video, multi-media or in performance; not simply as a written text or a scholarly monograph).[156] (Similar points about the distinctiveness of oral history material are made in a discussion of orality in Chapter 4.3.3.)

There are also arguments to be made for the distinctive nature of the CFP as an organisation. To begin with, its archive contains a collection of stories of life in a small city in Ireland (this is a local collection, its specificity makes the material distinctive). As well as this, it is a collection that has been gathered over an extended period of two decades. Community oral history organisations do not often have such longevity and the CFP is "singular in its constitution, range of activities and longevity, and has survived due to the confluence of a number of favourable and unique conditions" (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 27).

The CFP uses the distinctive method of oral history to gather and preserve the unique memories of individuals who live and are associated with Cork (as described in Chapter 2.4). Distinctiveness is inherent in the archival holdings because of both the method of collection and the specificity of its focus (personal narratives and memories, usually associated with a particular place, i.e. Cork). As a collection of personal memories of everyday life, each item

[156] Abrams devotes an entire chapter of her book, *Oral History Theory*, to "The peculiarities of oral history" (2010, pp.18–32).

is unique, told from an individual perspective and (importantly) in an individualised way: "[o]ur central goal when interviewing is to establish a pace and tone that elicits rich, textured accounts and narrative," (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 25). The Project Co-ordinator at the CFP, Tomás Mac Conmara, talks about the distinctiveness of oral history recordings within the archive and the fact that these also make any digital projects based on the material distinctive:

> **TMac** You're operating here in Cork, Penny, and the voice is so critical here […] the voice and the accent, and the Cork accent is so well known. And obviously it's not just the Cork accent that's going to appear on a Memory Map, there's multiple voices. But I think the voice, the accent, the way people communicate and […] the emotion that's carried then is so critical. And that's as distinct from the transcript. And that's really pointing out, you know, that […] the Memory Map in carrying the voice […] is much more powerful than a transcribed piece of information.
>
> (LVWC_SR009_240117_MacConmara: Tomás Mac Conmara 24 January 2017 at Cork Folklore Project)

While the idea of a digital oral history map like the Cork Memory Map and Stories of Place is not unique (some other examples of digital oral history maps are mentioned in both Chapter 2.2.6 and Appendix I), nevertheless it is possible to argue that each example is distinctive because it collates and disseminates different and distinctive material. This is an aspect of the argument that Mac Conmara makes in the excerpt above when he notes the distinctiveness of voice and accent within the CFP's archival holding. Stories of Place (the new Memory Map that Mac Conmara refers to in the excerpt) is based on this distinctive archive of oral histories collected by the CFP. It is the fact that the digital oral history maps are a vehicle to carry distinctive voices that makes them different.

7.6 Challenging expectations (the "gadfly" argument)

Small's "gadfly" argument refers to the ways that the humanities, as a range of different disciplines, foster skills in critical reasoning, debate and evaluation (2013, p. 175). The "gadfly" argument is so-called because it is based on Socrates' defence of his own role as a philosopher within the political state, as presented in Plato's *Apology*. Socrates argued that he acted as a gadfly who could rouse the state which, without such provocation, "is like a great and noble steed who is tardy in his motions" (cited in Small, 2013, p. 129, based on

Benjamin Jowett's 1892 translation of the *Apology*).[157] Small characterises this argument for the value of the humanities as a "democracy needs us" argument associated with political engagement and epitomised in the book *Not For Profit: Why Democracy Needs the Humanities* (Nussbaum, 2010). The "democracy needs us" argument is based on the idea that humanists are trained and encouraged to think critically, and that the application of critical thinking to public life can be valuable.[158] The humanities, "concerned as they are with the cultural practices of reflection, argument, criticism, and speculative testing of ideas, have a substantial contribution to make to the good working of democracy" (Small, 2013, p. 6). Rather than arguing that the work of the CFP, or my own work on digital projects, is crucial to the functioning of a healthy democracy, I am using the idea of a gadfly in a more humble sense, suggesting that the oral history practice and digital oral history projects can challenge conventional wisdom, and can play the role of the gadfly in this small but incremental sense.

Oral history methodology emerged as a method of documenting history from the bottom up (see Abrams, 2010, p. 155), deliberately challenging official histories and presenting accounts by the marginalised and the excluded. This is the reason why many oral historians started to work with the methodology. Gluck, for example, describes her formation as an oral historian of the woman's movement as being deliberately challenging and political, saying that she "was determined to uncover our hidden history and, in the process, empower women and energize our movement" (2013, p. 25). Likewise, Sangster describes her interest in oral history as being influenced by the possibility of social transformation:

> [w]e were interested in challenging the prevailing "history from above," reviving class analysis that took into account experience and human agency, and recovering the lives of historical actors – both women and the working class – who had left fewer written records for posterity (2013, p. 60).

Challenging perceptions is also an important part of the CFP's role as an oral history archive, with their work and mission including collecting and disseminating oral histories of marginalised groups (see Chapter 2.4.2), or even simply those that are not from the expected cohort of contributors:

> [i]n contrast to public expectations of folklore practice, we eschew an idea that older native members of the community would be the only, or best possible,

[157] Jowett's translation is out of copyright and is freely available online, for example in the Internet Classics Archive, housed on the Massachusetts Institute of Technology servers at http://classics.mit.edu/Plato/apology.html, accessed 10 July 2017.

[158] Although Small takes issue with the claim that critical thinking is limited to the humanities (see, for example, Small 2013, 147-8).

> contributors to an investigation of a living urban culture, and have worked with a broad range of people as contributors and researchers (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 25).

This is because the purpose of the oral history archive is to represent "the people of Cork in their diversity … as well as reflecting a multifaceted sense of traditional and popular aesthetics" (Desplanques, 2015, p. 32). The practice of oral history at the CFP seeks to challenge ideas about the make-up of "the community" and how it can be "meaningfully represented, served and/or challenged" (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 16).

Digital oral history maps like the original Cork Memory Map and, now, Stories of Place, have a place in this mission as they can represent the community in different and surprising ways, creating unexpected juxtapositions, in a map of a city that users might find familiar, but also different (see Chapter 3.2.1 for a further discussion of the potential of the Cork Memory Map). The underlying goal for Stories of Place is to eventually accumulate a multi-layered story map that presents a city that is both familiar and different, recognisable and challenging, to the web audience. The Cork Memory Map (both in its original incarnation and as Stories of Place) includes contributions from some people who are not from Cork and, defying the expectations of who is interviewed for an oral history, it also includes stories from people who are not necessarily "older."[159] In this way the digital project gradually becomes multi-layered and challenges expectations as it accumulates over time. However, Stories of Place has not yet accumulated enough material/content to achieve this goal.[160] As an example of how this mission might be accomplished in the future, Stories of Place may eventually include a number of different layers, exploring different aspects of the CFP's archival holdings. In the excerpt below I suggest the creation of an LGBT layer to Stephen Dee, one of the researchers who worked on the CFP's LGBT Archive (mentioned in Chapter 2.4.3):

> **PJ** That's another thing […] if we could have different layers of like, […] we could have like an LGBT layer, or you know.
>
> […]

[159] An example of a non-national whose story appears on Stories of Place (and on the original Cork Memory Map) includes a story by Dragan Tomas "New Local, Old Reliable," see http://storiesofplace.org/neatline/show/stories-of-place#records/1, accessed 13 July 2017. A newer story that only appears on the Stories of Place website includes a tale of Cork in the 1980s or early 1990s, (see http://storiesofplace.org/neatline/show/stories-of-place#records/34, accessed 13 July 2017) a recent story not traditionally seen as "folklore" by a general audience.

[160] This is because Stories of Place does not yet include enough entries to justify a claim that it is a multi-layered depiction of the city. However, the CFP archive itself, with circa six hundred interviews, is certainly already an adequate archive of source material that represents a multi-layered view of Cork city.

SD Well I'm all for you, I'm all for that layer.

(LVWC_SR003_040515_MaddenOSheaDee: Penny Johnston, Louise Madden O'Shea and Stephen Dee 4 May 2015 at Cork Folklore Project)

The LGBT oral history archive was created to collect and document stories about LGBT life in Cork because researchers within the CFP felt that it was important to record these stories as Irish society changed and became more open, so that the struggles of the past were not forgotten.[161] An excerpt from this collection was included in Cork's Main Streets and the goal is to include more material from the LGBT archive on Stories of Place in the future.[162] This kind of work is dedicated to the idea of challenging the perceptions of outsider audiences, the end users of the website.

7.7 Usefulness

Of all of the criteria that Small has outlined, the "usefulness" criterion is the one most closely related to the value and impact debate in digital humanities as outlined in Chapter 2.5.2. Small calls this argument the "spectre of trial by proven utility" (2013, p. 59) and warns that "any defence that gives primary place to the instrumental value of a humanities education will quickly disfigure the broader kind of good it nurtures" (ibid., pp.174–175). The idea of usefulness is often seen as problematic because humanities disciplines have always found it difficult to argue for their worth within instrumental frameworks for judgement, where knowledge and learning are measured by their "worldly use value" (Brooks, 2014, p. 4). Many humanists see the usefulness argument as being about a "mistaken pressure to demonstrate economic or social benefit" (Small, 2013, p. 87). In this section I will outline ideas of usefulness pertaining to the practical uses of the oral history method in research and the CFP's oral history archive as a research resource. I will then switch focus to examine

[161] See https://www.ucc.ie/en/cfp/lgbtarchive/, accessed 13 July 2017. The website says that the purpose of the LBGT archive of oral histories is to "document and preserve stories and memories of LGBT life in Cork City and County" to "record the achievements and struggles that have contributed to a society that today is far more open and accepting of difference."

[162] See http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/10, accessed 16 July 2017 for the story "The Other Place burns down," from an interview with Clive Davis. The LGBT oral history archive website (https://www.ucc.ie/en/cfp/lgbtarchive/, accessed 13 July 2017) also notes an ambition to include some of the stories from the LGBT collection on the Cork Memory Map in the future: "[w]e believe this collection will be an invaluable tool for oral historians and other researchers, but we will also share this material with the wider community through our website and social media, and possibly in the future on CFP's Cork Memory Map."

the usefulness of digital oral history maps for the "behind the scenes" staff members at the CFP who learn new skills as they work on digital projects.

The oral history method can be useful in a practical sense because it is a different way to approach gathering information about the past. For example, it has recently been used to write a history of the discipline of digital humanities (see Nyhan & Flinn, 2016), demonstrating that "[c]onducting an interview is a practical means of obtaining information about the past" (Abrams, 2010, p. 1). Abrams says that, beyond simple information gathering, the oral history method is also a way to look at "signification, interpretation and meaning," that is, how things are said, why they are said and what this means (ibid., p. 1). Similarly, the archive of the CFP is useful because it is a "rich research resource" for "studies of social history, linguistics, memory, migration, placemaking and social and cultural process" (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 26). In both of these cases, the oral history method and the CFP archive have the potential to be useful to end users who are researchers.

However, I would like to switch the perspective and, instead of looking at end users, here I will look at work in the CFP oral history archive and, in particular, work on digital oral history projects, from the "behind the scenes" perspective of the people who carry out that work. Within the CFP, the process of creating a digital project like Stories of Place was "useful" in that it provided a relatively gentle level of technical training for staff members, most of whom work as part of a government-led initiative for jobseekers. They are, therefore, often trying to improve their skill-set in order to return to the workforce.[163] This is a supplement to the CFP's regular training; the organisation has a mandate to provide "training in the methodologies and technologies of ethnography and archiving" (Desplanques, 2015, p. 23) and all new recruits are trained "in folklore theory and methodology" (O'Carroll, 2013, p. 25).

Because it is staffed by a scheme for jobseekers, the CFP resembles oral history projects from the 1970s and 1980s in Britain that were funded by the Manpower Services Commission (MSC). The work of the MSC was reviewed by the oral historian Alastair Thomson in 2008.[164] His overall view of the MSC was that the projects produced many excellent oral history outputs, but that the benefits of participation for the workers were minimal. He suggests that involvement with MSC oral history projects had a "limited, short-

[163] Many of those working at CFP are part of an Active Labour Market Policy, primarily the Community Employment Scheme (see O'Carroll, 2013, p. 25 for a description of the CFP's relationship to these schemes).
[164] Thomson is a Professor of History at Monash University in Australia. He has extensive experience working in oral history in Australia and Britain.

term value" for them because they were "usually only employed for a maximum of one year and gained little in terms of long term employability, especially in a shrinking labour market" (2008, p. 102). Thomson here is reflecting on the fact that there were few opportunities for employment in oral history beyond these schemes. Similar criticism could potentially be levelled at the CFP; as in Britain in the 1970s and 1980s, in Ireland today there are few posts specifically for oral historians (most practitioners are either freelancers, or they teach and work within research institutions, as well as being oral historians).[165]

Nevertheless, while I recognise that the argument about the relationship between training received on a jobseekers' scheme and available posts is one that has gained wide currency, I am inclined to resist Thomson's assessment of the benefits of the training. Even if the interview training received as part of the MSC scheme (or within the CFP) did not lead to a job *in oral history* it may have been personally beneficial, and may have fostered skills that were instrumental in obtaining other types of work. This is a common end result for humanities training and education, in that it may not be directly related to an identifiable section of the labour market, but it can lead on to other things, since students can:

> take the knowledge and the intellectual training they are given into practical activities: media, business, journalism, the civil service, politics, publishing. The link between the training given and how it is used is much less transparent than with vocational subjects … but there is, demonstrably, a product (Small, 2013, p. 66).

In addition, the inclusion of digital training at CFP has a benefit beyond simply providing a dissemination platform for the Project. In a scenario where augmenting job skills are seen as an important aspect of the work placement at CFP, the training associated with building Stories of Place has the potential to foster job skills. This is because it provides basic digital training in using a Content Management System (Omeka), learning basic concepts about metadata when uploading files and using some very simple HTML (when creating an entry in Neatline). I taught these skills at workshops in CFP (described in Chapter 5.2.1) and they represent an easily acquired skillset that can be added to any jobseeker's *Curriculum Vitae*.[166] Thus, the digital project has a utility that is not at all apparent to the end user of a website.

[165] As representative examples, the directors of the Oral History Network of Ireland (OHNI), see http://www.oralhistorynetworkireland.ie/about/directors/ (accessed 27the June 2017), include freelance researchers, the Project Co-ordinator at the CFP and people with academic posts where oral history is an aspect of their work, not its entire focus.

[166] The added value of the training was not emphasised at the time when I conducted the training workshops. This is something that I would remedy in any future training programme.

This is a specific instance where an argument for utility is made based on practice, the process of creation. The argument hinges on the fact that those involved in the creation of the digital resource are not professional web masters, and are therefore acquiring new skills and knowledge as they work. Admittedly, the CFP and Stories of Place represents a very particular case study of a digital humanities project. The question therefore remains about how to extrapolate this lesson from practice within the CFP and whether it is possible to apply this experience to other digital humanities projects. In other words, are there other ways to argue that the process of creating a digital resource adds value for the people who work behind the scenes at any digital project? I suspect that this is one reason why crowdsourcing began to gain momentum within digital humanities (particularly since 2010).[167] Crowdsourcing sites are constructed as outreach projects, with one of the motivations for taking part (i.e. becoming a volunteer who does some of the labour associated with a research project) being the acquisition of new skill-sets. Many of those who do the bulk of crowdsourcing work recognise it as a "learning experience" (Terras, 2016, p. 427). This makes a crowdsourcing site a place where it becomes easier to demonstrate benefit, value, and usefulness (for an audience of contributors, and therefore insiders), in contrast to a more top-down scholarly publishing project.

That the *process* of working has an epistemological value is a recognised theme within the literature of the digital humanities, since work in digital humanities is generally acknowledged as being a "process of creation [that] yields insights that are difficult to acquire otherwise" (Ramsay, 2013, p. 244). In essence, digital humanists suggest that building digital projects is a practice and that there "is real knowledge in the making and that that knowledge can be acquired by anyone genuinely interested" (Rockwell, 2013, p. 243). The work of creating a digital humanities project is therefore a valuable process, although this is not generally acknowledged as an element of value in digital humanities value and impact studies.

7.8 Fulfilment (contribution to well-being and happiness)

The argument that the humanities contribute towards happiness is part of a "reaction against a reductive economic and political conception of the human good" (Small, 2013, p.

[167] Although there is no published timeline that outlines the history of cultural heritage crowdsourcing, Terras (2016, p. 424) notes that it was first introduced in 2008, and began to "gather speed" in 2010.

89). To argue that the humanities contribute to "happiness" is a big task since happiness is an intangible idea, difficult to define, and in most cases subjective. I use a relatively simple definition by experts in psychological happiness, who "refer to 'happiness' as 'subjective well-being' in scientific parlance, because it is about how people evaluate their lives and what is important to them" (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008, p. 4). There is also a general consensus within psychological literature "that happiness and meaning in life are both core components of a good life and often overlap considerably" (Abe, 2016, p. 498).[168]

This understanding of happiness and well-being may relate to the recognised therapeutic effects of the oral history method, particularly in relation to reminiscence work with the elderly. The beneficial outcomes of the method are mentioned in both oral history literature (for example, Bornat, 1998) and in nursing and medical literature (for example, Taft et al., 2004). It is considered a method that allows a narrator to craft experiences and wisdom into "a heritage to hand down to one's family and communal heirs. There are great therapeutic benefits or enhancement-of-life benefits to the narrators doing an oral history" (Baum, 1981, p. 49). Other researchers have noted that participants often appear to enjoy the experience of being interviewed for the purposes of recording oral history, and that "the process may validate their experiences" (Ligon, Welleford, Cotter, & Lam, 2012, p. 149). This is a discussion that suggests that the oral history method contributes to an individual's well-being and therefore fits in with the psychological definition of happiness, in that it is a process wherein people tend to evaluate their lives, and usually in a positive way.

