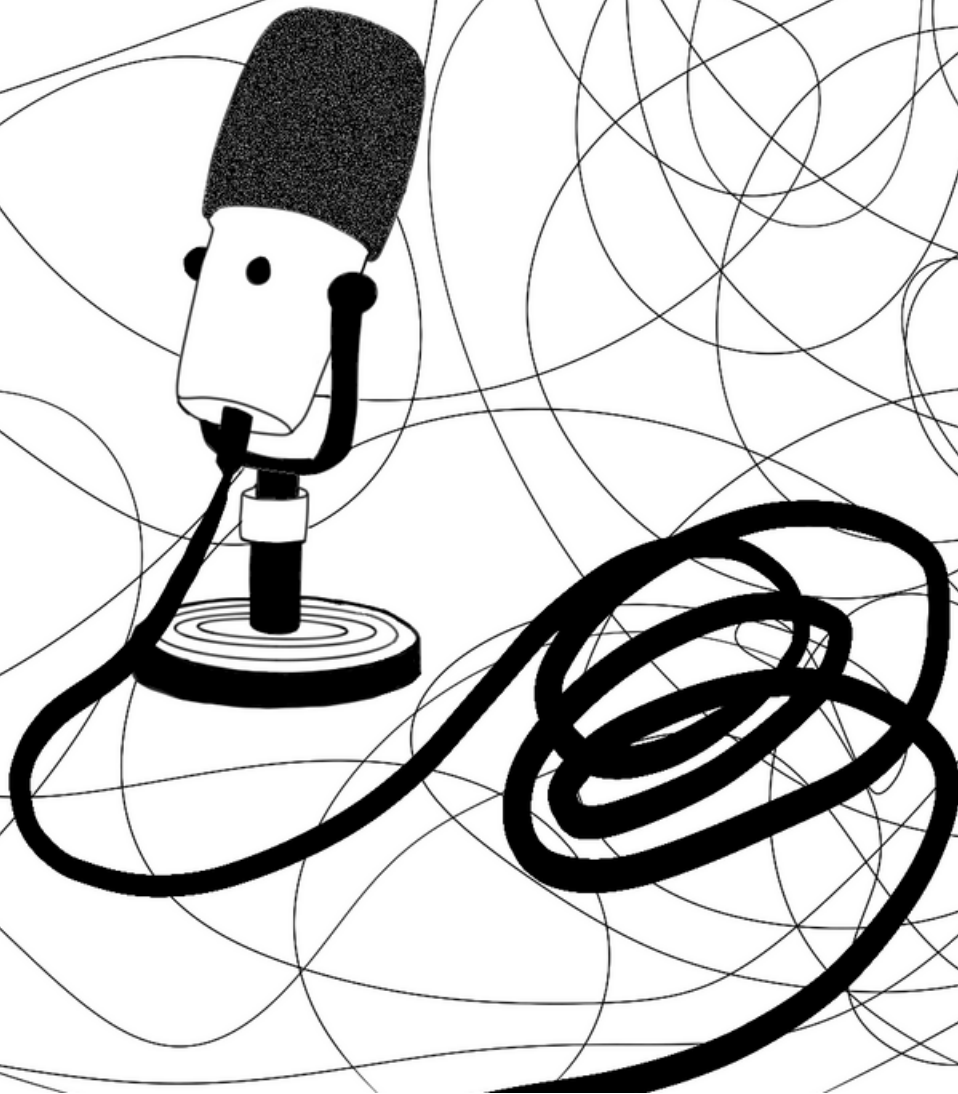
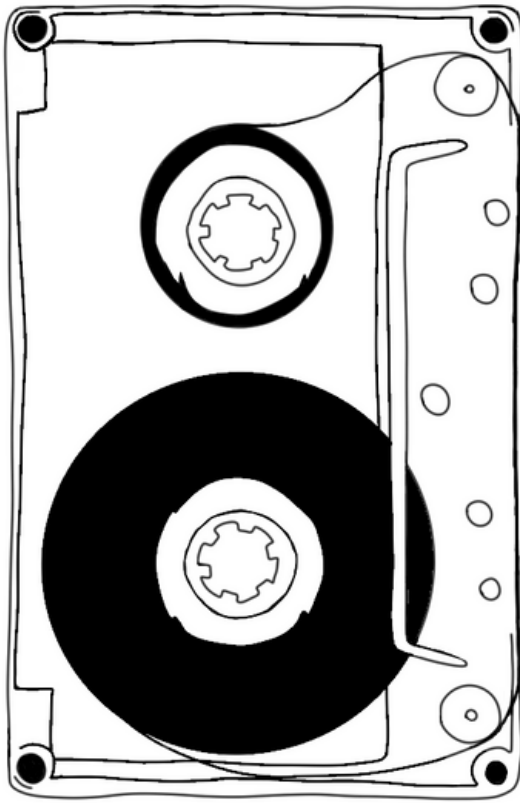


oral history preservation

***zine for the management and
preservation of oral history
recordings!!!***





CONTENTS

introduction

How are digital files at risk?

