

Oral History of Video Games

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By

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Abstract

For the 2020-2021 Oral History of Video Games IQP, Terry Deng and John Frazia were responsible for contributing to the ongoing, growing Oral History of Video Games Project at WPI. Due to unique current event circumstances, the group members had the challenge to look for new interview subjects while dealing with the COVID - 19 Pandemic. To adhere to the Massachusetts state guidelines and requirements to minimize pandemic effects, all participants within the project had to conduct all meetings and interviews virtually. Before the interview process, group members researched other oral history sites, studied various documentaries, and practiced mock interviewing to gain the interactive skills required for a professional interview. These interviews were all done virtually to fit with the pandemic. After all interviews were completed, the technical process of editing clips was done with software recommended by the project advisor, Professor Dean O'Donnell. The group managed to interview Michael Breault and has created several short clips that highlighted important narrative pieces of his story which were then later integrated into the WPI Alpheus website¹ that hosts the Oral History of Video Games Project.

¹ "ORAL HISTORY OF VIDEO GAMES," *WPI*, accessed May 9, 2021, <http://alpheus.wpi.edu/imgd/oral-history/>.

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Firstly, we would like to thank our project advisor, Professor Dean O'Donnell of the WPI IMGD Program. He helped guide us in our research and study on interviewing techniques and has reviewed and instructed us on how to edit clips to generate a cohesive and compelling narrative for academic learning. In addition, he used his own ZOOM experience to give us important tips and tricks to overcome some of the new technical difficulties that the COVID-19 pandemic brought that will happen during our interviews.

Secondly, we like to also thank Michael Voorhis for his assistance and maintenance of the Alpheus Website that hosts the project site. He gave us the permission and credentials required to access the server and gave us instructions on how to remotely access the lab computer and the server with the Remote Desktop App already provided by Windows 10.

Furthermore, we would like to extend our gratitude to WPI as an institution for allowing free full access to the ZOOM video conference software that allowed us and all individuals involved in this project to host meetings without any form of paid-service restrictions.

Finally, we like to thank all interviewees that helped us during our practice interview training with names that we will not release. By allowing us to interview them, we gained enough practical experience to perform real interviews later in the year. We wish to give Michael Breault a big thank you for his generosity to spare some of his free time to share his personal, compelling journey and thoughts about the video game industry with us to be preserved within the Oral History of Video Games Project Site.

Authorships

This project's responsibilities were shared and split equally among the two members. Both members have fully reviewed all aspects of the report. Different sections of the report, editing of the interview clips, and integration into the Alpheus Website were split into the following sections.

Terry Deng: Abstract, Authorships, Acknowledgements, 3.0 Procedure, 4.0 Virtual Interviews V.S. Physical Interviews, 7.0 Conclusions, 8.0 Bibliography, Michael Breault SEGA, and Volition Clips

John Frazia: 1.0 Introduction, 2.0 The Oral History Project, 5.0 Results, 6.0 Integration, 9.0 Appendix, Website Integration, Michael Breault Pool of Radiance, Ubisoft, and Zenimax Online Studio Clips

1.0 Introduction

The Oral History of Video Games at WPI has been an Interactive Qualifying Project, or IQP, for the past fourteen years. The purpose of said IQP has been to find and interview people that were formerly in the game industry and had no intention to return to the industry. The reason for this is so our interviewees do not have to worry about what they have to say to get a job in the game industry. Our group has the same goals as the previous years of the IQP: to find interviewees that met our guidelines, interview the interviewee that had responded to us and were available, edit their interview into multiple, two-minute clips, and then post said clips and full interview onto the Oral History of Video Games Website.

For this year we had a unique issue and constraint change. Typically, the IQP interviews game industry veterans that are in the New England area. The reason for this is so we could interview them in person and set up cameras and microphones. However, with the COVID-19 pandemic, we were forced to move our interviews to ZOOM, and thus now could expand our search radius for interviewees on a much larger scale. With going to ZOOM however, we now had to deal with the issues that came in the form of remote recording, which we will go more in-depth later on inside this paper.

With the pandemic, physical meetings were impossible, the whole IQP was coordinated off of ZOOM. We had each group meeting in a ZOOM call, to follow social distancing guidelines. All of our training was through ZOOM, and instead of learning about physical recording and using our physical equipment, we worked with ZOOM and various audio and video software. We had to make sure our instructions for our interviewees were as easy to understand as possible because we couldn't record them ourselves. Any video recording being

local will provide a much better quality output than us recording them using ZOOM's inbuilt system. ZOOM compresses both your video and audio to allow for a better running application, thus if we recorded from there, the recording would be just as compressed. By recording locally, the recording doesn't get compressed and outputs a better quality clip.

This project aims to get a full look at the game industry and the people who worked in it. We hope to achieve a full look into their life working in the game industry from the interviews that we have gotten in the past, the one we got this year, and the many more that we hope in the future.

2.0 The Oral History Project

2.1 What is Oral History?

To begin, what is oral history? Oral history is “a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events”². An oral history can be about anything; you just need the personal experiences from one or many people to fuel it. The defining part of an oral history is the interview itself. Even with all the research, getting that first-hand experience from your interviewee can illuminate different ideas or completely change what was previously believed. The first-hand experience is the purpose of an oral history. Without it, it isn’t an oral history anymore.

2.2 Examples of Oral History

Oral history is still very much around today and not just WPI’s efforts with our Oral History of Video Games. Many TV series or modern journalists use oral histories as both content for their consumers and a way to preserve history. While some lean more towards content creation than preservation, they still do a decent job at preserving the oral history of their subject or interviewee.

The main bastion of oral histories is the Oral History Association, or OHA in short³. OHA has been around since 1966, and since then it “has served as the principal membership

² “Oral History: Defined,” *Oral History Association*, accessed May 11, 2021, <https://www.oralhistory.org/about/do-oral-history/>.

³ “Oral History Association”, *Oral History Association*, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.oralhistory.org/>.

organization for people committed to the value of oral history”⁴. OHA has many committees that you may contact if there are any questions regarding oral histories. The website for OHA has multiple publications as well. There is also a wealth of resources on hand to use, even resources about remote interviewing, which were very helpful.⁵

Starting on July 7th, 2020, and ending on April 14th, 2021, Matt Leone of Polygon has worked on an oral history series on the Street Fighter games⁶. It has a massive range of different interviewees that worked on each game, from the Japanese developers and directors, to the English location testers and sales managers. It is free to view on the Polygon site with multiple articles readily available to read. Matt Leone is currently working on putting these interviews into a book; further keeping all of the interviews in one place.

In 2017, Netflix created a series called *The Toys That Made Us*. The series is a highly edited oral history of the development of old toys. From the history behind the creation of toys, to the condition of the toy line in the present, the show features many of the original creators of each respective toy line and has good questions that lead into each other with a professional sheen of editing. However, there is a caveat to this. You can only legally watch this on Netflix itself with the lowest barrier to entry being \$8.99 a month⁷.

⁴“About OHA,” *Oral History Association*, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.oralhistory.org/about/>.

⁵“Remote Interviewing Resources”, *Oral History Association*, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.oralhistory.org/remote-interviewing-resources/>.

⁶“Everything You Ever Wanted to Know about Street Fighter History.” *Polygon*, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.polygon.com/2021/4/16/22376607/everything-you-ever-wanted-to-know-about-street-fighter-history>.

⁷“Plans and Pricing,” *Netflix*, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://help.netflix.com/en/node/24926>.

From 2000-2001, the filmwright Errol Morris had a TV show called *First Person*. Instead of focusing on a particular topic like the other two examples, it focused on letting “unusual people to tell their outré stories directly into the camera to the viewer”⁸. The series ran for two seasons, Season One in 2000 and Season Two in 2001. It is a thirty-minute window into the interviewee’s life and what they did. However, unlike *The Toys That Made Us*, *First Person* is free to watch on YouTube⁹, posted there by none other than Errol Morris himself.

2.3 Who We Want to Tell Their Stories

The most important piece of an oral history is the interviewee. When making an oral history, you want someone that can give their first-hand experience about a subject. In our case, we wanted to get their experience of the event or their life story. For oral histories based on a particular event or subject, you want someone that is directly related to that event. Our job as oral historians is to get an accurate viewpoint from a first-person account. We ask about their experience in the subject and what they, the interviewee, had to go through.

You want people that will give you the closest look at your subject of research. Get people who were there, or who were directly affected by it. For our topic, it wouldn’t have been prudent of us to interview someone that wasn’t in the industry or barely in it at all. We wanted someone who was in the industry for a long time. If we had someone that was barely in the industry or knew someone who was in the industry, we wouldn’t have received the same type of information as we got from our interviews.

⁸ “First Person,” *IMDb*, accessed May 1, 2021, https://www.imdb.com/title/tt0240264/plotsummary?ref_=tt_ov_pl.