The CFP facilitates these kinds of therapeutic practices because the organisation invites narrators to contribute to the oral history archive and therefore recognises and acknowledges that narrators have an important contribution to make to a collective memory bank. This acknowledgement is another way of validating experiences and memories. Stories of Place, as a website, is a public acknowledgement of this and may therefore extend the feelings of validation and contribute to well-being. (There is a validation of life experiences, adding a sense that the contributor has something to say that merits being included in an archive and on a website.) However, I feel that these arguments that a digital oral history map can make a contribution to fulfilment are tenuous at best, and may be stretching the point too far. In fact, Small's discussion of the contribution that the humanities can make to happiness is related specifically to John Stuart Mill's refinement of the utilitarian position on

[168] According to Abe (2016, p.498) there is widespread agreement on the idea that happiness and meaning in life are components of a good life in the literature on psychological happiness, but disagreement on how these two components are interrelated and on how to differentiate one from the other.

literature (despite being a utilitarian, Mill felt that literature had saved him during a mental crisis), and Small indicates that the happiness criterion is specific to literature.[169] While I am dubious about the claim that only literature can contribute to well-being, it is, admittedly, difficult to argue that a digital oral history map can contribute to happiness. I have mentioned here only a very superficial consideration of how my project may have the effect of validation that may contribute to a sense of well-being, but these are minor add-ons; the main therapeutic benefit and contribution to well-being comes from the oral history method itself. For other digital humanities projects, ones not associated with a recognised therapeutic process such as oral history, it will be even more difficult to argue that the project contributes to happiness.

The difficulty that I have in using the fulfilment/happiness criterion to argue for value demonstrates that the appropriateness of each one of the arguments for value will depend on the project that is being assessed. Depending on the nature of the project, some arguments will be weaker and more problematic than others. This emphasises the importance of using and exploring *all* of the arguments so that a pluralistic account of value can be arrived at.

7.9 For its own sake

Another way to argue for the value of the humanities is to recognise them as being good in themselves, having intrinsic worth, that is, they have value "for their own sakes," irrespective of the fact that this type of value can only be understood and appreciated in a subjective way. Small suggests:

> [i]f one admits … alongside knowledge for its own sake, pleasure, work, interest, affect – all 'for their own sakes' – one has a range of modes of engagement with the objects of study that have, like those objects themselves, a legitimate claim to value as an end (2013, p. 173).

All of the preceding arguments about value have been based on the *effect* of the humanities. For Small, the "for its own sake" argument is about *content*, an argument that the materials that we study are worthy in themselves, and this is why we preserve, curate, archive and study them:

> [i]f advocacy for "the humanities" can say nothing about their content – the things they study or curate, the practices they cultivate, the knowledge they

[169] Although Small also allows other writing that engages the imagination, including historical and philosophical writing, to be included in the list of humanities work that can contribute to happiness (Small, 2013, pp.89–90).

> own, the interpretations they make and continually remake – then it is in danger of asserting consequential importance at the expense of any account of the humanities as good in themselves (Small, 2013, p. 152).

The idea of the humanities having a value for their own sakes is closely allied to the argument that they have a contribution to make to individual happiness (section 7.8 above). This is because Small's "for its own sake" argument incorporates pleasure, interest and affect. Discussing happiness very broadly, the psychological literature notes that the universals, (i.e. the cross-cultural aspects) of happiness include the fact that "[i]n all cultures, people can find pleasure in activities that capture their interest" (Diener & Biswas-Diener, 2008, p. 143). In other words, we understand that one of the ways to contribute to individual happiness is by doing enjoyable and/or enriching things (things that we do for pleasure and out of interest). My qualitative research work includes occasions when the staff from the CFP expressed their interest in and enjoyment of the material from oral history interviews that was included in the digital oral history maps, as in the two examples below:

> **TW** Well I think that all those interviews were quite brilliant […]
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Tara Arpaia Walsh 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

> **LMOS** I transcribed it and it was brilliant. It's a great interview actually!
>
> (LVWC_SR001_170216_CFPStaff: Louise Madden O'Shea 17 February 2016 at Cork Folklore Project)

In addition, I can also say that I have found my work with the CFP enjoyable because the material that I was working with was interesting. These are three expressions of appreciation for the *content* in the CFP archive. They therefore add to the argument that the CFP archive is worth it "for its own sake" because its content is interesting. The digital oral history maps by extension, since they present content from that archive, could also perhaps be said to be worth it for their own sakes. However, as with the argument about fulfilment and happiness, I feel that this may be stretching the point too far. The fact that I have difficulty creating an argument for valuing digital oral history maps using criteria such as fulfilment and intrinsic worth ("for its own sake") demonstrates that not all criteria are ideally suited to every digital humanities projects. This is a point that that I will return to in section 7.11, below, when emphasising the importance of considering all the arguments collectively when arguing for value.

7.10 Contribution to public engagement

There is one final argument for value not mentioned by Small but which I feel is relevant to the discussion of the value of digital humanities projects, and that is the contribution that projects can make to public engagement (research whose outputs extend beyond the academy to a wider, more general audience). As an academic who works in a literature department and who is primarily defending higher education, Small does not consider public engagement in her considerations of value. Yet public engagement has emerged as an important aspect of digital humanities discourse, to the extent that it is seen as one of the objectives of the discipline. The idea is to use digital technologies to create accessible resources that allow researchers to "reach larger audiences than the few who read academic journals, meet their responsibilities to be 'public servants,' participate in public exchanges, and become more visible" (Spiro, 2012). Public engagement is therefore articulated as a key element of what makes a digital humanities project *valuable*.

For example, two digital humanities projects that have such a public engagement remit include HyperCities and Transcribe Bentham.[170] These two projects are not simply academic endeavours, they are also committed to extending their work beyond the confines of the university. Presner describes HyperCities as a Web 2.0 project, where users can "navigate through and collaborate on the construction of the urban, cultural, and social history of any city in the world" by overlaying a digital map or satellite image of a city with geo-temporal information, creating a "participatory, open-ended learning environment grounded in space and time, place and history, memory and social interaction, oral history and digital media" (Presner, 2010b, p. 172). This work is framed by the idea of participatory research, which is understood by the HyperCities creators to mean that it involves engagement with people and communities who are not traditionally involved in university research work.

> By conceiving of scholarship in ways that foundationally involve community partners, cultural institutions, the private sector, non-profits, government agencies, and ever-broader slices of the general public, digital humanities expands both the notion of scholarship and the public sphere in order to create new sites and nodes of engagement, documentation, and collaboration. With such an expanded definition of scholarship, digital humanists are able to place questions of social justice and civic engagement, for example, front and center; they are able to revitalize the cultural record in ways that involve citizens in the

[170] Hypercities is found at http://www.hypercities.com/, accessed 22 August 2017. Transcribe Bentham is found at http://blogs.ucl.ac.uk/transcribe-bentham/, accessed 22 August 2017.

> academic enterprise and bring the academy into the expanded public sphere (Presner, Shepard, & Kawano, 2014, p. 143).

While the language used here may be idealistic, it nevertheless makes it clear that the participatory and the public outreach remit of HyperCities is an important aspect of the work for its creators.

Likewise, the researchers working on a very different kind of digital humanities project, Transcribe Bentham, also see a great deal of the value of their work emerging from their efforts at public engagement. Transcribe Bentham is a project that aims to transcribe the entire archive of writings by the utilitarian philosopher, Jeremy Bentham, so that the texts can be used to produce a complete scholarly edition of his work. This project is now being compiled using crowdsourced labour, where online volunteers transcribe digitised images from the manuscript archive that can be viewed through the Transcribe Bentham website. Researchers from Transcribe Bentham have estimated the financial worth of voluntary transcription by calculating the amount of money that the same labour would have cost if it had been professionally transcribed. However, above and beyond the benefits of saving money, the researchers note that there are other ways that the project has been valuable, since merely outlining savings does not "take into account the incalculable public engagement value of Transcribe Bentham, and the creation of a hugely important searchable digital archive of Bentham's manuscripts" (Causer & Terras, 2014, p. 85). While it was possible to put a price on the labour, for the researchers, the public engagement value of their project was beyond calculation.

Both of these digital humanities projects discuss engagement beyond the university as a public good, and do so in a relatively uncritical way. There is no evaluation of whether or not the commitment to public engagement makes the projects worthwhile; it is taken as a given. These are good examples of emerging views within digital humanities where ideas about the audience for digital humanities resources are beginning to extend beyond the university (despite a focus that, until recently, has been primarily academic, see Tanner, 2012, p.21).[171] Public engagement in both HyperCities and Transcribe Bentham is also participatory, in that both projects encourage members of the public to contribute to the research projects.[172] Because this kind of outreach is understood as a good, the use of a digital project for the purposes of public engagement can be understood as a way to argue

[171] There is a discussion of the academic focus in digital humanities value and impact studies in Chapter 2.5.2.

[172] Flinn and Sexton (2013, pp. 2–3) describe various different ways to frame the idea of participatory research. I use a very general framing here, where members of the public and non-experts are asked to contribute and/or participate in the research project.

for the value of the project. In the paragraphs below I outline how the oral history method and the work of the CFP can be understood as participatory research, and how digital oral history maps are being used by the CFP as a tool for public engagement, a use that adds to the value of the projects.

The oral history method can collect contributions from a wide variety of different people who can add to our understanding of the past (and the present) by putting their accounts of lived experience "on the record." The idea that narrators become the experts in an oral history of their own lives is at the heart of oral history practice, where the voices of ordinary people are incorporated into the historical record.

> Oral history was intended to give a voice to the voiceless, a narrative to the story-less and power to the marginalised ... these aims are still present in much oral history work at both the academic and the grass-roots level (Abrams, 2010, p. 154).

This kind of "bottom up" approach to enquiry characterises the participatory research method, where community members usually define the priorities and the perspectives of the work to be carried out (Cornwall & Jewkes, 1995, p. 1667). Oral history and folklore archives like the CFP have always sought contributions from non-expert narrators, but the extent to which the research aims are defined by the community is less clear. Desplanques has characterised early practices within the CFP as being about "sharing" rather than about top-down, hegemonic teaching and learning relationships (Desplanques, 2015, p. 30). This commitment to an egalitarian working ethos, as well as the fact that the CFP is staffed by community members (who often make their own decisions about who to interview, therefore deciding the direction of their research) means that the work of the Project fits within the continuum of participatory research. The digital oral history maps that I have worked on with the CFP present material that emerges from this practice. Stories of Place is also a project that was conceived of as a site that would be worked on and stewarded by a group of different people working at CFP, that it would be a work of collaborative co-creation and, in that limited sense, participatory (Chapter 5 describes some of the difficulties achieving this aim). However, these are not participatory projects in the way that HyperCities and Transcribe Bentham are, since there is no facility for online users to contribute/participate by uploading their own content.[173] I would describe the digital oral history maps as public engagement projects, rather than participatory research. They are

[173] The necessity of moderating uploaded content, contributed by unknown users, means that such a participatory project would be beyond the scope of the CFP's resources.

public engagement tools in that they publish and give a flavour of some of the materials in the CFP's archive, helping others to appreciate the kind of material that is held in the archive (and perhaps even encouraging people to contribute), while at the same time increasing the visibility of the CFP.

For example, Mac Conmara suggests that having a memory map such as Stories of Place creates a positive image of the CFP:

> **TMac** And to be honest with us it's a big, you know, plus for us. So, there's a credit to us. And […] when we present it […] it looks good on the Cork Folklore Project to have this memory map.
>
> (LVWC_SR009_240117_MacConmara: Tomás Mac Conmara 24 January 2017 at Cork Folklore Project)

The primary benefit that an organisation gains from having a digital project is the increased visibility that creating a web project brings (facilitating publicity and audience expansion). A website or digital project is something that can be promoted at different events, such as conferences, or amongst peers in internal university settings. For example, Stories of Place was promoted at the Oral History Network of Ireland conference and this increased the visibility of the CFP amongst a community of academic peers and oral history practitioners.[174] A digital project can bring increased visibility and can help to communicate a flavour of the organisation's work to outsiders, creating a sense that an archive or a cultural heritage organisation is valuable, and worthy of funding. This potential economic benefit can make digital projects useful for the organisation. Outlining what creators can "get" out of building a digital project may seem self-serving, but "usefulness is not to be sneered at" (Small, 2013, p. 174).[175] These benefits should not be dismissed simply because they accrue to the organisation rather than to the general public, since these are often benefits that the organisation will use as a means to promote and support its ongoing activities.

[174] Furey, J., Murphy, L., & Johnston, P. (2016, October). Stories of Place: a new memory map of Cork city. Presented at the Oral History Network of Ireland conference: People and Place, oral history in Ireland, University College Cork. See the Oral History Network of Ireland conference website at http://www.oralhistorynetworkireland.ie/2016-conference/2016-conference-programme/, accessed 30 November 2016. Slides are presented at my website http://pennyjohnston.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/OHNI-Memory-Map-Project-Showcase_Group.pdf, accessed 30 November 2016.

[175] These arguments about the value of public engagement of the digital project are closely allied to arguments about the usefulness of the digital humanities project for the host organisation (see section 7.7 above).

7.11 Modelling qualitative value

In the discussion above I have argued for the value of oral history work in general, and for the value of the work of the CFP and my work on digital oral history maps in particular. I have argued that the consideration of value should take the perspective of the people working behind the scenes into account, as well as the end users, and that the *process*, or making, should be considered an important part of the value of a project. I have drawn on Small's work in *The Value of the Humanities* and the criteria she uses to argue for value throughout, but at the end I have also added my own criterion for value to suggest that the contribution of the work to public engagement and/or participatory research should also be included.

To model this approach so that it can be applied to other digital humanities projects beyond the CFP, I have listed a set of prompts to consider when constructing qualitative arguments for value of digital project work:

- Detail the **distinctive** features of the project. This could be distinctiveness of content (disseminating distinctive humanities material online, as is the case with my work with the CFP) or distinctiveness of method, applying new techniques of analysis to texts (for a recent example, see Pearl, Lu, & Haghighi, 2016).
- Outline how this work will **challenge** ideas and make people think (act as a gadfly). Most humanistic inquiry will involve critical thinking, but how does doing the work *digitally* offer a challenge? In the case of the CFP's Memory Map, we want to challenge perceptions about who and what make up the community in Cork city by building a multi-layered map, a feat that can only be achieved digitally.
- Summarise how the work can be **useful** to others, starting with the end user. For example, is this a resource that other researchers or community groups can use for their work?
- Switch the focus to insiders and examine how the work is **useful** to members of the team involved in building it or creating content. Does the work augment the skills-base of those working on the project? Does the work/practice of creation involve learning and discovery?
- Make arguments about how doing or participating in the work can be **fulfilling** for people working on the project and the content contributors. (It is likely that this argument is most relevant to public engagement projects where there is a participatory element to the work and if the work builds human connections, since

connections to other people are important aspects of the way that happiness and fulfilment are understood. It will be more difficult to argue that research projects without a participatory component contribute to a sense of fulfilment or well-being.)

- Argue that the work is worth carrying out "**for its own sake**" because the content brings pleasure and is interesting. This ties in with the argument for fulfilment, since pleasurable, interesting work has the potential to make an individual feel happy.
- And finally, talk about how the work contributes to **public engagement**, and emphasise any elements of **participatory research** in the project. Is it a project that involves community mobilisation? Is it, for example, a dissemination project that a local cultural heritage group can use to publicise its work?

The arguments that I have outlined for value in sections 7.5–7.10 are specific, and relate to my case study (and often rely not only on the value gained from the digital humanities project, but also on the specific methodologies, such as oral history, that are used to gather the content for the digital project). These arguments are very varied and in some instances it may be difficult to construct robust arguments using some of the criteria outlined here (in my specific case, for example, I found it difficult to construct well-founded arguments using the criteria of fulfilment and "for its own sake", see sections 7.8 and 7.9 respectively). The appropriateness of each criterion will vary depending on the nature of the project that is being assessed. This underlines the importance of combining *all* of the criteria to argue for value. Each one of the arguments is limited on its own, each one has pitfalls and potential problems as well as good points. It is in the combination of these arguments that a pluralistic account of the value of a digital humanities project can be made. It is in their combination that these different criteria can be used to argue that a digital humanities project is *valuable*.

It is notable that none of these arguments is based on criteria such as the quality of the interface design. This means that, using these arguments, it is possible to argue that a digital humanities project is valuable even if it does not look like "the best, brightest, shiniest DH project that gets featured in the *New York Times*" (Posner, 2016a). While value and impact studies in the digital humanities may have emphasised the importance of measuring use in the past, there is increasingly a recognition of the value of *quieter* projects. This is the implication of Miriam Posner's warning to digital humanities practitioners to "beware the flash." By this, she means that it is necessary to carefully consider the aims of the work:

> this is a question about what you want. Do you want a small set of superstar faculty with awesome projects? Or do you want a community of people who learn together, support each other, and trust each other? My preference is for the latter, even though it is not as shiny (Posner, 2016a).

In many cases there may never be a realistic choice between "awesome projects" and community-building, in particular if the work is being carried out with a relatively limited budget. The important point that I take from Posner's discussion is her emphasis on digital humanities work as an opportunity for learning and for community-building, and her explicit statement that she considers this preferable to the shiny end product. This implies that the value of a digital humanities project extends beyond mere use and mere appearance, that it can lie in the human relationships that are forged (online and offline) around the digital projects.

7.12 Summary of Chapter 7

In this chapter I have outlined a model for describing the value of digital cultural heritage projects based on criteria outlined in Helen Small's book, *The Value of the Humanities*. These criteria include distinctiveness, the ability to challenge expectations, usefulness, the ability to contribute to a sense of fulfilment and the value that comes from doing something for its own sake. To this I have added my own criterion of value derived from the contribution to public engagement. All of these criteria need to be looked at in combination to provide a qualitative account of value.

My argument throughout has been that it is not a given that value should only be viewed from the perspective of the consumer. Small's summary of her arguments for the value of the humanities ties all the strands together with a discussion of commensuration and comparisons of values that suggests that humanities scholarship cannot be compared to economic or commercial activities because it is not an "ends driven activity" (Small 2013, p. 180), implying that much of the point of the work is the process, and not necessarily the end product.

