

Teaching resource: Non-interview methods

Different ways in which researchers can collect qualitative data



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Introduction

This teaching resource provides instructors and students with materials designed to assist in teaching qualitative methods of data collection.

This resource provides brief summaries of some of the different ways in which researchers can collect qualitative data, including focus groups, diaries, online data collection, and visual methods. Each summary is accompanied by an illustrative data sample from the extensive collections held by the UK Data Archive.

Introduction to other qualitative methods

Grounded in the interpretivist tradition, qualitative researchers are interested in the subjective attitudes, beliefs and feelings of their respondents.

Qualitative research methods are concerned with finding the meanings and attempt to capture rich, detailed information about the subject. This in-depth exploration is usually achieved by focusing in on small, purposive sample groups. Qualitative methods allow for flexibility in the research and facilitate the follow up of emergent themes and ideas rather than relying on prior concepts.

There are a wide range of approaches to collecting qualitative data. This teaching resource has chosen to focus on four of the most commonly used: focus groups, diaries, online data collection and visual methods. Interviews are covered separately in Teaching resource: Interview methods.

Focus groups

Focus groups are small focused discussions facilitated by a moderator, in which qualitative data is generated by the dynamic group interaction.

Diaries

Diaries are used as a research tool to capture rich, detailed qualitative data which accesses personal meanings and understandings.

Online data collection

Online data collection focuses in on a relatively new phenomenon in which digital technologies and the use of the internet can enable researchers to access data which has already been published online. The internet is also used as a way of accessing geographically dispersed or inaccessible groups.

Visual methods

Visual methods can either generate primary data, such as through the creation of a film or through photographs, or visual data can be used as a secondary resource.

Ethical reuse of qualitative data

All the data used here are available from the UK Data Service.

Under standard conditions for accessing data held by the UK Data Service, users must register and sign an End User Licence specifying the terms and conditions of reuse. For this interview resource, different permissions were necessary as the materials are available via the web and other media without requiring users to register. Although registration is not required, anyone using these data must follow the standard conditions for use outlined in the [End User Licence](#).

All depositors whose data extracts are used here were contacted and the depositors gave their permission for UK Data Service to use their materials for this purpose.

Depositors were sent a copy of the introduction and their own extracts for review. Depositors were also consulted to ensure that their collection had been classified correctly. The access conditions that were required for web dissemination of this resource were explained to each depositor.

The UK Data Service has not attempted to standardise a format for these extracts; style and presentation are the depositors' own. All depositors' suggestions for both extracts and the introductory material were incorporated into final versions.

Focus groups

Introduction

Focus groups involve encouraging a group of participants with specific interests or characteristics to draw upon their attitudes, expectations, and feelings on a particular topic or issue.

One of the key features of the method is to capitalise on the communication and interaction among group participants in order to generate qualitative data.

Focus groups are often used as a preliminary method for identifying emerging themes or generating hypotheses to be further explored with other methods; however they are also

sometimes used after other methods to explore preliminary findings which emerge from other types of data collection.

Focus groups enable participants to question each other's opinions; this allows an opportunity to observe the development or re-evaluation of subjective understandings which are often challenged or modified in the process of dynamic group interaction. Moreover, this method enables the researcher to observe other forms of inter-personal communication such as jokes or disagreements.

Focus groups can offer a supportive environment for discussion which some people find less inhibiting than a one-to-one interview. Consequently focus groups can actually be a useful and empowering way to discuss sensitive subjects or enabling an expression of opinions which are shared by group members but which deviate from normative cultural opinions.

However it is important to note that some people feel they need to conform to group opinions and pressures so their opinions risk being constrained.

It is also important to be aware of power dynamics in the group and the hierarchical positioning of participants when they are in the context of the group. All participants should feel confident discussing issues, so it is important that the moderator creates and maintains a secure environment for each member of the group.

Focus groups can be an effective way of collecting data from several people simultaneously, and they enable the researcher to gain a large amount of information in a short period of time.

However, they have some limitations in that they are a relatively expensive method to organise. They also require a skilled moderator to lead them and a skilled researcher to analyse the resulting data, which can be particularly complex due to the intricate interactions among respondents.

Example

SN 5668

Study Title: [*Framing of Terrorist Threats in United States and Russian Elections, 2003-2004.*](#)

Principal Investigator(s): Oates, S.

Date of Fieldwork: March 2004 - December 2004

Abstract: This project examined the framing of terrorist threats in Russian elections (2003 Duma and 2004 presidential) and the United States (US) general presidential election in 2004. The project examined coverage of the nightly news during the campaigns, messages from political parties and candidates as well as audience reaction in focus groups in each country.

Citation: Oates, S., *Framing of Terrorist Threats in United States and Russian Elections, 2003-2004* [computer file]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], September 2007. SN: 5668.

Example extract

[SN 5668 Framing of Terrorist Threats in United States and Russian Elections, 2003-2004](#)

Depositor: Oates, S.

ID: SN5668fg01. Clermont, Florida, USA. December 3, 2004

Facilitator: On a typical day, where do you get your news? Whoever wants to start can start.

Jose: Television news every night.

Staci, Maria, Hilda: Same here.

Clair: I think more than TV, it's Internet, I'm on it quite a bit. On a homepage or whatever, just telling you what's going on.

Jenny: Television. In the morning or at night.

Jose: I get most of it from Internet because I don't have cable or anything like that, so the Internet, CNN.com, FoxNews.com, also US News & World Report magazine.

Facilitator: OK, so we're going to do a quick round robin in chronological order. Which single news source do you use most often? And by that I mean like, if you watch television, what television station, and if you Internet, what internet site.

Judd: CNN.com

Jenny: FoxNews.

Clair: Internet would be MSN homepage, for TV it would be any local channel.

Hilda: I listen to news in Spanish, Channel 16.

Maria: Univision in the evening and in the morning either CNN or Fox.

Jose: Channel 9 ABC (local ABC affiliate)

Staci: ABC

Facilitator: OK, since 9/11, do you think there's been not enough, sufficient, or too much coverage of terrorism and terrorist acts in the mass media?

Clair: I think it seems like a lot more because now it's like a huge issue came up and now all of sudden everyone is talking about it. I can't really remember before 9/11 any discussion about it because it was such a dramatic thing. I feel like it's a lot, but I can't really remember to compare because there was a lot of coverage on it.

Staci: I think there is a lot of coverage on terrorism, we just didn't pay attention because it wasn't here in America, there's been plenty of coverage, it's just now finding our turf. We've been immune so long.

Jose: We've had terrorism across the world. Spain has been hit by the ETAs for years. All over the world there has been terrorism that has never touched us until now. Now, we've been stuck with that terrorism fear and now everybody wants to eat, everybody wants more and more and more, it's like a feeding frenzy (referring to media coverage of terrorism).

Facilitator: Anybody else? OK, do you think there has been, is enough reporting on the causes of terrorism?

Judd: I would say no. We hear a lot about the different groups, why they believe what they believe. But we don't really hear about what social issues may be going on in the nations they are from. That kind of stuff that we hear, is 'radical Islam', but that's way too general.

Group: I agree.

Jenny: I don't hear too much about the causes, what is the origin, why this is what they do. The only thing they say is everybody hates America... they hardly talk about the real group issues, why every country outside think about the United States and why they don't like us.

Facilitator: OK, has the media provided you with a better understanding of security concerns and the U.S. role in the world?

Staci: I think what happening is that they are scaring everybody, I really think as far as security this country really is in the position that it needs to be. We're doing every that we can be. There's isn't really a book you can write, 'OK this is how you're going to secure us from terrorism.' Nor do I think that there ever can be. People that aren't intelligent enough to understand that are absolutely petrified because they think their country is not doing enough. But there is only so much you can do and I don't think there is any way to reassure anybody because look at the acts in what they do. How do you prepare for that?

Clair: Especially with that red, orange, yellow. That is horrible. All of a sudden it's orange and they start freaking out and they have no idea what that truly means. They just see orange and that's higher than yellow or whatever the bottom one is.