file naming

Exploring what files will you generate during an oral history project, and why the name of a file important.

file formats

Talking about what the best file format are to ensure digital files can be preserved for the future.

preservation

You'll be donating your oral history to the Mazer which will ensure it is preserved for future researchers and queer people to learn from these stories. The zine outlined a few ways you can help us during the process of your projects before we take these files in. All of the work you do to collect these histories is so important. Thank you for donating them to the Mazer!

thank you :)

sources and further reading:

File Formats:

<https://www.loc.gov/preservation/resources/rfs/TOC.html>

<https://library.duke.edu/using/policies/recommended-file-formats-digital-preservation>

File naming convention information:

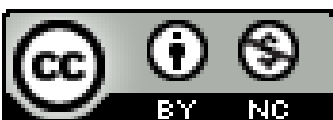
<https://datamanagement.hms.harvard.edu/collect/file-naming-conventions>

Exercise and inspiration from:

http://preservethispodcast.org/assets/PreserveThisPodcast_Zine_Online.pdf

This zine was created for students in Dr. Marie Cartier's Queer Studies course when creating files for their Queer Elders project.

Drawings content, and design by Laura Dintzis, 2023.



Introduction

Why are digital files at risk?

The Internet, computers, hard-drives, and digital files are physical things, and can degrade just like a piece of paper. Digital technology actually breaks down faster than a piece of quality, acid-free paper would.

If it doesn't break down, the technology becomes outdated, hard to find, and then the files that depend on it can't be accessed.

Things get lost or damaged, too!

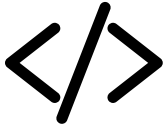
Imagine having a CD with all of your family's stories recorded on it--but no CD player. Digital files work this way too, just with different technology.

Or think about the transition from CDs, to MP3 players, to streaming services like Spotify, Apple Music, or YouTube Music. each of these required different technology and environments to use them.

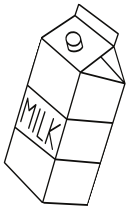
Digital audio and video files depend on



software: the environment where the files can play.



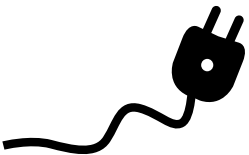
data: the ones and zeros that make up the file.



formatting: the format that encodes the file and tells the system what the file does. Much like a bottle label.



storage: there needs to be storage space to hold all of the files created like servers and hard-drives.



power: it takes energy to power the computers and servers that enable our devices and the internet.

**IF ANY OF THESE DISAPPEAR OR FAILS, SO DO
THE FILES THEY SUPPORT.**

file naming

What files will you create?

Write out the process of completing your oral history project, including all the assignments and other components:



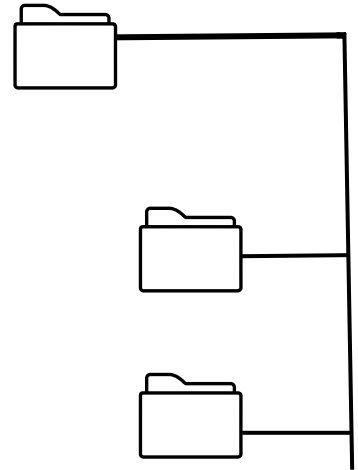
circle all the
things that will
be files.

writing everything down can give you a better idea about how you will organize everything.

