

## What is new in this 4<sup>th</sup> edition?

This 4<sup>th</sup> edition contains three brand new chapters which have been introduced because the world of research methods is changing so quickly, offering us a greater variety (but also more complexity) when it comes to collecting and analyzing data. A new chapter, *Visual Research Methods* includes discussions on: two-dimensional still visual images such as photographs, cartoons, maps, graphs, logos and diagrams; and visual methods such as film, television, video and interactive web pages; there is also discussion on three-dimensional methods which include lived media such as dress and architecture. While social sciences have privileged word and numbers-based approaches, there is a general awakening of visually orientated theoretical frameworks and visual research methods. Indeed, some argue that visual methods reach the parts that other methods cannot reach! For example, with participant-created visual data, the researcher elicits the collaboration of, say, individuals or teams of employees who take an active role in capturing visual data using still or video cameras. One of the positive features of participant-created visual data is that it is the subjective perspective of participants that is brought to the fore, rather than the researcher's assumptions as to what is important.

The new chapter on *Digital Research Methods* is mainly concerned with the use of the Internet for supporting the collection of *primary* research data. In doing this, a distinction is made between researching *through* social media (for example, using Facebook to conduct a survey) and researching *into* behavior and activities within social media (for example, exploring the types of social relationships within the social media space). The Internet and Web now make it possible to find out about the opinions and experiences of a vast number of people, most of who are complete strangers to us. Furthermore, an increasing number of people who use the Internet are making their opinions available to strangers (either deliberately or accidentally). Today, millions of blogs comment on and document everyday life; social networking sites such as Facebook generate masses of data for social analysis. Digital research offers a growing but still underused approach to research methodology and this chapter offers you a wide range of methods that you can use.

Finally, this 4<sup>th</sup> edition offers you a new chapter on *Getting started with NVivo* which, as I'm sure you know, is one of the most widely used software programs for the analysis of qualitative data. The chapter guides you into the first steps in the process and allows you to practice and play with the functionality of NVivo, giving you the confidence to analyse your own qualitative data.