Maria: Well I think that what bothers me is the stereotypes, like what she was saying before on the other answer. We tend to stereotype different issues and different peoples and we really don't concentrate on the main big picture, which is any country at any given moment can be in jeopardy as far as what happened to us on 9/11. You cannot prevent that. You can try to prevent it, but you cannot prevent people who have such strong beliefs on what they do that they are willing to sacrifice their own life, their families, everything because they believe they are doing the right thing. To us, they are all a whole bunch of crazy people that are harming us and harming our freedom and what we believe to be this wonderful country. But to other people and other nations, like you said, it has to be something different than what the news and what everybody else is bringing it out to life. I don't feel that they are really telling us what the real cause is. They are just giving us numbers and saying, 'So and so went and did this, and that.' But why don't you try to search and see what's really causing these people to feel this anger toward all of us. I mean not all Americans are mean people.

Staci: But don't you think they (media) know and it's not sensational enough.

Maria: Probably.

Staci: The causes are known, they just don't bother reporting them.

Maria: Well, you're probably right.

Staci: Because someone like you and I will go research it if we're interested, we'll find out. And usually those types of causes they pull in the people that aren't intelligent, the people who are looking to find a group or needing to find belonging. And those are the people they focus on. And if they actually put out what they really stand for or what causes, they won't have anybody. That's part of it.

Maria: It's ignorance.

Staci: Yes. That's exactly it.

Jose: You talk about terrorism and you hear the word terrorism after 9/11 and we always think about somebody from outside coming in. But we have to understand that before 9/11 we had McVeigh that blew up Oklahoma. There is terrorism in every different way. There are people locked up in prison now that were sending bombs through the mail to judges and other people that were opening bombs and blew up. We hear terrorism today in the news and the first thing we think of is 9/11 and somebody coming from outside. We have our own terrorist groups that live within our borders.

Judd: Also, wasn't there something about policy?

Facilitator: Yeah, has the media provided you with a better understanding of security concerns and the U.S. role in the world?

Judd: OK, I think with the way reporting goes in very contained to each single occurrence, we don't hear so much about how security policy is made or what is taken into consideration when we hear there's a Patriot Act and it's controversial and people don't like it, but we don't know how, we don't know what kind of thought process went into different things on constructing it. So yeah, I don't think we have, we're provided with, a very good big picture on how everything wraps together with our policy.

Facilitator: So, overall what role did the issue of terrorism and international security play in the Bush/Kerry campaign?

Clair: Isn't that all there was?

Staci: You know what, honestly, I don't think it really matters which one of them became president, terrorism isn't going to go away or change. It doesn't matter. I know that the tape of Osama bin Laden came out, who knows really came up with that little message, that if are to re-elect Bush it (terrorism) would get worse, and then you get all your Midwestern states having panic attacks - that you know 'We'll show them, no one is going to push our country around.' You know, all I think it did was take a lot of ignorant people and scare the hell out of them because it really didn't matter who was going to become president, we're still going to have terrorism. Both sides wanted you to believe if you elected the other, say goodbye because it's going to come to an end.

Judd: Definitely, both the campaigns, I think, said, 'I'm going to do better at keeping America secure.' I don't remember any of them stating that they were going to wipe out terrorism or that it was going to be wiped out.

Staci: Or how.

Judd: Yeah. Because you know, the main focus is trying to keep America and Americans secure. They were both of course saying that. One was trying to say, 'I'm not too concerned about it.' Well, that was a guaranteed loss. But yeah, it was pivotal focus, especially with the way you have a difference in the way Bush trying to tie Iraq into the whole war on terror and Kerry saying there was no relation whatsoever. That permeated everything else.

Jose: I agree with that. If you kept watching the news, every time something happened around the world, they wanted to increase the threat of the people of the United States that terrorism chart would change colour, but then they'd flip it back down. It usually happened on like a Thursday or Friday, they'd raise the colour and then bring it back down. They keep people on the edge of their seats. Like, what's going on, what's going on.

Maria: They almost made me feel like I was living back in Cuba, which is my country of birth. You have that terrible fear that Americans were going to invade Cuba, so of course, I would have been very happy if that would have happened, because they are communist. But, you know the government made me believe that kind of lies. It's like you woke up in the morning and the sirens would go off that we were having bombs coming down and that's exactly how I felt every time after 9/11 and I still do. I see that alert go up and down, up and down, it's like going back to live a type of life that I hated. I hate living in fear. I hate feeling that I'm not in a safe place. There's nothing certain out of life. You cannot predict future. You can only try to live every day to the best of you capabilities. If the government does what they think they can to keep us safe that's all we need to be worrying about. There are many, many other issues that media doesn't seem to bring up or that they never brought up during the campaigns. But to me, as a parent, and as an American, are a lot more important than worrying about what level of safety that we have right now. How you predict that?

Facilitator: So, to you personally, what was the most important issue in the campaign?

Staci: I lost focus on the campaign. I can't even tell you originally what my focus was, because it got so out of control, I think I got away from the focus of what I thought was important, and I was waiting to see what was going to happen next. It was almost, it wasn't focused, and they didn't talk about anything. First they talked with terrorism, and then it was black-balling one person's military record. Then it was black-balling Bush's reserve record. I

never felt like they got to the issues where I got any questions answered. I gave up on basically and just went with my party because I didn't find anything new or better from either one.

Clair: That's exactly what I did.

Staci: I didn't find anything. I lost focus. I couldn't find anything.

Clair: The only thing I remember them talking about was terrorism. I don't remember any of the other issues.

Staci: And I really thought that (terrorism) didn't matter.

Clair: In fact, like 2 days before the election, I had to online and look up their sides. I was like, what's going on, I don't know. I had to go to and it look up.

Staci: I gave up.

Jose: Both of them the arguing was done in the media. Who cares what his military record is? Who cares What I wanted to know. One of the things I wanted to know, and was interested in that, and by my profession, I wanted to know these senior citizen issues. I'm going to be retiring someday. You know, they're having to pay so much medicines in this country and they only talked briefly about that - part about medicines coming from Canada and being sub-quality. Guys, listen up for a second, the medicine that Canada receives, we're making it here in America and taking it across the border, it's just coming back cheaper. And what are we doing wrong, that's what I wanted to hear. They mentioned that and all of a sudden it would be just silent. They went up to talk about terrorism, because that's what people wanted to hear. But if you look at it, the baby-boomers are retiring. We're going to have the biggest amount of retirees here soon, it's almost at our door.

Staci: And social security was another thing we didn't hear enough about. We heard one wanted privatization and one wanted to save it. But nobody told us how.

Maria: Exactly.

Staci: And nobody showed us how either one, well obviously we know how social security works, but as far as privatization, you're basically no one is paying social security and you're making funds available that you're not to going to take interest on that money, but it's going to

come out somewhere else. Nobody could answer anything. They just told you what you wanted to hear.

Maria: What about the health care issue? That was pretty funny. We're talking about if you're young, if you're boss can't afford to give you health insurance; we're going to giving them this tax break. We never really knew what the actually plan was for either candidate. It's like blah, blah, blah, and nothing really concrete and we deserve as educated Americans, should know exactly, prior to everybody to campaign for president of the most wonderful country in the whole record to really give us educated answers. Rather than stand in front of a podium, look at people, make us all feel like we're all ignorant or stupid.

Judd: I think part of that though, comes from we have too much reliance on the media to provide us with information; with everything that they are going to provide us is sound bites, that's what they're looking for because they're looking at 30 minutes to cover everything that's happening in the world in a day. So, for us to find out how each of the issues that's important to us really plays out, the responsibility falls back on us to go look at their Web sites and go look at, and of course their Web site is going to tell you what they want. Go look at what other, you know, find other sources than what is going to come on the nightly news, things like that.

Staci: I noticed more on this election than any other election before, that some of the news stations, you could feel the side they were on. Like Fox, absolutely pro-Bush, which regardless of what your party is, it was just an obvious thing. There were some that you could really feel it.

Facilitator: So, who thought, a quick show of hands, that terrorism was the most important issue?

