

## **Creating in collaboration: reflections on a World War One transmedia project**

Theme 4: Role of oral history in student learning

### **Abstract**

The centenary of World War One (WW1) is being marked by a range of nation-wide and international commemorative events. Our project brings to life personal narratives of the years 1914-1918 and sets them alongside contemporary, youth-driven responses to the commemoration of WW1, with a particular focus on stories from the home front. It features a singular collaboration between Unitec (in particular staff and students enabled in digital storytelling technologies), oral historians, heritage researchers and community archivists (including those from local government). The project also encourages community participation by inviting people to share stories, documents and memorabilia of this period.

Students participate by creating digital stories from a range of primary sources; this includes archived collections - oral history narratives, letters, manuscripts and images. The students, first and second years studying a Bachelor of Communication degree at Unitec, were also trained in oral history interview techniques with the supervision and support of course tutors and project researchers.

The conference presentation will highlight the student learning journey - the methodologies by which students contributed to the project, the outcomes and an interim evaluation of the project. Of particular note is the growth in digital literacies demonstrated by student engagement in the project, the creative nature of their personal responses as they came to appreciate the power of story, the intergenerational dimension of the project as older generations shared their recollections with young people and the impact of community participation.

The project aims to create an archive of unedited material for future researchers to access through Auckland Libraries as well as to produce digital stories, blogs, and transmedia presentations – content which will contribute to the various online resources marking the centenary of WW1. Furthermore, the student digital productions will feature in an Auckland Libraries exhibition during the 2014 Auckland Heritage Festival. It will also form one of a series of magazine-style, current affairs documentaries broadcast on SkyTV later this year.

## **Authors:**

### **Dr Sara Donaghey \***

BA (Hons), PGCE, PGDipBus Admin, PhD

Programme Leader & Senior Lecturer, Communication Studies, Unitec Institute of Technology

### **Sue Berman**

BA, PGCert Research&Analysis

Oral Historian, Auckland Libraries

### **Nina Seja**

BA, MFA, Doctoral Candidate

Lecturer, Communication Studies, Unitec Institute of Technology

## **Author bios:**

Dr Sara Donaghey is a Senior Lecturer and Programme Leader in the Department of Communication Studies, Unitec, New Zealand. She has a PhD in cultural heritage management and is a specialist in historical research and oral history narratives. She is currently developing collaborative projects that link undergraduate students, researchers, local government and the community.

Department of Communication Studies

139 Carrington Road

Mt Albert

Auckland 1025

New Zealand

Tel: +64 9 815 4321 ext. 8281

Mob: +64 9 21 1857504

[sdonaghey@unitec.ac.nz](mailto:sdonaghey@unitec.ac.nz)

Sue Berman is the oral historian for Auckland Libraries. Her role as curator supports the creation, interpretation and management of oral history collections. Sue's work includes the teaching of best practice oral history and research skills. She supports creative digital interpretative work that encourages further interest and access to collections.

Ngā Whare Mātauranga o Tāmaki Makaurau

Auckland Libraries

Private Bag 92300, Auckland 1142

Ph: (09) 440 7056 or 3010101 x 427825

Mobile: 021 0414427

[sue.berman@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz](mailto:sue.berman@aucklandcouncil.govt.nz)

Nina Seja is a Lecturer in the Department of Communication Studies at Unitec. Her areas of specialization include human rights witnessing, social movements and social justice and their

intersection with new media, documentary film and autobiography, and photojournalism related to war and political violence.

Department of Communication Studies

139 Carrington Road

Mt Albert

Auckland 1025

New Zealand

Tel: +64 9 815 4321 ext. 8804

nseja@unitec.ac.nz