This argument has been constructed as a counterpoint to an instrumental view of value that is prevalent within digital humanities.[176] But although there has been a tendency to rely heavily on quantitative methods in the past, there is a growing consensus in digital humanities that studies of impact and value should also incorporate qualitative methods.

[176] The instrumental origins of value and impact studies in digital humanities may be related to the close links between digital humanities and information science (see Clement, 2015, para. 2).

However, there is no consensus about how this should be achieved, and there is some evidence to suggest that many scholars involved in digital humanities are not necessarily comfortable with qualitative methods of analysis (see Chapter 2.5.2 and see also Clement, 2016b). In this chapter I have discussed what we mean by the value of a project, outlining some philosophical discussions of the concept of value. I have also discussed the question of who benefits, arguing that it is important to identify the perspective from which we make arguments for value. I then outlined different criteria for value and applied these to everyday practice and to digital humanities work within the CFP. This was followed by a series of prompts for those working on other digital projects who wish to use a similar set of criteria to argue for the value of their work. I consider this a starting point for future discussions about modelling value in the digital humanities, and in the humanities in general.

One of the key perspectives that I have adopted in this work is to indicate that value and impact is not always in the *use* of the digital resource, but that the *processes of creating* the resource (and other processes involved in the work) are equally important in terms of value.[177] The CFP digital projects are an interesting example of participatory research where members of the public (and not just academics) are active contributors to the project, both as narrators in the oral histories and as CFP staff who become the stewards of the digital project and who operate as content creators. I have suggested that these are "behind the scenes" workers (or insiders), who can also benefit from working on or with digital projects. Switching the focus from the end user to the insiders has allowed me to foster a new perspective on arguments for value, one that is markedly different to the cultural statistics approach. It emphasises both the importance of practice, of doing and making, and argues that value comes from engaging in a transformative practice, rather than from a high number of clicks and hits. This illustrates one of Small's points about the value of humanistic approaches; that humanities scholars "have a particular gadfly role to play as a corrective to the dominance of quantitative modes of reasoning" (Small, 2013, p. 140).

[177] If value accrues through new learning and developing new skill-sets, then it follows that it is not possible to use this criterion to argue for the value of a professionally designed and built website, because the process of building and creation has not augmented a skill-set.

8 Conclusion

8.1 Introduction to Chapter 8

In the years leading up to 2013 Helen Small set herself an "attractively difficult" task (2013, p. 2), to argue for the value of the humanities. Although Small tends to limit herself to humanities within higher education, the topic of value also has wider relevance for work that is carried out both inside and outside the academy.[178] In this research I have addressed ideas of value within the growing discipline of digital humanities, drawing on insights from oral history and practice, all at a time when both disciplines are becoming more nuanced in their understanding of value and digital dissemination.

There is some diversity in the digital humanities literature when it comes to discussing qualitative methods of assessing value but most researchers emphasise relatively short-term investigations, such as one-off interviews or workshops. In contrast, in my work I have adopted a long-form immersive approach to examining the value of digital projects *in context*, within the organisation in which they are created. This ethnographically inflected study is characterised by the specificity of the place and the organisation where I carried out my work, and by the particular nature of the material (oral histories) that I was working with (see Chapter 2). At the same time, this narrative account of my work intertwines specific details of my practice with commentary and analysis that address broader issues in digital humanities and oral history.

The thesis begins with a contextual chapter outlining the issues that have framed the research, including the disciplinary background to the research (Chapter 2.2), a detailed outline of the "place" of the case study, the CFP (Chapter 2.4) and an analysis and critique of the current approaches in value and impact studies (Chapter 2.5.1 and 2.5.2). The subsequent chapter includes a discussion of a legacy dissemination project and its attendant technological issues. These caused site malfunctions and malicious spamming activity that corrupted automatically generated usage data and the insights that emerged from dealing with these issues (Chapter 3). The following two chapters include an in-depth account of the stages involved in building a replacement digital project, including user studies sessions that were carried out (Chapter 4), and a detailed outline and analysis of approaches to training

[178] In some sections of her book Small even limits herself solely to commenting on literature, rather than on the humanities as a whole, see Chapter 7.8.

and documentation that were part of an effort to foster long-term stewardship and ownership of the new website (Chapter 5). Using these accounts of practice, I then go on to discuss wider aspects of disciplinary discourse, including ideas about ethics, representation and dissemination in digital projects (Chapter 6), before culminating in a discussion of *value*, and how this can be argued for in a qualitative manner (Chapter 7).

The aim of this research has been to work from the specific to the more general, to bring some insights from my localised practice with an oral history archive and to apply these to the important discussion of value within the digital humanities. In the chapter that follows I revisit the aims, arguments and outcomes of my research building digital projects with the CFP. I discuss, in summary form, the main themes and the key findings of my work. I position this work as a contribution to new knowledge primarily within digital humanities, where the contribution is discursive and methodological. (The discursive contributions include discussions of ethics, representation and qualitative arguments for value, and the methodological contribution includes the use of a long-form ethnographic methodology, an approach that is extremely rare in digital humanities.) In this chapter I also outline the practical contributions that my research has made, the most notable of which are the new digital oral history maps that were built as part of my research work and which will be of interest for those involved in oral history and local studies. And finally, in this chapter I also consider some of the implications of the research and potential future directions of study.

8.2 Research aims and outcomes

The research aims in this study were three-fold. My first aim was to use the specificity of digital humanities work within a small community heritage organisation as a case study (and to gather empirical data as I did so). The second aim was to use the empirical data gathered during the case study to explore theoretical and ethical issues and to contribute to disciplinary discourse. The third and final aim was to use data gathered to present a qualitative account of value and, with this as a foundation, to suggest a model for arguing for the value of digital humanities projects in general.

8.2.1 Digital humanities work within a small cultural heritage organisation

The contextual information in Chapter 2.4 details the work of the CFP, a small, community oral history archive. This is atypical in many respects (see Chapter 7.5 where I

discuss the distinctiveness of the organisation), but it is nonetheless a reasonably representative example of a small local cultural heritage organisation, in that its members are usually enthusiastic about tackling new projects, yet its activities are curtailed by the limits of its resources. Many digital humanities projects are carried out in such small-scale environments and Omeka, the software platform that I used for my digital humanities work, was specifically built for such "boutique" projects. Even small organisations like the CFP are now coming under pressure to have a digital presence (see Chapter 2.4.3 and Chapter 5.1). Within digital humanities, the desire to encourage and support the development of digital projects may sometimes understate or gloss over the *necessity* for expertise, which became a recurring theme of my research.[179] Such expertise is often simply not available in small organisations like the CFP.

Although technical problems hampered some of the work documented in this thesis (in particular in Chapter 3), this study also shows that human and organisational factors can also be barriers to the creation of a successful digital projects (see Chapter 5). Ongoing communication, facilitation and effort, as well as technical expertise, are required in order to create a successful, sustainable digital project.

In my work with the CFP it became necessary to plan and work around the requirements for technical expertise as much as possible, while also trying to establish and promote a sustainable digital environment, where non-specialists could work and create a new version of the Cork Memory Map. This commitment to encouraging the work of non-specialists means that many of the experiences detailed in this thesis (particularly in Chapters 3 and 5) could be relevant to any small cultural heritage organisation that wishes to publish its material online. Some of the outcomes of this research are very practical and, although the examples presented here are tailored specifically to suit the working practices of the CFP, these could be easily adapted for use by other similar cultural heritage organisations. These practical outcomes, which are outlined in the "Practical outputs" section, Chapter 8.3.3 below, are likely applicable to a community of practitioners that extends far beyond the CFP.

[179] It is even preferable that there is some level of technical expertise when installing tools such as Omeka (as discussed in Chapter 4.3.1), but once installation is complete, expertise if not usually necessary for use and the creation of new digital projects.

8.2.2 Contributing to disciplinary discussions about ethics

In Chapter 6 I discussed the specificity of work in digital oral history and how this has the potential to contribute to a broader and emerging discourse in digital humanities, with particular relevance to discussions of ethics, digital representation and the treatment of living subjects. Oral history's commitment to duty of care towards living subjects has often led to a curated, gatekeeper approach to disseminating oral histories. This contrasts with an approach in digital humanities that emphasises the accessibility and openness of digital media (influenced by the open source and open access movements). However, the gatekeeper approach adopted in oral history is generally not guided by a desire to keep the material closed away from rival researchers and the general public, rather it is about maintaining a reflective approach to the material, one that takes the interests and potential future worries of the narrators into account, even aside from the informed consent agreement that has been signed. It is about an ethics conversation (in oral history and, perhaps, now also in digital humanities) that is an ongoing dialogue with narrators and collaborators, one that should be constantly under review. In Chapter 6 I have explored how the disciplinary specificities of oral history can contribute nuance to discussions of ethics within digital humanities practice (see 8.3.1 below).

8.2.3 A qualitative approach to value

My research began during a period of fiscal austerity (see Chapter 2.1). Severe funding cuts are the context for emerging discussions of value and impact within digital humanities, and within the arts and humanities in general. These discussions have been ongoing and have developed as I was carrying out my research; "value" is a topical concern for those working within humanities disciplines.

In digital humanities, scholars have emphasised the idea that digital projects should have impact and value, a *realpolitick* response to cut-backs in the wake of the global economic downturn. However, my research has indicated that there has been a failure to comprehensively develop and integrate long-form qualitative methods into digital humanities approaches to assessing impact and value (Chapter 2.5.2 and Chapter 7.2). Because of this, the current qualitative toolkits available to researchers who wish to argue for value in this context are inadequate. Out of necessity, therefore, this research has not simply used an appropriated and established methodology to argue for value in digital humanities projects, it has used and added to an entirely different and profoundly

humanistic approach, based on criteria outlined by Helen Small in *The Value of the Humanities*. This is a contrast to the "mapped-out" approaches that are currently available to digital humanists who wish to assess or argue for the "value" of digital projects, including examples such as TIDSR, the Toolkit for the Impact of Digital Scholarly Resources, and the Balanced Value Impact Model (Tanner, 2012).[180] It is an approach that is based on insider knowledge and time-depth, an approach that allows insights to emerge from everyday practice. This work has allowed me to develop a series of prompts, or questions, that people can use to think about how to argue for the value of their digital projects (see the section on "Practical outputs," Chapter 8.3.3 below).

8.3 Research contributions

This research has contributed to the fields of digital humanities and oral history in a number of different ways, including discursive and methodological contributions (outlined in this chapter, sections 8.3.1 and 8.3.2 respectively), as well as practical outputs designed to offer solutions to some of the types of problems that emerged during my work, and which may be useful and re-applicable in other contexts (see below, section 8.3.3).

8.3.1 Contribution to broader disciplinary discussions

The discursive contributions to theoretical and disciplinary discourse within digital humanities include discussions of ethics and representation as well as qualitative arguments for the value of digital projects. In Chapter 6 I outlined discussions in oral history about the ethics of dissemination, a topic particularly germane to digital oral history and digital humanities. Approaches to online dissemination differ according to disciplinary traditions. Fields such as oral history and anthropology have been influenced by ideas of duty-of-care towards their "living subjects." As a result, practitioners often act as gatekeepers to their material, an approach that tends to mimic that of a traditional archive. In contrast, digital humanities has been influenced by the (technologically-driven) open access movement, and therefore tends to emphasise accessibility and un-mediated access to research materials. However, I suggest that as digital humanities is changing and maturing into a more globalised field it is becoming more aware of other points of view and is adapting to these. My position

[180] The TIDSR website is found at http://microsites.oii.ox.ac.uk/tidsr/, accessed 28 August 2017.

is that adopting an ongoing reflective approach to practice is a prerequisite for ethical dissemination.

Another contribution to disciplinary discourse is presented in Chapter 7, where I discuss approaches to value in digital humanities. These have primarily been preoccupied with the idea of *measuring* value, usually by quantitative means, but with an increasing acknowledgement of the contribution of qualitative work (see Chapter 2.5.2). However, this focus on measurement never fundamentally questions the idea of what value might be, and whether it is even possible to measure it. It is also an approach that inherently understands value as something that can be interpreted through the actions of the end user/consumer. In contrast, I argue that value also accrues through *making*, that is, that value can also be sought in the process of creation. Using and adding to Helen Small's criteria for arguing for the value of the humanities, I have constructed an account of value based on qualitative reasoning and devised a new model for outlining value, one that is based on the perspective of both the end user and the "behind the scenes" insider. The approach combines six different ways of looking at how digital cultural heritage projects can have value. These are: distinctiveness; the ability to challenge expectations, usefulness, contribution to fulfilment (happiness or well-being), the "for its own sake" argument (doing something for the pleasure or knowledge it brings) and the contribution that a project can make to public engagement.

8.3.2 Methodological contribution

The methodological contribution is based on the approach that I have taken during this work, where I used the technique of participant observation, recording and analysing my experiences and observations as I worked on digital humanities projects with the CFP. This is not a traditional ethnography, but this thesis has been written as a narrative account of my work, presenting the details of what was done and why, showcasing the successes and analysing the failures. My account of practice laid the foundations for discussions of the difficulties of trying to construct digital cultural heritage projects collaboratively, ethically, and taking theoretical and disciplinary perspectives into account. This is a methodological contribution to the discipline of digital humanities. Long-form ethnographic approaches are rare in digital humanities. The only example that I am aware of is a three-year long ethnographic study of digital humanities work by Smiljana Antonijević that has been recently published as *Amongst Digital Humanists* (2016). This is an ethnography that was carried out at 23 different research and educational institutions in the USA and Europe, and involved

interviewing and observing 258 different participants (Antonijević, 2016, p.38). It clearly is much broader in scope (and more like a traditional ethnography) than my work. Antonijević situates her study within digital humanities but in fact many respondents appear to be humanists who use digital tools such as citation managers, rather than digital humanists who use technology as part of their research process and work. The focus of the work, therefore, is not about the practice of digital humanities, it is about the practice of humanities scholarship in general, and how digital tools are used by researchers. My work, in contrast, is about the practice of creating digital humanities projects, and the work includes, but goes beyond, the academy, to incorporate work within a community setting. As a work of participant observation where I was the worker and the observer, the scope of my work is obviously also much narrower than the scope of Antonijević's study, but it is more immersive.

The advantages of my methodological approach have been that it allowed me to document many of the problems encountered when working with digital projects. I have emphasised throughout this work that it is not unusual to encounter these difficulties when working with digital technologies. The book, *Oral History and Digital Humanities* (Boyd & Larson, 2014b) includes multiple accounts by digital oral historians where they recount their failures, and use these to point to the future. Most of the contributors, who have worked on well-known and innovative oral history websites, talk about the problems of technical obsolescence and changing IT managerial strategies. These had an impact upon their websites and how they existed in the virtual/digital world in the long-term. For example, Gluck (2014, p. 46) describes an extreme technological failure, the "catastrophic crash" of the first iteration of the Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive, while Boyd discusses a digital project that stalled once he (the main instigator of the project) left to work elsewhere; his project was "digitally abandoned, opened up to online hackers and eventually taken down" (Boyd, 2014, p. 90).

Many oral historians now feel that exposing such fault lines is useful because it operates as a learning opportunity:

> [w]hat is most wonderful about the early work on Digital Oral History is the drive to move forward despite the limits of the early media technologies and the delight in *reporting mistakes as learning moments* (Rehberger, 2014, p. 190, my emphasis).

The digital humanist John Unsworth declared in 1997 that "[i]f an electronic scholarly project can't fail and doesn't produce new ignorance, then it isn't worth a damn" (Unsworth, 1997).

In general, digital humanists tend to understand "failure" as an important part of the digital scholarly process. However, in contrast to the approach adopted in *Oral History and Digital Humanities*, I have found that discussions of failure in digital humanities are often in the abstract; warts-and-all accounts of failures are relatively few and far between.[181] This is despite the fact that it is only possible to truly explore the lessons from failure if we engage in concrete rather than abstract explorations of the relevant issues. Referring to digital humanities, Chun and Rhody suggest that:

> we often claim to 'celebrate failures,' but it is unclear to what extent we follow through on that intent ... Consequently, we have riddled our discipline's own archive with silences about our work process, our labor practices, our funding models, our collaborative challenges, and even our critical theory (2014, pp. 15–16).

The general absences of accounts of failures and barriers to progress in digital humanities means that the account presented in this thesis is a relatively unusual contribution to the discipline. I have deliberately exposed and discussed the fault lines in my own work, feeling that it is surely appropriate to reflect on the "behind the scenes" processes, including failures, that influence end results. Descriptions of concrete practice provide a counter-narrative to techno-utopianism, a common facet of digital humanities discourse, which tends to share in the progressive narratives that surround technology (see Flanders, 2009). These descriptions also serve as a starting point for critical reflection, activity that provides new insights because, as McCarty argues, these are opportunities for growth and not true "failures" because the "struggle is the point of it all" (2014, p. 295).

Although this methodological approach is not mechanistic or replicable, the experiences related in this study, reflecting on the creation of digital projects and attempts to generate momentum, have the potential to offer guidance to other practitioners. It is through this examination of the minutiae of decision-making processes, the "nitty-gritty" of everyday practice, that we (necessarily) expose fault-lines and use the knowledge that these bring as an opportunity for learning that will inform future practice.

[181] Dombrowski's (2014) work examining the failings of Project Bamboo is an exception. Project Bamboo is archived at http://www.projectbamboo.org/ (accessed 3 August 2017). Chun & Rhody (2014, p. 14) note that Dombrowski, in discussing failures in digital humanities, "did what few scholars are willing or bold enough to do."

8.3.3 Practical outputs

The practical outputs from my research include:

1. New digital oral history maps, Cork's Main Streets and Stories of Place. Stories of Place is now the main memory map in use by the CFP. Aside from being a public engagement tool, this website also serves as a kind of "taster" so that researchers can get a flavour of the material in the oral history archive (see Chapter 2.4.1), with the aim being that it will operate as a gateway to a research resource, such as an online catalogue, in the future (see Chapter 4.5). This website is a contribution to oral history and local studies because it ensures that excerpts from the CFP archive are accessible online for the general public.