Clair, Judd, Staci, Jose, Maria raised their hands.

Jenny and Hilda did not raise their hands.

Facilitator: And to yourselves personally, what did you think the important issue was, not what they showed in the media, but what you felt should have been addressed or what you think?

Maria: Education, health care, Medicare, Social Security, well benefits, the essentials that have made this country be what it is. And what makes millions of people every day dream about coming to America.

Staci: Security. They lose sight of these issues, look at the two of them, look how wealthy they are. Do you really think? I have relatives that there are all very, very wealthy doctors on Park Avenue, New York and their father is a union organizer who retired. My uncle with so upset with his three sons voting for Bush. Their answer to their father was, 'What you're worried about the \$15 a month raise you got from Social Security? We'll send it to you.' Well, what about all the other people who couldn't get their sons, or don't have wealthy sons, that live on Social Security that aren't going to get any? I think that the politicians are so out-of-control wealthy now that those issues aren't important to them anymore. Their families aren't worried about suffering from it.

Clair: None of the issues are really important to them anyway. It's all about talking to what we want to hear.

Jenny: Maybe just a little bit for some of you, I think we cannot criticize that both candidates were trying to talk more about terrorism. Because, let's think about it, if you want health care, if you want education, you want all the wonderful things, if you're not safe, you're not together, you have no cares. You don't care about education. You want to be safe. You want to have a place to go to, a country to go to.

Staci: But you can't give up on everything else and just focus on that.

Jenny: No, no, like of not, terrorism has to be the major.

Staci: We're not, that's fine, we're arguing at all.

Maria: We're trying to say there were other important issues that the media does not think about.

Staci: We're talking about the candidate, not the media itself.

Maria: They did not focus enough on and spend enough time with their researching staff members to find out what the needs of the country really are besides terrorism. Unfortunately, what happened on 9/11 and I hope to God and I pray every night that it will never happen not only to America, but to anyone else in any other country in the world. And it does, it's sad to say it, but it does.

Staci: You know what, people just don't do one after another. They take years before this will happen again in this country. It's not going to happen tomorrow. They take years. They're intelligent people. They waited six years to do this.

Facilitator: In general, why did you vote the way you did and when did you make the decision to vote for the person that you voted for?

Clair: When I was standing at the machine.

Judd: Did you have a coin with you?

Clair: Yeah, eenie, meanie, minie, moe?

Staci: I kind of went for the female issues. Seriously, I didn't think either candidate really told me different than the other as far as terrorism, anything. So I kind of voted on things that affected me and my family.

Jenny: I voted based on my moral issues. I'm a very strong raising and morally. I felt strong about it and I based my voting on it.

Clair: I felt like, this might not be the same for everybody, but I felt like and probably this could be based on the media coverage, but I felt like Kerry changed his mind an awful lot and it made me very nervous. So I thought, I almost voted like which was the lesser of two evils because both of them were not telling me anything I wanted to hear, at least from the media standpoint because I can only hear what the media tells me. And quite a few issues seemed like he was toggling back and forth and I just felt like I was going to go with at least what I was familiar with, and that's why I voted that way.

Maria: I agree.

Judd: I voted with the security issue. But in watching the debate, seeing, that was where I thought you could get the best sense, from seeing how they spoke and hearing what they were saying, and was how they felt about these other issues. I felt one of them was just so far off base from what I believe and what I want for this country that it was the stuff I was hearing coming from them - eh, it wasn't going to work I can tell you now. While, security was the most important thing, it was heavily reinforced from a mix of everything else.

Facilitator: How about you Hilda?

Hilda: I voted for Kerry. I belong to the middle class and I'm not rich. I don't like the idea of war in a country, too many people is killed everyday. And I don't like that. And Bush continued the

war that his father started, he wants to continue that. And I don't like that. That's why I voted for Kerry.

Maria: See this is what makes us such a great country, we can all vote with our opinions and everybody is still smiling. Because that is what makes us respect each other. Exactly.

Facilitator: So let's go back and think about our earlier discussion about the mass media. How was the issue of terrorism and international security covered in the campaign by the mass media? I know we covered it a little bit, so we don't have to get into details, just a little brief, um you know.

Jenny: Cars blowing away, buildings destroyed, people in the streets. I mean, we're tired of seeing all of that you see a lot on television, we don't want to see that.

Clair: At least on local channels, there seems like very little international-wise. On local channels, they would do it (international coverage) very briefly, and I don't watch CNN enough. I'm sure they covered it much more in-depth, but local news doesn't at all. So you only have like she said, the real dramatic, quick two-seconds of what happened that day.

Maria: I think you should have media coverage when you have a war, but I'm starting to feel like the media is starting to turn this like another Vietnam. That's the way I feel. They are portraying the soldiers to be wrong at maybe shooting somebody. They are not there on the ground. They don't know what imminent, what imminent danger that person is really facing. And unless you've been in a war before, unless you work in a field where your life can be in danger every single day, I would suggest you don't pass judgment onto those people, unless you are in their shoes. And the media, rather than focus on the whole news around them like you said before, they give us just a little tiny bit of information, not enough for any of us to really access what we see and what really happened. So it would give us a better idea if we had a little more information.

Jose: Typical example, the media was following a soldier in Iraq and the soldier walked into a building being filmed, and shot a man that was on the ground. Now what they failed to tell you is that a couple of days before another soldier in that battalion went to turn over a body to see if he was alive and he blew up with him because the body was booby-trapped. Now, we transport ourselves back into history, to back to Pearl Harbor and the war with Japan or even in Vietnam, when parents were sending kids with bombs in their diapers and military people were blowing up. I had a friend of mine lose both his legs because of it, he picked up a child with a booby-trap. And luckily, it blew up just his legs, but I'm telling you, we're passing judgment. The media should be taken out of the war zone and let the military fight a war - it's a war.

Jenny: I so strongly agree with that, what he said. You're violating security. You're asking stupid questions about what is the next step, so nobody is going to be listening. What are they going to do?

Judd: Just real quick, I thought ah, when you look on the news and read, you see a car blew up today, 20 people killed, and I talked to buddies of mine I went to college with who had been over there once or twice already. And they're saying after the war was over, they were building electrical plants and getting schools back up.

Maria: Teaching people who to read and write.

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Diaries

Introduction

A diary is a record of personal experiences and events which is created by an individual.

Diaries are a rich source of qualitative data for the social researcher as they can be interpreted either as the construction of social reality from an individual's perspective or as a

source of information about unfolding events or the ongoing daily lives of individuals. They offer an insight into the interpretations people make about their lives, their everyday activities and behaviour.

Advantages of researching through the use of diaries

First it is a physically unobtrusive method that does not require the researcher to be present. Diarists are able to make entries 'in their own time', perhaps when they have had time to consider the significance of unfolding events or experiences. As such they may provide the basis of subsequent interviews, enabling the researcher to maintain a close link with 'life as lived'. As a result diaries often generate more sensitive material which respondents may have difficulty in expressing in interviews or through other methods requiring personal contact with the researcher. As longitudinal data, diaries provide evidence of expectations which can then be compared to subsequent entries.

Forms of diaries

Diaries can take a number of different forms and can serve different research purposes.

They may be kept at the request of the researcher for a limited period of time. The information recorded may be open with a full and detailed commentary in the respondent's own words, or it may be based on pre-categorised spaces or tick-boxes for ease of completion.

The diary may also take the form of a log, which only records the occurrence of events with little reflection and detail.

Most diaries are kept on a daily basis with specified space being allocated to each day, but short-term diaries may be organised on an hourly basis and others may solicit accounts on a weekly basis.

Unsolicited diaries

Some diaries are unsolicited; they are written without the specific intention of use in research and without payments or incentives.

The unsolicited personal diary may include little more than times of meetings, travel expenses, the state of the weather, or a record of sales and purchases. Alternatively they may record private thoughts, personal events and feelings which are recorded without intentional censorship.

If a diary is unsolicited and a private possession, it can also be very difficult for a researcher to gain access to this information as there is often no public record of its existence (Alaszewski, 2006, 61).