⁹ Errol Morris, “First Person,” *Youtube*, Accessed May 1, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7PTHqsfvY_gzzJKN8clAug.

2.4 How To Create an Oral History

Creating an oral history is a task that is difficult in different ways than you might believe. OHA has a page dedicated to guides on creating oral histories, which has helped us out immensely¹⁰. There are multiple stages in the process of making an oral history. There is an immense amount of work to be done to create an oral history, and much of it comes before the interview itself. While the interview itself is an important part of the process, the other stages are still important to its creation and you need to give each stage the same amount of work as the interview itself.

The first thing you start with an oral history is research. Research is half of the work in an oral history. Just because you are getting a first-hand account about a topic, doesn't mean you can slack off with your research. You need to have good research to facilitate your questions. If your questions aren't up to par, then you cannot bring the most out of your interviewee. With the research itself, you either begin with research on the topic you chose, or the research on your interviewees. You have to have a background on the overall topic first and learn who was part of it. With our research, we needed to learn about people in the game design industry, so we started by searching for people in the industry who were presumably retired. We had to look them up and see what they worked on, their positions, and what they are doing now. All that research went into the questions step.

With your research, you then go into your questions. If your research is sufficient, then you shouldn't have any trouble making the questions. However, wording every question correctly can be difficult. You have to make sure that the question isn't easily answerable by a simple yes or no answer. You want to get more out of your interviewee because they might not

¹⁰ "Web Guides to Doing Oral History", *Oral History Association*, accessed May 11, 2021, <https://www.oralhistory.org/web-guides-to-doing-oral-history/>.

give you the extra information you want if you give them a simple yes or no styled question. Asking questions with “how” is a good way to start, because you can’t answer it well without going in-depth. Attempt to also layer your questions. For example, we used this question in our interview: “Before starting work on video games, did you play any video games? If so, do you think they inspired you to continue writing and designing games?” With that second question, even if they said yes, we were able to capitalize on it. However, do this on questions that lead them into another main topic, like how we asked about Pool of Radiance in Micheal Bearault’s interview.

The final stage is the interview itself. Depending on your situation, preparation, and experience, the difficulty of this last stage can change. An important part of the interview is setting up the interview. For a remote interview, you need to make sure that your instructions to your interviewee on how to set up their recording softwares are clear and precise. You don’t want to spend unnecessary time setting up the interview when you don’t need to. Take multiple checks during your filming session to make sure everything is still recording. You do not want to learn once you finish that the recording never began. In the interview itself, it’s good to rehearse questions and keep to a script and tempo, but don’t strictly follow everything in the script. Something might go wrong or you might get better answers than you expect. Go with the flow of the interview itself, not the set up. You still need that set up as a baseline, but don’t fully rely on what you prepared one hundred percent of the time.

2.5 Format of an Oral History

An oral history’s most defining part is the interview. As mentioned earlier in 2.1, an oral history needs an interview. The interview itself is what defines an oral history. However, the

interview needs structure and needs to lead into each other. You need the questions to be concise, yet also pry into the interviewee's life in the right way. You can start in any way you want, but don't break the structure of your interviews. Breaking that structure will break the flow. The structure is different from the script. You can ask different questions depending on the type of answers you get, but you shouldn't change your structure. There are multiple structures to choose from. One structure to use is a chronological structure. If you start using this method, don't jump around in time while doing the interview. Unless the flow specifically goes that way, then don't do it. Feel free to be more casual about your questions if the flow does go that way. You want your interviewee to be comfortable and if you are acting stiff when they are more open, they might not enjoy that. For editing the interview, feel free to break the original flow to allow for a better edited interview. There are a few items of note while editing as well. During your editing process, you should typically get rid of the interviewer's voice. You want to focus on the interviewee, not the interviewer. If you do it in a clip style, where everything is separated, put a subtitle screen before the clip that echoes the question, or give a one phrase summary on the clip. The full question list and an unedited version of the interview should be put in a repository.

3.0 Procedure

3.1 Unique Differences from Previous Years

In previous years, most interviews were conducted locally within the New England region. The project director and students would then commute to their interviewee's home with their camera and light equipment¹¹. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we were restricted from conducting any physical interactions for all aspects of the project; whether that would be in-person project meetings, or simply interviews with selected subjects. Our only other form of communication must be performed virtually, which comes with a variety of different challenges and bonuses. For instance, the main criteria for selecting subjects had to be altered to fit with the current pandemic situation. The subject in question must have been a former, experienced developer that has worked on at least 5 finished and published games. Our project advisor specifically required a former developer to interview them with honest answers, and have a greater chance of accepting an interview because they are not associated with the industry anymore. Additionally, with no camera or equipment to handle, our training for interviewing and our software that we used are totally different from what other previous years had to use¹². Using ZOOM as our main method for communicating, we used Zoom for all of our training sessions, meetings, and any interviews with game developers. Despite ZOOM giving us a free, easy way to run a camera with a microphone to record audio, ZOOM's video quality is the worst available option for interviewing. Our project advisor iterated to us that Zoom compresses video quality so

¹¹ Can Alper, Isaac Kwabena Donkoh-Halm, and Solaimon Nadeem Saqib, "The Oral History of Video Games," *Worcester Polytechnic Institute - Electronic Projects Collection*, accessed May 1, 2021, 17, <https://web.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-030119-123012/>.

¹² Can Alper, Isaac Kwabena Donkoh-Halm, and Solaimon Nadeem Saqib, 15.

much that it essentially removes any kind of clarity and sharpness. ZOOM's camera quality can also be easily washed out by any form of lighting and produces too many post-video effects such as bloom when used. With no consistent camera to use for the project, it was another challenge that the group needed to solve. On the other hand, ZOOM's audio quality wouldn't be as important as its video quality because many free audio editors can remove random amounts of static or room noise. End result clips of video recordings would also be handled differently compared to cameras. Most camera brands use popular file formats such as MPEG-4 AVC or DV/HDV; commonly known as MP4 and AVI formats¹³. Video recording software has no restrictions for file formats as they can be generated into any format necessary without relying on the hardware of a camera. Finally, the biggest challenge the group needed to face was their independent connection to the internet; a single instance of internet failures can break up meetings and interviews and completely disjoint the process.

3.2 Choice of Subjects

With the restriction to follow pandemic guidelines for all members and interviewees, our area restriction of finding retired developers within the New England region was removed. This removed the one problem that inhibited previous years from finding multiple, suitable interview candidates. We did not have to face any kind of travel or time constraints because this project

¹³ "A Full Guide to Camera Video File Formats and How to Convert Them," *Wondershare*, accessed May 9, 2021, <https://videoconverter.wondershare.com/dv/full-guide-to-camera-video-file-formats.html#:~:text=Some%20of%20the%20commonly%20used,known%20camera%20and%20camcorders%20brands.&text=Part%203>.

was solely focused on virtual calls¹⁴. Additionally, we discussed with Professor O'Donnell about the possibility of contacting any developers outside of the United States to which he agreed as long as they could speak English fluently. So while our choices for interviewees expanded greatly, it did not come without its disadvantages. Firstly, unlike previous years, we did not have any opportunities to physically contact developers in conventions such as MassDigi, PAX East, or local conventions and events that bring in game developers to talk with students at WPI¹⁵. This forced us to resort to the “cold calling tactic” where we would send out an email to various game developers that we found online and hope for a response back.

Hello Mr/Ms X,

We are students attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the Interactive Media and Game Development Program.

My partner and I are part of an on-going project known as the "Oral History of Video Games." We interview game developers and document their experiences of their time working in the game industry. It is intended for many to understand, learn, and preserve the history of game development through the eyes of many past developers.

In the past we have interviewed Brian Moriarty, Brenda and John Romero, and Ralph Baer. You can see these interviews at <http://alpheus.wpi.edu/imgd/oral-history/>

We would love to interview you and hear your story.

Due to current circumstances with the pandemic, we are currently conducting interviews via Zoom. An interview lasts about 1 to 2 hours over an online zoom meeting where we will record you and properly integrate your interview into the archive website, with your permission.

We can set up a date and time at your convenience in the next few weeks.

Please reach out to us if you are interested! We are happy to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you!
John Erazia and Terry Deng

[Figure 1: Cold Calling Email]

In order to find candidates, we used any kind of social media like LinkedIn and Twitter, looked into other universities that had a game development program to contact their faculty, and searched through large repositories that credit game developers with Moby Games and Board Game Geek. This way, we weren't restricted to looking for specific developers within New England, but rather look for all kinds of developers from around the world; given that they can

¹⁴ Nicolas Chaput, and Maurizio Vitale Touris, “The Oral History of Video Games 2016,” *Worcester Polytechnic Institute - Electronic Projects Collection*, accessed May 1, 2021, 21, web.wpi.edu/Pubs/E-project/Available/E-project-030416-153516/.