2. A collaboratively produced document that outlines how to create a digital project similar to Stories of Place. "How to create an oral history map using Omeka and Neatline" is reproduced in Appendix IV and disseminated on the Stories of Place website.[182] (The reasons for creating this document are described in Chapter 5.2.1.) The CFP can use this document to rebuild Stories of Place if there are problems with the website in the future. Other organisations may also use it for help with Omeka and Neatline, for instructions on how to create customised entries in Neatline (it includes a sample of HTML code that can be used as a template for each entry), and to build similar projects.

3. A workflow that suggests how to facilitate engagement within an organisation, so that content is generated regularly. This is specific to working practices within the CFP, but it could be adapted for work within other small organisations.

4. A qualitative model for arguing for value for digital humanities projects. Once again, this has been developed specifically for work with the CFP. The value model would benefit from work with comparative projects to ensure that it is robust and suitable for its purpose when arguing for the value of other types

[182] The document can be downloaded at:
http://storiesofplace.org/files/original/2b862bf59160f1216ef2885198a3eec6.pdf, accessed 7 August 2017.

of digital humanities projects (see section 8.5 below, in which I discuss potential future directions for my research).

8.4 Limitations

As with any research, it is necessary to acknowledge the limitations of what has been done to date. The limitations of my work include methodological and temporal factors, as well as limitations of scope and theme.

Methodological and the temporal limitations are intertwined in this research, since the nub of these limitations is that I did not have an adequate amount of time to take on the tasks of both building digital projects and doing a large-scale and in-depth piece of ethnographic research. It is extremely challenging to carry out ethnographic work at the same time as carrying out a piece of goal-orientated practical work. Although I adopted the method of participant observer, there were times when my "observer" status was subsumed by the requirements of my participation (when I pursued almost exclusively technological endeavours). In addition, the temporal constraints also meant that there was limited time for me to follow up on some of the recommendations that I have made as part of this PhD. For example in Chapter 5.5, I suggest a workflow that may help to encourage greater participation in the ongoing work of Stories of Place, but there was no time for me to test this and follow up on these suggestions. These limitations point to some of the potential future directions of my practical work (see below, section 8.5 in this chapter).

An additional and related limitation is the restricted scope of some of the work, in particular the fact that only one organisation was used to develop the model for assessing value presented in Chapter 7.11. I consider this model to be under-developed as it stands, because it is based solely on my work with the CFP. This part of the research would benefit from incorporating perspectives from a variety of different organisations. However, such work would inevitably have had an impact upon the time-scale of the research, and the level of my immersion with the CFP. Identifying this limitation points to potential future directions for this research, and I expand on this below (Chapter 8.5).

As with any research project, there were a number of different themes that I could and did explore during the course of my PhD, explicit discussion of which never made it into the final text of this thesis. Some of these are documented in my research blog, which was updated irregularly during the course of my PhD, and which explores topics not explored in

this thesis such as place, memory, and the use of the Text-Encoding Initiative markup in oral history transcripts.[183] The variety of these topics hint at the inevitable narrowing down of the thematic scope of my research as I began to write this thesis in earnest; limiting the focus was a necessary step, taken in order to present a coherent narrative as opposed to a sprawling, unwieldly text.

8.5 Future directions

In Chapter 5.7 I argued that digital research projects involve ongoing commitment and a cycle of engagement with no "end of the line" in clear sight. In the case of digital humanities this is largely because of the need to constantly maintain and update technologies, but it is also related to the nature of audience and researcher expectations of digital resources. In oral history this ongoing work is largely relational, a constant process of reflection and negotiation, in particular with reference to putting oral histories online (see Chapter 6). Although my PhD research has come to an end, there are many areas where the research and practice could be developed and expanded in the future, suggesting that it too is part of a cycle of engagement. Future directions could include a development of the technical projects, further qualitative research with users and a development of the model for qualitative arguments for value.

For example, further work on technical projects could include expanding and improving the content of Stories of Place, including developing layers of different types of content. This could include thematic layers dealing with, for example, migration, LGBT oral history (see Chapter 7.6), bonfire night, or a layer of place-specific stories about North and South Main Streets (incorporating Cork's Main Streets into Stories of Place).

Stories of Place is part of a broader digital disseminations strategy. The CFP is in the process of making their catalogue metadata available online using Omeka (see Chapter 2.4.1). The ability to link individual entries on Stories of Place to the catalogue details of the full-length interview will transform the map into a valuable research resource for browsers and researchers alike (discussed briefly in Chapter 4.5). The map as it stands provides users with rich and interesting narratives anchored in place, but links to the catalogue would provide a gateway to valuable and full archival contextualisation.

[183] My research blog is available at http://pennyjohnston.org/blog/, accessed 7 September 2017. I named the blog "Forking Paths" as a reflection of the multiple pathways that can emerge from research.

Future work could also include an expansion of the user studies that were carried out as part of this project (see Chapter 4). I am particularly interested in user studies with a select group of narrators whose voices appear on digital oral history maps (for example, a small, coherent group are represented on Cork's Main Streets). Narrators' views and opinions about how their contributions are disseminated would make a valuable addition to the discussion of representation within digital oral history. It would also expand the group of "insiders" who contribute to the behind the scenes decisions that take place when a digital oral history project is being constructed. I feel that this work would be a significant contribution to the ethical conversations about digital representation of oral histories (see Chapter 6), and could contribute to the discussion within both disciplines of oral history and digital humanities. It is an objective that I hope to include within my research work in the future.

Finally, in the discussion of limitations above (Chapter 8.4) I noted that the model for qualitative value is under-developed as it is outlined in this thesis. Expanding the number of case studies (to incorporate comparative work with similar organisations, or with groups that operate on entirely different scales and in different contexts) and testing the model would help to develop a more holistic model for qualitative value that applies to a wide range of different digital projects and the work of different cultural heritage organisations.

8.6 Concluding remarks

This research project has concentrated on work and practice within digital humanities and oral history, the process of conducting the research has been underpinned by the influence of oral history theory, practice and methodology. Oral histories are built around interpersonal experiences. Reflecting about the nature and quality of that experience is an important step that has to be taken in order to assess the kind of record that has been gathered:

> [w]hat we learn from our interviewees is a direct result of the relationships we forge with them–our chemistry and sense of purpose; the moments we share before and after the recorder is turned on and off; the power differential between us and how it evolves; and everything that is relayed or goes unsaid (Sheftel & Zembrzycki, 2013, pp. 4–5).

Likewise, my work and relationships with colleagues at the CFP has informed the way this research project has unfolded. From the start, pre-existing work (the original Cork Memory Map) and the legacy issues that I inherited influenced the early stages of my investigations

(Chapter 3). Subsequently, feedback from my colleagues (often with the recorder turned on) provided the basis for my discussion in Chapter 4, and a mismatch between my sense of purpose and the interests and motivations of CFP staff in relation to work on Stories of Place is the primary topic of Chapter 5. The wider power differential between oral historian and narrator and what happens to recorded interviews after the machine is switched off has influenced the ethical discussions in Chapter 6. And, finally, the specificity of oral history method, practice and material is the basis of many of the arguments for value put forward in Chapter 7.

This research has demonstrated that it is possible for small cultural heritage organisations to participate in small-scale digital humanities projects, but that there are barriers to success and progress. The research has highlighted these barriers, as well as documented and outlined ways to overcome and work around them in order to complete a digital project. This research has also highlighted issues of ethical tensions, with different approaches to representation, dissemination and informed consent taken in digital humanities and in oral history. I suggest in Chapter 6 that this is an area of future discussions within both disciplines, but that the "ethics conversation" is relational, and therefore part of an ongoing process.

Finally, this work contributes to the discussion of value within digital humanities by taking a qualitative approach, typical of work in oral history, and applying it to the topic of value in digital humanities (Chapter 7). By bringing qualitative reasoning to the fore in a discipline that has primarily focused on quantitative research I hope that this work has made a new and *valuable* contribution to qualitative digital humanities studies.

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Appendices

- Appendix I: Oral history sites powered by Omeka
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- Appendix III: Prompt sheet used for Cork's Main Streets focus group
- Appendix IV: How to create an online oral history map using Omeka and Neatline
- Appendix V: Dissemination (list of conference posters, presentations and articles based on this PhD research)
- Appendix VI: Documentation submitted to the Social Research Ethics Committee for ethics approval

Appendix I: Oral History websites powered by Omeka

This appendix presents a list of digital oral history projects powered by Omeka on the user-generated list at the "Sites Using Omeka" website (http://omeka.org/codex/Sites_Using_Omeka, accessed 18 May 2017). This demonstrates that Omeka is a relatively popular platform choice for disseminating oral histories online.

Oral history sites powered by Omeka and listed on the Omeka website:

- American Merchant Marine Veterans Oral History Project (http://seamenschurch-archives.org/sci-ammv/collections/browse, accessed 18 May 2017).
- Backside Stories Oral History Project (http://www.backsidestoriesproject.org/, access attempted 18 May 2017 but the server could not be found).
- BGC Craft, Art, and Design Oral History Project, Bard Graduate Centre (http://bgccraftartdesign.org/, accessed 18 May 2017).
- Bracero History Archive (http://braceroarchive.org/, accessed 18 May 2017).
- Educating Harlem Digital Collection oral histories (http://educatingharlem.cdrs.columbia.edu/omeka/collections/show/4, accessed 18 May 2017).
- From Farms to Freeways: Women's memories of Western Sydney (http://omeka.uws.edu.au/farmstofreeways/, accessed 18 May 2017).
- Goin' North: Stories from the First Great Migration to Philadelphia (https://goinnorth.org/, accessed 18 May 2017).
- New Roots: Voices from Carolina del Norte / Nuevas Raíces: Voces de Carolina del Norte (https://newroots.lib.unc.edu/, accessed 18 May 2017).
- William H. Berge Oral History Centre (http://oralhistory.eku.edu/, accessed 18 May 2017).

Other oral history sites that I have found that use Omeka as a platform:

- Georgia Journeys 2 (http://marb.kennesaw.edu/meethistory/neatline/fullscreen/georgia-journeys-2, accessed 7 August 2017).
- Our Marathon by Northeastern University (http://marathon.neu.edu/wburoralhistoryproject, accessed 7 August 2017).
- Cleveland Historical (https://clevelandhistorical.org/, accessed 7 August 2017).

Appendix II: Technical report on the use figures for the original Cork Memory Map (results from Google Analytics)

II.i - Introduction

This technical report presents the website metrics for the use of the Cork Memory Map, a digital project by the Cork Folklore Project (CFP). The results were collated using a software tool (Google Analytics) to gather quantitative information about the use of a website. The data were collected between March 2014 and March 2015. The results are presented here as they appear within Google Analytics, the tracking application used to gather this data. Data gathering activity was initially envisaged as a practice that would be carried out over several years, but technical difficulties meant that it was only fully implemented in March 2014. This was despite initial attempts in September 2013. It took some time to get the snippet of Google Analytics code approved for use on the original Cork Memory Map site. Further technical difficulties (this time with referrer spam) meant that data collection was suspended in March 2015. Assorted problems with the results and the data gathering methodology will be discussed in detail in the discussion below.

II.ii - Methods

The results presented below were collected using Google Analytics and are generally reported according to the reporting standards of the Audit Bureau of Circulations (ABC), the industry body for media measurement.[184] These results include the mandatory elements that must be included when reporting metrics, i.e. unique browsers, page impressions, visits, unique browser duration and visit duration. The data that these results are based on are openly accessible in a digital repository (see section II.xii of this report). All of the raw data that this report draws on are stored as spreadsheets (.csv) format in an online repository, and a list of hyperlinks to this data is presented at the end of this report.

The only mandatory element listed by ABC excluded from this analysis is the daily unique browser count for each day during the reporting period. This was excluded, firstly because the statistics were unwieldy – the reporting period was thirteen months long and to include

[184] ABC (2015). Reporting Standards Web Traffic (No. Version 1). Retrieved from http://www.abcstandards.org.uk/images/ABCWebTrafficReportingStandards.pdf (accessed 21 October 2015; still available to download 26 September 2016).

daily figures for such a long period would be difficult to present. In addition, the daily figures for this period were not high or significant. These figures are, however, presented in the archive of usage data available in an online repository and accessible at https://figshare.com/s/c0f6b7d3abf46a726aa1.

More than a year (thirteen months) of these figures were collated (between March 2014 and March 2015). The choice of this period was governed by factors that affected the implementation of Google Analytics. For example, the start period was initially supposed to be the start of my PhD research (September 2013), but there was a problem with implementing the service, and it was not until March 2014 that I was able to collect reliable data, once the Google Analytics java script code was added to the website. The collection of data from Google Analytics was terminated in March 2015 because at this point it became clear that the results were skewed by automated referrer spam, giving much higher page views and user results than was usually the case. Although it is possible to block the referrer sites (and some blocks were implemented) this requires constant monitoring. It was felt that the quality of the results obtained from Google Analytics was not sufficiently high to merit this time-consuming repeated monitoring process (more detail about referrer spam is found below). In addition, by that time, CFP was already beginning to consider creating a new Memory Map site, and the old Memory Map was no longer being updated. There was, therefore, no activity on the site to be monitored, the usual purpose of gathering metrics. The site was also noticeably out-of-date; a welcome note that appears each time the original Cork Memory Map is accessed assures visitors that "We will be adding more points and tours to the map throughout 2012-13, so do return to hear more Cork stories" (http://www.ucc.ie/research/memorymap/, accessed 3 August 2016).[185] This creates an immediate air of stasis about the site. This sense of stasis is compounded because new content has not been added to the original Cork Memory Map for several years now (since technical problems were noted in September/October 2013). This means that it is difficult for CFP staff members/researchers to try and create a social media "buzz" about the map, as no new content is being added. The unchanging nature of the content on website, in an era of dynamic and interactive website that are constantly being updated, creates an air of neglect around the website.

[185] Despite attempts to change this it has not been possible with current CFP staff knowledge and site access permissions.

II.iii - Factors effecting results (explaining referrer spam)

All of the results presented here must be viewed in the knowledge that, since at least March 2015, the Cork Memory Map Google Analytics account has been subject to "referrer spam" – a kind of spam that takes advantage of a weakness in Google Analytics. "Referrer Spam is low impact spamming. Spammers create web crawlers that selectively visit to [*sic*.] web pages but instead of leaving referrer field blank, they insert a link of their own target web page" (Chandra and Suaib 2014, 637).

There are good descriptions of how ghost referrer spam works (and some solutions to trying to stop it) at:

- http://www.optimizesmart.com/geek-guide-removing-referrer-spam-google-analytics/ (accessed 5 October 2015)
- http://rankabove.com/referral-spam/ (accessed 5 October 2015)
- http://www.ohow.co/what-is-referrer-spam-how-stop-it-guide/ (accessed 5 October 2015)
- https://viget.com/advance/removing-referral-spam-from-google-analytics (accessed 5 October 2015)

Referrer spam effectively creates a false "hit" on your website, and, in the data that is collected by Google Analytics, it is recorded as a hit, with a link inserted to show where the "hit" came from. In fact, this is just the spam bot trying to get the other people to access their own site: "[t]he fake referrer header contains the website URL which spammer wants to promote and/or build back links" (http://www.optimizesmart.com/geek-guide-removing-referrer-spam-google-analytics/#ixzz3nhwAE09K, accessed 5 October 2015).

The reasons that people might create this kind of spam bot are usually about ways of creating links back to their own site, promoting their own site's ranking and augmenting hit counts (and hence revenue) through spam. The methods used to counteract this kind of spam require some understanding of the type of spam that it is, as well as a fairly detailed knowledge of the use of "Regular Expressions" within Google Analytics.

I initially counteracted this type of spam within the Google Analytics results for the Cork Memory Map by creating a filter that excluded the main offending website that *appeared* to be referring to the site (social-buttons.com). This provided a significant correction, removing a lot of the fake traffic that was appearing in the Google Analytics results. However, some spikes persisted, ostensibly from other sources. As there are many different sources of ghost/referrer spam, and because these sources change frequently, this is not a realistic way of correcting the fake results that are shown in Google Analytics. This is because this kind of filtering only excludes the main culprits and it requires almost constant administration, adding new spam referring sites to the filters on a regular basis

A second filter was developed, which only allows Google Analytics to record hits that are referred from the sites own hostname (ucc.ie). This was constructed in the "Create new filter" section within Google Analytics and used a Regular Expression (.*ucc\.ie.*). This was applied on 15th October 2015 and should ensure that all subsequent results from Google Analytics, for the Cork Memory Map, are genuine hits, and not the result of spam. On this date also the Google Analytics option to exclude all results from known bots and crawlers was enabled. Subsequent data should be very clean but the problem of how to remove these kinds of ghost hits from "historic" data within the Google Analytics account remains.

At the time of writing the initial draft of this technical report (October 2015) the concept of Ghost Referrer Spam has not yet made it in to scholarly literature: search of the available databases (Google Scholar, JSTOR, Scopus, Academic Search Complete, Web of Science and Science Direct) for the terms "ghost spam" and "ghost referral" all returned negative or irrelevant results. A subsequent search in September 2016[186] revealed one relevant result for "ghost spam" and a second for "ghost referral", both published in 2015. However, there is no in-depth discussion of this phenomenon in the scholarly literature. It is likely that this is simply because, at this point, the phenomenon is relatively new and has not made its way into the academic literature yet. The topic of ghost spam is, however, a frequent one in blogs by analytics and search engine optimisation specialists. The topic appears to have become an important one around February 2015, around (or slightly before) the time when this referrer spam began to affect the Google Analytics results for the Cork Memory Map. At this time there is a surge of blog posts that deal with the problem of ghost referrer spam

[186] On the 26th September 2016.

and how to stop it (for example, see the list of blog posts above). Ultimately they conclude that this is a flaw in Google Analytics and that it is up to the code providers to work out an effective way of excluding this kind of spam, particularly if they want to continue providing web analytics services into the future.