Furthermore there are ethical considerations in using diaries which have not been written for the purpose of research.

There is also another type of unsolicited diary, not written on the request of a researcher, yet still purposefully written with an audience in mind and with the considered possibility of eventual publication. Such a diary may form part of an eventual autobiography or similar literary project.

Limitations to the use of diaries

There are some limitations to the use of diaries in social research, notably the respondents must have the literacy capabilities to be a diary keeper (Corti, 1993), and the extent of the writing skills of the diarist obviously influences the quality and recording of the information.

Such difficulties can be countered through the use of tick boxes or proxy diarists. However, even if the respondent has the ability to record the information there are issues to consider about what is recorded.

How important these issues are is dependent on the intentions of the researcher. For example a researcher who requires a detailed, reliable, accurate and contemporary record of events and emotions may encounter problems such as the under-recording of information or of inadequate recall, particularly if information is being recorded sometime after the event.

Similarly the act of diary keeping may influence and alter the way in which respondents report their data, choosing to include more favourable data or data which more closely fits the project's remit. However, these are only problems if they do not fit with the researcher's intentions.

It could also be that an analysis of what is recorded and what is not could be equally as revealing if the diary is collated with an in-depth interview. Some researchers may be particularly interested in the narrative construction of a diary: how people frame their stories, what they chose to include and the words they use. Therefore these recording practices are not problems necessarily but rather could be seen as an interesting source of data in their own right.

New opportunities

The World Wide Web has created new opportunities and ways of keeping diaries, such as blogs and postings on sites like Facebook and MySpace. Individuals are now able to post detail about their lives online in new and innovative forms. These new forms of diary keeping and logging of personal information will be discussed in more detail in the section on online data collection.

Example

SN5631

Study Title: [*Media Consumption and the Future of Public Connection, 2004-2005*](#)

Principal Investigator(s): Couldry, N., Markham, T. and Livingstone, S.

Date of Fieldwork: February 2004-June 2005

Abstract: This project was conducted to gather data on whether and how people's practices of media consumption give them the resources to connect to wider public spaces. The research also examined what implications for forms of democratic citizenship and participation that consumption may have. The research covered the ways that people's practices as media consumers were connected (or not) to their practices as citizens; how individual consumers might themselves understand the relationship between consumption and citizenship; and how far consumers think their media consumption provides them with the resources for citizenship they feel they need and ought to have.

Citation: Couldry, N., Markham, T. and Livingstone, S., *Media Consumption and the Future of Public Connection, 2004-2005* [computer file]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], July 2007.

Example extract

[SN 5631 *Media Consumption and the Future of Public Connection, 2004-2005*](#)

Text file name: diary26.rtf

Diarist: 26

Week: 1

Date: 15 Mar 04

Format: Written

Mon:

I was most concerned about the killing in Spain and have followed the news media. Apparently 3 men have been arrested and they are associated with Al Qaeda and one of the men arrested is known to be involved in the 11th September bombing in US.

Due to the above Spanish Polling Station are up by 10%. Spanish people are concerned for their own safety. Al Qaeda could strike here in Britain and I will follow the situation.

Tue:

Vandals wrecked a train from [town in Midlands] to [nearby town in Midlands]. Passengers were terrified as windows were smashed and seats slashed causing £75000 damage. This report was on Look North on BBC which was of interest to me.

Wed:

I was not very impressed with the Budget as usual the cigs, bar, petrol has increased. The 40 000 civil service job cuts will cause havoc when all the factors are known. No wonder it was called credit card budget.

Thurs:

I was very interested in an article in the paper today where blind people are using miniature horses instead of guide dogs as a horse will last a lifetime whereas they have up to 3-4 dogs in their lifetime but the cost is much greater unfortunately.

Fri/Sat:

There is a local nursery (plants) near to my house which was shared a few years ago by a husband and wife team. Myself and all my neighbours and friends have always bought our garden plants from there.

10 months ago contractors moved in to widen the [number] motorway about 10 minutes drive from my home and I thought the nursery had closed, but due to the full front page of our Messenger (free paper) apparently they are still open for business.

I was going to B&Q (Sat) today to buy my garden plants. Of course, due to the [local newspaper] article I will go to Kiwi and I hope other readers will do the same. I have attached the article as I think this is of local human interest.

[Attached: Article 'We will not be moved' Front page, local newspaper.]

Diarist: 26

Week: 2

Date: 22 Mar 04

Format: Written

Apparently 3 people have been arrested for using a lazer phone whilst the gaming clerk's croupier calls no more bets. Subsequently they have won £1.3 million in 2 nights as the phone predicts where the ball will fall. Police are not sure if it is illegal.

1st time buyers are having a bad time buying a home the average 1st time buyer has to wait 6 years to get together a large deposit. In Worcester 1st time buyers are sleeping in tents to buy new unused army property for £120,000 and are hopefully hoping for 100% mortgage.

I was amazed to hear of two anti-war protesters who climbed Big Ben to protest about war and they got away with the climb. I was pleased to learn today that the government was taking action to protect the commons they are to build a huge concrete wall topped with razor wire and are thinking of a 'shoot to kill' policy.

This is all very well, but I live in detached house, but I am not allowed to put razor wire on my side gate to protect myself.

A terrorist strike is to be expected and obviously safety is of most importance.

Free home loans for Key workers, teachers, nurse and police up to £100,000. They are in secure jobs and the government thinks this will help. Where will they get all the millions to assist this scheme? There is much talk about tax increases.

Tony Blair is trying to head off a new Iraq crisis by meeting the new Spanish PM. Mr Blair met with the outgoing PM Jose Maria Aznar who has been an ally with Britain and America over Iraq.

The mood will change when he meets the new PM of Spain Jose Rordriguez Zapatero : the aftermath of the Madrid bombs as he has vowed to pull his troops out of Iraq by June and condemned the Iraq war. It will be very interesting to see what develops and I will report back with much interest.

The sponsor of Colonel Gaddafi to meet Tony Blair, who arranged the deaths at Lockerbie, Tony Blair went to Tripoli and met Gaddafi in a tent and his own royal camels.

Gaddafi's blood stained past leaves much to be desired. Gaddafi has promised to be a pillar of society, let's hope Tony Blair can lift sanctions imposed.

Schools, trains, houses need rebuilding then oil and gas is worth billions of pounds. Irrigation schemes are due to commence and British companies are hoping for business. This now supports [illegible] and really cannot be trusted.

In a lighter mood a football playing policeman tripped up a male stripper on the pitch and he himself was sent off the pitch for pushing the stripper.

Diarist: 26

Week: 03

Date: 29 Mar 04

Format: Written

People of [Midlands town] over 65 are now all free from heart problems as the g.p.'s and hospitals worked together to reduce heart problems by 30%. Walking, swimming and exercises have been organised and people who had expected to die with angina are now having a good quality of life and are now not going to die. Let's hope this 'working together' spreads across the country.

Ireland has gone 'no smoking' in bars and restaurants. As a non-smoker I think it is excellent. Lots of people may go back to pubs because the air will be free of smoke. Anyone caught smoking in restaurants will be immediately fined £2000.

Beverley Hughes M.P. has been under fire as she has ignored evidence that immigration papers are not being checked properly and papers allowing immigrants into England are being ignored. The evidence was given out by immigration officers and the people are allowed into Britain with knowingly false papers.

Thousands of telephone lines were put out of action today due to a fire in [name of city] area and telephones will be out of action for some time. 130,000 phones not internet lines are out of service.

Emergency services are having to use mobile telephones as their lines are out of order and communication would not be restored to their mobile crews. BT said it will be days before the repairs are completed.

I was concerned further regarding Visa's into Britain.

It has been told that lawyers can get visa's into Britain for £3000 in Bulgaria. It is stated that a Bulgarian electrician with no fingers and a roofer with one leg have been given a visa into Britain and await more damaging allegations. I am following this story with much interest.

In Luton, there are 20 000 Muslims and they are taking to the streets to talk people into the Mosques. The youths adhere violence.