¹⁵ Nicolas Chaput, and Maurizio Vitale Touris, 22.

speak English fluently and have worked on enough games. With a large bank of potential candidates, we would have to email as many former developers for any cold calls to respond back. Such methods would not work as well as any physical connections with its given problems: potential subjects could simply shrug off emails as spam, the idea of virtually conducting an interview may be too bothersome or difficult, or they simply aren't interested in sharing their stories and posting them on a public website.

3.3 Preliminary Training

To prepare for any upcoming interviews throughout the year, we had our project advisor train us on how to conduct interviews during the entire B-Term. Firstly, we were advised to watch a couple series of interviews to understand how the interviewer edited them. To see a generalized approach to how interviews were conducted, we watched a documentary-style series called *BBS The Documentary*¹⁶. Teaching us a key example of editing, it was formatted in a way that connected multiple stories to ultimately explain the origins of the first computer server and network system. We were also instructed to watch *Inside the Actor's Studio: Peter Falk (1999)* hosted by James Lipton¹⁷ who interviewed many famous actors and their careers for the run of the show. This was used as a set example on how to formulate proper, thoughtful questions to ask, and to learn various interviewing techniques to help an interview flow smoothly. Finally, we

¹⁶ James Scott, "BBS The Documentary Part 1/8: Baud," *YouTube*, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mJgRHYw9-fU&list=PLgE-9Sxs2IBVgJkY-1ZMj0tIFxsJ-vOkv>.

¹⁷ James Lipton, "Peter Falk: Inside The Actors Studio (1999)," *YouTube*, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nOcfWlQyL3Q>.

were instructed to watch the television series of interviews, *First Person*¹⁸, directed by Errol Morris, to learn about his methods in using B-Rolling.

After watching the given clips, each member of the project was required to conduct several 30-min mock interviews of anyone we were familiar with and a topic they were passionate about. Scheduling a proper time and creating insightful questions for our subject were all part of the learning experience. However, unlike the previous years, the process behind recording the interviews had to be done without any physical contact and without any camera equipment. Therefore, our project advisor linked us up to the Oral History Association's "Remote Interviewing Resources"¹⁹ to learn the proper techniques to create quality, virtual interviews. All mock, virtual interviews and future virtual interviews going forward needed to use three pieces of software: an on-screen video recording software that included the subject's camera, an audio recording software that uses the subject's microphone, and an online communication software. This also required us to properly instruct our subjects on how to use our suggested software and methods to transfer video data. Proper lighting techniques could not be taught, as not every interview would have the best camera quality for recording. Instead of dealing with the hassle for a better camera, we had to use simple lighting tricks and software settings to boost video quality. For this project specifically, our project advisor had us use ZOOM to communicate with our subject and allowed any kind of video recording software to capture their camera. After settling on software requirements, recording our mock interviews, and receiving all the videos, we then had to edit them down into a 2-3 minute clip that highlighted their story and the subject that was discussed in the video. Finally, our advisor gave

¹⁸ Errol Morris, "First Person," *YouTube*, accessed May 1, 2021, https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC7PTHqsfvY_gzzJKN8clAug.

¹⁹ "Remote Interviewing Resources," *Oral History Association*, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.oralhistory.org/remote-interviewing-resources/>.

us a short review of his thoughts for each mock interview we made and gave us feedback and tips to guide us for future interviews. This preliminary training continued for the rest of the B-Term to help us further familiarize and master the process of generating a cohesive story in the interviews; while also dealing with a new virtual environment due to the pandemic. As these were merely meant for practice and technical experience, none of these clips are made publicly available, nor any information regarding the whole interview.

4.0 Virtual Interview V.S. Physical Interview

4.1 How to Conduct a Virtual Interview

The first thing before starting a virtual interview is to look at the necessity to do one. Normally, physical interviews are restricted by time constraints that are not flexible or distance constraints. Due to this year's pandemic and social distancing guidelines, the group was forced to make all interviews happen virtually. There is also the consideration of internet connectivity, hardware, and software requirements for all parties involved that need to be prepared in advance. Look for the best video, audio, and cloud sharing options before deciding to use them for the interview. Test them thoroughly and practice using them in order to teach future interview subjects how to use them correctly. We decided to use the Open Broadcasting Software Studio (OBS), Reaper, and MEGA as our video, audio, and cloud options respectively. Due to our own familiarity with all these forms of software, it was all simple enough to use. As for bonuses for using what we used, OBS is one of the top streaming softwares used in many online media platforms like Youtube and Twitch because of its beginner friendly uses; perfect for newbie online interviewees²⁰. MEGA has up to 50 GBs of free storage; a great way to bypass most paid options. Lastly, Reaper's audio editing and exporting is very high quality and not difficult to set up either. Later on, more specifics for these software pieces are explained more thoroughly. Finally, ensure that the required space necessary for a large recording session is available to avoid corruption. This generally needs about 20 GBs of hardware space per 2-hours of interviewing time.

²⁰ Alex Bybyk, "Best Streaming Software: What to Choose?," *Restream*, accessed May 11, 2021, <https://restream.io/blog/how-to-choose-the-best-streaming-software/>.

Once this preliminary step is achieved, a virtual interview may formally begin and be scheduled at the most convenient times for everyone involved. Start off by having all required software, cloud sharing, and personal equipment ready for all parties involved; especially for the subject being interviewed. This pre-session is the most important part in all virtual interviews. The interviewers must have their prepared, appropriate instructional session ready for their interviewee. This is to guide them on how to use any software they are given, how to cloud share large files, and how to tinker with their own cameras and microphones to be set up for the video recording session. They must also have prepared enough hardware space in advance because recording video and audio can eat up lots of space. In both our mock and real sessions, we spent roughly a half-hour explaining to our subject how to install and use ZOOM and all our other video recording softwares. By using ZOOM's share screening function, we were able to mimic a small training session to guide them as if we had a virtual hand pointing them in the correct direction to set up both their hardware and software to record. After we talked them through setting up their machines, we immediately performed a short testing session of them recording and sending their raw video and audio through a cloud sharing network. This quick training session is to help the interviewee feel more comfortable and ready to record without having to worry about a complete video failure or deal with the additional stress to send their clips. It also provides a great interactive way for everyone in the meeting to feel like they are talking to real people as opposed to talking to a computer screen. After preparing all software and hardware, the subject of the interview must start recording both their audio and video. For interviewers, it is highly suggested that a backup of the interviewee's video and audio is made on their own machines if allowed. During this time, the interviewer will ask the subject to clap at a specific time interval in order to sync audio and video recordings when editing. Due to internet

connectivity being at different speeds for all members of the ZOOM meeting, our advisor suggested we use the website, “Time.is”, as a way to easily sync up the time difference in the video clips once we approach the editing process. Once everyone is synced up properly, the interview may begin with its question and answer period.

While conducting the interview, all subjects must directly look at their camera to avoid eye wandering. This can pose a major issue for centering attention to the camera, so a friendly reminder is necessary for the subject to look toward their cameras. In addition, occasionally ask the subject to check their video to see if it has stopped or corrupted. If such issues occur, it is possible to use your own video and audio backups to fill in the gaps before the point of error. Afterwards, resume all video and audio recording sessions with the same procedure explained before. After the interview is completed, the subject must end all recordings and look to see that their video and audio have no issues. Generally, current video software is advanced enough to prevent any issues. If the recording session ends with no issues, ask the subject to send over their clips over a large cloud sharing site. Notify them once you received all clips to add a better conclusion to the meeting and interview. Finally, immediately backup everything related to the interview to prevent any chance of further corruption and issues during the editing process.

4.1 Advantages and Disadvantages

One of the greatest advantages of a virtual interview comes from its accessibility. These interviews do not require heavy travel and time constraints, and can be easily prepared without bringing all the lighting and camera equipment. No travel plans and no additional training for operating equipment are both fantastic benefits to conduct any type of interview at any time and anywhere. There’s also the comfort of not having a real physical environment. Since virtual

interviews only require a face-to-face camera interaction, subjects are free to create a relaxed environment. There are also no physiological barriers that could potentially affect both the interviewers and their subject; effects from social anxiety such as stuttering, voice cracking, long pauses, loss of focus, and overall general fear inducing actions will not easily occur in an online environment. Although the accessibility of conducting these types of interviews can be appealing, it comes with numerous new challenges that are only present in an online environment. Performing a virtual interview comes with its biggest issue on the interactivity between the interviewers and their subject. With no physical view of the person's motions and body queues, the interactive elements are dramatically simplified into a face-to-face talk towards your screen, your microphone, and your subject's projected video. This can also easily distract anyone involved, and can make the general atmosphere of the interview feel unpleasant and lonely. There are also quality constraints that cannot be easily solved without the lack of expertise. With no physical interactions for the site of the interview, we cannot use high quality cameras, microphones, or physical data storage methods. For an oral history project that requires proper quality and storage control, this can be a huge disadvantage if the interview subject does not have a suitable camera, computer, or microphone that outputs high quality recordings. No physical cameras also mean we cannot set up a proper lighting environment, nor add any additional cameras to make the interview scene look professional. This becomes a bigger issue during the editing process because using only one camera to cut and stitch together can result in a choppy looking clip. Additionally, most professional, high-grade recording hardware is generally expensive and requires the subject to have on hand. The group also can not fund a free camera or microphone as the project does not give a budget for any other expenses besides traveling; which does not apply to this year's IQP. Besides hardware disadvantages, there are

also software challenges. Software to record video and audio has a chance to corrupt during recording. ZOOM meetings can have internet problems where it can interrupt the flow of the interview, disjoint the audio so neither side can hear each other, and could ultimately cut out the meeting altogether. Furthermore, if not correctly configured, all software may accidentally compress video or audio quality and ruin quality control. This is most notable in Zoom video sharing where the quality of the video adds too many bloom filters and washes away any sharp details. Finally, the issue of getting any recorded audio and video to the group can present cloud sharing issues; whether that be from the long wait to transfer enormous video files to preserve quality, or the issues of acquiring enough cloud storage on a suitable website.