III.iv – Results from Google Analytics: unique browsers

A unique browser is "[t]he uniquely identified client generating requests on the web server (log analysis) or viewing pages (page tagging) within a defined time period (i.e., day, week, month). A unique visitor counts once within the timescale. A visitor can make multiple visits" (Dragoş 2011, 113). The number of unique browsers accessing the site is reported by Google Analytics as a "User" although this term is somewhat misleading, since the metric actually measures "access from each browser on a given device" and not a person (ABC 2015, 24).

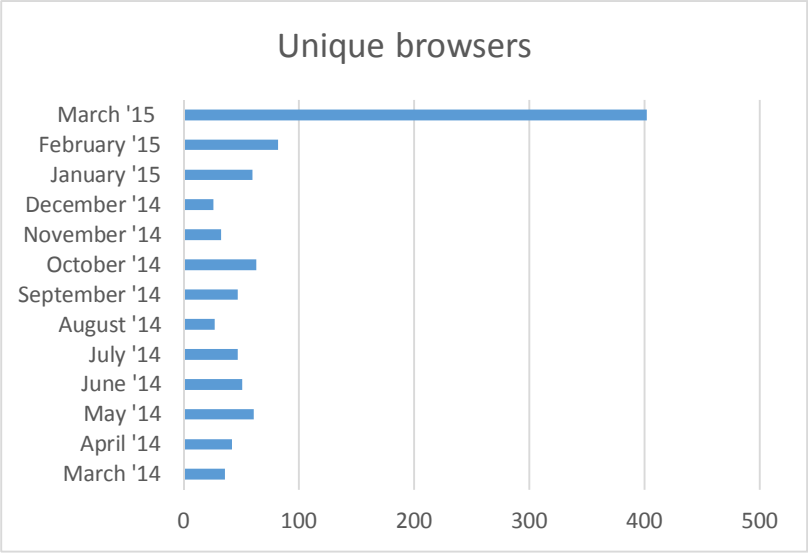


Figure II.1: Unique browsers for Cork Memory Map (March '14–March '15)

The results for this period show that the number of people accessing the site is relatively modest, but steady (averaging just over one a day), until February/March 2015, when the Google Analytics tracking script was targeted by referrer spam (see Figures II.1 and II.2).

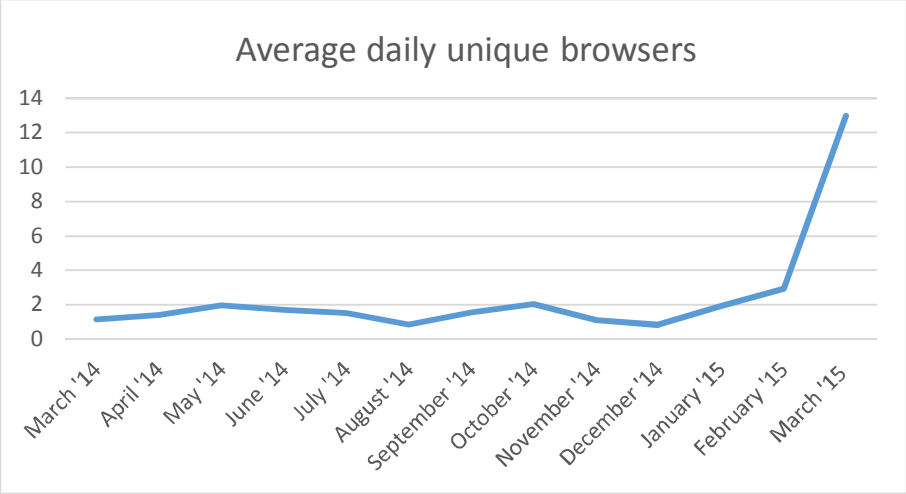


Figure II.2: Average daily unique browsers for Cork Memory Map (March '14–March '15)

II.v - Results from Google Analytics: page impressions

Page impressions are recorded in Google Analytics as "Page Views". These are explained by ABC as "a file, or combination of files, sent to a valid browser as a result of that browser's request being received by the server" (ABC 2015, 21). In essence, it is a record of the number of requests for a web page (several files can be associated with each file, including images, audio, java script and CSS files, but these are not relevant for the purposes of web analytics and are all counted as one request). The number of page impressions recorded for the Cork Memory Map remained low but steady (usually between 50 and 100 per month) until referrer spam began to alter the recorded figures in February 2015.

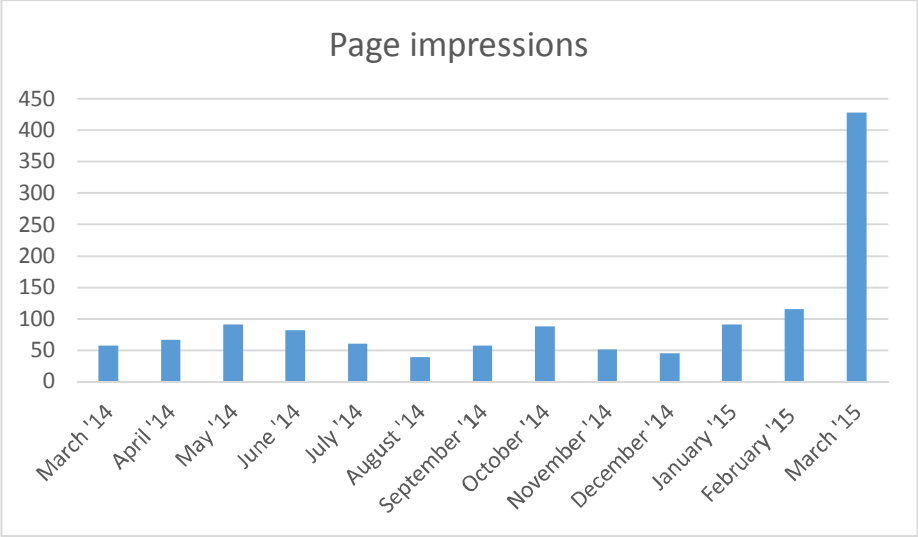


Figure II.3: Page impressions for the Cork Memory Map (March '14–March '15)

II.vi - Results from Google Analytics: visits

The number of visits counts is a"series of one or more Page Impressions, served to one valid browser, which ends when that browser has not made a Page Impression for a 30-minute period" (ABC 2015, 20).[187] Google Analytics call this a "Session" and Dragoş (2011, 113) notes that both terms tend to be "used for visits, because it cannot be determined if a visitor viewed other pages from other domains." For the original Cork Memroy Map, the number of visits per month usually hovered around 50, with some months (May and October 2014 and January 2015 for example) recording a higher number of visits.

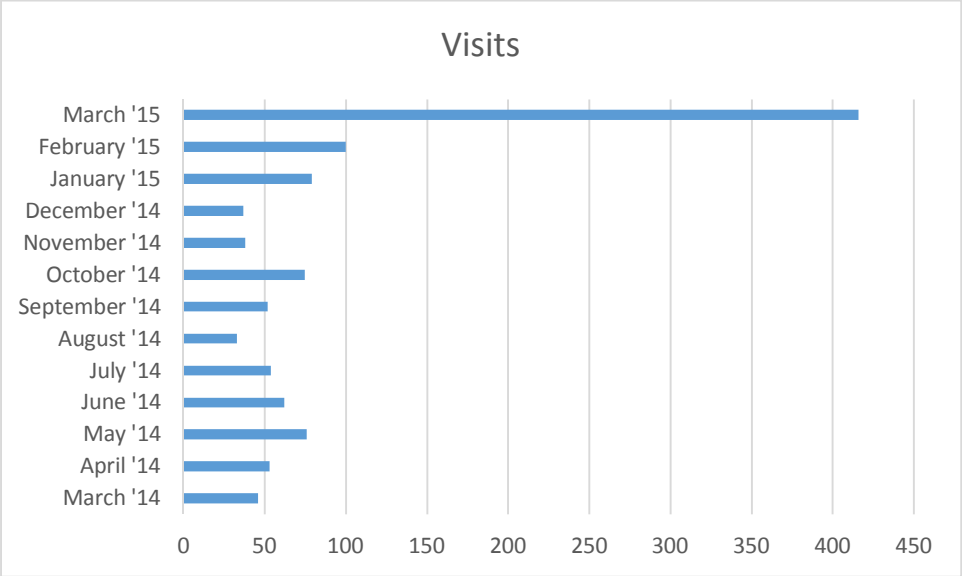


Figure II.4: Visits for the Cork Memory Map (March '14–March '15)

Because there have been technical difficulties involved in adding new content to the original Cork Memory Map since September 2013, the CFP have not been able to engage in digital interventions to promote the online audience for the website, as they cannot add to the site and therefore encourage repeat and new visits. There have, however, been individual attempts to promote the website (these included presentations at conferences, within UCC and to local societies in Cork, carried out by the author and by the CFP Research Director, Dr Cliona O'Carroll). But in fact, Google Analytics results suggest that these interventions, carried out usually during the summer period, in particular Summer 2014, with promotion at conferences at its peak, are correlated to a diminished rate of use (see

[187] Alternatively, (but similarly), Dragos (2011, 113) describes a visit as "a series of page requests from the same uniquely identified client with a time of no more than 30 minutes between each page request."

Figure II.4). A known sustained period of Cork Memory Map use in July 2014 appears to be barely reflected in the Google Analytics results. During this period, the author attended a conference in Switzerland, presenting a poster about the Cork Memory Map. At the conference, a table with a laptop was set up in front of the poster, the computer was logged in to the Memory Map and headphones were attached (so that people could listen to the oral history excerpts). This session, which lasted for approximately two hours, appears to have been only minimally recorded in Google Analytics as three sessions in Switzerland (recorded for that month) but with the average session duration recorded as 0 seconds.

II.vii - Results from Google Analytics: visit duration

Visit duration is a key metric, as it allows website managers to calculate whether people actually spend time browsing their website and reading their content. It is calculated as an average; the average amount of time that a visitor spends at the site when they visit. According to Dragoş (2011, 114), this is calculated by comparing time stamps, specifically the differences between the time stamps on the first and last pages accessed during the visit. The problem with this method is that the time spent on the last page cannot be determined. In addition, visits that only look at one page cannot be measured (and single page visits are counted as a "bounce"): this is because it is the interval between clicks that is used to establish the amount of time on the page. When the visitor clicks away from the page, the duration of that visit cannot be determined.

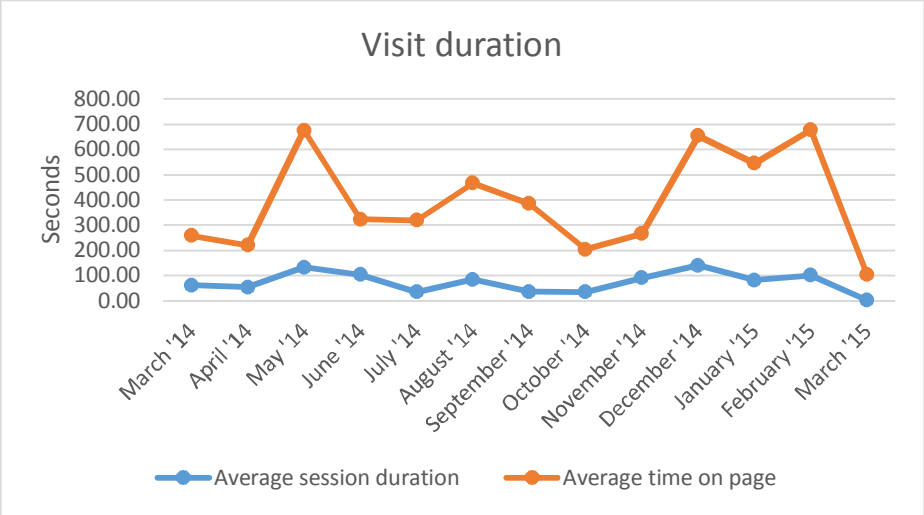


Figure II.5: Visit duration for the Cork Memory Map (March '14–March '15)

The Cork Memory Map results indicate average whole visits usually between three to seven minutes each month (i.e. between 180 and 420 seconds). However, there are peaks (in terms of the amount of time spent on the site) in May and December 2014 and January and February 2015, with a steep decline in the average amount of time spent on the site in March (Figure II.5). Because the time is averaged per visit, the high number of automated "hits" in March (all of them not real hits and therefore having no time duration) means that the average visit duration dropped significantly from this period.

II.viii - Results from Google Analytics: bounce rate

Bounce rates are visits that comprise just a single page view; these are usually seen as an indication that the site has failed to engage the visitor (Dragoş 2011, 113). Because of the way the Cork Memory Map is constructed (the site was not initially designed for use with Google Analytics, or with any Google tracking or advertising products, therefore it is not optimised for Google Analytics) the bounce rate is generally high (Figure II.6). The bounce rate for the Cork Memory Map does get higher in March 2015: the average bounce rate for the entire year from March 2014 to February 2015 is 86.98% and in March 2015 it rises to 97.36%), but because the figure is already high, this does not show up as a dramatic change on the graph.

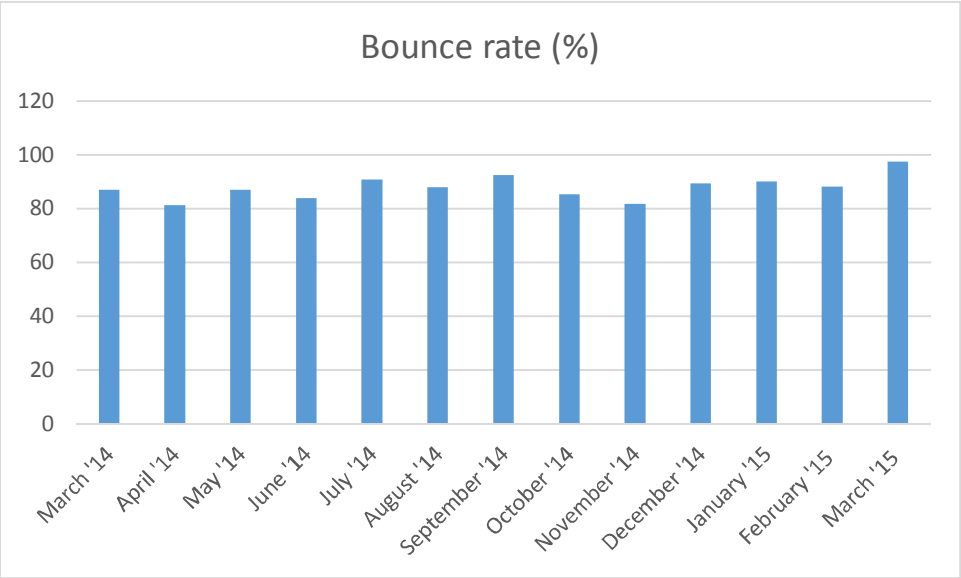


Figure II.6: Bounce rate for the Cork Memory Map (March '14–March '15)

This is interesting because the high bounce rate can either indicate lots of accidental visitors, or alternatively, that the site is not well constructed (Dragoş 2011, 117). In the case of the Cork Memory Map the site has not been optimised for Google Analytics. The site is a single html file that calls images, audio and text from different locations using javascript and php. Because Google Analytics records single visits to the site (with no multiple page views) as bounces, the way that the site is constructed has an impact on the bounce rate.

II.ix - Results from Google Analytics: geographic location of users

Information about the geographic location of users indicated that Ireland, as might be expected, is the most common place where users access the site, with session numbers from other locations often being comparatively low (FigureII.7). Average session duration from locations outside Ireland are often very short, occasionally registering as 0 seconds in duration. This fact suggests that many of these users from outside Ireland were accidental visitors or bots.

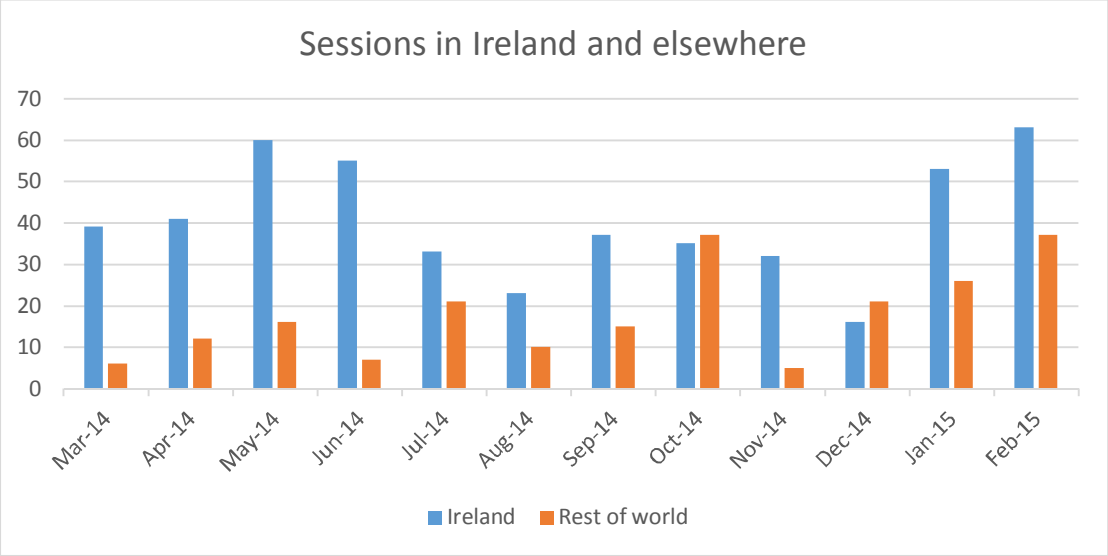


Figure II.7: Geographic origins of sessions for Cork Memory Map (March '14–March '15)

II.x - Conclusions

These results demonstrate that the Cork Memory Map had a small and sometimes variable base of use and consultation. Google Analytics results between March 2014 and January 2015 appear to indicate that this was the case. The fact that new material could not be added to the site since September 2013 has undoubtedly impeded the ability to foster a wider

digital audience. The targeting of the Google Analytics account by referrer spam since the end of February 2015 has skewed the results from this period. It has also highlighted the difficulties that can arise when seemingly easy-to-use software tools such as Google Analytics are implemented by non-expert users.