The British Embassy in Romania have shut up shop - Tony Blair will look into the panic regarding Visas. The conservatives are having a field day and there is much concern at no. 10. Possibly job losses will now occur.

Michael Grade has been made boss of the BBC. BBC need to boost morale - he is very knowledgeable and started as a trainee with Daily Mirror - he was called Michael D Grade whilst at Channel 4 and honestly he will turn things around for the BBC. His uncle is Sir Lew Grade.

Shown on the Internet - how to make bombs. Information Jews and Christians to be human targets listing many countries including Britain. Possibly the group are the ones who bombed houses in Riyadh.

BA Systems have made 720 workers redundant and a further 1000 workers are to lose their jobs in three factories in Lancashire due to the shortage of new work coming in. This will have a terrible affect on the Lancashire people.

It was wonderful to learn that the flying Scotsman is to remain.

Diarist: 26

Week: 4

Date: 05 Apr 04

Format: Written

In Britain,

I have been a passenger on the Flying Scotsmen a few years ago and it was a wonderful sensation - Sir Richard Branson has made a donation of £428,000 [illegible] and £1.8 million from the national heritage which was built in 1923 will be secured in its new home at the national railway museum in York. This is a very satisfactory solution all round.

An all year round horse race track is to be built in [nearby suburb] Equestrian Centre - bring 10,000 cars on race days. [nearby local council] are to review the structure and will bring jobs to the area.

[village in same region] is a village near River [name]. The local Council has taken down all the sign posts so cyclists and walkers avoid the village causing the local business having no passing business for Easter. The County Council took down the signs but denied liability - the locals erected their own signs when their Parish Council took no action.

The Canadian government allow the culling of seals - up to 10,000 seals an hour die around 350,000 will be killed. The Canadian government claims the cull is needed. Animal rights say the fashion for fur is pushing up the prices for skins. They have seen seals skinned alive and dragged whilst unconscious. The US Human Rights Society, I am pleased to say have taken out full page newspaper adverts urging travellers to boycott Canada. The world was shocked in 1968 by front page pictures by Ken Gavin which led to the virtual collapse of the seal skin industry. Seal's genitals can be sold for £200 in the Far East where they are believed to be an aphrodisiac.

I know culling has to be done, but not for personal gain. I will follow this story closely.

Diarist: 26

Week: 5

Date: 19 Apr 04

Format: Written

40 full time volunteer bird watchers are working around the clock to protect the Black Tailed Goodwit Birds that have come to nest in the north west area - CCTV cameras have been set up and a fine or imprisonment will be given to anyone stealing the bird's eggs.

4 people were rescued when the Liverpool Coast Guards were [?] - they were air rescued from where the 20 cockle pickers were found drowned on Feb 20th. They were very quiet when rescued they did not know about the dangers seen at Morecombe. Coast Guards leave after given a warning.

I was interested to learn that house prices are rising at £150 a day and set to reward increases to hit 20% this year. The average home in England costs £184,582. More than 50% at start of 2002.

In the north west last month homes increased by 3.1% which is great for me.

I was disturbed regarding the article in the paper regarding invading gypsies in the village Cottenham, Cambs. The gypsies now own 20 acres. A village postman was beaten to death and 4 gypsies questioned. 43 properties are now for sale against 19 last month.

A property scam has been unveiled with the gypsies aiming to sell off housing plots to make a potential £20 million profit. The people of Cottenham have had enough. The South Cambridgeshire District Council spokesman said - we are taking enforcement action against illegal gypsies/travellers at the site. I will follow this story with interest as I personally had the same problem at my holiday home in Lincoln numerous years ago where travellers invaded farmer's land opposite to my property, and many many problems were made at the time and it will be interesting to see how they handle the situation.

I am not a football fan, but [city club] fans were said to have gone to the game in spite of a terror alert.

Fans attended the match against [name] even though terrorists were arrested. Bombs made of chemicals and suicide bombs were made against the high profile game. Also our big shopping centre called [name] centre was supposedly targeted by terrorists. Living on the doorstep and I visit the [name] Centre a great deal. This is very worrying.

I was upset to learn of my local hospital - [name] where they discovered bodies of families were mixed up with other names. This must be very worrying to the families and I should be upset if this was my family. The mixed was only resolved by one of the bodies' rings on his finger.

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Online data collection

Introduction

The internet has created new opportunities and challenges for the qualitative researcher, including the way in which material is gathered, accessed and archived.

The internet can be used as a method of research through online interviews, focus groups, online observations, interactive chat and surveys. It is also a rich source of easily accessible archived data about people's lives.

Using the internet as a method

The internet can be used to facilitate a variety of qualitative research methods.

Online interviews for example are a popular internet-based method, which can be carried out through an email exchange or through a more instantaneously interactive chat forum.

Interviewing online has the advantage of being able to access geographically dispersed respondents and is more cost effective than meeting people offline.

A notable disadvantage to online interviewing is the lack of physical co-presence and bodily clues which the researcher would usually rely on in a face-to-face interview and this lack of non-verbal contact can make the development of rapport more challenging to establish and maintain. Counter-arguing this though is that the lack of personal contact with a respondent online makes the research perhaps less ethically demanding.

In an interview, conducted through an email exchange, interviewees have time to think through and formulate their answers rather than giving more spontaneous response which might be more revealing.

The process of interviewing through email can also be a much slower process than through instant messaging or talking face to face with someone; as a result conducting research through emails can be time consuming and also a long-term commitment for both the researcher and respondents.

Due to the relatively distant and impersonal aspect of online interviewing there is a greater risk of the participant withdrawing from the communication process. It therefore becomes particularly important for the researcher to maintain the interviewee's interest and engagement with the project.

Online interviewing could also be used in conjunction with offline methods for example following up an offline focus group or interview with email communication, or through carrying out online and then face-to-face interviews later.

The shift from an online to an offline relationship or vice versa can be a complicated area of negotiation in research and trust is an important factor in the success of this transition. Some interviewees may prefer the relative anonymity afforded to them by the online setting.

Using the internet as a source

The internet has seen a rise in new forms of inter-personal communication for instance through chat rooms, internet forums, blogs, home pages, bulletin boards, and virtual worlds.

These new online sources have created new forms of expression about everyday life giving a unique insight into the personal lives of many people and can yield a particularly rich source data for the qualitative researcher.

Weblogs or blogs as they are more commonly known are a particularly popular form of computer mediated communication which is unique to online culture, and their popularity has increased dramatically over the last decade.

Blogs are personally-created websites on which people develop and regularly update a commentary on a specific topic or use it to record their everyday life events, almost like an online diary with each entry listed in a reverse chronology.

Other people can then comment on the blogs and respond to each others' comments. Blogs often contain embedded images, photographs and hyperlinks to other sources, making them particularly interesting sources of visual as well as textual information.

The capacity to remain anonymous when posting internet material can raise some issues about authenticity, particularly as the writers of internet entries are able to play more freely with their identity and self-representation than they might otherwise have done offline. It is easier for an anonymous writer to deceive the researcher; however the way in which people construct their identities online may also be an interesting area for research in itself.

Other areas that the researcher should take into consideration when using online sources include finding and collecting relevant data; due to the infinite and intricate links on the internet it can become an overwhelming and quite time consuming process. Therefore it is important for researchers to set their own limitations to the amount of online searches that they do.

There are also other considerations such as issues of confidentiality, what is considered private material or public material, issues of copyright, and the representativeness and authenticity of material and consent to use it (Hewson, 2003, 52).

Example

SN 5475

Study Title: [*United Kingdom Children Go Online, 2003-2005*](#)

Principal Investigator(s): Livingstone, S., and Bober, M.

Date of Fieldwork: Phase I: summer 2003; phase II: January to March 2004; Phase III: autumn 2004

Abstract: This project conducted a thorough investigation of 9-19 year olds' use of the internet between 2003 and 2005. Work was conducted with girls and boys of different ages and socio-economic backgrounds across the UK in order to ask how the internet may be transforming, or may itself be shaped by, family life, peer networks and education.