4.2 Video and Audio Hardware

Without the equipment that is present with physical interviews, all hardware must be acquired by the subject. Any kind of laptop will automatically have an in-built camera and microphone that can be used. However, if the subject has any external hardware pieces for a microphone and camera, it is much more preferable to use those compared to most in-built hardware in laptops²¹. If the subject does not have a laptop in hand, they may use other devices, like a tablet for example, but generally, these pieces of hardware are not acceptable for interviews due to software and storage problems that come from portable devices. While recording audio, there is a possibility that it may record echoing from improper room setups that absorb additional noise. To prevent this, the subject may have headphones on to remove all additional noise coming from a computer²². The headphones may also have an external

²¹ “Remote Interviewing Resources,” *Oral History Association*, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.oralhistory.org/remote-interviewing-resources/>.

²² Ibid

microphone which can provide a much higher audio quality while they speak. A prominent example of a fair audio solution is any kind of earbuds. Webcams can also offer a decent way for improved audio quality, as most have in-built microphones that are superior to standard laptop microphones. For a quick method to improve camera quality, it may be worthwhile to ask the subject to record in a well lit room. Additionally, ask the subject to position the camera to center their faces²³. Do not allow any kind of tilting of the camera to remove any possible distortion. Height adjusting is fairly easy and simple to guide. All these steps will allow the camera to focus better on the subject's face and can increase quality with minimal effort no matter what camera quality the video may produce.

4.3 Acceptable Software and Settings

Software requirements to record video can be extremely flexible. The only restrictions are to find software that can output the best video and audio quality with an option to output the video quality as a MOV file format and the audio as a WAV file format. These are uncompressed, raw formats that will preserve the best quality for recordings, and are the best formats for an archive to store video and audio data²⁴. The video recording software must also have the ability to directly connect and use the subject's microphone and camera. It is vital that the software can use any external peripheral to ensure perfect quality. In addition, using in-built, video recording software from Skype or ZOOM is not acceptable for video recordings. For this year's project, the group decided to use the Open Broadcaster Software Studio, or OBS in short. The reason for using this software is because it is well known and often used by video streamers for great

²³ Ibid

²⁴ Ibid

camera and video quality controls. The software is also free and very easy to use for everyone. In order to properly set up OBS to output the correct video and audio settings, the following steps were made by the group's in-practice sessions to prepare interview subjects.

1. You can download OBS at <https://obsproject.com/>.
2. First, open up OBS, go to the "Sources" section, and click on the Plus (+) to add a video source.
3. Select the "Video Capture Device" option.
4. Hit "OK" and proceed until you reach the "Properties" settings.
5. In the properties menu, go to "Device" and then select the correct camera you wish to use. Leave all other properties to their defaults. Click "OK" to close the window.
6. In the "Audio Mixer" section, click on the gear icon under the "Mic/Aux" subsection
7. Select "Properties" and then click on "Device" to select your microphone. Click "OK" to close the window.
8. Go back to the "Audio Mixer" and mute your "Desktop Audio" and "Video Capture Device" by clicking on the speaker icon. When they are muted, you should see no green bar bouncing around and a red speaker icon with an X. Anything that has "green" in the "Audio Mixer" is your audio input.
9. Then under "Controls" in the bottom far right, click on "Settings"
10. Click on the "Output" section and look at the "Recording" tab
11. Adjust the "Recording Path" to a location on your computer that has at least 20 GB of space. Click on "Browse" to select the location path.
12. Change the "Recording Quality" to "High Quality". If the subject has plenty of computer space (50 GBs or more), change the quality to "Indistinguishable Quality". Note that

video quality will improve but the file size will be enormous. There is also the “Lossless Quality” option, but the subject and your cloud sharing must have enough free space to accommodate it (300 GBs+).

13. Change your “Recording Format” to mov.

14. Leave everything else alone and click “OK” to close the window.

15. If the camera output that you see on your screen does not fill up the black space, click on the video’s edge. It will be highlighted in red and many small dots form around it. You can now drag it out and expand it until it fills up the black space. Make sure the video is centered and that as much black space is removed from the screen.

16. You are now ready to record the video by clicking on “Start Recording” under “Controls”

After recording your session, it is very important that the subject leaves OBS open until the video finishes processing. This can lead to corruption or loss of data if they close the software immediately after you finish. Please remind them to wait a couple minutes for the software to finish processing the video, and to open the video when it is finished. Only after they confirm the video has no visual issues, they may safely close OBS. Audio recording will be present in the MOV format video. However, because they muted their desktop audio, the interview’s voices will not be present. This may be freely edited later, but taking this precaution adds a level of safety from the subject’s computer from making random noises not related to the interview. The audio that OBS output is regarded to be high quality along with the video. However, you are free to also record audio on a separate software as a backup. ZOOM’s recording software is good enough for use as the main audio or as a backup for the interview.

There is also the audio editing software Reaper. It is available with a 60-day free “trial”. The free trial gives you the full version of Reaper and once your 60 days are up, you can

continue using it by clicking “Still Evaluating” when launching. With Reaper, you can record the mic audio of whoever is using it. It’s quite simple to set up as well.

1. Download Reaper from <http://reaper.fm/>
2. Run the installer
3. After installing, open up Reaper and click “Still Evaluating when it pops up
4. When Reaper first is open on a fresh install, it should bring up a screen asking for which audio components to use. If not, there is a button on the top right hand corner to access it
5. Once your audio is set to how you want it, create a new track by right clicking the darker grey part of the left side of the screen and selecting “Insert new track”
6. If you click on that new track and then click on both the red circle there and the red circle by the play button below, you should be able to record audio from your mic.

4.4 Backups, Compression, and Cloud Sharing

After successfully recording both video and audio, there is now the challenge of attempting to receive the videos into the interviewer’s machines. Compressing videos is not an option as receiving the rawest video and audio are important for archival purposes. Any kind of cloud sharing is accepted as long as the offer is cheap and gives a lot of storage space. For a great free option for cloud sharing, the group used the MEGA cloud service which offers all free accounts up to 50 GBs of free cloud space. Additionally, there were no restrictions to upload any type of file. This is a great temporary solution to simply transfer files. It can also be a decent backup solution, but MEGA can accidentally delete accounts if they remain inactive long enough, or if you forget the password to your MEGA account. So we do not recommend using MEGA as a permanent solution for a cloud backup. Once files are put into a common MEGA

cloud, it is vital that all group members download the interview onto their own machines as another form of backup. Keeping all original raw files, files that were directly outputted by a recording software, as an extra copy is essential for preservation. When anything is dealt virtually, the expectation of corruption can become common, especially when file sizes are big. The group must also consider compression standards that are acceptable. Ideal raw file formats must be in MPEG-2, MOV, or broadcast WAV. It is also ideal to keep edited clips in the same format. Other acceptable file formats include regular WAV, AIFF, FLAC, and MPEG-4(MP4)²⁵. Compression is a key factor for file sizes that may or may not present problems while transferring. Often, the better the quality, the more storage space you will need. Consider what kind of compression is best for the given situation, and appropriately convert them into the ideal or acceptable file formats.

²⁵ Ibid

5.0 Results

5.1 Michael Breault

5.1.1 Background

Michael Breault, or Mike as he likes to be called, is a veteran of both the video game and board game industry²⁶. Mike has an accomplished background in academia. He has a Bachelor's Degree of Science in Physics with a minor in both math and astronomy from Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in Troy, New York. With that, he also has four years of graduate study in the Astrophysics PhD program at Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. To top off his education, he also has a Master of Education in Instructional Design from the American College of Education.

