



Essay: Information Management Example

Sample introduction 1

The purpose of conducting oral history is not merely to record information but to make it available to researchers (Matters 1995). This is true for all types of materials collected by libraries and archives. **While** most librarians would consider it unacceptable to acquire published materials and not make them accessible, academic institutions often actively collect oral histories without making adequate provision for researchers to discover, access, and use them. **Without** policies and procedures guiding collection, management, and access, it will be extremely difficult—if not impossible—for researchers to find and use oral histories, especially over time, considering staff turnover, technological advances, and other changes. **After** a brief discussion of the important roles university libraries play in the transferring of information about the history and culture of society orally as an ancient tradition, several key barriers to creating access to oral histories are identified, most notably, insufficient funding, limited expertise or experience with oral histories and technological issues. Finally, guidelines are suggested that may assist university libraries to better manage access to oral histories.

Context

Sets the scene, introduces the topic

*'problem' statement
Leads the reader toward the thesis of your essay, i.e. a key issue in relation to the topic*

*Thesis statement/
main idea/ position
the controlling idea, theme or argument
which continues through your essay*

*Outline of essay
Provides the reader with a 'map' of your essay*

(Adapted from Grimsley & Wynne 2009, pp. 278-279)

Sample body paragraph 1

Funding and staffing support for oral history collections is a significant barrier to improving researchers' access to these materials. More than twenty years ago, Ekrish examined 129 oral history programs in academic institutions and found that most were understaffed and underfunded. Only five programs in his study had autonomous budgets allocated specifically for oral history activities (Ekrish 1987, p. 63). Sanner's survey, completed several years later, included various types of institutions—academic libraries, public libraries, historical societies, special libraries, and government repositories. Only about half of respondents in all categories received annual funding designated for oral history collections. Commonly, repositories did receive one-time grant funding to begin an oral history program, but no

Topic sentence

Explain & support

<p>provisions were made to continue processing materials over time. A common concern in MacKay's survey of academic, historical, government, and special libraries was the need for 'creative ways to meet expenses in an era of shrinking funds' (2007, p. 11). Ten of the twenty-one academic library respondents to MacKay's survey felt that curation of oral histories was not sufficiently funded in their institutions (2004, p. 11). Without the ongoing financial commitment of the institution, university libraries are unable to sustain the level of service required to manage access to oral history collections.</p> <p>Related to funding and staffing support, staff experience with oral histories or collaboration with curators, oral historians and others ...</p>	<p>Concluding sentence</p> <p>Topic sentence <i>New paragraph, new topic sentence</i></p>
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(Adapted from Grimsley & Wynne 2009, pp. 284-285)

Sample conclusion

<p>Considering the uniqueness and research value of oral histories, academic libraries can and should pursue greater access by developing acquisitions and collecting policies and describing materials in discovery tools that are readily available to the public. Even if an institution holds relevant oral history material, if university libraries are not adequately funded or staffed with appropriately experienced personnel, if these resources are not catalogued, and if they are not equipped with state-of-the-art technology, with they might as well not exist. Despite these barriers, most university libraries do possess the capability to enhance access to such resources. In today's information-seeking environment, for example, multiple access points can enhance the visibility and accessibility of oral histories. Libraries and archives should seek a variety of methods to expose oral history collections beyond the local repository. Further studies of different access methods may lead to greater standardization among institutions, offering solutions to institutions that are currently wrestling with (or ignoring) unprocessed collections due to competing priorities and lack of funding and staffing.</p>	<p>Remind the reader of the topic (broadly)</p> <p>Restated your thesis</p> <p>Sum up main points or findings from the body of the essay</p> <p>Concluding observation <i>'Where to from here?' or forward looking statement</i></p>
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(Adapted from Grimsley & Wynne 2009, p. 295)

References

Grimsley, R & Wynne, S 2009, 'Creating access to oral histories in academic libraries', *College & Undergraduate Libraries*, vol. 16, no. 4, pp. 278-299.