



## Doing Qualitative Research Online

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### Worksheet: Methodologies Influence Design Decisions

Most topics can be studied many different ways – with vastly different results. In Table 1, review an example, then use the blank table (Table 2) to try out your own research idea from various methodological perspectives. The example shows that a topic such as ‘employee adoption of new technology tools’ would be designed very differently, depending on the selected methodology.

**Table 1**

<p><b>The research problem:</b> When new technologies are introduced, employee resistance can reduce productivity or cause conflict between the early adopters and those who struggle to learn as needed and change from familiar ways of working as needed to using new hardware or software. Scholars studying organizations need a better understanding of the ways in which employees respond and adapt to changing technologies and related changes in the nature of their work and relationships with others in the organization (Ayyagari et al., 2011; Boothby et al., 2010; Milliou &amp; Petrakis, 2011; Yu &amp; Tao, 2009).</p>			
Methodology	Purpose	Population and Sampling	Data Collection
<p><b>Ethnography</b> A study of culture(s), cultural influences or cultural sensemaking</p>	<p>To explore how aspects of organizational culture influence adoption of new technologies. Cultural norms about risk-taking, employee involvement in change initiatives, risk tolerance, and willingness of employees to help one another will be explored</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees</li> <li>• Criterion-based purposive sampling (Miles &amp; Huberman, 1994; Ritchie et al., 2003). Criteria specify research participants’ roles in the formal and informal</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online observation of employees’ staff meetings during a period when a new technology is introduced and adopted</li> <li>• Online focus groups with employees</li> <li>• Online interviews with selected employees</li> </ul>



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		aspects of the organization	
<p><b>Case Study</b></p> <p>A study of one or more 'cases', clearly defined and bounded exemplars of the research phenomenon</p>	<p><i>Single case:</i> To explore how one organization plans, implements and evaluates adoption of a new technology</p> <p><i>Multiple case:</i> To compare and contrast how a co-located and a virtual organization or how multiple units of the same organization plan, implement and evaluate adoption of a new technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CIO, leaders, managers, employees, and/or IT and tech support staff</li> <li>• Stratified purposive sampling. Researcher looks for specific sub-groups within each department of the organization</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online interviews with participants who have different responsibilities for the implementation of the new technology</li> <li>• Online observation of employees at work, observation of meetings of decision-makers during a period when a new technology is introduced and adopted</li> <li>• Review of records, such as rates and nature of calls to tech support over the period when the new technology is introduced</li> </ul>
<p><b>Delphi</b></p> <p>A study designed to find consensus from a panel of experts on a present or future issue</p>	<p>To reach consensus with a diverse group of experts on the best way to plan a future roll-out of a new technology</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• CIOs from different organizations</li> <li>• Maximum-variation purposive sampling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Iterative rounds of online questionnaires and online interviews with the same group of CIOs who serve as the panel</li> <li>• Online focus groups with the panel</li> </ul>
<p><b>Grounded Theory</b></p> <p>A study designed to generate a new theory, new theoretical constructs or models</p>	<p>To develop a model which organizations can use to improve the adoption of new technologies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Theoretical sampling. Researcher identifies characteristics based on theoretical constructs and looks for participants who have those characteristics</li> </ul>	<p>Multiple online interviews. Interactions with each participant to learn about successful techniques used initially and habits developed once the technology has become familiar</p>



<p><b>Phenomenology</b></p> <p>A study of individuals' experience through the perceptions of research participants</p>	<p>To understand employees' perspectives and experiences of the phenomenon of using a new technology tool</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Employees</li> <li>• Criterion-based purposive sampling. Criteria could specify research participants' level of experience, technical literacy, type of position and/or level of authority. Sampling could also specify selection of a heterogeneous or homogenous group of participants</li> </ul>	<p>Multiple online interviews. Interactions with each participant during the period when a new technology is introduced and adopted to learn about their experiences and perceptions</p>
<p><b>Exploratory Study</b></p> <p>A study designed to explore a new area of research leading to an understanding of the group, process, or activity</p>	<p>To explore a specific individual and virtual team experiences when adopting new technology tools</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team leaders and members, who could be employees or contractors</li> <li>• Critical case purposive sampling. Criteria could specify specific types of virtual teams, including size, experience or degree of virtuality</li> </ul>	<p>Data collection methods selected from both case study and phenomenology. Cases approaches used to look at multiple sources of data about the team's productivity during new technology adoption. Phenomenological approaches used to explore individual experiences of the changes</p>



**Table 2**

<b>The research problem:</b>			
<b>Methodology</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Population and Sampling</b>	<b>Data Collection</b>
<p><b>Ethnography</b></p> <p>A study of culture(s), cultural influences or cultural sensemaking</p>			
<p><b>Case Study</b></p> <p>A study of one or more cases', clearly defined and bounded exemplars of the research phenomenon</p>			
<p><b>Delphi</b></p> <p>A study designed to find consensus from a panel of experts on a present or future issue</p>			
<p><b>Grounded Theory</b></p> <p>A study designed to generate a new theory, new theoretical constructs or models</p>			
<p><b>Phenomenology</b></p> <p>A study of individuals' experience through the</p>			



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<b>Exploratory Study</b> A study designed to explore a new area of research leading to an understanding of the group, process, or activity			