II.xi - References

Audit Bureau of Circulations. (2015). *Reporting Standards Web Traffic* (No. Version 1). Retrieved from http://www.abcstandards.org.uk/images/ABCWebTrafficReportingStandards.pdf.

Chandra, A., & Suaib, M. (2014). A Survey on Web Spam and Spam 2.0. *International Journal of Advanced Computer Research*, *4*(2), 634.

Dragoş, S.-M. (2011). Why Google Analytics cannot be used for educational web content. In *Next Generation Web Services Practices (NWeSP), 2011 7th International Conference on* (pp. 113–118). IEEE. Retrieved from http://ieeexplore.ieee.org/xpls/abs_all.jsp?arnumber=6088162.

II.xii - Links to datasets used in this report

- Google Analytics results for Bounce rates Cork Memory Map March 2014–March 2015 https://figshare.com/s/9d9f1de5be11db17334b (DOI 10.6084/m9.figshare.3892275, saved 28 September 2016)
- Google Analytics results for Sessions by user location (country) for Cork Memory Map March 2014–March 2015 https://figshare.com/s/39984e2aa4e884b8f847 (DOI 10.6084/m9.figshare.3893445, saved 28 September 2016)
- Google Analytics results for Page Impressions for Cork Memory Map March 2014–March 2015 https://figshare.com/s/a1ba475b434e29dfb4c7 (DOI 10.6084/m9.figshare.3893925, saved 28 September 2016)
- Google Analytics results for Sessions by country for Cork Memory Map March 2014–March 2015 https://figshare.com/s/cbbde1322d946be3b2a9 (DOI 10.6084/m9.figshare.3895284, saved 28 September 2016)
- Google Analytics results for Sessions comparing Ireland with the rest of the world Cork Memory Map March 2014–March 2015 https://figshare.com/s/f1265bfa0279bf08ee24 (DOI 10.6084/m9.figshare.3896028, saved 28 September 2016)
- Google Analytics results for unique browsers Cork Memory Map March 2014–March 2015 https://figshare.com/s/7fd3327f86cc15aa7647 (DOI 10.6084/m9.figshare.3896457, saved 28 September 2016)

- Google Analytics results for visit duration Cork Memory Map March 2014–March 2015 https://figshare.com/s/3527fb2e326f495532ce (DOI 10.6084/m9.figshare.3896886, saved 28 September 2016)
- Google Analytics results for visit duration Cork Memory Map March 2014–March 2015 https://figshare.com/s/07669e22c56e3cc152f8 (DOI 10.6084/m9.figshare.3897213, saved 28 September 2016)
- Google Analytics results sessions per day March 2014–March 2015 https://figshare.com/s/c0f6b7d3abf46a726aa1 (DOI 10.6084/m9.figshare.3897858, saved 28 September 2016)

Appendix III: Prompt sheet used for Cork's Main Streets focus group

This prompt sheet was distributed to CFP staff members in advance of a focus group held on 17th February 2016.

Preparation for CFP new Memory Map focus group

Discussion topic: Ideas about a (newish) website – a memory map built using the North and South Main Street interview collection and using Omeka and Neatline software/platforms

The purpose of this focus group will be to brainstorm ideas about the work of the CFP and how it is represented online. It is also an opportunity for the group to discuss ideas about the issues that we need to consider when selecting material that is represented on the Memory Map, in particular in relation to our duty of care towards narrators/interviewees.

1. Go to: http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets
2. Browse the site for a while, looking at entries, listening to excerpts
3. Proof the entries that you select to listen to/read (please make a note of any mistakes in the transcript, formatting errors, distorted images, corrupted sound files, etc.)
4. Bring your thoughts about design and, in particular, **content** to the focus group and feel free to air them (positive and negative). The site will be changed based on your feedback and the general consensus that emerges. Some ideas to think about are listed below, but please feel free to raise any issue that comes to mind.

Some ideas to bear in mind as you browse the map:

- *What sorts of stories should be included?*
- *Is sound quality an important issue?*
- Editing excerpts – when is this appropriate? In one entry (http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/32) I edited out a long tangent about an iron foundry (it wasn't relevant to North Main Street). Should I have left it in? Is it appropriate to cut and paste from the interviews whenever I (rather than the narrator) feel it is suitable? Should this be represented on the transcript?
- In contrast, check out the excerpts from Noreen Hanover (e.g. http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/17 and http://pennyjohnston.org/exhibits/neatline/show/north-and-south-main-streets#records/16). These are very short, but would it be more appropriate to combine some of these short excerpts into one recording?

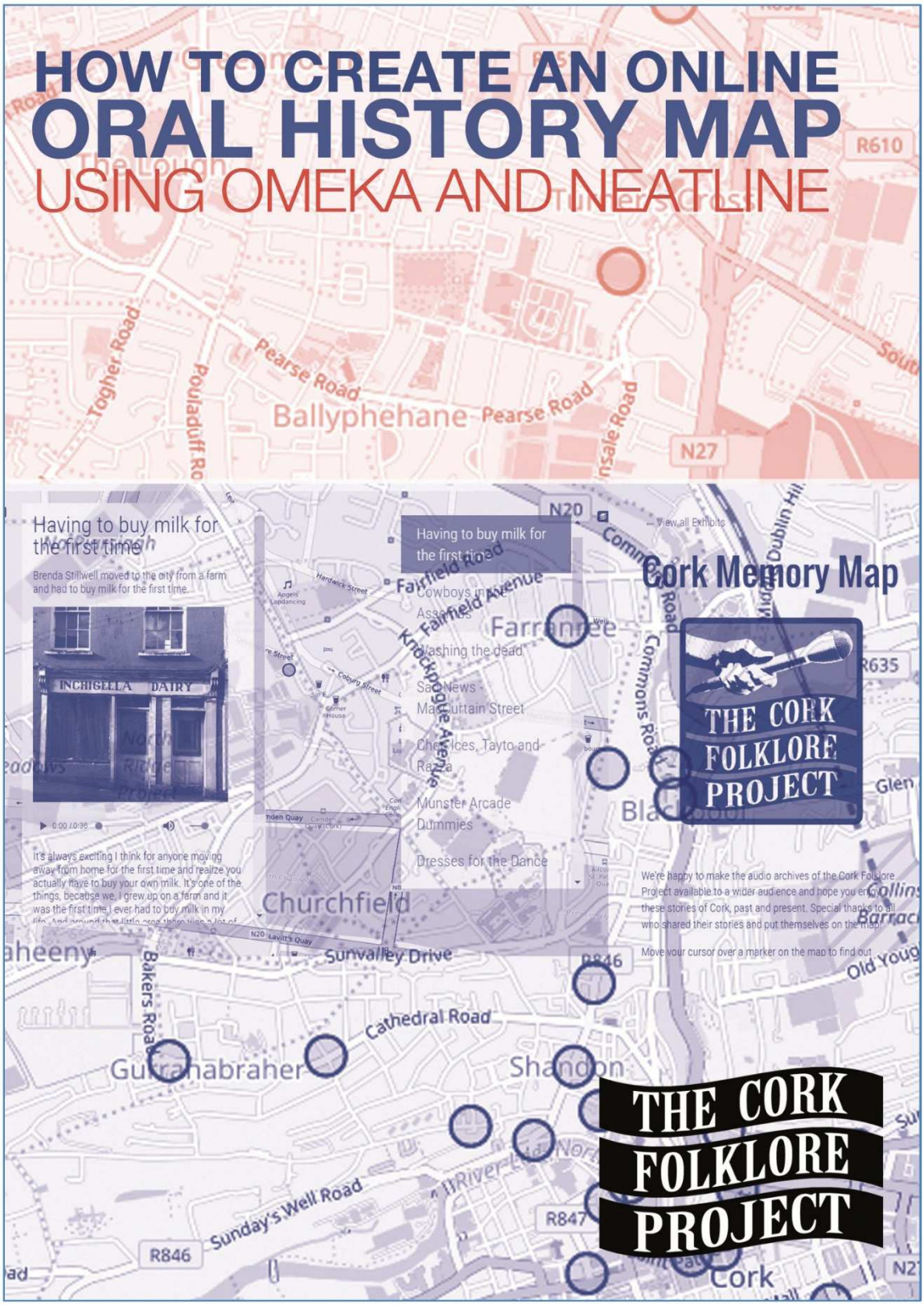
Appendix IV: How to create an online oral history map using Omeka and Neatline

The following document was created in collaboration with Laura Murphy from the Cork Folklore Project.

The document was created as a downloadable pdf, which can be accessed from the Stories of Place website. The download link for the correct version of the document is available at:

http://storiesofplace.org/files/original/2b862bf59160f1216ef2885198a3eec6.pdf

The document is reproduced in the pages that follow, but it has been resized in order to conform to thesis formatting guidelines (specifically, a 4 cm left-hand margin).


HOW TO CREATE AN ONLINE
ORAL HISTORY MAP
USING OMEKA AND NEATLINE
Having to buy milk for the first time
Brenda Stillwell moved to the city from a farm and had to buy milk for the first time.
INCHIGEELA DAIRY
It's always exciting I think for anyone moving away from home for the first time and realize you actually have to buy your own milk. It's one of the things, because we, I grew up on a farm and it was the first time I ever had to buy milk in my
Having to buy milk for the first time
Cowboys in Assa
Washing the dead
Sad News
Mad Curtain Street
Munster Arcade
Dummies
Dresses for the Dance
Cork Memory Map
THE CORK FOLKLORE PROJECT
We're happy to make the audio archives of the Cork Folklore Project available to a wider audience and hope you enjoy these stories of Cork, past and present. Special thanks to all who shared their stories and put themselves on the map!
Move your cursor over a marker on the map to find out
THE CORK FOLKLORE PROJECT

Note:

This is a printable downloadable instruction manual, provided by The Cork Folklore Project.

Directions around Reclaim Hosting, Omeka and Neatline were correct at time of completion of this document. Layouts are likely to change in future, which may make such directions obsolete, however the basic tenets will remain. Look for the same or similar options which may be in slightly different locations.

If you do create your own Oral History project using this manual, please share it with us as a thank you for our efforts in compiling this substantial training document.

This manual was designed and written by Laura Ann Murphy of the Cork Folklore Project in 2016, based upon the preliminary work of Penny Johnston, who consulted in drawing up this document.

CFP Testers: James Furey, Mark Treacy, Dave McCarthy and Kieran Murphy.
Cover designed by Dermot Casey.



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INTRODUCTION

The Cork Folklore Project (CFP) was founded in 1996 as a not-for-profit oral history archive, co-sponsored by Northside Community Enterprises, UCC's Dept. of Folklore and Ethnology, and the DSP. The project researches and collects oral history from the Cork community, and stores it for future generations and interested parties. At present, it houses approximately 600 interviews from Cork residents - blow-ins and natives alike. To give back to the locality, CFP produces various cultural items such as the *Archive* journal - produced annually and free to the public - as well as books, films, and radio documentaries.

The *Cork Memory Map* (CMM) was conceived as a means of returning some of the research content from the CFP back to the community. It is an online map with oral history audio excerpts, transcripts and photographs, pinned to various locations within Cork city. The end user can click on a location marker to read and listen to a CFP interview excerpt from an associated location.

Having generated an earlier version of the CMM, the team invested considerable time in recreating a new technical framework using open source software in the hopes of future proofing this new version, and in 2016 it was decided to document the build process and create a training manual so future staff of the project could learn how to build upon the map going forward..

The Cork Memory Map embraces the best of modern technology, in order to help sustain the ancient practice of oral tradition. In documenting the voices and stories of Cork for over two decades, CFP has witnessed the evolution of digital technology and has embraced this to assist in our attempt to document the folklore and oral history of Cork. In so doing, we have been able to illuminate the way people relate to their place and shine a light on both known and unknown dimensions of particularly the urban landscape of Cork. The production of this Training Manual by CFP is the result of months of careful research and preparation. The manual forms part of our outreach strategy and aims to engage with people and groups across Cork city and county and to help generate and capture increased amounts of folklore and oral history. It is the hope of CFP that by enabling individuals and groups to develop memory maps, which link to our project, current and future generations will benefit from a more comprehensive and accessible resource.

This training manual aims to enable people to create their own online oral history map. The build process is not limited to oral history purposes; it can be used for any type of project that involves displaying content on an online map. If this is something that interests you, and you don't know how or where to start, we hope you will find this document useful. We offer it free to encourage more people, community groups, schools, etc. to create their own online, interactive documentation of place-related stories. We truly hope to see some of your finished projects, so please share them with us on our social media sites:

/corkfolkloreproject/ @bealoideascork

The Cork Folklore Project is a community project and due to the broad scope of our work we are sorely under-funded. If you find our work and/or this document valuable and would like to support us, please contact us for our patronage form on: folklorearchives@gmail.com, or cnfp@nce.ie, or 021 4228110.

PROJECT OVERVIEW

To set up an oral history map online there are several steps involved.

Section A details setting up our online workspace. First we create a webhosting account (with **Reclaim Hosting**), which provides us with online server space as well as allows us to create our domain name (www.example.com). Next we need a way to organize our content online, for which we must install a CMS (Content Management System) application and some suitable plugins. The **Omeka** application is ideal for our CMS, as it allows us to create an online database of oral history content (audio and image files, etc.). A plugin called **Neatline** is installed to create the map and location markers that link back to content stored in the CMS. Two more plugins (**Neatline Waypoints** and **Neatlight**) are also used for aesthetic purposes. Section A details how each of these are installed to the domain name specific to the online map project.

Once our online workspace is ready, we then begin uploading files to our **Omeka** CMS. This is covered in Section B. Some of the file types that can be uploaded include audio files, photographs, and other image files.

Note

It is suggested that during the initial stages of setting up your project, that you upload just a few items, and carry on with these few items through Sections C to Section E as proof of concept. Once these items display online, you can then come back to Section B to add more items.

Many oral history projects would be continually added to, and as such, each time an item is added, you may wish to revisit Sections B & D. Section E (publishing, or making available to the public online) is only required once, unless you need to take your map offline again for any reason. If you envision that you will continually add content to the map, you may find yourself revisiting section B many times, as each new item of content will need to be uploaded via Omeka using the steps detailed here.

Section C outlines how to set up the landing page, or homepage, for the map. Here we choose the type of map and its default view, add headings and basic details about the project, and these will then be displayed when a user loads the map homepage. This is done using the **Neatline** plugin we installed in Section A.

Section D outlines the basics of how to place content, including files from our Omeka CMS, to a specific location on the map.

Finally, Section E shows how to make the website public by publishing it online. Should the need arise in future to make the website private again, this is also detailed here.

So, sounds simple, right?

Let's begin ...

SAVE IMPORTANT INFORMATION HERE



As you follow this manual and create your accounts, remember to keep coming back here to save all important details in one place.

Web Hosting Provider Login Address: _____

Username: _____ **& Password:** _____

CMS (Omeka) Login Address: _____

Username: _____ **& Password:** _____

Other Details:

Website Title Within CMS (default is: CMS) _____

URL for Website Items _____

SECTION A SETUP ONLINE PLATFORM

1. CREATE HOSTING ACCOUNT

Before we source and install the software, we need to set up our web hosting and create a domain name for the online project. For the Cork Memory Map (CMM) project, the provider **Reclaim Hosting** was chosen due to its ease of use with Omeka (more on this later). Other providers are available; however, all instructions within this document are based on the use of this platform. If you choose a different hosting provider these instructions may vary considerably.

First, create an account with Reclaim Hosting (or your chosen hosting service) by going to their website and following their step-by-step instructions online. This normally requires payment of a fee. Remember to take note of your username and password for this account, as well as the hosting provider's web address - something you don't want to forget! Spaces are provided below, and also on page 3, following the Project Overview, for this purpose.

With Reclaim Hosting you will need to choose an account type based on how large your project is expected to be - Individual to Organisation accounts - the options which provide greater allocated space along with various whistles and bells, correlate to higher fees.

SUGGESTED WEB HOSTING PROVIDER: http://reclaimhosting.com

If using an alternative web hosting provider, note their login website here: _____

WEB HOSTING USERNAME: _____

WEB HOSTING PASSWORD: _____

2. INSTALL SOFTWARE

Now that we have our web hosting, we can start to build a website. Reclaim Hosting offers several applications to use as a basic Content Management System (our web-building platform which stores and manages content). The Omeka application is ideal for us as it allows us to create an online database of files *and* the installation of the Neatline plugin, which allows us to locate these files on a map for public display. We also install two sub-plugins/widgets to improve our map display options in Neatline: Neatline Waypoints and Neatlight.

Note

There are many more plugins available for you to explore. In this manual we only mention these basics to get you started. We hope that once you have these basics you will be confident enough to explore further options to use in your own projects.

CMS PLATFORM: OMEKA

We start with Omeka, our Content Management System (CMS). It is in Omeka that we will create a database of information [detailed in section B], which will be used to populate our map. The application for Omeka is immediately available for use in Reclaim Hosting. It must, however, be activated by following these simple steps:

1. Log in to your Reclaim Hosting account using your web hosting user details, which takes you to the **Client Area**.
2. Select **cPanel** which redirects to **Applications**, **Domains**, etc.
3. Under **Applications** select **Omeka**, which redirects to the **Installatron.**
4. Click **Install this Application**.
5. Ensure the correct domain name is selected in the **Location** field *(This only becomes an issue if you have more than one domain name setup)*.

Note

This only installs Omeka to this specific website domain. If you require Omeka on more than one domain name it will need to be installed separately in each.

6. Scroll down to find your account details. You can use the details automatically generated, or replace them with something more memorable. - **Be sure to write these details down, else you won't be able to use the installed application.** There are spaces provided for you to write your login details in the box below and also after the table of contents.
7. Be sure to **write down** and store safely your:
    a. Username;
    b. Password (click on **Show Password** to view this); and
    c. Website title.

