

Guidelines for SEG Oral History video interviews:

Purpose:

To record for posterity, and for educational purposes, events in the history of economic geology, as experienced by economic geologists worldwide

Deciding on whom to interview:

Choose someone who is interesting, and who has had a long career, and/or has been involved in a notable event (e.g., discovery of an ore deposit). Discussions between two people who have shared experiences are also useful.

Once deciding on a possible interview subject, send a proposal (to SEG@SEGweb.org, subject line Oral History) with a 100-word outline of why the person would be good for the SEG Oral History project. Any language is fine for the interview, but if not English, the video must be subtitled in English.

Once approved by SEG, contact the person(s) for agreement, and to arrange a suitable time and place for an interview. Advise the subject that they will have the opportunity to review the edited video(s), prior to signing release papers that give SEG permission to broadcast the video. SEG also wishes to archive the complete, unedited video at SEG Headquarters.

The interview process:

Be prepared. Read the subject's CV, bibliography, and articles by and/or on the person; talk with some of their friends, to help to formulate and ask leading questions. Web searches are also useful to gather background information.

Have a list of questions to focus upon, although once started, many conversations during the interview have a natural evolution; bring the conversation back to the main topic if it gets off track. Consider providing the subject with the topic(s) of discussion in advance of the interview, as this can help them formulate their responses.

Ask the interviewee to address a question by including the topic in the introductory sentence. This allows the questions by the interviewer to be edited out of the final video.

Although conversations naturally have digressions, or leaps from one topic to another, these can be eliminated by careful editing of material that is on a single topic, in correct chronologic order.

Most interviews are about 1-2 hours in length (if people have the time); longer periods can result in repetitiveness, and the conversation losing its freshness.

Be imaginative, in questions and discussion, and in editing.

Recording the video:

Video recording an interview benefits from experience; if this is the first time, try interviewing a friend first, as a test, and process the video on your computer. Practice helps.

Ensure that the sound quality is good (some videos have an external microphone, which can help). If in doubt, have the camera close to the subject, to largely fill the screen (leaving room for the person to move or make gestures). Always use a tripod.

Make sure that there is no background noise (even loud air circulation or traffic noise can be distracting). Arrange an interesting background (wall with photographs or books). Ensure that there is good frontal lighting; good indirect natural light will result in the best video resolution, whereas back lighting will lead to a silhouette appearance.

Technical details for videos

All videos, once edited, are uploaded by the author to a YouTube site (you need to set up an account first; this is easy, as is the use of YouTube). YouTube has a 10-minute video limit (100 mb, but this limit may change).

SEG encourages edited videos to be less than 5 minutes. Typically 1 hour of interview can be edited to about 5 minutes of highlights on one topic. A 1-2 minute video on a specific topic (e.g., Skinner and Meinert on How to Write [a good paper], or Misac Nabighian on Geologists and Geophysicsts) can be very useful.

Ensure that the edited video that you will produce with the software on your computer (e.g., iMovie on Mac) is the correct format for YouTube. Visit www.YouTube.com before downloading to your computer and editing the Oral History interview. It is a good idea to test for compatible format, as well as audio and video quality, by editing your practice video and then uploading to YouTube for viewing.

Once you have taken a video, edit it to focus on the topic; eliminate questions from the interviewer where possible.

Place a title slide, and/or an introductory caption of the name and affiliation of the subject, and the topic (and possibly other information, such as place and date, and interviewer). Choose a fade transition between clips in the edited video.

Add captions as necessary to help explain the background to comments (e.g., with a paper reference). If the conversation is not in English, provide subtitles of an English translation at the bottom, and have it edited by a native English speaker before finalizing the video.

After you upload your video to YouTube, in the Privacy options choose "Unlisted" (not Private or Public). Go to the Embed button, copy the embed code (a long, 3-4 line code), and send this to SEG. The video will be reviewed, and after review and acceptance, the YouTube link will be embedded to the SEGweb.org Oral History page.

Have fun.