Mike first started his career at TSR in 1984. In college, he played Dungeon & Dragons until he graduated. He soon found work in a newspaper to apply to TSR when they had an opening. While there, he worked on multiple modules and expansions for Dungeon & Dragons, and eventually worked on the Advanced Dungeon & Dragons' 2nd Edition Player's Handbook. Mike worked on his first video game, Pool of Radiance, during his stay at TSR. In 1989 though, he quit his job at TSR and became a freelancer; working much of it with SEGA. Some very notable games he helped bring over are Phantasy Star III, Sword of Vermillion, and Shining Force I and II.

However, his freelancing ended in 1999, when he joined Volition. At Volition, Mike worked on several different game series. One of the most notable game series he worked on was the Red Faction series. He was the narrative designer for both Red Faction and Red Faction

²⁶ "Michael Breault," Webster University, accessed May 1, 2021, <https://www.legacy.webster.edu/communications/about/faculty-and-staff/michael-breault.html>.

Guerrilla, and a scripter for Red Faction 2 due to management disputes. He also worked on other games at Volition, like Punisher and FreeSpace 2. Additionally, he also acted as a consultant for Saints Row 1, and was credited for his advice to the main writer even though he did not personally work on the project of his own accord.

After his time at Volition, he went to Raven Software. During his stay at Raven Software, he worked on their Wolfenstein game and also on an unreleased James Bond:007 game that never came out. After that, he worked in 38 Studios, on a game known as the Kingdoms of Amalur Reckoning. When he got there, he was informed that they had been working on this game for five years and he had to leave 38 Studios nine months later due to the company running out of money.

Mike's next venture was at Ubisoft Montreal, where he was brought to work on Project Legend due to his previous stardom. Mike noted that he disliked his higher placement on the proverbial totem pole solely due to his stardom. After that project fell through, he was placed in a position in Ubisoft where he wasn't in any video game project but still did in-between work, called "interposé". He was asked multiple times about joining the Far Cry 3 team and denied multiple times. However, he eventually gave in and worked on Far Cry 3 as a narrative designer. He enjoyed the team he was in but once closers were brought in, the experience severely diminished. Eventually he did leave Ubisoft Montreal with a lot of discontent with the company.

Mike's last company he worked at before leaving the industry was at Zenimax Studios. He worked as a writer for the Elder Scrolls Online MMO. He worked with the team before the game launched, during the open beta, and at its real launch. During that beta, he was responsible for the creation of "Those Who Stood at Chalman Keep", a story based on events that occurred in the game's beta, in which he messaged people that were a part of it as well. However, he was

let go from the company after a few waves of firing due to the initial reception of Elder Scrolls Online.

That was his final position in the game industry. After that, he looked for jobs as a game and narrative design professor. He worked at Post University, George Mason University, and Bradley University, but nothing full time until 2015 when he was hired at the University of Texas. Now Mike currently works at Webster University, still teaching game and narrative design. He has made a textbook as well, *Narrative Design The Craft of Writing for Games*. He's currently working on a board game, based on another IP.

5.1.2 Interview Process and Conclusions

Our interview with Mike started very casually. We had frequent email talks beforehand, and got to know each other so we were able to talk very casually and comfortably at the start. The call first started with setting up OBS. We told him to download it before the meeting, so we could discuss it with him later. We then followed our pre-prepared training session and script to teach him how to use OBS, and how to transfer his files to us. After 15 or so minutes, we then started the actual interview. We first kept to the script by asking the first few questions that were prepared beforehand. However, once we got a flow down, we were able to talk more freely and not stay so strict with the script. We even skipped some questions and added new ones to fit our flow of the interview better. We got some great history from Mike, learning more about him and his time in the industry than our research would allow us to know. We did know about some subjects he discussed, allowing us to continue on the interview smoothly and for us to expand upon said subjects easily.

In the end, our group believed that our interview with Mike went very well. There was more insight to be learned from him than just researching the man himself. Some of the information that was gained was already public knowledge, but now with the added backstory to it in our whole interview.

Mike was kept in close contact, even after the interview, due to his possession of his locally recorded audio and video. Our group had a small issue with getting his recorded version back due to online data storage sites not working within our bounds. However, once that small hiccup was passed, it was relatively smooth sailing from there.

5.2 Considerations

As a requirement for this project, our job to secure more candidates was crucial for the success of this project. However, despite our freedom to look for more candidates, we could only find one person who accepted over many other “cold-calling” emails that our group sent. A short discussion was made about why we only managed to get one interview despite not having the harsh travel and time limits removed due to the pandemic. One possibility could be the awkward notation of sending cold-calling emails. The reality of finding these interviewees requires a lot of internet sleuthing, and if the developer doesn’t willingly want to spare their private information, then it is highly unlikely that they feel comfortable enough to share their story. Another possibility is that our general email that we sent to many former developers may not be personalized enough for each contact we found. For example, Michael Breault may have agreed to our interview because it was slightly personalized to include his work in the Red Faction series.



Frazia, John
Tue 3/2/2021 2:36 PM
To: michaelbreault50@webster.edu
Cc: Deng, Terry



Hello Mr. Breault,

We are students attending Worcester Polytechnic Institute in the Interactive Media and Game Development Program.

My partner and I are part of an on-going project known as the "Oral History of Video Games." We interview game developers and document their experiences of their time working in the game industry. It is intended for many to understand, learn, and preserve the history of game development through the eyes of many past developers.

In the past we have interviewed Brian Moriarty, Brenda and John Romero, and Ralph Baer. You can see these interviews at <http://alpheus.wpi.edu/imgd/oral-history/>

ORAL HISTORY OF VIDEO GAMES - Academics | WPI

ORAL HISTORY OF VIDEO GAMES . The Oral History of Video Games is a multi-year joint project of the IGDA Game Preservation SIG and the Interactive Media and Game Development program at Worcester Polytechnic Institute aimed at documenting the history of video games and the industry around them.

alpheus.wpi.edu

We would love to interview you and hear your story, especially about your time working on the Red Faction series and what you do now as an assistant teacher at Webster University.

Due to current circumstances with the pandemic, we are currently conducting interviews via Zoom. An interview would last about 1 to 2 hours over an online Zoom meeting where we will record you and properly integrate your interview into the archive website, with your permission.

We can set up a date and time at your convenience in the next few weeks.

Please reach out to us if you are interested! We are happy to answer any questions you might have.

Thank you!
John Frazia and Terry Deng

[Figure 2: Mike's Personalized Email]

Potentially, this was enough to send the message that we genuinely wished to interview him and add his story to the project. There was also the fact that a 1-2 hour interview over a virtual conference software, such as ZOOM, might give a general disinterest toward the email. A virtual interview is guaranteed to feel way less interactive and interpersonal than a regular physical interview. The contact would also have to consider having a decent enough microphone and webcam because we do not have any funds to provide that.

Finally, due to the COVID-19 lockdowns issued by the country, people are in their homes much more frequently and might feel less inclined to work with us virtually. A prime example would be other kinds of former developers who are also teaching, and simply cannot shift through the spam of emails; resulting in our own emails being lost into a sea of spam. Another example is a new physiological issue that is unique to the COVID-19 pandemic known as

pandemic fatigue or burnout²⁷. Throughout all of 2020 and 2021, many states in the US impose lockdowns in early 2020, lift them up during the summer of 2020, and re-impose them during the winter of 2020-2021. Individuals may also receive a negative mental experience from being stuck in their homes for many months with no certainty as to when the pandemic may end. As of May 2021, as much as a third of the United States is fully vaccinated; a very respectable amount of statistical evidence that supports the idea of removing pandemic restrictions²⁸. However, during C-term, all our potential interviewees that we contacted back in C-term wouldn't have this kind of positive news because the United States was only offering vaccinations for any elderly or essential workers.

²⁷ "COVID Data Tracker Weekly Review," *Centers for Disease Control and Prevention*, accessed May 9, 2021, <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/covid-data/covidview/index.html>.