    (*By default the Website title is **CMS**, for Content Management System. There is no need to change this title as it will not display on your homepage.*
    If you do change the Website title, take note as you may need it later when installing plugins as detailed in the next subsection. The remainder of the document assumes use of the default title, so if you change it, substitute your given title for 'CMS' where it subsequently appears.

8. Only when you have stored your username and password below, should you scroll to the bottom of the page and click **Install**.
9. You will be redirected to the previous Installatron page, which will show your new URL for you username. Save the URL here:

OMEKA CMS USERNAME:	_____
OMEKA CMS PASSWORD:	_____
WEBSITE TITLE (IF CHANGED FROM DEFAULT)	_____
URL FOR WEBSITE ITEMS:	_____

MAP PLUGIN: NEATLINE

The Neatline plugin provides our map interface within Omeka. On this map we will create location points which, when selected by the end user, loads location-specific content with links to files in the Omeka database, such as audio and images (detailed in Section B). It is installed as follows:

1. Keep your Reclaim Hosting page open in your browser, and in a separate browser tab go to the following URL: http://omeka.org/add-ons/plugins/
2. Find the **Neatline** plugin in the list and click on the **Download** button - this button will also contain the most recent version of the filename, so will be called, for example **Download v2.0.2**.
   Here are two more locations to find this plugin, should there be any issues with the Omeka site:
   http://neatline.org/plugins and
   https://github.com/.
3. **Save File** - this will normally auto-save to your Downloads folder. If you save it elsewhere make sure you make a note of where it is saved as you will need this for step 7. It will download as a .zip folder - **do not extract it**.
4. From your Reclaim Hosting account, select **File Manager**. If this is not visible you may need to first select **cPanel.**
5. Open the **Plugins** folder for your online map domain name.
   If you have more than one domain name with your hosting provider, there will be more than one plugins folder Ensure you select the correct one! See troubleshooting box below.
6. Click on **Upload** from the header menu.
7. Use the **Select File** button to browse your computer for the **Neatline.zip** folder that you have downloaded (you have taken note of its location in step 1). Wait for it to upload, which should not take long.

8. Once it has uploaded, **a link** will appear towards the bottom of the page which redirects you to the Plugins folder in File Manager. Select this link.
9. A zip folder named **Neatline** will now be visible in plugins. Right click on this zip folder and click **Extract**, then click **Extract Files**, then **Close**.
10. Return to the cPanel by clicking on the **cP** logo at the top left of the screen (beside **File Manager**).
11. Select **Omeka** from cPanel **Applications.**
12. Select **My Applications** tab (you usually need to click on this twice).
13. Under **My CMS** select the URL ending in: **/admin/** This link* opens the Omeka interface, or the content management system login page. There is a space allocated below to **write down this URL** for quick access in future.
14. Login to the CMS if prompted using your Omeka account login details that you noted in the previous subsection. If you are already logged in, proceed to the next step.
15. From the header menu select **Plugins**.
16. Scroll down to select **Neatline** and click **Install.**
17. A button for Neatline will now appear in the sidebar.

*To access your website's content management system more easily in future, you can enter this URL link directly into the address bar to open the login page for your website's Omeka CMS:

URL FOR YOUR CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM:

_____

Troubleshooting

If Neatline is not visible in step 16 this usually indicates that the zip folder was uploaded or extracted to the incorrect location in File Manager (steps 4 to 9). Check back through the steps to ensure the plugin folder you selected in the file manager does actually relate to the specific domain name and website title of your project. An example of the plugin folder file path is: www.yourdomainname.com/cms/plugins

To find the correct plugins folder:
In **File Manager** open the folder that is named as your domain name. Within this folder is a sub-folder named as your website title (default is **CMS**). Open this folder to find and select the correct **Plugins** folder.

NEATLINE SUB-PLUGINS: WAYPOINTS; NEATLIGHT

NEATLINE WAYPOINTS

Neatline Waypoints is a sub-plugin designed to work in conjunction with Neatline, providing extra functionality to our map interface. It allows us to display on the screen a list of titles for each location

point. Hence the end user can select topics based on title, in addition to selecting based on their map location. You may choose not to use this functional option, in which case, skip to the next section.

This sub-plugin/widget is installed in an identical manner to installing the Neatline plugin. So the steps below will be very familiar to you:

1. Keep your CMS (Omeka) open in one browser tab and open a new tab; we will return to the CMS tab in step 11.
2. In the new tab go to this address: http://omeka.org/add-ons/plugins/
3. Find the **Neatline Waypoint** plugin and click on the **Download** button - this button will also contain the most recent version of the filename, so will be called, for example **Download v2.0.2**.
   If you can't find the plugin, here are two more options to source it:
   http://neatline.org/plugins and
   http://github.com/scholarslab/nl-widgets-Waypoints
4. **Save File** and note where it is saved. Again, this will download as a .zip folder - **do not extract it**.
5. From your Reclaim Hosting account, go to the **cPanel** in the Client Area.
6. From the header menu, select **File Manager.**
7. Open the **Plugins** folder for your domain name. This is the same location in which Neatline was installed, within the folders named as per your domain name and website title. Remember, there may be more than one plugins folder, so ensure you select the correct one!
8. Click on **Upload** from the header menu.
9. Use the **Select File** button to browse your computer for the **NeatlineWaypoints.zip** folder that you have downloaded (you have taken note of its location in step 4). Wait for it to upload, which should not take long.
10. Once it has uploaded **a link** will appear towards the bottom of the page which redirects you to the Plugins folder in File Manager. Select this link.
11. A zip folder named **NeatlineWaypoints** will now be visible in **Plugins**. Right click on this zip folder and click **Extract**, then, **Extract Files**, then **Close**.
12. Return to the web browser tab left open in step 1.*

* If you accidentally closed the tab, you can log in again using the URL saved while installing Neatline**, *or* via cPanel in your Reclaim Hosting account. Here's a reminder, so you don't need to go back:

1. Log in to Reclaim Hosting account
2. Click **cP** logo at the top left of the screen
3. Select **Omeka** from **Applications**
4. Doubleclick **My Applications**
5. Under My CMS select the URL ending in**: /admin/**
   **Take this second opportunity to save the link for an easier login next time:
   _____
6. Log in to Omeka if prompted

13. From the header menu select **Plugins**.
14. Scroll down to select **NeatlineWaypoints** and click **Install.**
15. Proceed to install Neatlight.

NEATLIGHT

Neatlight is a theme designed for use with Omeka and Neatline to display content on the website. It was used in CMM to display copyright details, a few paragraphs describing the Project, and headed by the CFP logo. Use it as you see fit for your own project.

Installing the Neatlight sub-plugin is done slightly differently from the other installations, in that we do not install it to the plugins folder. Instead we install to the **Themes** folder, although the process is the same, as follows:

1. Download **Neatlight**, available from: http://github.com/scholarslab/neatlight [accurate as of 14/9/16] Be sure to take note of where this has saved (required for step 5) and do not extract the files from the Neatlight zip folder.
2. From your Reclaim Hosting account, select **File Manager**. If this is not visible you may need to first select **cPanel.**
3. From the list of Folders in the left panel, find and open the **Themes** folder for your domain name and website title. This will be in the same location as the plugins folder, with which we are already familiar.
4. Click on **Upload.**
5. Use the **Select File** button to browse your computer for the Neatlight zip folder that you have downloaded. You should have noted its location in step 1.
6. Once it has uploaded, a link will appear towards the bottom of the page which will bring you back to the **Themes** folder in the File Manager. Select this link [or return via File Manager].
7. A zip folder named **Neatlight-Master** will now be visible within Themes. Right click on this and click **Extract**, then **Extract Files**, and finally click **Close**.
8. Return to the CMS page - see box above if you need help with this.*
9. Select **Appearance** from the header menu.
10. Ensure **Themes** tab is selected.
11. Scroll down to select **Neatlight** and click **Use This Theme.**
12. **The theme has been successfully changed** will appear.

Our online workspace is now ready to use. Well done!

SECTION B CREATE DATABASE OF CONTENT

The finished/public version of our online Oral History map will allow the end user to access images and audio online. Therefore these image and audio files must be stored online - makes sense, right?

In Section A we set up our Content Management System by installing the Omeka application. In this section we create an online database by adding items (files) to this CMS. From here the files are then accessible for use in Section D, but for now let's create our database.

Uploading files to the website is the responsibility of the Content Manager. Further content can be added at any future time if desired. Details of the files can also be edited later; however a suitable title should always be entered when uploading the file.

Notes

URL: The Uniform Resource Locator is used to identify and locate each database item. Each item is automatically allocated a unique URL once uploaded to Omeka, so it can easily be accessed online. We discuss this further in Section D.

Audio files: Large audio files such as .wav are usually too large to play online and so our audio clips should be in a condensed audio file format. One such format is an mpeg, or .mp3 file. However, as some browsers do not support .mp3 files, a second copy of each audio clip needs to be uploaded in .ogg format.

Image files: Similar to above, image file sizes should be considered, as larger files take longer to load online for the end user. Use a condensed image format such as .jpeg or .png. Avoid .tiff files as these are very large.

Metadata/Item Details: This adds tags to our content, allowing search engines to find our website contents. See appendix for further information regarding metadata.

Uploading files to the CMS is done as follows:

1. Log in to your website content management system (i.e. Omeka login to your website admin page).
2. Click on **Items** and then on **Add an Item.**
3. Add details for the file you are about to add in the **Dublin Core** Tab (which should be automatically).
    a. Create **Title**. This is imperative - it must be a name that allows you to easily identify the file at a later stage.
    b. Add other metadata elements as required. **Subject** and **Description** may also be particularly useful to aid locating the file later.
    c. See table in appendix for example of how metadata forms were filled for the CFP's CMM and adjust to suit your project if required.
4. Go to the **Files** tab.
5. Click **Choose File** (this opens up a window that allows you to browse files on your computer).

6. Locate and select the file that you want to upload, and then click **Open**.
7. In order to save this to the CMS you must click on **Add Item** button (either at the bottom or side of the page). This automatically creates a URL for the item, which you will need in Section D.

   *Remember: If you edit details in the **Dublin Core** tab at a later stage, remember to click **Save Changes**.*
8. To add the next item, select **Items** from Sidebar and repeat from Step 2 for each.

Once one or two items have been added to the database you may continue in this manner uploading all items before continuing to Section C. Alternatively**, and this is recommended**: continue to Section C with only one or two items in the CMS and come back to Section B later to upload the remainder. This way any issues, or areas you may wish to do differently once you see how it appears on your map, can be identified and added into the steps above for all subsequent items uploaded.

Use this blank space to write notes for any changes you may wish to include in your own map:

SECTION C CREATE NEW EXHIBIT IN NEATLINE

Now that we have uploaded files to the CMS database, we are ready to create our online exhibit, i.e. our online map interface. For this we use Neatline's Exhibit function as follows:

1. Log in to **Omeka** with account details that were created on page 10.
   (if continuing directly from Section B you are already logged in so go directly to step 2).
2. Select **Neatline** from Sidebar.
3. Click on **Create an Exhibit**.
4. Add a **Title** for the Project - Be aware that this will display in the address bar for the end user.
5. The **Narrative** box (below Title and URL box) is used to display text on the website, which describes the exhibit to the end user.
6. In **Widgets** select **Waypoints** from the dropdown menu. Remember we installed this sub-plugins in Section A (Neatline Waypoints).
7. Under **Enabled Spatial Layers**, select the layer that you wish to use for map display (Open Street Map is used in CMM).
8. **Default Spatial Layer** in CMM is Open Street Map.
9. Leave **Public** box (at bottom of page) unchecked until you are ready to publish online.
10. Click **Save Exhibit.**

Notes

All of the above can be changed later by selecting Exhibit Settings. Please note, however, that although the title can later be changed the URL will remain fixed as its initial saved 'Title'.

Our exhibit is now ready for content to be added, however, let us first create our default view.

SETTING MAP DEFAULT VIEW

Whenever an end user enters the website the default view of the map is displayed. To set this:

1. Select **Neatline** from Sidebar.
2. Click on **Title** of the exhibit we have created. This opens the working area of the exhibit.
3. Find the area of the map that you want as default view on opening. Do this by using the zoom in and out controls at the top left-hand corner of the map.
4. Go to **Styles** tab and select **Use Current Viewport as Default**.
5. Click **Save**.

If continuing directly into Section D, skip the first 3 steps in D.

SECTION D ADDING CONTENT TO THE MAP EXHIBIT

This map will display content in the form of **Records**. Each record can group related items together, such as text, audio and image files. We combine our content files into a record using the Text Tab; position the record on the map using the Map Tab; and use Style Tab to list the record on the map.

Notes

The **Item Tab** will take the end user to the metadata stored in our Omeka database. This is often not useful for the public and as such was not used for the CMM.

If continuing on from Section C, skip the first 3 steps and go direct to Step 4: Create Record.

It may be useful to have the Exhibit (Neatline) and the Omeka CMS both open in separate tabs, as some switching back and forth is involved.

1. Log in to **Omeka** (if not already logged in).
2. Select **Neatline** from Sidebar.
3. Click on the title of the exhibit we have created. This opens the working area of the exhibit. This is where we add our content.

CREATE RECORD

4. Click on **Records**, then **New Record.**
5. Click on **Text Tab** (this is probably already open by default), where we combine text with the URLs for audio and image files.
6. Enter the name of the record in **Title**. This will display in the records list on the map and when the cursor hovers over the map location.
7. **Body** is the main content of the record that displays when a marker on the map is selected. This is where we place our image and audio files, along with text (transcription of the audio). For this we must use HTML code.
8. The sample HTML code in the box below[†] can be adapted to your own requirements (by replacing the green text in CAPS as required) and pasted into the **Body** box. [See appendix for information and tutorials on coding.]
9. URL links required for this code can be found as follows:
    a. From Omeka Dashboard select **Items** in Side Panel.
    b. Select the specific item by clicking on the title or the image.
    c. Once item details load, click on item image, or filename listed under **File Metadata** on Right Side Panel.
    d. Under **Direct Links** select **Original**, which opens the item URL in your browser.

e. From the browser address bar, copy the URL including the file ending - such as .jpg, .ogg etc.
Sample URL: http://website.org/exhibits/files/original/6300eb7053c49d99da741ac.ogg.

f. Paste into appropriate section of coding below†, replacing text in CAPS.

10. Scroll down to click **Save Record**, and/or continue to position the record on the map.

†**Sample HTML Code** - *See appendices for more detail on HTML*

It may be useful to copy this code to a new document, to use as a template for each item.

Copy the entire edited code (including all brackets and punctuation) and paste into the body box above. Do this for each item/file that you want to add to the map.

Edit this Code as appropriate by replacing the text in CAPS:

```
<p>PUT YOUR SUMMARY TEXT HERE</p>

<p> </p>


<img src="URL LINK FROM OMEKA FOR IMAGE FILE" alt="WRITE IMAGE DESCRIPTOR HERE FOR
VISUALLY IMPAIRED USERS OF WEBSITE" align="center" style="width:480px;height:320px">


<p> </p>

<audio controls>

   <source src="URL LINK FROM OMEKA FOR .ogg FILE" type= "audio/ogg" >
   <source src="URL LINK FROM OMEKA FOR .mp3 FILE" type= "audio/mpeg" >

   Your browser does not support the audio element.

</audio>

<h4>IF YOU WANT A MINI-HEADING REPLACE THIS TEXT WITH YOUR HEADING, OTHERWISE DELETE
THIS LINE OF CODE</h4>

<p> COPY AND PASTE YOUR TRANSCRIPT HERE </p>

<p> IF YOU NEED MORE THAN ONE PARAGRAPH PUT EACH ONE BETWEEN THE PARAGRAPH MARKERS -
OTHERWISE DELETE THIS LINE </p>
```

POSITION RECORD ON MAP

Here we create a click-through point on the map for each record:

11. Select **Map** Tab.
12. Within the map panel, Click/Drag/Zoom to find the desired point for the record.
13. Select drawing tool from Side Panel to create point on map. For CMM **Draw Point** tool was used.

14. Click on the map to select the specific point for the current record.
15. Scroll down to click **Save Record**, and/or continue to create a list of records on the map.

STYLE TAB

Waypoints list the titles of each record in a click-through list on the map. This is set up as follows:

16. Select **Style** Tab.
17. In **Widgets** select **Waypoints.**
18. In **Presenter** select **Static Bubble** in order to display list of records on map.
19. Map point style (colour, size, etc) may also be edited from **Style Tab.**
20. The map view that opens on selecting a record is set here:
    a. Set the map to the desired view, then
    b. Scroll to bottom of the Side Panel and select **Use Current Viewport as Default**
21. **Save Record!!**

For each new record return to Step 4 and follow the instructions to the end. To edit part of a record select the appropriate tab and work from there. Always remember to **Save Record** to effect your edits in the online exhibit.

You may now wish to return to Section B to add in more items. Remember that the database can be expanded upon at any future stage by returning to: Section B to add new items; and Section D to position them on the map.

Your Oral History Map online exhibit is now ready. Just one thing left to do to share it with the world...

SECTION E PUBLISH ONLINE

If continuing on from Section D, click the **Back to Omeka** button and skip the first 2 steps.

1. Log in to **Omeka** (if not already logged in).
2. Select **Neatline** from Sidebar.
3. Select **Exhibit Settings** for your exhibit.
4. Check **Public** box (at bottom of page).
5. Click **Save Exhibit.**

Your Oral History Map Exhibit is now online for viewing.

Notes

If for any reason you need to take your map exhibit offline, simply follow the above steps to uncheck the **Public** box.

If everything has not quite gone according to plan, a troubleshooting section follows, and there are several online forums for Omeka and Neatline, in which you may find a solution (Google will be of help finding these). There are also some links to useful documents in the Project Resources section on page 3.

If everything did go according to plan - **Celebrate! And please remember to share your finished project with us as a thank you for our work in this document ☺**

Disclaimer: We, in the Cork Folklore Project, are not developers nor do we work for any of the services or software providers we have mentioned in this document. If you do have issues, please contact the hosting and software providers. We have worked hard to put together this document to share our experience with you in order to help you create your own project. This is as part of our continuing effort to give back to the local community as well as local, national and international oral history communities. We cannot be held responsible for any issues that arise.

