Collecting qualitative online data

Digital Strategizing & SAP Research
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Outline

• Introducing Tracking & Trawling
• Key steps
• Ethics
• Development & resources
Why online qualitative data approach?

• Relevance to organizing and organizations
  • Web 2.0 “permeates and even replaces traditional forms of organizing” (Pablo and Hardy, 2012: 822)
  • Challenges the “assumption that organising necessarily occurs in organisations” (Ashcraft, 2007:11)
  • Strategizing incorporates digital work (Morton et al, 2020)

• Contribution of qualitative research
  • Big Data is not necessarily ‘Better’ Data
  • If Big Data is mapping and mining the Web, with tracking and trawling we can examine how we navigate the maps and negotiate the mines
## Definitions of Tracking & Trawling

<table>
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<th>Approach</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<td>Tracking</td>
<td>Uses a variety of digital means (such as using proprietary tools) to track (or follow) a particular event and/or people or groups of interest and/or a concept due to their engagement with a specific topic of relevance to the research. It is usually prospective in that it involves tracking from the start of the project onwards in time to capture new material as it is published on the Internet.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Trawling</td>
<td>Uses specific key word search (such as in search engines) to provide potentially relevant material across a variety of source types (e.g. websites, blogs, Twitter). It is usually retrospective in that it involves trawling the Internet for existing material that has already been published or posted before the start of the research project.</td>
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Common Features of Tracking & Trawling

- Require researcher to develop key search terms
- Can use proprietary tools
- Can be combined with other methods of data collection
- Can be carried out in respect of multiple search terms, individuals, groups or organizations
- Require researcher to assess relevance in relation to material identified
- Can capture different forms of Internet data
- Results determined by algorithms of proprietary tools and platforms
- Can be adapted at any stage (with some limitation on tracking as noted above) by researcher
- Can be used to supplement the results of the other method
Generic steps in collecting online data

- designing research questions
- deciding on data type(s)
- designing data collection
- data selection and sampling strategy
- choosing data selection tools
- examining ethical issues
- designing data management
- choosing a data management method
- conducting a pilot study
- conducting the main study
- data management and preparing for analysis.
Research ethics in digital methods

• Core ethical principles
• Internet context: discipline, institution, specialist guidance
• Key debates
  • What is public or private?
  • Human participants?
  • Informed consent and from whom?
  • Anonymise or attribute?
• Ethics approval
Key elements of T&T approach

flexible
Enables you to work within different paradigmatic stances
THEREFORE
requires a genuine, ongoing engagement with the ontological and epistemological framing of the research endeavour

THEREFORE
Enables you to look back and/or look forward
THEREFORE
requires careful consideration of the temporal framing of research objects and subjects and encourages us to reflect on time within our research practices

adaptable
Enables you to work with a range of online and digital resources

THEREFORE
Requires an understanding of the way in which these resources, and the means of accessing them, shape our understandings

timely
Future developments

• The future is socially distanced so research will be too?

• ‘organisations and the world of work have been pushed further towards digital forms of organising in response to COVID-19-related restrictions’ (Baptista et al, 2020: 2)

• New combinations of digital and traditional methods

• Data is evolving too:
  • Ephemeral, transitory nature
  • Multimodality is now the norm
  • New challenges – deep fake
Useful resources


Bonus Features!

- https://katrinapritchard.wordpress.com/2020/05/04/more-resources-for-online-qualitative-research/

Other Methods Papers and Chapters:


References