The final report can be located on the [LSE Research online website](#).

Citation: Livingstone, S. and Bober, M., *United Kingdom Children Go Online, 2003-2005* [computer file]. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], November 2006. SN: 5475.

Example extract

[*SN 5475 United Kingdom Children Go Online, 2003-2005*](#)

Interview ID: Message Board Log 2003 Date of Blogs: 29/10/2003-10/11/2003

File Name: 5475op01

Message Board Log - Young People's Online Panel 2003

Pseudonym	Age	Location
Anne	15	Essex
Colin	15	Essex
Milly	15	Essex
Caroline	15	Essex
Amil	15	Essex
Manu	18	London
Rosie	13	Derbyshire
Bethany	14	London
Oliver	17	Kent

Message subjects:

Test

Introductions (4 replies)

About the Young People's Panel

Chat sessions (1 reply)

Chat or IM? (6 replies)

Kids as internet experts? (5 replies)

The internet easy or difficult (2 replies)

If the internet disappeared tomorrow (6 replies)

Not having internet access (3 replies)

Creating your own content (5 replies)

Online porn (1 reply)

Email Tony Blair (4 replies)

Rate this site (4 replies)

Advertising (1 reply)

Apologies

Chat rooms

Search engines (1 reply)

Broadband (1 reply)

Message no. 23

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Wednesday, October 29, 2003 12:33pm

Subject: Test

If you'd like to send a test message to see how the message board works, you can do it here.

Magda

Message no. 66 [Branch from no. 23]

Posted by Rosie (Rosie.EXT) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 9:03pm

Subject: Re: Test

Hi young people panel!!!!

Message no. 25

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Thursday, October 30, 2003 11:05am

Subject: Introductions

Here you can introduce yourself to the other users. Just click on Quote and fill in your details...

Name:

Age:

Male/female:

Location:

What do you do?

Hobbies:

First started using the net:

Use the net how often:

Use the net for:

Fav websites:

Are you more likely to phone/text/email or IM your mates?

Have you ever bought anything online?

Where's your computer?

What's on your desktop?

Best thing about the net:

Worst thing about the net:

Add other things if you like.

Message no. 26 [Branch from no. 25]

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Thursday, October 30, 2003 11:15am

Subject: Re: Introductions

In message 25 on Thursday, October 30, 2003 11:05am, Magda (MAGDA.TA) writes:

>Name: Magda
>Age: 27
>Male/female: F
>Location: Normally London, but in Manchester this week
>What do you do? I'm a researcher on this project.
>Hobbies: Reading, watching telly, arts, swimming
>First started using the net: 1996
>Use the net how often: (almost) every day, I'm online most of the time
>Use the net for: Emailing, work, checking the weather, booking traintickets...
>Fav websites: BBC and Google
>Are you more likely to phone/text/email or IM your mates? Email
>Have you ever bought anything online? Yep, usually train tickets and flights.
>Where's your computer? In my office and also have a laptop which can be anywhere
>What's on your desktop? A picture of how the internet really works (people inside a mountain making a big fire that powers a machine and at the top, someone sitting at a computer)
>Best thing about the net: Keeping in touch with friends.
>Worst thing about the net: Very time-consuming, I don't get to do other things that often anymore.
>
>Add other things if you like.

Message no. 27 [Branch from no. 25]

Posted by Sonia (SONIA.TA) on Thursday, October 30, 2003 11:24am

Subject: Re: Introductions

In message 25 on Thursday, October 30, 2003 11:05am, Magda (MAGDA.TA) writes:

>Here you can introduce yourself to the other users. Just click on Quote and fill in your details...

>

>Name: Sonia

>Age: 43

>Male/female: f

>Location: london

>What do you do? research

>Hobbies: gardening, cooking, walking

>First started using the net: hmmm, cant remember - say, 6 years?

>Use the net how often: daily

>Use the net for: work, mainly

>Fav websites:lse, bbc, google

>Are you more likely to phone/text/email or IM your mates? phone, email

>Have you ever bought anything online? books

>Where's your computer? in the living room

>What's on your desktop?goldfish

>Best thing about the net: everything is there

>Worst thing about the net: frustrating

>

>Add other things if you like.

Message no. 55 [Branch from no. 25]

Posted by xxBethanyxx (XXBethanyXX) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 6:50pm

Subject: Re: Introductions

>

>Name: Bethany

>Age: 14

>Male/female: female

>Location: london
>What do you do? student
>Hobbies: bein wit frenz, watchin films, listenin 2 music n partyin
>First started using the net: 10 years old?
>Use the net how often: 4 times a week?
>Use the net for: instant messanger, research 4 work at skl, email
>Fav websites: dont rly have ne
>Are you more likely to phone/text/email or IM your mates? all of them but not email v much
>Have you ever bought anything online? yes, cds
>Where's your computer? in my parents office (they work @ home)
>What's on your desktop? my parents stuff
>Best thing about the net: i can chat 2 frenz online who i wdnt on the fone
>Worst thing about the net: paedophilia n popups
>
>Add other things if you like.

Message no. 58 [Branch from no. 25]

Posted by Amil (Amil.EXT) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 7:08pm

Subject: Re: Introductions

In message 25 on Thursday, October 30, 2003 11:05am, Magda (MAGDA.TA) writes:

>Here you can introduce yourself to the other users. Just click on Quote and fill in your details...

>

>Name:Amil Samar

>Age:15

>Male/female:Male

>Location:Colchester (Essex)

>What do you do? Studies at school

>Hobbies:Include Music, Acting, Sports, Using the internet and many more

>First started using the net:About 4-5 years ago

>Use the net how often:almost everyday

>Use the net for:various things from research, to finding news

>Fav websites:-

>Are you more likely to phone/text/email or IM your mates?All
>Have you ever bought anything online?Nope
>Where's your computer?Study room
>What's on your desktop?Folders which are sorted out into catagories, e.g. The folder 'Media' will have Windows Media Player in it etc.
>Best thing about the net:World Wide
>Worst thing about the net:Virus's, Rude materials, Unsafe for children
>
>Add other things if you like:

Message no. 29

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Thursday, October 30, 2003 11:29am

Subject: About the Young People's Online Panel

We have set up this panel for our research project 'UK Children Go Online'. The project explores how children and young people are using the internet and is run at the London School of Economics.

We have just finished the first part of the project, in which we interviewed children and young people in schools and at home about the internet. We would now like to ask for your opinion on our findings. Maybe you'll want to add some things which you think are important.

Early next year we will conduct a nationwide survey of children and young people's internet use. We would like to discuss with you what questions we should include.

If you'd like to read more about the 'UK Children Go Online' project, you can read our report about what children and young people told us how they use the internet. You can download the report straight from this link eprints.lse.ac.uk/399/. (Section updated by UK Data Service 15.10.13)

Magda

Message no. 30

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Thursday, October 30, 2003 11:34am

Subject: Chat sessions

We will be holding 3 chat sessions this week:

Monday, 3 Nov, 5.30-6.30pm

Tuesday, 4 Nov, 9.00-10.00pm

Saturday, 8 Nov, 7.00-8.00pm

It would be great if you could join us in the chat room for at least one of these sessions.
(Please use the first chat room on the list 'Chat for Young People's Online Panel'.)

Magda

Message no. 71 [Branch from no. 30]

Posted by Sonia (SONIA.TA) on Wednesday, November 5, 2003 11:20am

Subject: Re: Chat sessions

There are 2 more chat sessions this week:

Wednesday, 5.00-6.00pm

Thursday, 8.00-9.00pm

Please note that the time of the Saturday session has been moved to 5.30-6.30pm

Message no. 31

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Thursday, October 30, 2003 12:44pm

Subject: Chat or IM?

And here goes our first question:

Children we have interviewed are telling us that they rarely use chat but increasingly use instant messaging. Does this seem right to you and why do you think it might be?

If you want to reply to this question, just click on the Reply button.

Message no. 49 [Branch from no. 31]

Posted by Oliver (Oliver) on Monday, November 3, 2003 3:34pm

Subject: Re: Chat or IM?

