

Transnational History

Preparatory hints for recording biographical interviews

Martina Aichhorn

1. Equipment

Video camcorder + enough storage/cards

Audio recording device + enough storage/cards + headphones!!!

Tripod

Spotlight

Power source/sufficient power supply/battery pack

Power-Distributor

Extension cables

2. Technical specifications

VIDEO

file format: MP4, HD

frame size: 1920 X 1080

frame rate: 25 frames per second

AUDIO

16 Bit minimum, Stereo

48 kHz

3. First steps

- 01 Test the equipment before meeting the interview partner
- 02 Be sure that you have sufficient storage, do not change storage devices as SD cards while the interviewee is speaking (if you really have to change wait till the interviewer is asking!!!)
- 03 Choose a „quiet“ background in a suitable, quiet location which does not deflect from the interviewee.



04 Put the audio device close to the interviewee. Mind humming sources like airconditions or fridges and wobbling floors! Run an internal test with video/audio before interviewee will get seated! Be sure the interviewee feels comfortable!

05 Setting:

A. Medium Close-up, no central position but central perspective! Interviewer is sitting close to the camera



B. Mind headroom and space for subtitles! But avoid too much „Air above Head“



06 Do not move the camcorder while recording! No zooming actions during recording either!

07 Normal focal length

08 Briefing the interview partners: „Talk to me please“ (to avoid interviewee’s view into camera!)
„Don’t worry, we can cut/edit it!“

09 Short audio test with the interview partner to choose the audio level

10 First ask the team, if they are ready and when yes ...

11 ... ask the interview partner if she/he is ready

12 A. Turn on the audio recording device and confirm „Audio is rolling“

B. Turn on the camcorder and confirm „Camera is rolling“

C. Name the take by saying „ Mimi Meyer, take 1“, clap your hands (important for editing!) and start the interview.