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City Of Words

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Davis Nguyen

The interactive qualifying project (IQP) was a new experience where I had to do things I wouldn't have normally thought about. First, I had to read someone else's poetry, as oppose to my own, and had to gain an understanding of what they were trying to say. Then I created a list of questions that I, and possibly the audience, would be compelled to ask. After doing so, I had to contact the poet to conduct and record a live interview. In the end, the recording of the interview was to be made into clips of media to be placed on the website.

Before conducting the interview with Fran Quinn, I prefer to research about authors those who have passed away. For my first poet, I chose Elizabeth Bishop. At the start of the project, copyright issues were our first concern. I contacted several companies such as Random House Audio but came up with no reply or was ask for a high price for the copyright. After hitting the wall, I chose to pursue a different route of trying to get in contact with the college that Bishop's paper was bequeath to. That too soon came to an end as money became an issue. Thus after creating the bibliographical essay, I chose to do an analytical essay. Afterwards, it was time to choose a second author.

After much thinking, I was convinced by Professor Dempsey to do a live author, such as Fran Quinn. I recalled back in 2006 that Fran Quinn did a poetry reading at Worcester Polytechnic Institute that I attended for a class. I remember how some of his poetry was so simple and direct and it simulated my interest in poetry and Fran Quinn. There were not many information about Quinn on the internet or in the books. So as the interview draws near, more and more questions came up.

When I first contacted Fran Quinn, he was friendly and positive about the interview. He had replied back to me quickly, with a time period of when he would be in Worcester. This allowed me to set up the date and to rent the instruments that we would need for the interview. After I decided on the day, time, and place for the interview, I informed Quinn about it. Unfortunately, during this time I had lost contact with Fran Quinn. As a result, I couldn't receive his reply or confirmation for our interview.

After not hearing back from Quinn for a period of time, it was suggested that I choose another author or poet to interview. Ultimately, I chose to go with Esther Forbes and to work on her piece, *Johnny Tremain*. Since I did not have access to the Disney movie or book, I had to place an interlibrary loan on both items. However, after about two weeks, the items had yet come arrive at WPI. Afterwards, I received an email from Quinn out of the blue. It was to confirm the interview in the upcoming week. In foresight, the novel and movie, *Johnny Tremain*, wouldn't reach me until after my interview with Forbes was scheduled to happen.

I had to make a choice of either interviewing Esther Forbes or Fran Quinn. Ultimately, I chose to interview Fran Quinn. After making my decision, I contacted Quinn to inform him of the date, time, and place for our interview for March 25, 2009. We had planned to meet at the George C. Gordon Library during the late morning. However, Quinn did not show up till mid-afternoon due to a health issue he was experiencing. After speaking for a brief moment to reschedule our interview, we exchanged contact information and decided to postpone our interview for the following day; after which Quinn would have medical attention to the issue at hand.

Unfortunately, Quinn was unable to attend the interview the next day, due to doctor's order to stay home and rest. Resolutely, the interview was again postponed to March 27, the last day Quinn would be in Worcester. Accordingly, I met Quinn on Friday and conducted the interview, which was captured on video and audio with instruments. Our audio was provided by the ATC Center for the purpose of posting clips onto the website. Now all that was left to do was to edit/create the clips and to correct the original biographical essay of Quinn from the old website. After going through the video interview several times, correcting the facts of the biographical essay, I sent the essay to Quinn to have him confirm that the facts were correct. In doing so, I was able to proceed on and work on the video clips.

Creating the Video Clips:

Creating the video clips for the website was a difficult task. There were many concerns that had to be kept in mind, such as the audience and the audio of the video. The majority of the audience would be looking for facts or information about an author or poet and wouldn't be committed to watch a documentary video. At first, the concept of the video was to consist of

the interview or the information from it, much like a documentary. After rearranging the filmed interview into sections and topics of interest, it was edited so that the relevant information was matched together, such as his family, his writing, and his different jobs he have had. This had initially seemed easy, but timing the moment of when to split the clips was difficult. At times, his sentences would be cut off or start or end abruptly, which would make watching the video difficult or hard to understand at certain times. After this was completed, it was then placed into the timeline section of a movie maker. Afterwards, title screens were created and placed in-between each topic to notify the audience of what topics were going to be touched upon.

The length of the video had to be taken into account due to the possibility of a short attention span from the audience. If the video is too long, the audience would stop absorbing the information or becomes distracted and skip over the clip. As a result, the documentary was split into several smaller clips. Each of the section would focus on one specific topic in a shorter amount of time. Even though the amount of video clips increased, the length of each clip was shortened and focused on a detailed topic. As an added bonus, the size of the clip was also reduced. This is advantageous for the audience who are viewing the website since the loading and buffering time would decrease due to a smaller video playing.

After multiple viewings of the video with the IQP members, it was suggested that the surrounding in the video could be a distraction. They suggested that the video should be cropped to fit the upper body of the poet and their immediate surroundings. The audience's focus would not be diverted from the poet and that it would show a more focused perspective on the poet. However, when the video clips were cropped to about 75% of their original size and pan upwards, the video's quality diminish and the screen became pixelated. Pixelation is when an image does not look smooth and the individual blocks of colors or pixels can be seen. An example of pixelation is then a photograph is zoomed in on the computer screen. Before, when the photograph was zoomed out, the lines are smooth and sharp whereas zooming in reveals the individual blocks of color. Another example is hair. If you were petting a cat, its fur is together and uniform. If you were to move closer to the cat, you would see the individual hair of similar shade much like a pixel to a photograph. Fortunately, the video's pixelation wouldn't

be a significant problem since the size of the video playing on the website would be small and the pixelation wouldn't be as noticeable to our viewers. This will be the opposite of what happens to pixelation: taking a set of block colors and making them smaller to the point that they are pixels to a picture.

With all the considerations kept in mind, the final task to renovate were the transitions of clips from one scene to the next within the clip. How would the scene flow from one to another within a short amount of time? When the clips were placed together as a movie, the transitions were "flipping from right to left," where the scene would turn like a page in the book to proceed to the next on in sequence. The inspiration behind this was the theme of a book. Each topic that had been discussed by the author or poet was about experiences they lived through in life. Like a memoir, the scenes represented chapters and pages out of their book of life. Since the scene before and after are similar, the transition flowed easily.

The idea of the project, Worcester Area Writers, was not to read and write about a particular author or poet but to provide other sources of information such as a video, audio reading, or photographs. Each member of the project was to choose an author and do some background research to do the biographical section of the webpage. The second part of the webpage will be the analytical or extra media of the author. For my poet, Fran Quinn, I chose to do an interview and asked him to do some poetry reading. This led to the work on a documentary which was then later transformed into clips of information. While creating and editing the clips, I had to keep in mind what I was trying to get across to the audience, how long the video clip was going to be, how I was going to edit each scene, and the transition between each of the scenes. The attention span of the audience was a concern since they may not retain as much information from the video clips if the length of the video is too long. In addition to that, the focus of the video should be on the author instead of their immediate surroundings so that the audience knows what to pay attention to instead of getting sidetracked or amused by a bottle placed next to the author. Overall, the experiences I had creating the video clips were worthwhile and help me realize the importance and thought of each scene and editing piece that goes into a video.