Podcast Planning

This document complements the training video by Chris Gregory of Alternative Stories to suggests ways in which people can research, plan, record and edit their own podcasts over a few sessions. The aim will be to allow them to tell stories important to them in a manner that they choose. The process will also teach some journalistic skills as well as a few technical skills around recording and editing sound.

Planning the podcast

- Work out what the format of the podcast will be (eg interview, features, a diary or account of a dig or project they have worked on) and make decisions on what will need to be done to achieve this.
- Regardless of the format some planning and scripting will need to take place - eg if the podcast is to have a presenter it will need to have a draft a script for the presenter and record this
- If the format is to be based on an interview or interviews, decide who will be the interviewer and who the interviewee is and what the subject of the interview will be. The interviewer will need to prepare a set of questions that they will ask and whoever is being interviewed will need to be an "expert" on the topic (eg, they were on a really interesting dig last year and the interview will be about what the finds were and what processes and procedures they followed during the dig…how did it make them feel? Etc)
- If the podcast is to include features what will these be and who will speak about them. Some element of planning and scripting will be required.
- If more than one person is involved, once the format of the podcast is decided then decide roles in the making of the podcast. Some might be involved in making the features, some the interviews. Some may prefer to be operating the recording kit, others may be content to draft the scripts while others may be involved in post-production (editing it all once recorded)
- The team should decide how long they would like the finished podcast to be

Recording

- Using phones or microphones to record, follow the scripts and plans and make some short trial recordings
- Listen back and make sure participants are happy with the sound quality, volume etc
- Create full recordings of interviews, features etc
- Presenters to record their scripts and links

Listen back and editorial decision making

- Participants should listen back to the recordings making notes on what was good and bad about the content.
- Make notes on which parts to include in the final podcast and which bits to lose - these notes should include timings so that in post-production it is easily identifiable where to cut and which sections to keep
- Sometimes we identify that recordings are unusable and identify the need for retakes at this point

Post-production and final edit

- In this phase the individual or group assigned to the post production team will find all the clips they need as identified in the previous section and edit these into the running order they decided in the planning phase.
- At this point they will add in theme music, jingle or idents and any other elements they wish to use
- Here also think about volume levels and balance volume to ensure that no section is much louder or quieter than others
- Try to produce smooth fades and links between the sections so that there aren't long silences between features or sections clashing and running over each other

Final listen back, wrap and download

- Once the post-production team feel they are finished an independent member (with fresh ears!) will listen back and declare it "good" or in need of further work.
- Once it is declared good the post-production team just need to export the finished podcast as an .MP3 file
- The finished MP3 of the podcast can be shared via websites or uploaded to a cloud sharing site such as Google Drive and a link created so it can be shared

Planning the podcast

Presenter script and podcast layout / running order and timings
Think about TV or radio shows that have a presenter. How do these work and what does the presenter need to say….

Work through this sample running order to an idea of the elements to think about planning and recording

Opening theme music

Intro (eg)

"Hi, my name is XXXX and you're listening to the "Festival of Archaeology" Podcast.
In this edition we'll be looking at XXXX. We'll have an interview with XXXX and we'll share memories of the XXXX dig with members from (eg Lincolnshire) But first…. Last year a group in Yorkshire found something unusual in a field near……. We spoke to Josh and Olivia who were part of the group….

Feature   5 minutes

Links (eg)

Thank you to Billy and Olivia for telling us all about the XXXX dig. The interviewer was XXX and if you'd like to find out more about the dig you can do so by visiting the XXX website.   (Short pause - maybe a jingle). Later this year Festival Organisers from Wales will be travelling to XXX to get experience of a dig for the first time. We spoke to XXX from the Welsh region what they are expecting from the trip)

Feature 5 minutes

Links (eg)

Exciting times in store for our Welsh regioni! If you'd like to join the CBA Regional Group you can find out more details via their website or contact cbawales@archaeologyuk.org
Our interview today is with XXXX who has been involved in XXX project. Our interviewer XXXX met them at and started by asking about XXXXX

Interview 7 minutes

Closing
Thank you to XXX for being our interview guest in this edition and to XXX for aksing the questions. Next month we'll be speaking to XXX from the XXXX group about Woodhenge and other sites around Stonehenge and Salisbury Plain

Credits
Thank you for listening to this edition of the Festival of Archaeology podcast presented by me, XXXX
Recordings were made by XXX and XXXX
Our editorial team was XXXXX, YYY and ZZZZ
Post production and sound editing were by XXXXX
Don't forget you can find out about the CBA and join by visiting our website (address) We'd love to have you onboard.

Closing music

Total running time 22 minutes

Sample podcast along similar lines:
Alternative Stories and Fake Realities (buzzsprout.com)

Microphones

In order to know which type of microphone to purchase you need to know what types of phones are to be used to make the recordings. The examples of two models s either connect to a headphone jack socket (which many phones have but which the latest iPhones don't) or to the lightning (charging) connector on an iPhone. You need to know specifically which connections the phones you intend to use have in order to ensure that the correct microphone is purchased.

Price wise - RØDE VideoMic Me Compact Directional Smartphone Microphone with 3.5mm TRRS Connector for Mobile Filmmaking and Content Creation these are under £50 for the jack connection mic (as at June 2023)

And RØDE VideoMic Me-L Compact Directional Smartphone Microphone for iPhone or iPad with Lightning connector for Mobile Filmmaking and Content Creation, Auxiliary under £60 (as at June 2023)I

Chris Gregory - June 2023
<u>Alternative Stories</u>