

Remote/Virtual Qualitative Research

Qualitative research is not limited to in-person interviews or groups. Amazing depth of context for many of your objectives can be efficiently achieved by conducting qualitative research remotely via popular virtual platforms, such as:



Remote/virtual qualitative research is often an excellent alternative to in-person research and can provide cost and timeline benefits without sacrificing insights.

Consider conducting remote/virtual qualitative research for your upcoming in-depth interview, ethnography, shop-along, concept test, and more!

Some occasions when in-person research is more appropriate than virtual:

- When the research objective is to observe respondents in person as they interact with and respond to a physical product or device
- When the cost of a wrong decision is huge and the need to get it right is paramount (such as a multimillion-dollar integrated advertising campaign) or new product launch
- When the client's team has never seen their customers in a research environment
- For special objectives, such as jury selection
- When it is easy/easier to gather targeted respondents and clients together in a centrally-located venue
- When study is highly visible and needs video verification for promotional or reporting purposes

Remote/Virtual Interviews







ADVANTAGES

- **Lower cost than in-person:** No moderator, participant, or observer travel costs, no facility costs, lower incentive costs
- **Geographical reach:** Unlimited
- **Improved feasibility:** Lack of geographical boundaries allows maximum flexibility for low incidence recruits
- **Better response/show rates:** Respondent sessions are scheduled based on their own availability, versus predetermined onsite session times
- **Live video feed:** Allows for live, virtual face-to face moderator-participant interaction, and enables observers to view same interactions
- **More organic respondent experience:** Potential to be more relaxed/comfortable or willing to communicate freely in their own space
- **Real-time communication:** Client observers can privately message moderator in real time
- **Limitless observers:** No limitations to number or geographical dispersion of client observers
- **Expedited project timelines:** Potential to complete project faster than in-person qualitative, due to maximized scheduling flexibility
- **Digital stimuli:** Stimuli such as static images, videos, etc., can be presented during session
- **Unobtrusive note-taking:** Off-camera clients and suppliers can take notes totally unnoticed by research participants
- **Omits “group think”:** One-on-one interaction avoids potential for “group think” commonly observed in traditional focus group settings
- **Unlimited recording/transcribing:** Limitless recording/transcription services, which are often less expensive (and quicker!) than in-person sessions

DISADVANTAGES

- **Stimuli:** Unless shipped directly to participants, observable interaction with some stimuli, such as physical products or devices, can be limited
- **Body language:** Partially limited visibility of nonverbal cues
- **Webcam requirement:** While most participants own a video camera-enabled device, screening is required to confirm ownership
- **Technology issues:** Potential for technology issues such as participant comfort level with platform, or Internet, site, or device crashes
- **Distractions:** Potential for respondents to be distracted by environment
- **Environmental and demographic cues:** Limited ability for moderator to read demographic/environmental cues (age, race, etc.) if not covered in screening profile

Overview: In Person vs. Remote/Virtual Interviews

	IN PERSON	REMOTE/VIRTUAL
 COST & TIMING	Usually intensive; travel may add to costs	Can be less time intensive than F2F; lower costs (no travel or facility rental)
 GEOGRAPHY	Often limited geographically to local area	National and international access possible and easier
 SENSITIVE TOPICS	May be difficult; potentially embarrassing or awkward	May be less awkward than F2F
 BODY LANGUAGE	Very rich; includes dress, body language, mannerisms, hygiene; more data to be interpreted	Some body cues unavailable; can note pauses, hesitations, voice pitch, sighs/gasps, etc.; less info, but less potential bias and misinterpretation
 TECH ISSUES	Less likely to have problems, except with recording device	Calls can be dropped; possible recording problems
 INTERVIEWER SAFETY	Can be endangered depending upon session location/time	Low danger; interviews can be made from office, home, or other location