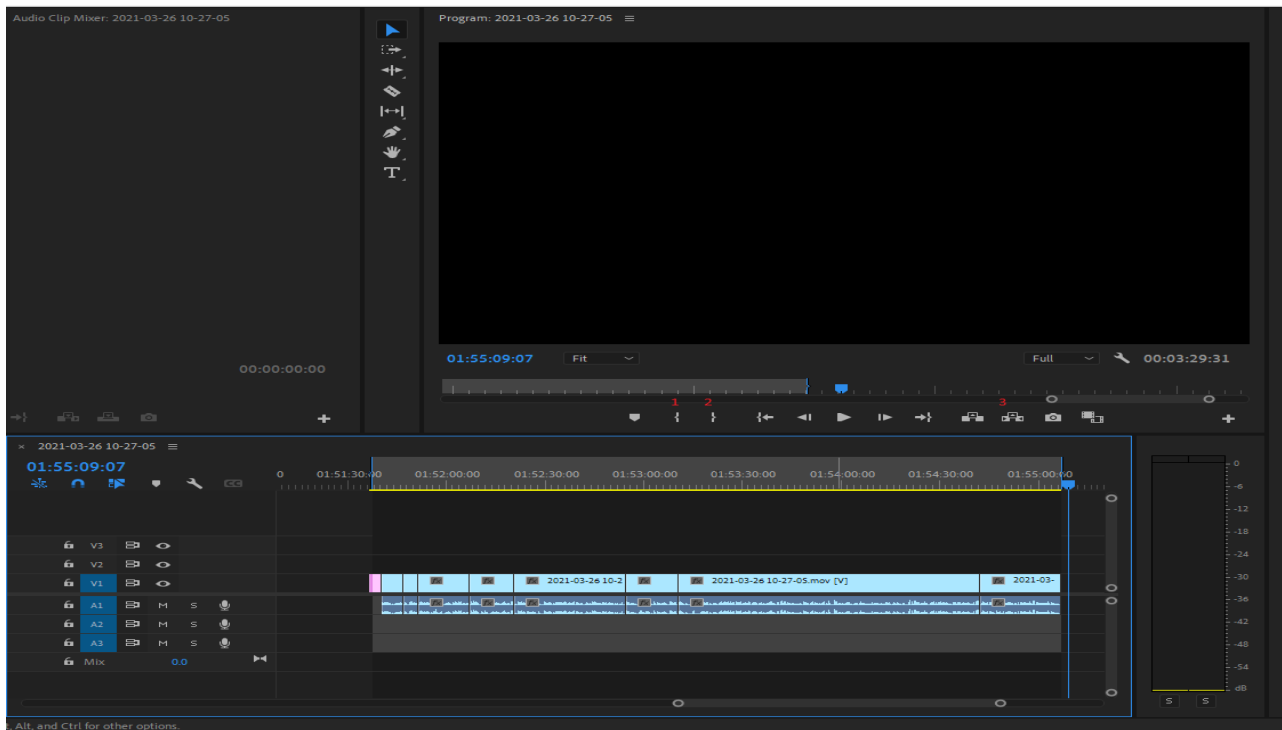
²⁸ Naz Beheshti, "The Pandemic Has Created A New Kind Of Burnout, Which Makes Well-Being More Critical Than Ever," *Forbes Magazine*, accessed May 9, 2021, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/nazbeheshti/2021/04/15/the-pandemic-has-created-a-new-kind-of-burnout-which-makes-well-being-more-critical-than-ever/?sh=4343cff32f01>.

6.0 Integration

6.1 Editing Process and Softwares

For the editing process, our group used two different editing softwares during the year. John Frazia used Adobe Premiere for the majority of the year while Terry Deng used Shotcut. During this school year, our situation was completely virtual. The use of the lab computers wasn't an option for us, so it was necessary to download our own versions of editing software.

Using Adobe Premiere was mostly issue free. John Frazia used liberal use of the “mark in”(#1) and “mark out”(#2) tools. He would mark in a section he suspected should be cut before watching it, watching through it, and then marking it out to “extract” (#3) that selection if he decided to make a video cut, or would “mark in” again if he wanted to keep it, moving the “mark in” up.

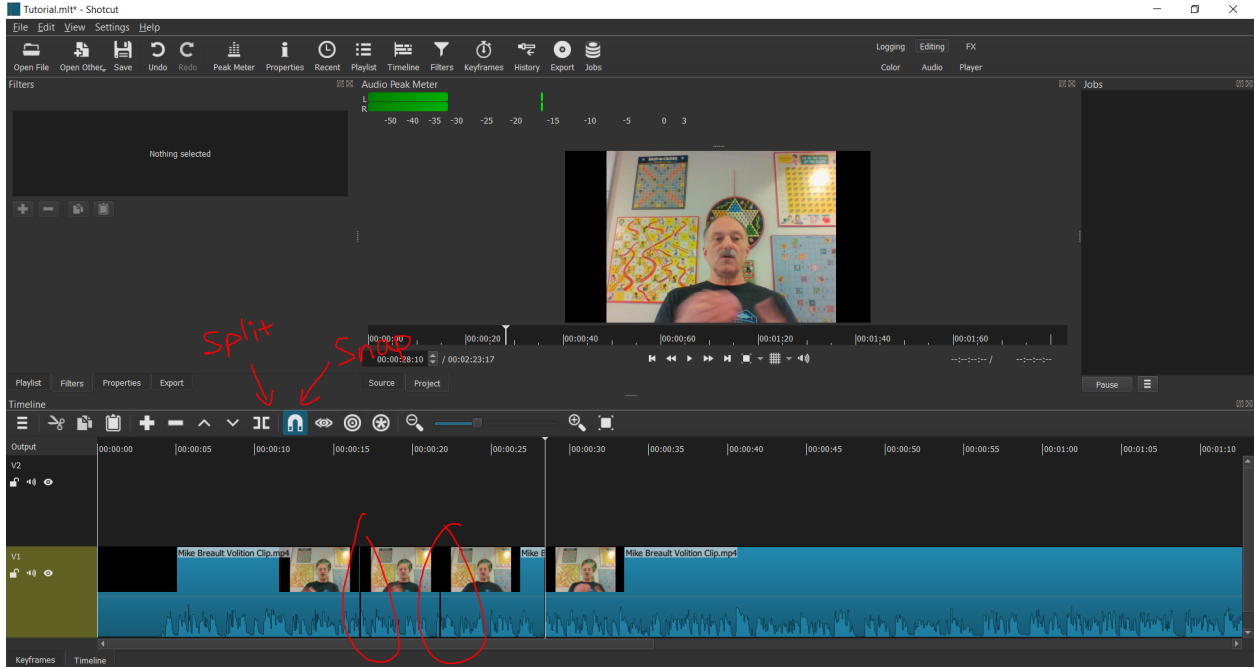


[Figure 3: Marked Overview of Adobe Premiere]

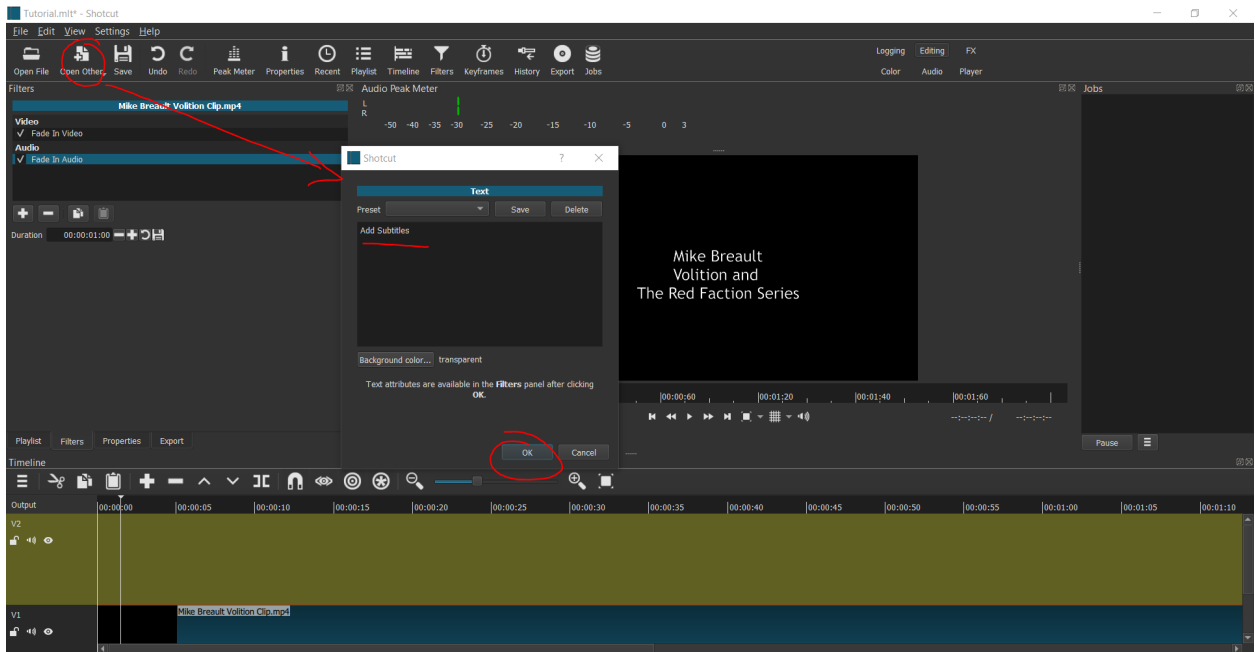
Using Premiere is a good option because it is a professional application used by many companies already. It's an even better option if you already have a subscription to Adobe Creative Cloud or have access to the IMGD lab computers. WPI can allow access to the Adobe Creative Cloud as long as WPI credentials are valid. However, if you have to buy a subscription to the Creative Cloud, it is less recommended. The subscription is a decent amount of money over the term of the year, even if you are able to access any sort of discount. There is one big issue for getting Adobe Premiere and thus the Creative Cloud for just this project. Depending on your type of subscription, Adobe has a 50% fee for canceling any sort of Adobe subscription after 14 days when a cycle starts²⁹. Be very careful if you decide to use Premiere. The product itself is good, but the price is a notable condition to take note of.

