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Abstract

In Janet Salmons Qualitative Online Interviews (2014) she provides researchers with the tools to be innovative in their research interviews. Researchers will have the skills to conduct a qualitative research study using technology. For the purpose of this book she changes the term online research to information and communications technologies (ICTs). Salmons' uses an EInterview Research Framework, which includes eight categories of questions and designs.

Keywords

Online Research, ICTs, Qualitative Research, Methodologies

A Journey into the Lived Experience:
A Review of Janet Salmon's *Qualitative Online Interviews: Strategies, Designs, and Skills*

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In Janet Salmons Qualitative Online Interviews (2014) she provides researchers with the tools to be innovative in their research interviews. Researchers will have the skills to conduct a qualitative research study using technology. For the purpose of this book she changes the term online research to information and communications technologies (ICTs). Salmons' uses an E-Interview Research Framework, which includes eight categories of questions and designs. Key Words: Online Research, ICTs, Qualitative Research, Methodologies.

This second edition of Janet Salmon's *Qualitative Online Interviews Strategies, Design, and Skills* (2014) offers options for conducting research in new and innovative ways using technology. Since publication of her first book *Online Interviews in Real Time* (2010), technology has continued to grow. In her first book, the focus was on synchronous interviews (interviews occurring at the same time; real time). Salmons introduced her reader to online research and interviews (p. 153). The second edition builds on the first adding the E-Interview Research Framework increasing the reasons for using online research (p. 57). In addition to these two books, Salmons published *Cases in Online Interview Research* (2012).

In this second edition, interviews are synchronous, near-synchronous (synchronous and near-synchronous are conducted in a chat or online), and asynchronous (communication that involves a delay between message and response). Conducting interviews in this fashion can sometimes be open to misinterpretation. "The researcher needs to be clear about expectations and gain agreement from the participants" (Salmons, 2012, p. 182). A professional and caring researcher understands their responsibility to the people they are interviewing. Some of the methods used by the researcher are through emails and social media. Chapter 8 addresses the ethical issues of the risks and benefits of online interviews. At the end of the chapter Salmons uses three stories of online inquiry and asks if they are ethical or not. These stories were particularly helpful to justify their work to the Institutional Review Boards (IRB).

The author accomplishes exactly what she intended it to do. On the back cover of the book one writer says "This book is ahead of its time. It tackles the complicated matter of merging technology with research in a lucid manner." I don't believe Salmon's book is ahead of its time it is right on time for the issues we are dealing with in the present time. So often, as in my case it is not possible to stay for long periods of time conducting interviews in person. Years ago when I did the research in my undergraduate program I spent countless hours in the library. Modern technology makes research more easily accessible. A scholarly article and dissertation can be researched from the comfort of one's home by accessing websites, libraries for articles and books, and anything else we need.

When I saw the title was about online qualitative interviews I became excited, just as I am on any book on the topic of qualitative research. As a PhD student writing my dissertation this book has proven to be invaluable to me. My research originated in Ecuador, South America. Once the interviews were completed and the fieldwork finished I continued to communicate with the people in the community through emails and social media. Because of

the distance, and the short time in the field much of the research, and some of the interviews were done online. While other books provided me with the tools for the type of data analysis to use for my dissertation, this book helped to look for ways to be creative and experiment to collect the data.

As a qualitative researcher I set aside any preconceived notions about the author to understand what the Salmons is trying to convey in her writing. Before I began reading this book I wrote in my journal what my expectations were from this book and the biases I had about the information I learned about the author and the topic. As I read each chapter I stopped to check my understanding of Salmons work. Soon after I began reading and journaling I realized how valuable this book is as a resource for me. This book has been a constant resource for me while writing my dissertation.

One of the many reasons I embraced this book was the E-interview Research Framework presented in the beginning. The eight categories in the framework are explained in-depth in the first eight chapters. Presented in a circular format, "The E-Interview Research Framework offers a conceptual system of key questions about interrelated facets of online interview research" (p. 4). As a qualitative researcher the framework was a guide for me in my research study to understand there are alternatives in the interview process. Chapter 2 begins the framework with ideas for the researcher to align the purpose and the design of the theoretical and methodological process. Salmons goes on to explain the seven other parts to the framework; choosing data collection method and taking a position as a researcher; determining E-interview or observation styles; selecting information and communications technologies and research setting milieu; visual research and the online qualitative interview; handling sampling and recruiting: selecting participants for online interviews; and last, addressing ethical issues in online interview research.

This book serves many purposes and is beneficial to beginner and advanced students in qualitative studies. The author states the purpose of the book is: "…to encourage researchers to extend the reach of their studies by using methods that defy geographic boundaries" (p. xvii). She suggests there are new ways to collect data that are cost-efficient and convenient for the researcher. This book was easy to read and provided special features in each chapter particularly helpful for the novice researcher. For example, research tips and ethics tips as reminders; key concepts summarizing the main ideas of each chapter, and the companion website provides resources related to the book.

People are interacting more on social media sites and blogs with friends and family and strangers online. They communicate with people they may never meet except online. Rather than use the term online interviews in this book, Salmon elects to refer to these interviews as information and communication technologies (ICTs). Other authors such as, Arun, Heeks, and Morgan (2004) are also using the ICTs in their data collection methods. In this example, ICT- based enterprises are used to improve livelihoods for women in developing countries.

In chapters 1 through 11 Salmons asks key questions at the end of the chapter and define other interrelated parts in a research study. If I had to choose one part of the book I found the most helpful to me as a qualitative researcher, it has to be the Chapter 9-Preparing for an Online Interview. Each of the previous chapters and E-Interview Research Framework prepares the reader for an online interview. My purpose for journal writing was to understand the process for generating data in relation to the research problems and to understand some of the procedural issues. Salmons gave me the opportunity to see how another researcher uses different strategies to develop her research practice.

For example in chapter 6, *Visual Research and the Online Qualitative Interview* Salmons defines and explains what is visual research. While interviews sitting across from the participant, is preferred it may not always be possible. Researchers are able to still do their

structured, semi-structured or unstructured with participants in the same city or across the globe. The author gives the reader a variety of options for visual interviews. One is a text chat, Voice over Internet Protocol (VoIP) audio, or telephone (p. 111). Other options are voice conferencing. For some researchers not familiar with the many advances in technology and how to use it qualitatively, this section is particularly useful.

I checked the student study site given in the book. Because it is a new book and was only published in May of 2014 the companion website was not fully up for viewing at first. Under the Student Resources each chapter had only eFlashcards listed with it. After contacting the publisher the study tools and resources were emailed to me. Throughout the book the Salmons refers the reader to the companion site for additional resources located at companion website. After clicking on the General Resources section, I found all of the information was in place.

This book is easy to read and can be used in an introductory qualitative research class as well as an advanced class. The key features; definitions, key concepts, discussion and assignments, and researcher's notebook makes the book entertaining and at the same time, the reader is learning the process for conducting an online qualitative interviews.

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