APPENDICES

TROUBLESHOOTING AUDIO & IMAGE FILES

These are some of the problems we came across during our testing phase.

ISSUES WITH MP3 FILES

Occasionally the security settings within the Omeka CMS need to be changed to allow mp3 files to be uploaded.

To rectify this, select **Settings** from the header menu of the Omeka CMS.

Select the **Security** tab.

Within **Allowed File Extensions** use the scrollbar and place cursor at the end of the list. Add a comma at the end of the list and type in the following:

application/octet-stream

Do not add any spaces or commas after this text!

Click on **Save Changes.**

Return to **Dashboard** or **Neatline** as required.

ISSUES WITH IMAGE FILES

When working with items containing images in the Omeka CMS, it is useful to have a thumbnail of the image associated with it. If this is not showing (for example in your item list), the settings within the Omeka CMS need to be changed.

Select **Settings** from the header menu of the Omeka Dashboard.

Within the **General** tab (which opens as default) scroll down to **ImageMagick Directory Path.** Within this field box type the following:

/usr/bin

Do not add any spaces or commas after this text!

Click on **Save Changes.**

Return to **Dashboard** or **Neatline** as required.

SAMPLE METADATA

This is a list of sample Dublin Core Metadata for Oral History Files entered into the CMS / Omeka database. They should be adjusted to suit your own project files.

DC element	Oral history adaptation for excerpts
Title	A title associated with the recording, e.g. - The only light on South Main Street in the evening
Subject	Main topic of the excerpt, e.g. - The decline of South Main Street
Description	A short explanation of the content of the resource and the purpose for which the excerpt was made, e.g. - Excerpt from an oral history interview where the narrator reflects on the decline of South Main Street
Creator	The name of the archive, e.g. - Cork Folklore Project
Source	A catalogue number relates to the original file
Publisher	The name of the archive/creator, e.g. - Cork Folklore Project
Date	This is the date that the excerpt was made
Contributor	To include all roles as follows, narrator(s) (interviewee), interviewer(s) and editor (person doing the excerpts, e.g. - Clive Davis (narrator), Stephen Dee and Dermot Casey (interviewers), Penny Johnston (editor)
Rights	E.g. - Copyright Cork Folklore Project
Relation	A link to the original audio interview
Format	mp3 or ogg for excerpts
Language	English (apart from some files that may contain some Irish)
Type	Audio or video
Identifier	Filename or URL
Coverage	Excerpt from an oral history interview

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION ON HTML CODING

Using the code provided in Section D[1], the following additional information may help you understand the code, which may be useful should you need to edit it for your project.

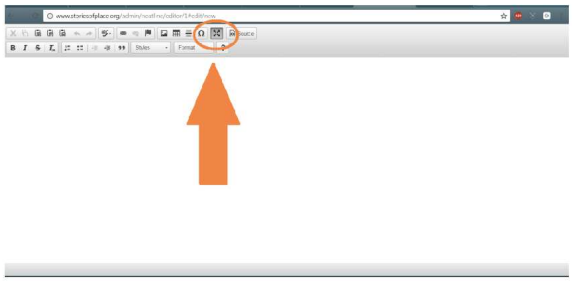
In your Neatline Exhibit, select the record you wish to edit, or select New Record.

Within the **Text Tab** (usually opens as default), use the **Body** box to create/edit the html.

This **Body** box can be expanded for ease of use (as well as additional formatting options) by clicking on **Edit HTML**.

Then select **Source** button. Write/paste your HTML code here.

Once editing is completed simply click the expand/collapse toggle button beside **Source** (highlighted in screenshot below) to bring back to main record details.



Click **Save.**

EDITING YOUR SOURCE CODE:

Your specific files and text must be entered into the pseudo code below, by replacing the text in CAPS as appropriate, before pasting into the **Body** field box.

Enter any text you wish to display with the item, placing each paragraph between ** ** and ** ** (which opens and closes a paragraph, respectively, and both are required).

In the CMM, images were required for display, so the following HTML code was used to direct to database images, and may be omitted if images are not used:

```
<img src="URL LINK FROM OMEKA" alt="WRITE IMAGE DESCRIPTOR HERE FOR
VISUALLY IMPAIRED USERS OF WEBSITE">
```

The URLs for these items can be found in your Omeka/CMS, as detailed in Section D.

Formatting images is outside the remit of this training document, however, if required HTML code can be inserted into the image tab (i.e. after **<img** and before the closing **>**). For example, to format image placement:

```
<img src="URL" align="center" alt="DESCRIPTOR"
style="width:480px;height:320px">
```

In CMM an audio player is required so audio files play in the website. The following HTML code was used to insert the player and may be omitted if your project does not use audio:

```
<audio controls>
   <source src="URL LINK FROM OMEKA FOR .ogg FILE" type= "audio/ogg" >
   <source src="URL LINK FROM OMEKA FOR .mp3 FILE" type= "audio/mpeg" >
Your browser does not support the audio element.
</audio>
```

Use the appropriate URL link from Omeka to replace the text highlighted above in green.

Note: The audio code for this player comes from the W3schools website (http://www.w3schools.com/html/html5_audio.asp)

If you want to upload video, see here for HTML5 video player code:
http://www.w3schools.com/html/html5_video.asp

PROJECT RESOURCES

Case Study:

CMM: Cork Memory Map is the case study used for this training document. This exhibit was designed and built in Omeka and Neatline by Penny Johnston and the Cork Folklore Project. It is currently available on:

http://cork.storiesofplace.org

Website Hosting Provider:

Reclaim Hosting used by CFP for CMM due to its ease of use with Omeka. Available on: www.reclaimhosting.com.

Software :

- http://omeka.org/
- https://github.com/
- http://neatline.org/

Online Tutorials:

W3 Schools is a Web Development site which offers tutorials in web languages such as HTML. This may be beneficial for tailoring your own specific online project. Available on: http://www.w3schools.com

If not using Reclaim Hosting, Omeka will be installed in a different manner than that described in this manual. Instead, download Omeka from: http://omeka.org/ and follow hosting service instructions.

Up and running with Omeka: http://programminghistorian.org/lessons/up-and-running-with-omeka

The Omeka Forums: http://omeka.org/forums

Getting started with Omeka: http://libguides.library.cofc.edu/c.php?g=230905&p=1532681

Neatline documentation: http://docs.neatline.org

Omeka Exhibit Building with Neatline: http://guides.library.ucsc.edu/omeka-exhibit-building/neatline

Spatial Humanities Omeka and Neatline: http://ryancordell.org/research/spatial-humanities/omekaneatline-workshop

GLOSSARY

Application: A program, such as Microsoft Word and smart phone applications (apps).

Content Management System (CMS): is an application used to upload content to your website domain.

Content Manager: You! Or any person who adds or edits content to your website / online map.

Domain name: This is a website address [or URL] which will need to be purchased if you don't already have a current website. It can be done through an individual domain name registration service, but most hosting accounts offer this as part of their subscription.

End User: The technical term for a person browsing and using your website once it is published online.

Interface / User Interface / Graphic User Interface [GUI]: is how the end user interacts with the website, using mouse, keyboard or touch-screen with images, menus and links on the screen.

Plugin: A mini program that works within specific applications only. They may allow for the installation of related **sub-plugins** (also called **Widgets**) to improve functionality of the main plugin.

Web Hosting: A web hosting service provides a platform from which your website will be built. This is where all the data (text, pictures, etc,) that you wish to have on your web project will be stored online, ready to be displayed.

Appendix V: Dissemination (list of conference posters, presentations and articles based on this PhD research)

Publications in conference proceedings

Johnston, P. (2016). Stories of place: presenting the local in an online world. In T. Collins, G. Kindermann, C. Newman, & N. Cronin (Eds.), *Landscape Values: place and praxis* (pp. 149–153). Galway: Centre for Landscape Studies, NUI Galway.

Conference presentations

"Stories of Place: a new memory map of Cork city," (with James Furey and Laura Murphy) at the Oral History Network of Ireland conference at University College Cork, October 2016.

"Stories of Place. Presenting the local in an online world," at the Landscape Values: Place and Praxis conference at National University of Ireland, Galway, June 2016.

"Main Street? Creating a digital oral history of urban decline," at the Digital Research in the Humanities and Arts conference in Dublin City University, September 2015.

"Is Intangible Culture Different? Looking at Ideas of Digital and Immaterial in the Oral History Archive," at the Digital Material conference, panel 5, in the National University of Ireland, Galway, May 2015.

"Local, digital, global: assessing local cultural heritage resources online," at the College of Arts, Celtic Studies and Social Sciences Postgraduate Conference, University College Cork, December 2014.

"Can digital outreach help oral history groups build communities?" at the Oral History Network of Ireland in Kilkenny, 13 September 2014.

"Getting to know your digital audience: a case study from the Cork Folklore Project," (with Clíona O'Carroll) at the Oral History Society conference, Manchester Metropolitan University, 19 July 2014.

Research posters

"New narratives online: re-contextualising the oral history archive," at the DARIAH Ireland launch at the National University of Ireland Maynooth, May 2015.

"Local voices, worldwide conversations," at Digital Humanities 2014 in Lausanne, July 2014.

"Maps, space and place in digital oral history," at the Digital Humanities Summer Institute at the University of British Columbia, Canada, June 2014.

Appendix VI: Documentation submitted to the Social Research Ethics Committee for ethics approval

The documentation that follows is material that I sent to the Social Research Ethics Committee in University College Cork at the very beginning of my research (it was necessary to get approval before the research could commence). This now stands as evidence of how research projects can change between the time when they were initially conceived and the production of the final thesis. When I submitted this documentation, I thought that I would assess the value of digital projects that were already up and running by conducting interviews with various stakeholders. In the end, because I spent a lot of time building entirely new projects, there was never time to conduct one-to-one interviews about the digital resource. Instead, my PhD archive includes audio recordings of user studies sessions. To comply with best archival practice I will use the "Cork Memory Map Project Clearance Note and Deposit Instructions" form (below) when the audio recordings are submitted to the Cork Folklore Project archive to contribute to the documentation of the working practice of the organisation.

Local Voices, Worldwide Conversations

Contribution to the Oral History archive of the Cork Folklore Project

Information Sheet

Purpose of the Study.

As part of the requirements for my PhD research at UCC, I will be carrying out oral history research that involves interviewing people to find out about how they relate to places (Cork in particular). This will be carried out in collaboration with the Cork Folklore Project (please see attached leaflet for information about this project).

What will the study involve?

The study will involve interviewing people to collect their stories about everyday life in Cork in the past and in the present. These stories will contribute to the archive of the Cork Folklore Project (www.ucc.ie/cfp), and extracts may be selected for dissemination online, as part of the Cork Memory Map (www.corkmemorymap.org). Interviews are not strictly structured, and are directed by you, the participant. You can talk about any memories or stories about life in Cork that interests you. Interviews usually take between forty-five minutes and two hours, and they can be longer if you like.

Why have you been asked to take part?

You have been asked to participate because you have interesting stories to tell about Cork. Everyone has a story to tell!

Do you have to take part?

No. Participation is entirely voluntary and every participant needs to sign a consent form. The recorded interview will be held, for posterity, in the Cork Folklore Project.

If, in the future, you wish to withdraw your participation from this research or from this archive, then you are free to do so, using the contact details provided below.

How will your contribution be recognised?

Most contributors choose to have their name mentioned with their contribution. Oral history projects do not guarantee anonymity as a person's voice or some details may be recognisable. If you would prefer that we do not use your name, we can acknowledge you using initials, a pseudonym or a description of your choice (e.g. “Woman from Blackpool”).

What will happen to the information which you give?

The recording of the entire interview, and a transcript of it, will be kept in the archive of the Cork Folklore Project. This archive is available for public consultation by appointment. An archival summary of the interview, outlining the content of the recording, will be included in the database of the Cork Folklore Project (this database will ultimately be available online). Selected extracts from the interview may be disseminated online, in the form of transcripts or audio extracts associated with the online database, or as audio extracts associated with the Cork Memory Map (www.corkmemorymap.org).

What will happen to the material generated?

The interviews will be accessioned into the archive of the Cork Folklore Project. Some extracts may be presented in my research thesis. This will be seen by my supervisor, a second marker and the external examiner. The thesis will be submitted to the UCC online repository, CORA, and will therefore be

available for open access consultation in digital format. The study may be published in a research journal, and results may be presented at conferences. At every stage of the archiving and dissemination process, duty of care towards the material and the participants will be exercised and interview material will be edited in order to remove any sensitive material.

What are the possible advantages/disadvantages of taking part?

Being interviewed about your life can be a very interesting experience, prompting you to think about events and people and making you aware of how interesting your life story is. At the end of each interview an audio copy is generated and given to participants, so that you and your family can listen to it. Many families find this a positive experience. The interview is also safeguarded for posterity within the Cork Folklore Project archive. However, the experience of remembering and making the past more vivid may include difficult emotions for some people.

What if there is a problem?

At the end of the interview, I will discuss with you how you found the experience. If there are any problems then, or in the future, you can discuss them with me using the contact details provided below. You can also discuss any issues with staff at the Cork Folklore Project.

Who has reviewed this study?

Approval must be given by the Social Research Ethical Committee at UCC before studies like this can take place.

.

Any further queries? If you need any further information, you can contact me or the Cork Folklore Project:

Penny Johnston

[redacted]

[redacted]

Cork Folklore Project

[redacted]

xxxx@xxx.xx

The Cork Folklore Project was founded as a non-profit community research and oral history archive in a partnership with the Department of Folklore and Ethnology at University College Cork, Northside Community Enterprises and FÁS. Serving as a community employment scheme located in St. Finbarr's College, Farranferris, in Cork City, more than ninety people have worked on the project, acquiring training in computers, oral history interviewing, research, photography, video and sound recording, desktop publishing, archival methods and more.

Since our beginnings in August 1996, the Project has been at work collecting folklore and oral histories--preserving a record of the rich traditions of Cork City and beyond. Our projects have covered a wide array of topics including: bingo; hurling; road bowling; showbands; drag hunting; Roy Keane; children's games and rhymes; toys and fashions; textile production; religious processions and feast days; boat building; Traveller families; and Rory Gallagher, documenting the everyday lives of the local people. Our permanent public archive contains hundreds of hours of sound and film recordings and around 5,000 photographs, available to community groups, schools and individual researchers.

Our many accomplishments include:

- **17 issues of our highly regarded free annual journal, *The Archive***
- **The book, *Life Journey, Living Folklore in Ireland Today***
- **An attractive portable exhibition, funded by the Heritage Council**
- **Our *Cork 2005, European Capital of Culture* oral history project that resulted in six half hour radio programmes and a book, both entitled, *How's it goin', boy?***
- **Four short films made in conjunction with Frameworks Films: *A Night at Bingo; Sunbeam; Blackpool, Old Heart, New Face*; and *I Went Down to the North Infirmary*, the last two having been made for Cork Community Television and funded by the Broadcasting Commission of Ireland's Sound and Vision programme.**

An exciting new endeavour begun in 2010 is *The Cork Memory Map*, an interactive city map that portrays the landscape in the words of its people. Including visuals, text and audio, the memory map documents the personal memories, folklore, occupational lore, characters and stories associated with the landmarks, streets and lanes of Cork. The online map makes all of this rich material accessible to the public; clicking on a point of interest in the city will let you hear people talk about growing up in the area, a description of the trades and streetscapes of recent or bygone times and much more. We also hope to develop self-directed audio tours using this material which will be accessed either through mobile phones or other media devices.

The Cork Folklore Project offers training, advice and support to groups and individuals involved in oral history and folklore. We continue to develop links with overseas educational institutions, along with our connections to diverse community and cultural groups here in Ireland. We have a strong relationship with the Cork City and County Archive and our local Heritage Officers, and have been named as an official partner in the County Cork 5 Year Heritage Plan. To find out more, please see:

www.ucc.ie/cfp

www.corkmemorymap.org

Cork Folklore Project

CORK MEMORY MAP PROJECT

CLEARANCE NOTE AND DEPOSIT INSTRUCTIONS

The purpose of this deposit agreement is to ensure that your contribution is added to the archive of the **Cork Folklore Project** in strict accordance with your wishes. All material, including sound recordings and photographs, will be preserved as a permanent public reference resource for possible use in research, publication, education, lectures, broadcasting and online.

If you wish to limit public access to your contribution for a period of years (up to a maximum of 30 years) please state these conditions (note: it is not possible for us to promise anonymity for materials deposited in our archive):

I hereby assign the copyright in my contribution to the Cork Folklore Project.

Interviewee/Contributor:

PRINT NAME_____ DATE_____

SIGNATURE_____

PRINT ADDRESS_____

_____

PHONE NUMBER _____EMAIL_____

May we use your name in conjunction with your contribution? YES NO

If not, how should we refer to you? _____

You will receive a copy of your interview on CD.

The Cork Folklore Project
St. Finbarr's College Farranferris
Cork
(021) 422-8100

www.ucc.ie/cfp
www.corkmemorymap.org

Collector's Name and Signature_____

The CORK FOLKLORE PROJECT

Northside Community Enterprises

St. Finbarr's College Farranferris

Redemption Road, Cork

Phone: 021- 422-8100

REQUEST FOR USE OF THE ARCHIVE

Name_____ Date_____

Address_____ Phone_____

Describe fully the sort of material or the specific items you are looking for. Mention if you are interested in a particular geographical area.

What use do you plan to make of this material? Are you writing a book, article, essay, thesis? Please be as specific as possible.

I understand that all material is the property of the Cork Folklore Project Archive and cannot be reproduced or published in any way or form without the written permission of the Research Director or Project Manager. I undertake to use correct Archive reference numbers in all my notes or copying, and in any work which may use Archive materials. I also agree to bear all cost for photocopying, photographs, and media duplication in connection with my request.

Signed _____

Date_____

Remarks: