UNIVERSITY OF AMSTERDAM
Faculty of Humanities

OH-SMArt
ORAL HISTORY – STORIES AT THE MUSEUM AROUND ARTWORKS

Interviews in Conservation Initiative Guidelines for Processing and Depositing Interviews

1. Consent

1. Inform your interviewee with an Information Brochure and make sure to have informed consent from all parties involved, interviewer(s), videographer and everyone else visible or audible.
2. You can find ICI informed consent form templates, (EN) and (NL), on www.uva.nl/ici under Resources
3. Aim for open access to best adhere to FAIR data principles. Alternatives are provided but open access includes most possibilities, even if you decide to publish the material with restricted access.

2. Privacy and Pre-archiving

1. GDPR urges to download audio or video recordings from the recording device as soon as possible, directly on a protected Research Drive. Commercial Cloud Services are not recommended as it is known that AI training can access storage spaces, including Dropbox, Google Drive, OneDrive and SharePoint (if permitted one would hope).
2. All downloaded files should be checked for completeness and corruption, files named according to conventions as indicated in the ICI file names guideline on www.uva.nl/ici.
3. Create folder per interviewee <last name, first name>, followed per interview <last_name_YYYYMMDD_Place>.
4. At all times, leave all original material on the Research Drive, even after permanently depositing in a trusted archive, such as DANS in the Netherlands, and has received a Digital Object Identifier (DOI), a stable URL.

3. Automatically Transcribe

Whisper is an automatic speech recognition (ASR) system developed by OpenAI that can be used on a local device, e.g., your own computer and without internet access. For Mac OS, MacWhisper is easiest, for Windows, Python or Subtitle Edit or aTrain. Do note this is subject to change given the rapid developments in this field.

Mac OS: MacWhisper

1. Download MacWhisper from https://goodsnooze.gumroad.com/l/macwhisper for free version and install.
2. Note that App store updating prompts may bring you to the Appstore later, which requires payment for the free version. It will overwrite your first install and making it unavailable. Normally, updates are notified by email.
   If you opt to use a paid version with better quality recognition, medium is a perfect model to use, large may not fit your device and is possibly made available institutions (e.g., SURF).
3. You can either use MacWhisper to correct only subtitles, but Whisper Corrector generates subtitles (.srt), text including speaker turns (.txt) and a time aligned search-and-find interface (.html) in one go (see 4).

Windows: Subtitle Edit

1. Download latest version of Subtitle Edit from https://github.com/SubtitleEdit/subtitleedit/releases
2. The first time you use the program for speech recognition, you will be required to change some settings, only once.
   a. Click Options – Settings.
   b. In the window that opens, click on Video player, then on Download mpv lib, then click OK
   c. In the main menu, click on Video – Audio to text (Whisper) (the programme asks download permission)
   d. Click Yes to download FFmpeg, then click OK
   e. Click Yes to download whisper.ccp, then click OK
   f. In the window that opens, click on the three dots
   g. Select the model(s) you want to use for speech recognition. A larger model means more accurate transcription, but slower processing. Models ending in ".en" are more accurate but only for full English text
   h. Once you've downloaded the model(s), Subtitle Edit is ready to use for speech recognition

3. To automatically transcribe an audio or video file with Subtitle Edit, use the following steps:
    a. Click on Video, Open video file, and select your audio or video file (click 'All files' in the lower right corner);
    b. Click on Video – Audio to text (Whisper);
    c. Select the language and the desired model (make sure you have downloaded the model before);
    d. Make sure the boxes 'Auto adjust timings' and 'Use post-processing' are ticked;
    e. Click on Generate. The program will start automatic recognition. You can follow the progress in the green bar
    f. When automatic recognition is completed, save the .srt file by clicking File – Save as. Save the file in the same folder as your audio or video file under the same file name, excluding the file extension;
4. You can either use Subtitle Edit to correct only subtitles (.srt), but Whisper Corrector generates subtitles (.srt), text including speaker turns (.txt) and a time aligned search-and-find interface (.html) in one go (see 4).

NoScribe

Since Whisper appeared in 2022, many others have used the open-source software to improve its performance and offer various applications to the community. An excellent example is No Scribe, to be downloaded for free for various operating systems https://github.com/kaixxx/noScribe. Scroll down for the explanation and download options.

4. Carefully Correct

All ASR results still need some correction. To make most profit of your correction effort, make sure that you select a correction programme with multiple file output, for transcript (txt), subtitles (srt, vtt), and, for instance, an audio-text html interface to facilitate searches. For this purpose, Arjan van Hessen has developed the free open-source programme WhisperCorrector, available from https://asr.brs85.nl.

