Exercises

# Chapter 16: Using computers to analyse qualitative data

## Exercise 1: Get to know different QDA software packages

Download a demonstration version of one of these software products. Demonstration versions will usually contain sample datasets to use in learning the features of the software.

ATLAS.ti: [www.atlasti.com](http://www.atlasti.com)

HyperRESEARCH: [www.researchware.com/products/hyperresearch.html](http://www.researchware.com/products/hyperresearch.html)

MAXQDA: [www.maxqda.com](http://www.maxqda.com)

NVivo: [www.qsrinternational.com](http://www.qsrinternational.com)

QDAMINER: <https://provalisresearch.com/>

Transana: [www.transana.com](http://www.transana.com)

You could also try out WordSmith Tools or, for free, get a copy of AntConc.

WordSmith Tools: [www.lexically.net/wordsmith](http://www.lexically.net/wordsmith)

AntConc: [www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antconc\_index.html](http://www.antlab.sci.waseda.ac.jp/antconc_index.html)

When you have spent some time getting to know the software and what it can do, jot down answers to the following questions:

1. How could I use this software to save time on my research project?

2. How could I use this software to improve the rigour of my study?

3. How could I use this software to develop the theoretical aspects of my study?

4. What are the limitations and disadvantages of using this software for my study? Would another product overcome these, or should I opt for a ‘manual’ approach?

## Exercise 2: Evaluate the code-and-retrieve approach

This will help you evaluate the relative merits of a code-and-retrieve approach to qualitative thematic analysis and text mining using dictionary software.

The following two articles report data analyses that were carried out concurrently on the same data, using two different methods: coding and retrieval (Seymour et al., 2014) and a dictionary-based analysis using Wordstat (Seale et al., 2015). Here are the references in full:

Seymour, J., Rietjens, J., Bruinsma, S., Deliens, L., Sterckx, S., Mortier, F., . . . van der Heide A, on behalf of the UNBIASED consortium. (2014). Using continuous sedation until death for cancer patients: A qualitative interview study of physicians’ and nurses’ practice in three European countries. *Palliative Medicine, 29*(1), 48–59.

Seale, C., Raus, K., Bruinsma, S., van der Heide, A., Sterckx, S., Mortier, F., . . . Rietjens, J., on behalf of the UNBIASED consortium. (2015). The language of sedation in end-of-life care: The ethical reasoning of care providers in three countries. *Health: An Interdisciplinary Journal, 19*(4), 339–354.

Examine these articles and make a list of all the findings the authors report. Which ones are reported by one but not the other? Which analysis is the more convincing?

## Exercise 3: Explore coding without the use of QDA software

Select a published qualitative research project that you already know quite well, which was done without the use of QDA software. It could, for example, be an early ‘classic’ study of Chicago School ethnography, or a well-known study relevant to your research topic. Examine the way in which the researcher appears to have collected and analysed the data and answer the following questions:

1. How might QDA software have been used to aid data collection in this study?

2. How might QDA software have been used to develop a coding scheme in this study?

3. How might the use of QDA software have improved the quality and rigour of data reporting in this study?

4. What other questions might have been asked of the data in the study, and could QDA software have helped in answering these?