It all comes down to personal preference. If you want to go out (Metaphorically speaking), meet a load of new, possibly interesting, possibly dull and lifeless people, by all means, log on to a random chat server on IRC, or something of it's ilk. You enter a room and the people you can talk to are displayed down the right hand side with everyone talking to everyone else in a general "Room" as well. what IM gives you is the ability to almost form your own room. The people you can talk to are displayed on your screen, in groups you can choose. No-one can enter your room unless you let them in, you can even club conversations together to make a general room yourself.

The only problem is, you won't meet any new people. Like I said, personal choice.

Oh... Yeah, and hi, everybody!

Oliver.

Message no. 50 [Branch from no. 49]

Posted by Sonia Livingstone (LIVINGSS.TA) on Monday, November 3, 2003 6:08pm

Subject: Re: Chat or IM?

I see what you mean, Oliver, and I suppose that makes me wonder if things are so straightforward. Do people invite people that they hardly know to join an IM discussion (so it becomes more like chat), and are people still arranging to meet their friends in an unused chat room (so it becomes like IM) - or does this not really happen? Also, I am still puzzled about why kids want to meet strangers....

Sonia

Message no. 56 [Branch from no. 31]

Posted by xxBethanyxx (XXBethanyXX) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 6:57pm

Subject: Re: Chat or IM?

when i was younger i used to go into chatrooms in my spare time to just chat to new people but now i find it really boring to talk to someone you will never speak to or meet again. i use msn messenger 2 chat 2 my frenz n if i want 2 meet nu ppl then i meet them either @ parties or thru close frendz on msn. i don't understand y some kids wanna meet up wit utter strangers who r blatantly gonna b peadophiles. but i guess like Oliver said its personal choice. maybe if ur bored n have nothing betta 2 do or if ur depressed n wanna pretend 2 b sum1 else or if ur just curious. i also like im messanging better cos u have more control ova who u chat 2 n its easier 2 block them if they r not nice. Bethany xxx

Message no. 59 [Branch from no. 56]

Posted by Amil (Amil.EXT) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 7:15pm

Subject: Re: Chat or IM?

I agree. It is very dangerous for kids to speak to people they dont know, and then to meet up with them. I think this is one of the main reasons the chat rooms are being closed down. Good move if you ask me. There is no point in talking to someone that you dont properly know and then forget about them the second you come off the internet. I also use MSM Messenger and i think it is a safer more convinient way of talking to your friends. Can i emphasis, 'FREINDS'. Not complete strangers, people who i know and talk to, just to keep in touch. MSN is also good for aranging things like meeting up etc. But I too dont understand why kids want to talk to strangers...

(Bethany, could you not use slang, or abreviations plase as it is pretty hard to read,
Thanks)

-Amil

Message no. 74 [Branch from no. 31]

Posted by Milly (Milly.EXT) on Wednesday, November 5, 2003 5:19pm

Subject: Re: Chat or IM?

I personally think that more and more people are using instant messangers becuae of the massive emphasis on the problems chat rooms can carry. I think people would have continued to have used them as widely and dangerously if it wasn't for the government campagains and safety nets etc put in place. People see that they're trying to be protected so start to only talk to people they know.

Message no. 81 [Branch from no. 74]

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Thursday, November 6, 2003 11:31am

Subject: Re: Chat or IM?

Ok, so we have a variety of views here; the same was the case when we talked about this in the chat sessions - some of you use chat and have made new friends online; others think chat is dangerous and they'd rather talk on IM to people they know. So it's all about personal choice, as you say - and all of you know the rules for staying safe on the internet.

But some of you have also told us of other kids you know who have done stupid things and met up with people from a chat room, and it all ended up being quite dodgy. And we also hear about such kids on the news sometimes.

So what could be done to get the safety message through to those kids as well?

More safety campaigns and adverts?

Should they be thought at school?

Should parents be educated and then tell their kids?

Put more 'scare' stories in the news?

Where did you learn how to stay safe online?

Message no. 32

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Thursday, October 30, 2003 12:52pm

Subject: Kids as internet experts?

Some kids told us that they are better at using the internet than their parents.

Do you think that's generally true - are they really better?

Does this get them any advantages in their family, or with their friends, if they are the experts and can help others?

Are there any other areas where kids can be experts - not just with computers?

And what about the parents? Are they starting to catch up and slowly getting better at using computers?

Message no. 51 [Branch from no. 32]

Posted by Manu (Manu) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 3:40am

Subject: Re: Kids as internet experts?

Personally i can say that my parents are pretty hopeless when it comes to using the internet! I am not sure whether its due to the fact that they dont have the time or patience to send emails or browse web pages or simply they fear the great unknowns of the net.

For me the internet is something i think i often take for granted, it just seems to make my life easier. Whether its buying books online or finding out the cricket scores, the internet benefitted my whole family on several occasions. By asking me or my elder brother to 'do it online' saves time, effort and money

Message no. 53 [Branch from no. 51]

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 1:43pm

Subject: Re: Kids as internet experts?

Hi Manu! Do you mean your parents ask you or your brother to do things online for them, like find out something or make a purchase? What else?

Is being an expert of advantage to you, or do you wish your parents would do it themselves, or that you could ask them things as well?

Or maybe it's good for you that they don't know everything what you do online?

What do the other users think?

Message no. 60 [Branch from no. 53]

Posted by Amil (Amil.EXT) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 7:21pm

Subject: Re: Kids as internet experts?

In way its good to be better at your parents at something and it can also be bad.

Good: By knowing more than your parents, you are in a way, more superior to them.

And kids like that. Also, parents (well atleast my parents) ask me to do certain things for them on the net and off quite often. My mum is pretty good at using the internet, she can go to websites and send emails, but isnt that good enough to know about HTML etc. This means that the parents spend time with their children, learning from them and boding with them.

Bad: It can also be bad for the parent, as the kid my get a little sneaky and start downloading certain things and in one of those things could be a virus. Because the parent doesnt know how to fix the virus and the kid doesnt wither, they are pretty much screwed. So all parents should have some knowledge, or atleast the basics.

-Amil

Message no. 70 [Branch from no. 60]

Posted by Sonia (SONIA.TA) on Wednesday, November 5, 2003 10:47am

Subject: Re: Kids as internet experts?

Amil - I'm curious about what you do with HTML - and what other things kids do online that their parents don't do. For example, do they know about weblogs, or are they as good at searching as you? When do you ask them for help - what sorts of things? And, does anyone ever look for advice in computer manuals, help systems, books?

Message no. 88 [Branch from no. 70]

Posted by Amil (Amil.EXT) on Thursday, November 6, 2003 6:30pm

Subject: Re: Kids as internet experts?

i construct my wensites with html. I learn things myself, lookin through manuals never get me anywhere. i dont exactly ask for my parents help either, i think im abit more advanced then them

Message no. 33

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Thursday, October 30, 2003 12:54pm

Subject: The internet - easy or difficult?

Do you feel there are areas of the internet which are really difficult to use, areas you don't know much about at all?

How do you go about finding out about them, learning how to use things?

What could be done to make things easier?

Message no. 61 [Branch from no. 33]

Posted by Amil (Amil.EXT) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 7:27pm

Subject: Re: The internet - easy or difficult?

I think of myself as someone who has an 'upper hand'. I think this because i have been using the internet for a good few years now and i am able to do alot with computers. I think i can type very fast (well my friends say i can) and it allows me to get things done quicker, like homework or essays. I also find it easy to quickly gather the information or research i want from the internet. I suppose that is because i know so many wab sites and i make use of more than i can imagine. I currently have 2 web sites, one personal, and one that is more of a resource, though i would like to keep them to myself... :)

If there is anything id like to learn, it would have to be, well, erm..... probably, how to.... im not sure actually... :)

-Amil

Message no. 67 [Branch from no. 33]

Posted by Rosie (Rosie.EXT) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 9:11pm

Subject: Re: The internet - easy or difficult?

