

Using digital media

Media for recording

Record to a medium that allows easy transfer to a computer data storage device.

- Consider the volume of sound data the medium will hold. Each 1GB of space on a flash memory card holds 3 hours, 13 minutes of uncompressed WAV files in monaural PCM format at 16-bit, 44.1kHz. Available memory card capacities are increasing rapidly. Some oral historians are taking advantage of higher capacities and lower prices of media by choosing to record at higher quality—in stereo, or at 24-bit, 96 kHz.
- To keep audio file sizes manageable and to facilitate transfer of files to CD-R media for storage, transfer, and access, consider using the auto-track feature available on many recorder models; this feature automatically breaks the audio recording into tracks of specifiable size—one hour or less is best.

Media for duplicating

The first step in protecting and preserving your interview is to store audio files on a hard drive and then copy them to high-quality, write-only CDs.

- Transfer the unedited, original audio recordings to a computer hard drive as soon as possible. Confirm that the computer's hard drive has sufficient capacity for the sound files, which consume a lot of space, and that the hard drive will be backed up regularly. To prevent loss in case of hard drive failure, save the sound file to an additional hard drive.
- Ask your chosen archives what medium is acceptable for digital oral history recordings. National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) has not issued a standard for original digital audio recordings but does consider CD-ROM acceptable for the transfer and storage of electronic files. The DVD is not considered an acceptable archive medium.
- Also, copy the sound files to an archival CD-R and additional CDs/DVDs for processing and public access. Oral historians recommend saving the files in at least *four separate places*. Once the audio files are secure elsewhere, you may reformat the flash memory card and reuse it.
- Many archives use archival-quality gold CD-Rs for a back-up preservation copy.
- Use consumer quality CDs/DVDs for transcribing, reference, and complimentary copies.



Learn more about preserving digital oral history, including tips on editing, transcribing, archiving, and documenting sound files from the *Digital Oral History Workshop*, available at <http://www.baylor.edu/oralhistory/index.php?id=61236>.