Oral History Summariser - 'Reading's Digital Revolution' project

Location: Virtual Volunteering for Reading Museum.

Reading Museum is seeking volunteers to summarise oral history recordings which have been made during the 'Reading's Digital Revolution' Project, which aims to document the story of Digital Equipment Corporation (DEC) and the inception of the UK's own Silicon Valley. No prior knowledge of history or oral histories is required. When complete, the summaries will be associated with the oral history recordings which will become part of the collections at either Reading Museum, or project partners, the National Museum of Computing at Bletchley Park.

Recordings range between 60 and 90 minutes and capture a wealth of DEC's history.

Why we want you:

We hope to recruit a small team of volunteers to summarise a library of around 30 oral history recordings so that they can be taken into the permanent collections of Reading Museum and/ or partners The National Museum of Computing.

What volunteers will be doing:

- Listening to recordings and making notes on the content of those recordings

- Organising a summary of the content and writing subheadings to define content

- Creating an accessible, detailed summary of each oral history recording that can be used by future researchers

Here is an example of a typical summary of a five minute recording:

00:00:00 – Interview Introduction

GC with TNMoC and RM. Interviewing former employees of DEC as part of 60th anniversary. Start with name, place, and date of birth.

Upbringing and family life

Conversation about how Angela's life started. This includes her background and that of her parents. She is from Scotland, father from Italy, mother from Ireland. Moved to Scotland and went to school there. Left school at 16. Went to university. Loved maths at school. Computing was new and Angela decided to do this. Four-year degree. Was one of the few people with a Computer Science degree at the time. Was very sought after, lots of job offers forthcoming. Started working in Fife with banking terminals. Got married and moved down south. Started working for Digital in the early 80s.

Women in computing

Did computer sciences at university. Angela loved it. Lots of programming, hardware. She built a personal computer in her final year. Bought all the pieces to build it. Covered everything in computing, including how the networks worked.

00:04:03 – Parents' background

Father is a geology teacher. Mother was a housewife. One of six children, and five of them went to university. Older sister was musical; older brother started law at university but then changed to computing.

You will need to have existing access to a laptop or desktop computer to fulfil the role in a remote capacity. You may also prefer to use headphones to listen to the audio.

Full training will be provided, and there will be support from Reading Museum for the duration of the role.

You will be allocated up to six recordings, and each summary generally takes around two days to complete. Therefore, the role will be flexible, but in any event, this project will finish on December 24th 2024.

The role will suit you if you:

- are organised – you will need to enjoy following a system to complete a rewarding task
- are IT literate – to complete your task, you will be using Microsoft Word and watching subtitled videos through a link to an online platform, as well as listening to audio files
- can write accessibly - with a flair for detail, you will be competent in writing brief, detailed summaries of each theme covered within the recording
- can work under own direction – you would complete your summaries and return them to us within the stated timeframe
- can problem solve – you may come across content which needs further investigation and interpretation. We'd like you be able to pursue this, resulting

in an accurate and informed summary which will be associated with the oral history recording that is accepted into Reading Museum's collection

What you will gain in return:

- Discover more about a fascinating and uncharted area of history
- The opportunity to work with the Community Engagement Curator and his team at Reading Museum
- You will be directly engaged with an ongoing historical research project, making oral history records more accessible to the public
- Access to events that the Reading's Digital Revolution project will organise

How much time will it take up?

We would appreciate if you could contribute an average of 3 or 4 days a month to the project.

Who does the role report to?

Kate Shrewsday, Reading's Digital Revolution Project Officer, based at Reading Museum: kate.shrewsday@reading.gov.uk

To apply:

Please click on this link to the volunteering platform http://bttr.im/w2yev and complete your application by **9am on Tuesday 20th August 2024.**

Please ensure you tick **'Oral History Summariser - Reading's Digital Revolution project'** in your 'Interests' section under My Profile, when registering.

Opportunities to carry out such tasks are few and far between, so you may not have had the chance to do this kind of thing before, so in your application, please tell us about any transferable skills you have that relate to such a task.

==When you are happy with your application, please don't forget to click SUBMIT – otherwise we will never receive your form!==

Existing volunteer / applicants on the waiting list

If you are already registered to volunteer with Museums Partnership Reading, please log in to the volunteering platform, click on 'My Profile', select the 'Interests' section, and ensure you tick the box next to **'Oral History Summariser - Reading's Digital Revolution project'** by **9am on Tuesday 20th August 2024**. Please update your 'Additional info' fields to reflect any experience and skills you have gained since you initially applied or joined the volunteering team.

Matching to the Role

We have six positions available for this volunteer role. We are fortunate to have perennial interest from prospective volunteers hoping to volunteer behind the scenes for fascinating projects such as this.

To help us select our project team, in the week ending 23 August 2024 we will look through all the application forms of those interested in this role, and draw up a shortlist of those who most closely match our ideal requirements.

As the second stage of the application process, we will invite a limited number of prospective volunteers to submit an example oral history summary of a ten minute video. You will be sent instructions to follow. You can see the oral history recording that you would be asked to summarise in the example exercise by clicking this link here.

We will then match the applicants to the six available positions.

If you are selected to join the project, you will be invited to attend an online kick-off meeting **on Monday 9th September from 11:00 - 12:30** where you will be given further training and have a chance to ask any questions you might have and meet the rest of the project team. This meeting will be recorded if you are unable to attend in real time.