

drainage. For internal batteries this may not be practical, so remember to always turn the device off after use.

Some equipment will be designed to run on standard batteries, e.g. AA or AAA size. Do not assume that it will run on rechargeable versions—it may or it may not, so check the specs and test. Our radio microphone transmitters and receivers use AA batteries (lots of them!) but refuse to run on rechargeables because the voltage is actually a bit lower than for disposable ones. The discovery of this in the field meant that we suddenly had to source large quantities of good-quality alkaline batteries.

1.5 Other equipment

A number of electrical devices other than recording and power equipment are likely to find their way into a field kit. The most obvious one is a portable computer. This may be complemented by accessories such as external hard drives, and perhaps a GPS device and digital still camera.

If it will be necessary to capture digital video tape in the field, then a reasonably powerful Notebook/Laptop computer (which includes a Firewire port) will be required. If this is not the case, then a 'Netbook' type computer may be quite adequate and more convenient. This relatively new type of miniature laptop is cheaper, smaller, lighter, and less power-hungry than a conventional machine. ↵ Most models will easily be able to run programs typically used in the field, such as word processors, linguistic databases, and audio/video applications.

All portable computers can benefit from a dedicated laptop stand (or just an external keyboard plus a cardboard box to raise the screen height). This helps prevent strain on the wrists and neck and can make a big difference to your well-being. Foldable, flexible, or laser projection keyboards are available which save space and weight.

Regardless of primary disk capacity, some external storage—hard drive or flash—is required for data transfer and backups. One can pay a considerable premium for 'rugged' USB sticks which are resistant to various calamities, but simply taking the same precautions as with other equipment is probably sufficient. External hard disk drives should be of the (more expensive) portable variety since, as well as being small, they generally do not require their own power source but run off the computer.

If a laptop computer is not available (perhaps it is not advisable to take one to the field at all), another solution for audio-video data backup is a device which combines a card reader with a hard drive (e.g. 'Nexto' or 'HyperDrive' brands).

For reading electronic documents (such as PDF versions of equipment manuals), a better option than the laptop would be an eBook reader. Although this might seem like superfluous expense and baggage, it is much easier to read for any length of time (especially in strong daylight) from these devices than from conventional screens. They are light and compact and are low on energy requirements. Currently not all e-readers are good at dealing with PDF documents however (e.g. they may reduce the font size to something illegible in order to fit a document to the page rather than 'reflowing' the line breaks).

It is becoming commonplace to add precise location information to metadata of language recordings. A GPS³⁹ device is required for collecting this information. Some cameras now contain built-in GPS capabilities for 'geo-tagging'. Small units that connect directly to the computer via a card slot or USB port are also available. Some of these devices are designed as 'track loggers', i.e. they can continuously monitor and store location against date and time over long periods using very little power. This data can then be downloaded to a computer in various formats (e.g. Google Earth KML). Such a track might help, for example, to define a poorly charted coastline or river, a footpath between settlements, or a property boundary. The best option,