



Name: Hannah Brana-Martin

Job Title:

Media Manager with Radio 1 (currently on a six-month placement as an Archive Consultant)

What does your job involve?

My job at Radio 1 involves setting up new processes to ensure that all content of archival value has a route to the archive. These processes depend on what the content is, and can be CDs, tapes or digital sound files from a broadcast or interactive content from the Radio 1 website. I therefore work closely with the Operations Team to set up practical systems for the management and archiving of material generated by the network. Radio 1 use a playout system called VCS to upload, edit and playout audio. It's also used to generate music reports. I set up metadata conventions for this system that aid production staff with searching and retrieving their content. The long term aim is for this content to flow into a digital archive alongside its associated metadata. The metadata conventions have to be simple for production teams to follow, compatible with operational processes and fulfil statutory requirements such as music reporting – i.e. every song played is reported so that the artists are paid. Music reporting is carried out on a daily basis by an assistant producer or a unit assistant from the programme production team. My job therefore also involves training production staff in how to use the system properly to make sure the conventions and guidelines are adhered to.

Radio 1's content is archived according to selection criteria, which includes complete broadcast programmes plus component parts of programmes such as live sessions and interviews. Unedited sessions and interviews are sometimes of more value for re-use but this is dependent on rights considerations. Content is catalogued by my colleague, detailing track titles and interview discussion points.

I'm also involved with setting up new processes to archive online content such as videos and photos from live events. It can be difficult to archive the complete online user experience as its constantly updated, so I've concentrated on processes which capture selected collections of content. I agreed selection criteria and set up an appropriate folder structure and naming conventions for images created by Radio 1's interactive team. I also encouraged the team to use a programme called Adobe Bridge to add more detailed metadata to their images. This meant that the images could also be batched under titles like Radio 1's Big Weekend or Glastonbury. Images which fit the archive selection criteria are flagged for the main BBC archive using Adobe Bridge and are transferred on a monthly basis, making them available to the whole BBC.

I'm also involved with ensuring Radio 1 material is preserved appropriately – the live sessions stored on dat tape are currently being transferred so they also exist as wav files.

Is there such a thing as a typical day?

Not really - the work is quite varied. If you have a new version of a system then your day might be taken up with training everybody on it – e.g. VCS or other content management systems used within BBC radio. But on another day I could be dealing with research and enquiries into archive content for new shows or liaising with my colleagues in the main BBC archive on Radio 1's behalf. I also get involved with scoping out or implementing new projects that have an archive aspect, most recently the introduction of a digital archive for radio. A lot of my job is also about liaising with colleagues to ensure successful processes are established and maintained – building this trust is really important.

What aspect of your job do you enjoy the most?

Setting up a new process is really interesting. I like to scope new projects and processes to make sure that we come up with a working solution to a problem that is user friendly and compatible with other production processes.

Are there any aspects of the job you don't like?

I'm less keen on monitoring whether people are filling in their metadata correctly. This is not only because it's repetitive, but also because the production teams' priorities are understandably to create new content and get it out there rather than archiving material for future use. This means you are always up against other people's priorities and transmission deadlines, and it's sometimes difficult to promote the importance of correct metadata and archiving!

How did you get into the industry?

I started working within BBC document archives nine years ago. I had graduated with a History Degree and wrote a rather vague letter about wanting to do research work at the BBC, and to my surprise I was invited along for an interview. My first job involved working with contracts, scripts and PasBs (Programme as Broadcast forms) – they contain programme details, who the producer was, contributors, recording and transmission dates, that sort of thing. So I'd source the relevant information for producers who wanted to reuse programmes so they could clear the rights as necessary. After that I just moved up within the department through various different roles.

How did you reach the current point in your career?

There was another Media Manager at Radio 1 before me; however, I had been working at 1Xtra, Radio 1's sister station as their first Media Manager. They had only been going for one year so I set up their archive processes from scratch. I gained a lot of experience from this, so when the opening came up at Radio 1 I expressed an interest to take over.

What formal qualifications do you have and are these necessary for everyone? (or are these necessary for your job?)

I have a History degree and a Lifelong Learning Diploma in records management through the University of Newcastle in Northumbria which is applicable to all types of archive work.

What kind of training have you found useful?

I have also taken a number of in-house training courses in general working skills such as presentation skills and assertiveness training. I've put this into practice when carrying out training within Radio 1.

How do you keep up with developments in your field?

The BBC runs a lot of internal learning forums at lunchtime to help staff find out about new strategies and technologies. I try to attend as many as possible because there is usually an archive angle to consider. I also like going along to external conferences to hear about what other archives and organisations are doing.

Is there a skill you need or want to learn?

I would like to find out more about archiving online and interactive material, like websites, blogs and wikis. At the moment we can only really take snapshots rather than record the way these change over time.

What are your career plans for the future?

I have just started a six month attachment with the main BBC archive team as an Archive Consultant. This involves setting policy for the BBC archive which is very interesting and good experience. In the longer term I'd like to work more closely with production areas, particularly on the interactive side.

What advice would you give to anyone who wants to get in and get on in this sector?

Don't allow yourself to be confused by archiving jargon and standards like Dublin Core and OAIS. These standards are relatively easy to apply and follow common sense a lot of the time. You need to have a good balance of theory and the practical. I think it's important to show an interest in the reasons for archiving, i.e. why people might want to find past material and how they might want to access and use it.

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