

Digital Preservation at Oxford and Cambridge

A collaborative research project to evaluate and provide sustainable recommendations for our digital preservation programmes

Skills interviewing using the DPOC skills interview toolkit

Posted on **16 May, 2017** by **ljp**

Cambridge Outreach & Training Fellow, Lee, shares his experiences in skills auditing.

As I am nearing the end of my fourteenth transcription and am three months into skills interview process, now is a good time to pause and reflect. This post will look at the experience of the interview process using the DPOC digital preservation skills toolkit. this toolkit is currently under development; we are learning and improving it as we trial it at Cambridge and Oxford.

Step 1: Identify your potential participants

To understand colleagues' use of technology and training needs, a series of interviews were arranged. We agreed that a maximum sample of 25 participants would give us plenty (perhaps *too much?*) of material to work with. Before invitations were sent out, a list was made up of potential participants. In building the list, a set of criteria ensured that a broad range of colleagues were captured. This criteria consisted of:

- in what department or library do they work?
- is there a particular bias of colleagues from a certain department or library and can this be redressed?

- what do they do?
- is there a suitable practitioner to manager ratio?

The criteria relies on you having a good grasp of your institution, its organisation and the people within it. If you are unsure, start asking managers and colleagues who do know your institution very well—you will learn a lot! It is also worth having a longer list than your intended maximum in case you do not get responses, or people are not available or do not wish to participate.

Step 2: Inviting your potential participants

Prior to sending out invitations, the intended participant's managers were consulted to see if they would agree to their staff time being used in this way. This was also a good opportunity to continue awareness raising of the project as well as getting buy-in to the the interview process.

The interviews were arranged in blocks of five to make planning around other work easier.

Step 3: Interviewing

The DPOC semi-structured skills interview questions were put to the test at this step. Having developed the questions beforehand ensured I covered the necessary digital preservation skills during the interview.

Here are some tips I gained from the interview process which helped to get some great responses.

- **Offer refreshments before the interview.** Advise beforehand that a generous box of chocolate biscuits will be available throughout proceeding. This also gives you an excellent chance to talk informally to your subject and put them at ease, especially if they appear nervous.
- **If using, make sure your recording equipment is working.** There's nothing worse than thinking you have fifty minutes of interview gold only to find that you've not pressed play or the device has run out of power. Take a second device, or if you don't want the technological hassle, use pen(cil) and paper.
- **Start with colleagues that you know quite well.** This will help you understand the flow of the questions better and they will not shy away from honest feedback.
- **Always have printed copies of interview questions.** Technology almost always fails you.

My next post will be about transcribing and analysing interviews.

SHARE THIS:



Share

This entry was posted in [skills & competencies](#), [training](#) by [ljp](#).

Bookmark the [permalink](#)

[\[http://www.dpoc.ac.uk/2017/05/16/skills-interviewing-using-the-dpoc-skills-interview-toolkit/\]](http://www.dpoc.ac.uk/2017/05/16/skills-interviewing-using-the-dpoc-skills-interview-toolkit/) .

This site uses Akismet to reduce spam. [Learn how your comment data is processed.](#)