

Qualitative Interviews

as an Insight Tool for Wikimedia Programs



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Part 1

Input & Question Rounds



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Why Qualitative?

QUALITATIVE (e.g. interviews, observations)	QUANTITATIVE (e.g. surveys)
Goal: Understand	Goal: Measure
Open & explorative	Standardized
Inductive → develop hypotheses	Deductive → test hypotheses
Small sample	Large sample/ scale
Close to individual reality	Generalizing across larger groups



Archives of the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle
(https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Radio_reporter_Alexis_af_Enehjelm_interviewing_a_man_fixing_a_car_1930s.jpg), Flickr-no known copyright restrictions

When to conduct Qualitative Interviews?

- ... if you start **exploring** a field in which you have no or not much previous knowledge
- ... if you need to **understand** more complex patterns of behaviour or social interactions
- ... if you think that **subjective beliefs** and individual lifestyles have an impact on your respective topic
- ... if you need **broad input** e.g. to generate ideas for optimization of projects/ programs
- ... if you don't have the resources or skills to reach out to your audience via surveys
- ... if you need more information beforehand to phrase questions for a quantitative survey



Common Types of Qualitative Interviews

Informal Interviews

Casual conversations, in the field, often spontaneous during observation, no interview guide, documentation from memory

Unstructured (Narrative) Interviews ★

Formal scheduled interview, no pre-set interview guide, but clear interview goals, respondents set course of the interview, only open-ended questions, detailed documentation/ recording

Semi-Structured Interviews ★

Formal scheduled interview, interview guideline, pre-set set of questions, but also flexibility to digress/ explore new topics, mainly open-ended questions, detailed documentation/ recording

Structured Interviews

Very formalized, fixed standardized set of questions, few open-ended questions, limited set of response categories, sometimes self-administered or self-reported → part of quantitative surveys

Formalize/ Standardize

Explore & Understand



Archives of the Finnish Broadcasting Company Yle ([https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reporter_of_the_Finnish_Broadcasting_Company_Esko_Tommola_interviews_Armi_Hilario_\(former_Armi_Kuusela\)_and_her_husband_Gil_Hilario_in_a_radio_studio.jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Reporter_of_the_Finnish_Broadcasting_Company_Esko_Tommola_interviews_Armi_Hilario_(former_Armi_Kuusela)_and_her_husband_Gil_Hilario_in_a_radio_studio.jpg)), Flickr-no known copyright restrictions

Q&A Round 1:

When to use Qualitative Interviews?



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How to set up a Semi-Structured Interview

- Collect all information you already have about your topic and **identify knowledge gaps**
- Write down the 3-4 **main research questions**
- **Decide on the specific target group** which can give input for your research questions → be precise
- Draft an **interview guideline** and let it be reviewed by others
- Decide on **format of interview** (f2f, phone, Skype)
- Reach out to your target group, explain your objectives well and **schedule interviews**
- Test your interview flow and **adapt after first interview** if necessary



Writing an Interview Guideline (Example Guideline)

Don't forget an introductory part to give the respondents all the information they need!

Let respondents introduce themselves → helps to establish a comfortable talking atmosphere and can serve as a warm-up

Structure the guideline by your main research questions/ main themes

Develop key questions within each major theme. Goal is to tap into the respondent's individual experiences and expertise

Use helping questions/ probes that elicit more detailed and elaborate responses to key questions. The more detail, the better!

Close with questions which give respondents additional room to express their perspective and leaves them with a good feeling!

1) General Introduction

Gives basic information like: who you are, background and objectives of the interview, setting and duration, clarification about recording/ note taking, explanation how data is documented and handled afterwards etc.

2) Introduction of respondent/ Warm-up

3) Major Theme 1

- Key Questions
 - Helping questions/ probes

4) Closing Questions & Thank You

Writing Interview Questions

1. **Avoid closed-ended questions.**
2. **Ask "how" questions** rather than "why" questions to get stories of process rather than acceptable "accounts" of behavior
3. **Adjust the language** of the interview according to the respondent (child, professional, etc.)
4. **Take care to word questions** so that respondents are motivated to answer as completely and honestly as possible
5. **Develop helping questions/probes** that will elicit more detailed and elaborate responses to key questions. The more detail, the better!
6. **Begin the interview with a "warm-up" question:** something that the respondent can answer easily and at some length (though not too long). It doesn't have to pertain directly to what you are trying to find out (although it might)
7. **Think about the logical flow** of the interview. What topics should come first? What follows more or less "naturally"? After first interviews, adapt if necessary.
8. Ask difficult or potentially **embarrassing questions toward the end** of the interview, when a good relationship has been established.
9. **Last questions should provide some closure** for the interview, and leave the respondent feeling empowered, listened to, or otherwise glad that they talked to you.



Q&A Round 2:

**How to set up & conduct
Semi-Structured Interviews?**



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How to document Qualitative Interviews

Choose any documentation method which fits both, the interview situation and your resources for further analysis of the material.

- ✓ Audio or Video recording / transcriptions of A/V recordings
- ✓ Taking notes during the interview
- ✓ Having a third person taking notes
- ✓ Taking notes from memory after the interview

ANY method of documentation is better than **NO** documentation!

BUT: trade off between level of detail you receive and amount of qualitative data you can analyze economically



Multiple ways to analyze and present Qualitative Data

Stories/Narratives



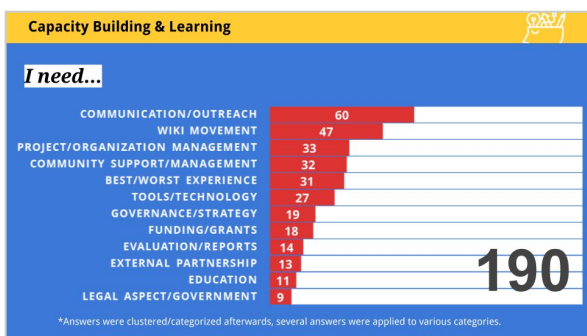
Analytical Reports



Quotes & Visualizations



Categorizing/Quantifying*



*rather complex / needs specific skills



[https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anna_Chao_Pai_\(b._1935\)_\(6891504099\).jpg](https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Anna_Chao_Pai_(b._1935)_(6891504099).jpg), flickr-no known copyright restrictions

Q&A Round 3:

**How to document, analyze and present data
from Qualitative Interviews?**



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Part 2 - Optional

Exercise part - 20 min



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Exercise Part (optional, approx. 20 min)

1	<p>Participants choose one of two Research Questions (see next slide) and draft a very simple & short (!) Interview Guideline, using:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Short intro• 1-2 major themes• A key question per theme• Helping questions/ probes per theme• A closing question & thank you	5 min
2	<p>Participants group in pairs and conduct short interviews with each other. If they want, they can take notes to document.</p>	2 x 5 min
3	<p>Wrap-up: Participants join again and whole group exchanges about experiences made during the interviews: What worked well? What was difficult?</p>	5 min

Research Topics for the Exercise Part

A. What are main motivations and expectations for participating at the Wikimedia Conference?

B. What are potential starting points for Wikimedians to engage with Wikimedia and the Wikimedia projects?

THANK YOU!



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Resources

- Example Guideline:
<https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:WMCON17LearningDays-QualitativeInterviewGuidelineExample.pdf>
- Overview interview methods: <http://www.qualres.org/HomeInte-3595.html>
- Writing interview questions:
<https://www.slideshare.net/bibliotecarioinvestigando/step-by-guide-to-writing-interview-questions>