You can see what files you might group together into a folder.

it will prepare you to make sure you are creating file types everyone can open.

and

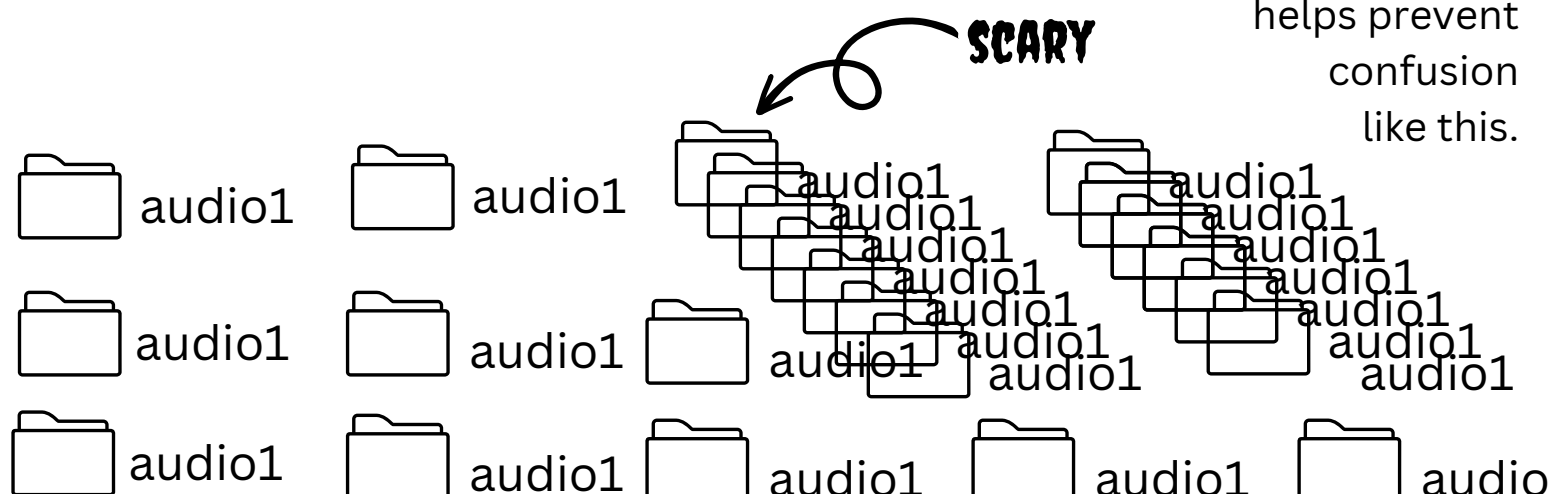


it allows you to prepare a naming convention.

naming conventions usually include a date, a unique ID (like a course number or course name), and information on:

- what each file is
- who it belongs to
- and what it is for

Have you ever looked at your files and realized you had 20 word documents named "Homework1"? a good naming convention helps prevent confusion like this.



PICK A CONVENTION
BEFORE YOU START
WORKING AND STICK
TO IT FOR EVERY FILE
YOU CREATE.

at the Mazer, we like
these conventions
for oral histories
convention:

computers don't
like spaces, periods,
commas, or other non-
number or letter characters
in file names.
You can use dashes,
underscores, or leave them
out all together

CART_IntervieweeLastNameIntervieweeFirstName_Year-
[file-explanation]-[Number if more than one].fileextension

BrinskeleAngela_2023-audio.mp3
BrinskeleAngela_2023-photo-1.jpg
BrinskeleAngela_2023-photo-2.jpg

Imagine you
hand these files over to a
stranger. your naming convention
needs to contain enough information for
them to understand what
the file is, and who it was
made by, or who it
represents.

even the folders!!! please use:

IntervieweeLastName
IntervieweeFirstName_Your
LastNameYourFirstName

file formats

Audio Files

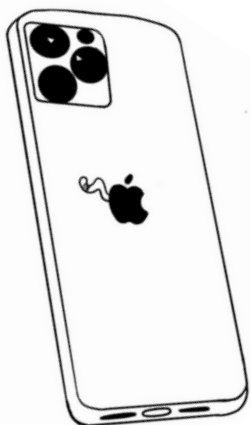
.WAV files -

these files are uncompressed and take up a lot of space. They contain the most information, but are the most likely to lose information over time.

.MP3/.M4A/.MP4 - these are compressed files, they don't take up much space.

VIDEO FILES

.MOV OR .MP4 - are best for video, they will play across devices.



FILE FORMATS TO AVOID

IF ANY OF YOUR FILES HAVE
THESE EXTENSIONS, PLEASE
CONVERT THEM, OR DELETE
THEM FROM YOUR SUBMISSION.

.M3U
.conf
.icloud
.avi



CONVERTING FILES

if you have to **convert audio files** VLC media player is a free tool to do this:
<https://www.videolan.org/vlc/>

or if you don't want to download a program:
<https://audio-convert.com>

if you need to **convert video files** Handbrake is a free tool to do this:
<https://handbrake.fr>