1. Always start with a new download for the latest version of WhisperCorrector from the website. You may have to actively go around your safety settings to open the application.
2. For every new interview, change the settings to 'expert mode' to open the ASR delivered .json file one time only. The software generates a xml work-file. If you repeat these steps when you have already started correcting the xml, all this work is replaced with a new xml starting from scratch. To avoid this from happening, save the app settings in 'normal' mode so it will automatically show the option to open xml only during the correcting stage.
3. Once xml is opened, specify speakers and click 'Replace and Safe All Speakers'.
4. Correct the text under the 'memo' tab. Open the AV-file from the same folder if not opened automatically.
5. Follow these rules to obtain the desired result:
    a. Avoid freestanding interpunction, e.g. with spaces around it.
    b. Avoid square brackets in the running text […], for they indicate the speaker turns only.
    c. Do not add additional information in the text to preserve the time-alignment. Clarifications and annotations can be added in a copy of the final transcript to avoid interference with the subtitles
6. Tools:
    a. right mouse click to Search and Replace a word in the entire file;
    b. turns can be 'glued' to combine two sections (or more);
    c. the playing indicator can be dragged to the left to fast-forward and may result in continued playing, which can be helpful to hear what's being said in between turns.
7. Once you are done correcting, export the results in Expert mode once more (Settings – Show expert mode), click export All files. The corrected versions will land in the 'results' folder. Follow Whisper Corrector Manual.
8. Check the .txt file manually for typos (red underlined), double spaces, floating interpunction marks, and find-replace them in WhisperCorrector to complete correction.
9. Click on Export mode once more and export All Files for corrected srt (subtitles); html (audio-text interface); txt (machine readable); word.txt, as a basis for your final (annotated) transcript (see 5).

5. Transcript

1. Open the '.word.txt' and copy-paste into Word or your preferred text editing programme.
2. Select all text and slide the left margin to the right and fix at 3 cm (or wider) for proper speaker alignment.
3. Add metadata to provide context. See the ICI metadata + transcript template (EN) and (NL) on www.uva.nl/ici

6. Video Subtitling

DANS uses vtt with their video playout with a language code added. You can simply convert srt to vtt, in Subtitle Edit or a standalone convertor, available from https://asr.brs85.nl. For automatic playout in the DANS viewer interface, add the

correct language code after the file name, before the file extension, separated by a dot: Sille_20250117_Popovich.nl.vtt. Note that both .nl and .vtt are preceded by a dot.

Currently, three languages are read in the DANS DataStation SSH:

- .nl (Dutch)
- .de (German)
- .en (Engels)

7. Double check consent

1. Before deposition, you need to have consent from all parties involved, provide the interviewee with the corrected transcript for a final review, and have the videographer, and everyone else visible or audible, to sign consent (see 1). Archive this with the material on the protected Research Drive / SURF Drive, as it cannot be deposited with DANS.
2. Aim for open access to support the FAIR principles in research. Alternatives are provided, but if you opt for restricted access, you will have to ask again for each access request in case you would like to cite or publish parts of it.

8. Deposition

1. a. [Register and] Log in DANS Data Station Social Sciences and Humanities, click on Add Data, New Dataset. Or:
   b. [Once registered with DANS (see under a) and access granted via a one-time only safety token]. Log in on http://ohsmart.datastations.nl, via your institution or your google account, click on Deposit Data for an Oral History specific and straight forward deposition, including standardised metadata connected to Persistent Identifiers (PIDs).
2. For examples, browse the most recent interviews grouped under, Interviews in Conservation Research, at the DANS Data Station SSH, https://ssh.datastations.nl/.
3. For deposition of Oral History specific data, you can use a user-friendly interface https://ohsmart.datastations.nl
4. For depositions directly in the Data Station SSH, see DANS deposition guidelines
   - Before depositing: follow link, and fill out metadata template, and merge with transcript into pdf
   - During depositing: follow link. Under 'Relation metadata': 'Oral History'; 'Interviews in Conservation Research'
   - After depositing: follow link. See 7.
5. Some keyword fields are free text fields, others are linked to standardized thesauri (Getty AAT, ELSST, Wikidata). Use additional thesauri f for all terms not found in the integrated controlled vocabularies with persistent Identifiers (PIDs). For additional Dutch terms and names, try RKD Artists, https://research.rkd.nl, and the Getty Union List of Artist Names, ULAN for international artists. For Getty AAT, Wikidata, and ELSST, start typing a keyword in English, and select from the suggestions from the drop-down menu. For CEDLA there is only one category for arts. Be creative in finding alternative keywords that are similar in meaning to find terms with a PID for optimal standardisation and linkability.
6. Make sure to fill out a Data Access Protocol template to add to the dataset, https://zenodo.org/records/10887572. In this form, the DOI of the dataset needs to be filled out, so this should be done last, as the DOI is created once a draft dataset has entered the Data Station SSH. Complete the form and upload as PDF to your dataset as Open Access in DANS Data Station SSH. For detailed information on how to deposit data with Restricted Access, see: *Guidebook - Depositing Restricted Access In the DANS Data Stations* (1.0). Zenodo. https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.10887484.
7. For Conservator Interviews, make sure to inform the FAIC Oral History project of the new interview that they can add it to the FAIC Oral History Project Interviewee List. Contact Rebecca Rushfield or Joyce Hill Stoner through https://www.culturalheritage.org/resources/resources-for-conservation-professionals/online-resources/oral-history-project