

# BRINGING FRESH INSIGHT TO ONLINE QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

Webcam-enabled qualitative online interviews are providing a rich, inclusive research experience, delivering insight and understanding.

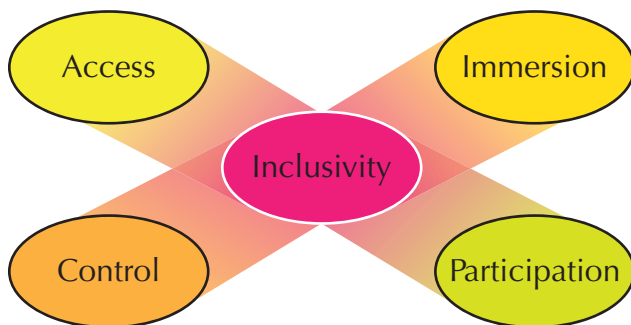
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It is now possible to conduct qualitative interviews online in a dynamic, interactive manner with the introduction of webcams bringing an inclusive experience, providing true immersion for all research stakeholders—this development has been enabled by the increasing availability of high-speed internet access and ever advancing technology. Detailed below are some of the key benefits associated with online qualitative interviewing using webcams.

achieving a broad geographical spread—even in qualitative research—is becoming more critical.

- *Easy to access difficult respondent types.* Often, research may require access to respondents with challenging profiles, either due to their highly specialized nature or because of strict recruitment criteria, and the high level of flexibility inherent within online interviewing means these challenging respondents can be accessed easily and effectively, thereby resulting in valuable research.



Inclusivity—driven by Access, Immersion, Participation and Control

## Real Immersion Through The Webcam: Getting Closer To Your Customer

Interviews conducted over the internet, utilizing a webcam, allow for an immersive viewing experience, driven by all participants maintaining the same perspective during the interview.

The nature of the video, showing the respondent’s facial expressions clearly, in combination with viewing the stimulus materials in exactly the same way as the respondent, brings all stakeholders who are viewing the research close to the respondent’s perspective and therefore makes it easy to consider their viewpoint. This has the effect of increasing the appreciation and understanding of the respondent’s views and results in the viewing experience feeling inclusive. The respondent’s expressions and body language are clear for all to see, and for the moderator to react to during the interview. Additionally, stimulus manipulation, and the respondent’s corresponding reaction, is seen in real time by all—for example, stakeholders can observe the respondent zooming in on specific components of the stimulus, or marking key stimulus features, while discussing their views and perspectives. This means the content of the interview has a high degree of clarity and is easily understood by all, thus increasing the appreciation and insight that can be achieved.

## Access: Finding Your True Target Market

Using the internet to conduct qualitative interviews means the potential pool of respondents that can be sampled is substantial, and this has several benefits:

- *Easily achieve a broad geographical representation.* Using the internet to access respondents means there are no travel restrictions, either on behalf of moderators or respondents. With the increasing influence of local payers often leading to similar local prescribing patterns,

**Participation: Interviews Do Not Just Involve Moderators And Respondents**

While an interview is conducted solely between a respondent and a moderator, there are normally a range of interested stakeholders, including the commissioning client and their colleagues, the market research agency and other moderators. A feeling of participation and involvement is generated during online, webcam-assisted interviews due to the ease of interaction between stakeholders during interview.

One of the benefits of conducting qualitative interviews online is the direct, private communication that is possible

Utilizing the internet offers many possibilities regarding the nature of stimuli employed during an interview—in addition to standard show cards, more dynamic stimuli can be shared including animations, movie files, high-resolution graphics, PowerPoint presentations and Excel models. These stimuli, combined with standard Word and PDF files, mean there is a wide variety of options available to generate discussion with respondents. In addition, annotation is possible and whiteboards are available, and it is also possible to direct respondents to other internet locations during and/or following the interview—for example, to complete a quantitative questionnaire or to review a website.



Example of one possible interface. Advert shown as stimulus for illustrative purposes only.

with the moderators during the interviews. This means that feedback and additional questions can be fed directly to the moderator at any time, thus helping to maximize the value of the interviews through identification and immediate provision of additional questions when interesting or unexpected information is uncovered. Also, the ability of stakeholders to converse during the interview, while not revolutionary, is none the less very useful and assists in discussions about how to optimize the research. From our experience, it has been clear that during the interviews the internet does not obstruct or constrain the building of a rapport between respondent and moderator.

There is a high degree of flexibility which allows all stakeholders to access live interviews from any location worldwide with an internet connection. This ensures that projects can be managed efficiently and is particularly valuable when working towards challenging timelines or when there is a project involving geographically disparate stakeholders. In addition, all stakeholders can have full confidence in the security of this approach as confidentiality is ensured through full data encryption.

**Control: Driving High Quality And Understanding**

Online interviewing provides a high level of control during the research, both from a stimulus perspective and from a logistical viewpoint.

Typical interfaces that have been developed enable a high level of flexibility in the manipulation of stimuli, allowing all those viewing to fully engage with the discussion, thus leading to a high level of understanding and appreciation for the insight uncovered.

**Summary**

Qualitative online interviewing with webcams offers the opportunity to create an inclusive research experience, with stakeholders feeling immersed and involved. In addition, a high level of control—from both a stimulus and logistical perspective—and an optimized ability to find the right respondents, delivers quality and understanding throughout the research process. Current experience has demonstrated that the benefits of qualitative online interviewing deliver added value and it is anticipated that this approach will be increasingly adopted in the future. ☺