For the Shotcut software, it was accepted by our advisor because of its ease of use and general familiarity with the program. It is entirely open-source and free to download on all systems. Shotcut works a little differently from Adobe Premiere, and is grossly oversimplified for basic editing and cuts. For the purpose of this project, a simple way to split parts, stitch them together, and adding subtitles is enough for any interview clip. Make sure to enable snapping so you can move clips to snap right next to each other when you delete unwanted clips that leave dead space between two desired clips. Create subtitles by first adding another video track, open "Other", select "Text", write your subtitle, and then dragging the subtitle box into the second video track.

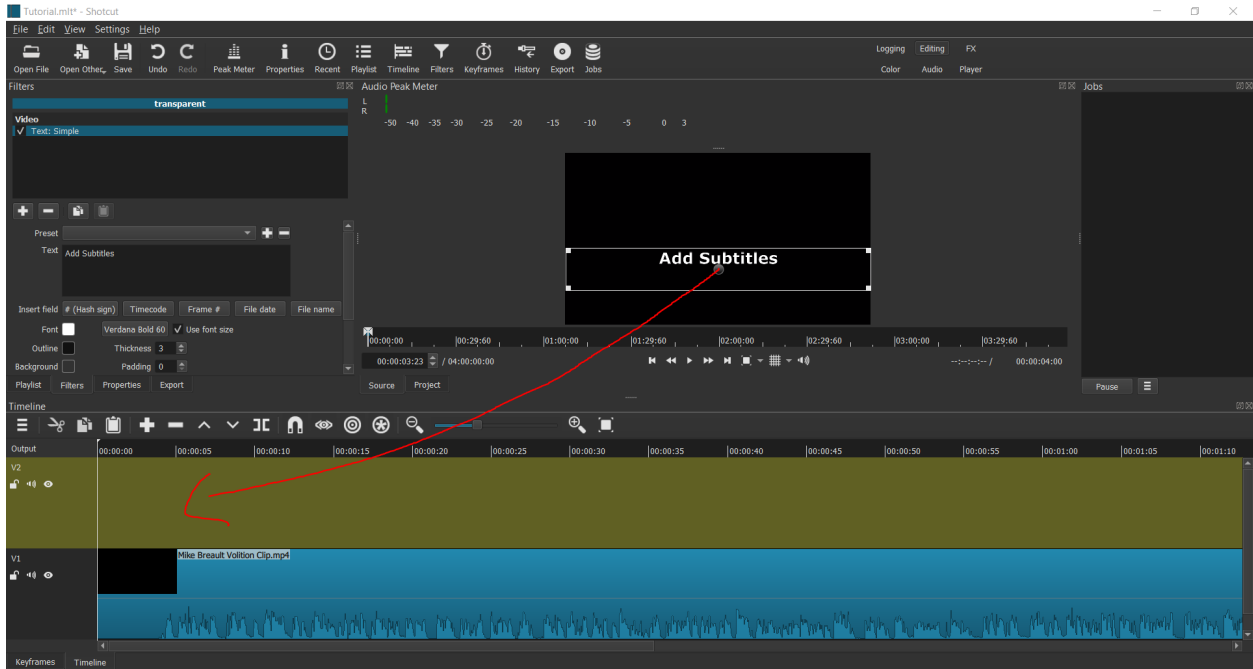
²⁹ "Adobe Subscription and Cancellation Terms," *Adobe*, accessed May 9, 2021, <https://www.adobe.com/legal/subscription-terms.html>.



[Figure 4: Splitting Clips and Snap Stitching them]

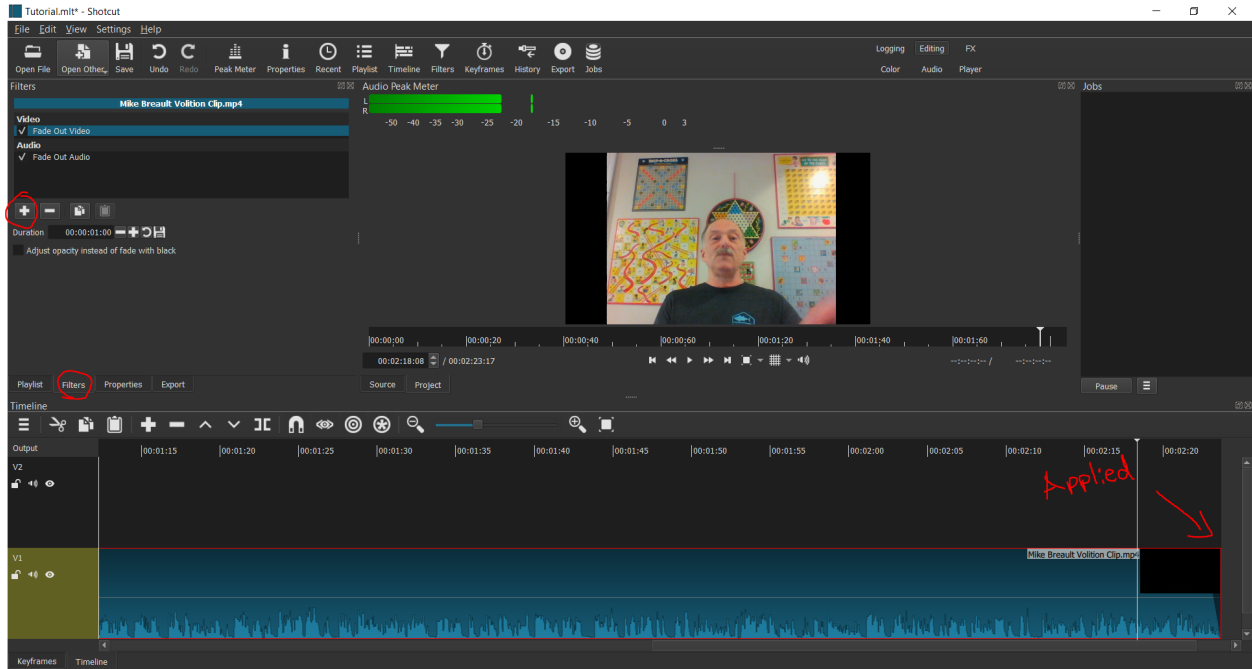


[Figure 5: Adding Subtitles]



[Figure 6: Drag Subtitles into your Video Track 2]

Filters in general are also oversimplified, but you can apply any type of filter that is needed. For example, you can add fade-in and fade-out audio and video filters to make your clips look more professionally edited. We encourage future groups to explore the program more in depth with its filters!



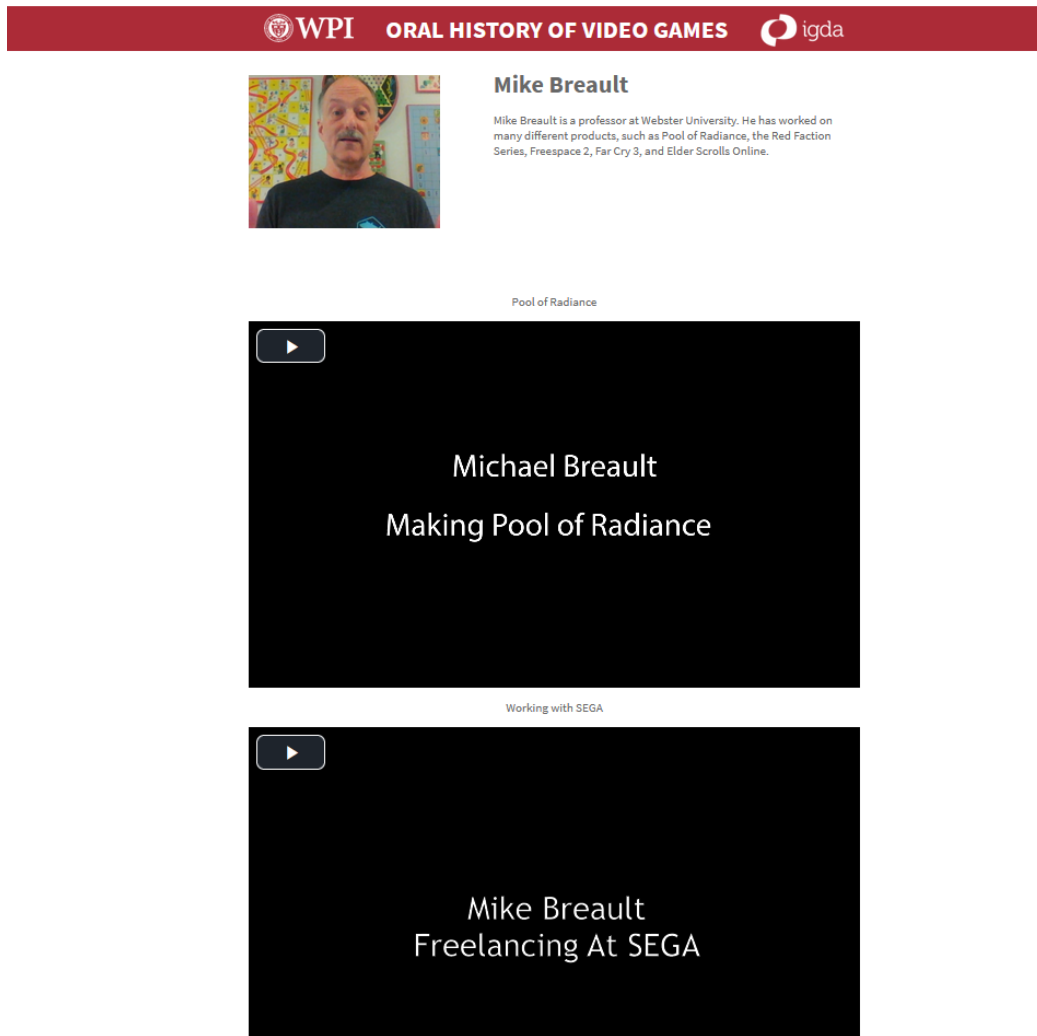
[Figure 7: Add Filters with the “+” Icon]

