

## APPENDIX C:



# Documenting Traditional Knowledge with Community Recording

## Inspired Practices for Audio Recording

The following document provides suggestions for inspired practices when documenting traditional knowledge with community audio recording. These guidelines should be seen as a starting point for developing practices customized for your context. Don't let so-called best practices get in the way of documenting this precious knowledge. For in-depth project planning and preservation guidelines, please consult the Indigitization toolkit at [indigitization.ca](http://indigitization.ca)

### Preparing Your Equipment

- Select a suitable handheld **audio recorder**. Zoom H2, H4N, H5, and H6 meet these criteria:
  - Ability to record Preservation Masters (96kHz sample rate/24-bit depth, .WAV format);
  - Audio quality – good microphone quality and frequency response;
  - Reliability, portability, and ease of use;
  - Suitability for your project goals (e.g. group or individual recording);
  - Suitability for your funding and/or budget requirements;
  - External memory and USB connection ports.
- Learn how to use your equipment, testing it out and listening back before your recording session;
- Bring along a back-up kit just in case. Items you may want to include are:
  - Extra batteries;
  - Extra memory cards;
  - Wind screen or sock if recording outdoors;
  - Power adapter.
- Bring along a **hard drive** and **laptop** to make safety back ups as soon as possible;
- Make sure you have more than enough storage space to record your session at Preservation quality;
- Develop a policy for sharing this equipment with other community members.

### Working with Participants

- Consider the **comfort** of your participants. Account for physical, mental, emotional, and spiritual needs;
- When working with Elders *wait*. Elders may take their time before speaking;
- Ask beforehand if they are comfortable with the questions or if there is anything that they are not comfortable discussing. They may also have suggestions for topics you have not considered. Build consent throughout your project;
- If you are planning to discuss a sensitive topic, offer your participants the opportunity to bring along a friend for emotional support;
- Be reassuring and warm when working with your participants;

- Respectfully ask them to avoid shuffling or wearing jangly jewelry. Remember that their time is valuable and they also want a good quality recording.

#### Selection your Location

- Select a suitable location for your recording, considering:
  - The comfort of your participants;
  - Whether the location may help prompt memories. You may want to bring a participant to a culturally significant location, but you should be prepared for the emotions this might provoke;
  - Any background noise you may have to address;
  - Whether there any time restrictions;
  - Whether you have access to power outlets.
- Visit your recording location in advance – listen to the space for unwanted noise and anticipate ways to minimize this (e.g. turn off fridge or clock, bring along a windscreen if outside);
- Be aware of your environment while recording – try for a quiet, controlled space if possible;
- Account for external noise makers & develop a protocol for what this means when they interrupt;
- Arrive early to set up and address any last-minute issues before your participant arrives.

#### Interviewing

- Bring along water, coffee, tea, and snacks for your participants;
- Test your equipment recording levels with your participant, aiming for -12dB to -6dB;
- Prepare questions or objects that spark memory, keeping your goals in mind;
- Be flexible and conversational. Follow up or ask for clarification about what someone has said;
- Be a good listener:
  - Use positive body language;
  - Don't interrupt, debate, or argue;
  - Pause before asking the next question – sometimes silence is necessary.
- Observe protocol:
  - Discuss what you would like to ask about with your participant in advance;
  - Seek informed and ongoing consent. Discuss the intended goals and uses of your recording;
  - After the interview, ask them to sign a release for future use of the recording. Develop this with your community and Elders;
  - Develop access protocols for culturally sensitive knowledge with your community and Elders.

#### Documentation and Back-Ups

- Write down some basic information to accompany the recording:
  - Equipment used;
  - Original format;
  - Date, time, and location;
  - Participants' names;
  - Languages used;
  - Community name;
  - Contact information for you and your participants;
  - Notes on the recording's content and whether it is culturally sensitive.
- Make a safety back up on a different device as soon as possible;
- Consider making a back up recording at a lower gain level.



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