

Semi-Structured Interview Protocol [NPP-Affiliated]

This version of the interview protocol is for interviewees who are ***NPP-affiliated individuals***.

Interviews are to be hosted using Zoom, which supports audio recording and automatic transcription, or in-person if requested as a preference by the interviewee. If an in-person interview is requested, the interviewer(s) will use their phone to record the interview, which will then be transcribed afterwards.

As this is a protocol for *semi-structured* interviews, the questions below serve as a starting point for each of the subcategories. However, the interviewer(s) may provide clarifications or ask follow-up questions relevant to the interviewee's answers.

Introduction

- Confirm that the **participant is previously or currently affiliated with the National Upcycling Computing Collective (NPP)**, or **works closely with their operations** of supporting students and clubs for the purposes of computing education and outreach.
- Describe the purpose of the interview and overall research study with the participant, and provide an estimate of how long the interview will take (~45-60 mins).
 - Depending on participants' backgrounds, their history with NPP, and their willingness to participate, interviews may last longer and are not to exceed 90 minutes without explicit permission to continue from the participant.
- Notify the participant that they may withdraw from the study at any time.
- Explain the confidentiality of their responses in this interview and notify them that their responses will be anonymous, confidential, and only used for our research.
- Check if the participant has any questions about the research and/or the process before beginning.
- ***Obtain consent for recording the interview (for further transcription and analysis by our team).***

Start recording.

Note for interviewers: In each subsection of questions, there may be more questions than can be asked within the 90-minute maximum time. Please keep an eye on the time and proceed to the next subsection as necessary, ensuring you receive a wide range of responses that align with what we are looking for. The questions are listed in priority within each subsection. If you have additional time, please see the questions at the bottom of this protocol.

Warm-Up

- What is your current occupation or field of study?
- What led you to do what you do currently in the space of computing education and outreach?

Main Questions

NPP and Operations

- What is NPP, and what is your role within NPP?
- How would you describe NPP's main missions and motivations?
- Where do you typically acquire the computing equipment that you upcycle for others from?
- What do you do to prepare the computing equipment for usage/upcycling?
- What is your process for reaching out to students and clubs to provide support to?
 - What groups do you currently work with?
 - Are there specific geographic areas or institutions you prioritize?
 - Have you encountered any challenges when reaching out? How have you overcome them?
- Has the quality or type of support from NPP changed over time?
- What does a typical lifecycle look like for the equipment that gets donated, from acquisition to end-of-life?

Outcomes

- What kind of support do you provide to students and clubs?
- How much do students already know with regard to the computing topics that you intend to provide more education for?
 - In your experience, what are the most common misconceptions students have when first receiving upcycled equipment or support?
- What kind of computing equipment do you provide them with?
 - How much is the computing equipment, roughly, worth that you provide?
- From your understanding, what outcomes have been made possible within the different students and clubs that experienced your support?
 - [Follow up on specific outcomes as necessary.]
 - Have there been any unexpected use cases or success stories that emerged from your equipment or guidance?

Challenges and Needs

- What challenges have you faced when working with students and clubs?
 - [Follow up on specific challenges as necessary.]
 - How did you overcome/address these challenges? Are these challenges still prevalent?
 - What do you feel are the most persistent barriers to scaling NPP's efforts?
- What challenges do the students and clubs face when conducting any relevant work or projects under your mentoring and support?
 - [Follow up on specific challenges as necessary.]
 - What trends do you see among the needs or challenges faced by clubs and students today compared to when you started?
- What do you and NPP need right now to better support the students and clubs?
 - [Follow up on specific needs as necessary.]
 - Are there resources you frequently wish you had more of—technical, financial, or human?
- What kinds of research or data would help you demonstrate or measure NPP's impact more effectively?
 - How can academic researchers or students meaningfully contribute to NPP's mission?

Growth and Collaborative Directions

- How do you envision NPP growing in the next few years?
- What advice would you give to similar grassroots or nonprofit efforts trying to upcycle and support underserved communities?
- Are there specific areas where you'd welcome research collaborations?

Conclusion

We've reached the end of our interview.

- Do you think there was anything that we should have asked but didn't?
- Was there anything you felt was relevant but didn't get a chance to say?

End recording.

- Thank the interviewee for their time and insights.
- Inform the interviewee about the follow-up survey that will be sent out after all interviews have concluded.
 - The follow-up survey will likely take no longer than 15 minutes and will be in a Likert-scale format (i.e., questions that ask participants to rate their sentiments on specific themes on a scale of 1 to 5).

- If they are further interested, ask for the best way to contact them (or check if the original method you used is the most effective one).
- Offer compensation in the form of a \$20 Amazon gift card. If they accept, ask for an email address where they can receive the gift card.

Additional Questions

NPP and Operations

- How do you assess whether the donated computing equipment has a meaningful impact?
- Have you seen any changes in the quality or availability of discarded computing equipment over the years?

Mentoring and Support

- How do you balance between technical mentorship and logistical support (e.g., shipping, setup)?
- What role do you play after initial equipment is delivered—do you remain engaged for follow-up support or mentorship?

Challenges and Needs

- If NPP had twice the resources it has today, what would you do differently or additionally?