I find the internet quite simple to use!!! i have for as long as i can remember there has been computers. I like to use the computer fairly regularly for my homework or just for research at school.

I'd like to think that i am good with computers and i have got quicker at typing in the last year. The one thing i would liketo learn is probably how to do spreadsheets properly!!!!!!

from-- Roxi --

Message no. 34

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Thursday, October 30, 2003 12:58pm

Subject: If the internet disappeared tomorrow...

We asked kids what they would do if the internet disappeared tomorrow. Surprisingly, many weren't that bothered at all. They said they would just use books instead or text or phone people.

What do you think, could we live without the internet? How would it make things different?

Message no. 54 [Branch from no. 34]

Posted by Anne (Anne.EXT) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 5:42pm

Subject: Re: If the internet disappeared tomorrow...

I think we could live quite easily without the internet, we did before so why not.

Personally, however it would be a great inconvenience, as i have friends who live in other countries who i e-mail frequently, as it is much more reliable, and faster than posting a letter.

I also frequently use it for research for school work, career options etc. Search engines such as google are much faster than searching through books.

On the other hand e-mails and IM is far less personal than sending letters, or telephone calls, and i prefer recieving the latter. The internet encourages this impersonal contact.

hello evry1. Anne.

Message no. 57 [Branch from no. 54]

Posted by xxBethanyxx (XXBethanyXX) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 7:02pm

Subject: Re: If the internet disappeared tomorrow...

If the internet disappeared tomorrow i would be at a loss for researching stuff 4 skl. i wd have 2 take ages 2 go 2 the library take down loads of encyclopedias etc n look thru them 2 find wot i want. wit the internet its so much easier n i can just go 2 google n type in wot i want n i have it! also i find IM messangin rly helpful 4 ppl who im frenz wit but not so much that i call them so it wd mean a lot less contact wit ppl from other skls.

Message no. 62 [Branch from no. 57]

Posted by Amil (Amil.EXT) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 7:31pm

Subject: Re: If the internet disappeared tomorrow...

sup Anne, who u doin... :)

erm, i would hate for the internet to be gone. as i said before, i use the internet very often and it would put absaloutly everyone at a dissadvantage. It would also mean that morse code will have to be put in use again as that only went out when the computers were made.

Telephoning another country is costly and emails just make everything more convinient. I dont know what i would do without the internet... unbearable thought...

-Amil

Message no. 65 [Branch from no. 62]

Posted by Amil (Amil.EXT) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 7:38pm

Subject: Re: If the internet disappeared tomorrow...

In message 62 on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 7:31pm, Amil (Amil.EXT) writes:

>sup Anne, how u doin... :)

>

>erm, i would hate for the internet to be gone. as i said before, i use the internet very

>often and it would put absaloutly everyone at a dissadvantage. It would also mean that morse code will have to be put in use again as that only went out when the computers were made. Telephoning another country is costly and emails just make everything more

>convinient. I dont know what i would do without the internet... unbearable thought...

-Amil

Message no. 68 [Branch from no. 65]

Posted by Sonia (SONIA.TA) on Wednesday, November 5, 2003 10:00am

Subject: Re: If the internet disappeared tomorrow...

I wonder if there are things that are getting lost, however. Like, have people stopped going to libraries or reading books - things that they used to do more before the internet?

Message no. 75 [Branch from no. 68]

Posted by Milly (Milly.EXT) on Wednesday, November 5, 2003 6:52pm

Subject: Re: If the internet disappeared tomorrow...

I dont really think so. The internet is realy useful for a varid look at many different opinions, but it has nothing of the calibre of history archives in libraries. (I know this is slightly contradictory to what I have said beofre, but I enjoy arguing). Also novels arent really that accessable free on the internet

Message no. 35

Posted by Magda (MAGDA.TA) on Thursday, October 30, 2003 1:03pm

Subject: Not having internet access

Almost all of the kids we talked to had internet access at home, but we'd also like to find out what it's like for young people who don't have the internet. Do you think they're missing out on something? If yes, what?

Do most of your friends have internet access?

Do you know people who feel 'left out' because they don't have the internet? What is it like for them?

Message no. 63 [Branch from no. 35]

Posted by Amil (Amil.EXT) on Tuesday, November 4, 2003 7:34pm

Subject: Re: Not having internet access

I know a few people who dont have internet access (i wont mention their names as i know a few people on here) and it doesnt seem to affect them to much, but theres no doubt that they want it. Its not like they go up to their mom and say "MOM, WE NEED THE INTERNET, NOW!! I NEED TO TALK TO MY FRIENDS, OH YEAH, AND HOMEWORKS" they just ask every now and then and the parents either say yes, or refuse. I currently want Broadband as it will make everything so much easier and faster, only problem is, we dont have cable in our area so its not possible. So yes, the people who dont have internet are at a disadvantage, but they dont have to be, they have schools and libraries who have the internet.

-Amil

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Visual methods

Introduction

The use of visual methods has become well established over the last few decades in the sub-disciplines of visual sociology and visual anthropology.

More recently, interest in the method has become popular across a range of other disciplines and interdisciplinary areas such as education. Advancements in digital technology have also opened the method up to a wider range of researchers and audiences.

Visual data can be either generated by the researcher or created by others and used by the researcher (Prosser, 2006).

An example of researcher generated images comes from the production of films, sketches or photographs, which can all be used to represent and document social and cultural phenomena.

Recording visual data gives another layer of information which auditory data or written description cannot provide, for example, clearly documenting non-verbal interaction such as body language.

An advantage to the visual recording of social life is that it enables the researcher to set up cameras and record situations without actually being present. The benefit of this is that the researcher is able to avoid dangerous or unwelcoming places and moreover reduce observer effect.

Visual data which is generated by others can be analysed as a secondary source through studying family photos, historical pictures, media images, websites, maps, keepsakes, or cultural artefacts.

In analysing visual data the researcher would usually strive to look beyond the surface appearances of an image to uncover the image's multiple layers of culturally and psychologically informed meanings.

Another way in which visual data are used in qualitative social research is through using images as a tool or prompt with other forms of data collection. Known as photo elicitation, this technique suggests using pictures or film-clips in an interview or focus group setting and asking respondents for their reactions to particular images.

Visual images can also be used to understand the way in which people live their lives and visual influences they have had throughout their life-course.

Giving informants disposable cameras to take pictures of their daily lives or particular situation is an interesting technique which has the advantage of giving the informants an active role in the research and enables them to convey information in their own preferred way.

Visual data gathering in this way can be a valuable method for studying vulnerable groups or people whose communication skills are limited through language barriers, disabilities or literacy limitations.

Example

SN 4890

Study Title: Severalls Hospital: Interviews for 'Madness in its Place', 1913-1997

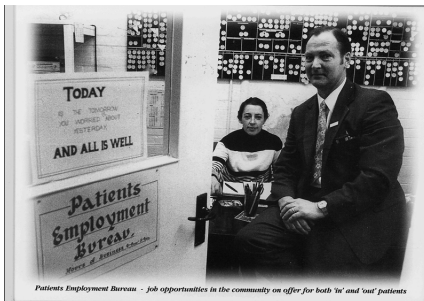
Principal Investigator(s): Gittins, D.

Date of Fieldwork: 1995-1997

Abstract: This research is based on the life stories of patients and workers at a large

psychiatric hospital in Essex and presents a social history of British psychiatric care in the twentieth century. The memories and narratives of patients and workers who lived, or were employed in Severalls Psychiatric Hospital provide a personal account of day-to-day life, contextualised both in relation to wider developments and issues in twentieth century mental health, and in relation to policies and changes in the hospital itself. Drawing upon both quantitative and qualitative material, the research deals with key areas such as gender divisions, power relations, patterns of admission and discharge, treatments, and the daily lives and routines of patients and nurses on the wards. The collection also includes image-based data.

Citation: Gittins, D., *Severalls Hospital: Interviews for 'Madness in its Place', 1913-1997* [computer file]. 2nd Edition. Colchester, Essex: UK Data Archive [distributor], June 2007. SN: 4890.



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