However, Shotcut does not have any kind of “marking” system, so any splits are automatically finalized. If students don’t have access to the WPI computers, we recommend the use of Shotcut for its ease of use and it being a good free software as another option if future groups have zero experience with video editing.

6.2 Website Integration

Once our editing was complete, John was tasked with setting up the website page and placing any edited clips on there. To first get access to the site, the team had to contact Mike Voorhis. Once contact was established, our team was given access to the site. John had to access the site through using remote access on his computer, and then installing and using WinSCP (<https://winscp.net/eng/index.php>) to access the SSH, using the command: ssh <username>@alpheus.wpi.edu, with <username> being the username he was given. After logging in with the password as well, he had access to the SSH.

First step is to access the file where the html files were being held. He used WinSCP to access the file, going to “/home/www/alpheus-docs/imgd/oral-history/”. From there, he accessed the necessary html files to change the site and added in the needed videos and photos. WinSCP is mostly used throughout the process, and is much easier to use than PowerShell because it has a proper GUI to work with.



The screenshot shows a webpage header with a dark red background. On the left is the WPI logo, in the center is the text "ORAL HISTORY OF VIDEO GAMES", and on the right is the igda logo. Below the header is a profile section for Mike Breault, featuring a photo of him and a short bio. Underneath the bio are two video thumbnails. The first video is titled "Pool of Radiance" and has a black title card that reads "Michael Breault Making Pool of Radiance". The second video is titled "Working with SEGA" and has a black title card that reads "Mike Breault Freelancing At SEGA".

[Figure 8: Mike’s Page on Alpheus]

7.0 Conclusion

7.1 Reflections

With the COVID-19 pandemic, there were numerous challenges to maintain communication with all participants in the project. It is not likely that another pandemic will become an issue in the future, but we do hope that through the knowledge and experience gained here during our remote IQP, new groups of students will learn from our new approaches to conducting all meetings and interviews virtually when applicable. The 2020-2021 Oral History IQP was an exclusive first look at how our society may evolve and adapt toward remote learning, meetings, and working. Not only did we overcome the difficulties of a completely remote experience, but we also learned a lot about the game industry from the perspective of a former game developer who was not related to the WPI IMGD Program. That by itself was an important fundamental step into our careers, and gave us a great opportunity to attempt to make personal connections with any former developers we managed to make contact with as well. Whether that was reviewing older clips from the project site, or from our interview with Micheal Breault, this was an eye-opening experience to learn the work environments we may inevitably work in the upcoming future. Additionally, learning technical skills such as how to use various video editing software or web development will help us with personal projects and portfolio making. For future groups, it is very possible that the Oral History of Video Games Project will go back to prioritizing physical interviews, but we highly encourage new teams to consider remote interviews to further expand the Oral History site to include all types of game developers internationally or globally. This would not only help solve the lack of any New England

developers available, but also give an even broader perspective for developers not working in the New England region.

7.2 Tips for Future Interviewers

1. If future groups are allowed and decide to do a remote interview, it is highly recommended that you overly prepare for it. That also includes doing a mock interview session virtually, so you understand the difference between a physical and virtual interview and understand how to keep the subject's attention. Read our guide and sections about virtual interviewing and prepare a tutorial beforehand. This will help cover up the lack of physical contact and make the interview feel more like a person-to-person interaction.
2. Make sure to use Time.is at <https://time.is/> so you have an easier time syncing audio by clapping hands. This is very important if there are multiple audio clips that need to be connected.
3. Prepare a good cloud sharing service. Make sure you have an account that has enough space to hold all interview clips. We highly recommend MEGA.nz, but please be aware that if you lose your password to your MEGA account, you will lose everything in the cloud.
4. Look for interviewees that are working as teachers now. They are going to have easier ways to contact them and most likely will answer back as well.
5. Don't be afraid to contact any game developers in English-speaking territories, especially England. You will have to deal with issues that come from the massive difference in time zones, but grabbing any opportunity is good.

6. Don't also be afraid to look at game conferences and WPI connections that bring in game developers. Although we did not have this opportunity to make physical contact, or have game conventions in general, opening up ways to ask as many potential interviewees as possible is crucial for the success of this project.
7. Adobe Premiere is a great software to use, but Shotcut at <https://shotcut.org/> is another great choice. It is a free, open-source software that allows basic cuts and subtitles.
8. Start searching and messaging early, and don't stop messaging at all, even if you just prepared one. Try to get another interviewee set up as you plan a date with the first.
9. It will be best to warm up to your interviewee before asking questions. Ask them questions or chat about a relaxing topic that will grab their attention and make them feel comfortable. You will not only feel way more focused and relaxed while asking questions, but the subject themselves will be able to tell their story without any worries or fears that may linger.

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Appendix A: Release Form

Digital Interview Release Form

Full Name of Person Interviewed

(print): _____

Email of Person Interviewed: _____

Name of Interviewer

(print): _____

Name of Interviewer

(print): _____

Name of Academic Institution: _____

Interview's Exhibit: _____

Name of Academic Advisor: _____

Date of Interview: _____

I understand that this interview and any photographs, tape recording, or video recording are part of scholarly research by the individual and institution named above. I give permission for the following (check all that apply):

May be used for educational and research purposes at the above institution

May include my name

May be included in a school publication or exhibit

May be included in another educational, nonprofit publication or exhibit

May be deposited in a local, state or regional archive

Signature of Interviewee

Date

Appendix B: Michael Breault's Questions

1. When you were at RPI, you were a physics major and astronomy minor. Given your extensive science background, how did you end up becoming a writer and editor?
2. Did you ever work on any other kind of Gold Box games besides Pool of Radiance? Did you ever dabble in other Gold Box games?
3. How was writing for traditional, analog, AD&D books or board games different from writing for video games? Were there any types of differences at all?
4. Before you started work on video games, did you play any video games? If you did, did it inspire you to get into games?
5. Could you explain how it was like working at SEGA?
6. Why did you decide to become a freelancer in the '90s? How was being one during that time? As you said, there wasn't the internet, just phones and Fedex. How was that experience?
7. We noticed that in Red Faction 1 you handled both the writing and level scripting but in Red Faction 2 and Guerilla you handled just level scripting. Could you share some thoughts and background information on why you have to drop out of writing?
8. We also saw that you worked on The Punisher at Volition. Could you share what you had to do to get it down to Mature from Adults Only?
9. Could you give any insight on the work-life balance as a writer at Volition? Or the general environment and atmosphere that it feels to be in a studio rather than previously freelancing for 10 years?
10. You were just narrative design on Saints Row 1 right? Was that the same as your other narrative design work?

11. The Red Faction series has a remaster, if you have seen it before. Did Volition ever call you up to work on it directly, use some of the older Red Faction games as reference, or did you just get credited for designing the previous iterations?
12. We noticed that you worked on the 2009 Wolfenstein game. Do you mind talking a bit about that and how was work on that, because it lists you did both game design and narrative design?
13. We would love to actually, we did have something in mind for Far Cry 3, since it is one of your biggest titles and we would love to hear your story about that.
14. We are going to jump companies now from Montreal to when you worked on Elder Scrolls Online with Zenimax. How was working on an MMO's narrative design scripting compared to what you've done so far?
15. Why did you end up making Elder Scrolls your last game you worked on or did you work on any other micro-projects before teaching?
16. How much do you look back at your time in the industry?
17. You mentioned that you were working on board games, so I'm assuming you've gone back to tabletop, casually playing?
18. Do you have any plans for the future that you want to talk about?