

OHS Media Guidelines (Britain)

Prepared by the Oral History Committee's Media Working Group

(last updated October 2006)

If you have oral histories that members of the media want to use

1. *Establish who you're dealing with.* Be clear about *who* it is approaching you to request the use of either existing recordings you have or contacts you might be able to provide for follow up interviews.
 - a. Who are they employed by?
 - b. Have they actually been commissioned to make the programme or are they merely researching for a pitch or proposal?
 - c. What will the programme(s) be about?
 - d. When will the programme(s) be broadcast and where?
 - e. Will there be any additional web, DVD and/or published outcomes?

You might like to ask them to provide these details in writing.

2. *Put the interviewee first.*
 - a. Never give away contact information without contacting your interviewee first and asking their permission.
 - b. Never allow access to recordings or associated materials without clearance as detailed in the Society's Ethical and Copyright Guidelines: <http://www.ohs.org.uk/ethics/>. Although it is not necessary in all cases, we also suggest that it is good practice to attempt to contact the interviewee again even if you have copyright clearance.¹
 - c. Remember that interviewees have the moral right to be named as the "authors" of their recorded words if they are published or broadcast; and publishers and broadcasters are obliged not to subject their words to "derogatory treatment" by, for example, editing, adapting or making

¹ Assignment of copyright to the holding organisation is not required for limited onsite reference access to material on a private research-only basis where a clearance/access agreement form is held. But copyright must be held by the repository (or be readily obtainable from whoever holds it) if dubbings or copies are being requested for broadcast or publication.

alterations which create a false impression, or by decontextualising their words. These rights are retained by interviewees regardless of who owns the copyright.

3. *Be prepared.* Organisations should decide on how they will deal with media requests by:
 - a. Drawing up their own policies, including whether the organisation or individuals in the organisation should have a screen credit.
 - b. Determining the financial costs, including staff time and reproduction costs, involved. It is worth noting that media companies (including the BBC and ITV charge for the use of their archived material).²
[See our Charging Guidelines below.](#)
 - c. Different companies take different approaches. Do a little research about the company you are dealing with. So, for example, the BBC editorial guidelines are published at:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/guidelines/editorialguidelines/onguide/interacting/index.shtml>
These include a section on ‘Handing user-generated content over to a non-BBC archive’ in which the BBC recognises ‘the need to respect contributors’ wishes’ and notes that if an interviewee has contributed ‘to a permanent national archive, they may not expect their material to be exploited commercially’.
4. *Recognise and understand* that the media has its own rules, pressures and concerns including:
 - a. Editorial freedom. Contributors will not be allowed to determine the editorial direction or content of a programme.
 - b. Both the National Union of Journalists (NUJ) and the International Federation of Journalists insist that their members shall use only fair methods to obtain materials for broadcast. The NUJ explicitly states that
A journalist shall obtain information, photographs and illustrations only by straightforward means. The use of other means can be justified only by over-riding considerations of the public interest. The journalist is entitled to exercise a personal conscientious objection to the use of such

² ITV (who own a huge amount of material including British Pathe 1896 – 1970), and the BBC, have stated that rates for usage depend on several key factors.

means. See <http://media.gn.apc.org/nujcode.html> [last accessed 31 August 2006].

- c. Since 2003 broadcasting in Britain has been governed by Ofcom. The Ofcom Broadcasting Code is available at: <http://www.ofcom.org.uk/tv/ifi/codes/bcode/> The Code is concerned mainly with impartiality and freedom of expression, but takes into account the European Convention on Human Rights, <http://www.pfc.org.uk/legal/echrtext.htm>
- d. All broadcasting, both BBC and commercial, is covered by codes of conduct. The commercial sector has its own specific codes supervised by the relevant licensing authorities. The BBC has separate procedures culminating with its Board of Governors. Viewers and listeners can complain either to the specific body (Independent Television Commission, Radio Authority and the BBC) or to the general agency, the Broadcasting Standards Commission, or both.
- e. Magazines and newspapers are governed by the Press Complaints Commission, who also have a code of practice: <http://www.pcc.org.uk/cop/cop.asp>
- f. All media companies have their own complaints procedures (we've listed some below).

5. *Avoid being pressurised* by programme makers:

- a. If you don't want to take part in the making of a programme say so.
- b. If you feel you are being unduly pressurised contact the Oral History Society through our members' pages providing the programme maker's name, programme title, and the organisation he or she says they are working for.

Charging Guidelines

When costing charges for requests by the media the following should be considered:

Staff time:

Liaising with the company making the request

Conducting searches for interviewee information and recorded data

Contacting interviewees to obtain their permission

Copying materials

Supplying materials
Associated costs
Materials used in reproduction
Postage and telephone charges
Blank recording and IT media
Photocopying

You might apply additional cost weightings such as:

The context in which the recording will be used: TV, feature film, corporate video, multimedia application, CD-ROM, etc.

Countries in which the production/product will be used

Duration of the licence required

The amount of the recording being copied

Any digitisation and transfer of analogue originals that is required (eg dubbing from cassette or open-reel to CDR or DVD) or any real-time transfer between formats that is requested (eg from minidisc to CDR or MP3)

Any specialist technical work that might be required (eg dehissing cassette originals, declicking discs, or assemble edits of selected extracts)

Useful addresses

BBC: Viewer and Listener Correspondence, BBC, 4th Floor, Villiers House, The Broadway, Ealing, London W5 2PA or Head of Programme Complaint, Complaints Unit, BBC Broadcasting House, London W1A 1AA

Independent Television Commission, tel: 020 7255 3000, 33 Foley Street, London W1P 7LB

Radio Authority, tel: 020 7405 7052, Programming and Advertising Department, The Radio Authority, Holbrook House, 14 Great Queen Street, London WC2B 5DG

Broadcasting Standards Commission, tel: 020 7233 0544, 7 The Sanctuary, London SW1P 3JS.

Press Complaints Commission, tel: 0845 600 2757 Halton House, 20/23 Holborn, London EC1N 2JD.

If you are a member of the media who wants to use oral history materials held in an archive or other repository

1. *Who are you employed by?* Clearly state who you are and the company you represent. It also helps to make it clear at the outset whether or not you have already accessed the repository's catalogue (online or otherwise) and whether or not you have contacted the organisation before.
2. *What are your aims?* Clearly state your intended use of recordings, interview data or interviewee details;
 - a. What will the programme(s) be about?
 - b. When will the programme(s) be broadcast and where?
3. *Put it in writing.* It is especially helpful if you put your requests for assistance in writing.
4. *Be patient.*
 - a. Requests for interviewee contact information will only be met after the interviewee is contacted and their permission obtained.
 - b. Access to recordings or associated materials is generally covered by copyright and clearance as detailed in the Oral History Society's Ethical and Copyright Guidelines: <http://www.ohs.org.uk/ethics/>
 - c. Some collection items may require time-consuming specialist conservation and /or digitisation work before they can be supplied in a ready-to-use format.
 - d. Bear in mind that very few publicly-funded archives or repositories have the staffing levels or resources to allow instant or fast-track delivery of material for media use.
5. *Remember* interviewees have the moral right to be named as the "authors" of their recorded words if they are published or broadcast; and publishers and broadcasters are obliged not to subject their words to "derogatory treatment" by, for example, editing, adapting or making alterations which create a false impression. These rights are retained by interviewees regardless of who owns the copyright.
6. *Be prepared.*

- a. To work with organisations who have developed their own policies (in addition to these guidelines), including whether the organisation or individuals in the organisation should have a screen credit.
- b. To meet the financial costs involved in your request, including staff time, technical and reproduction costs.