



Writing and Representing Findings

In: Digital Tools for Qualitative Research

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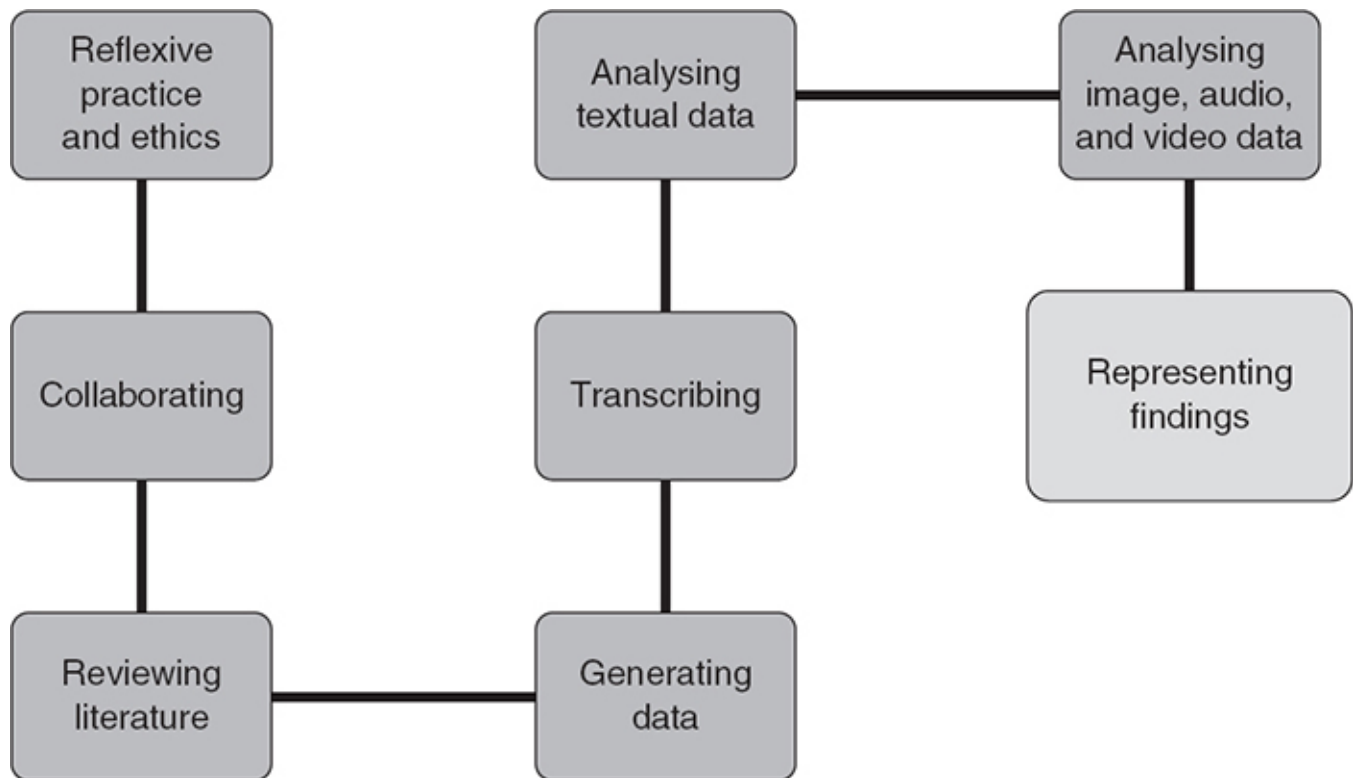
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Writing and Representing Findings



Learning Objectives

- Describe how different methodological approaches come with their own ways of representing the findings.
- Define the crisis of representation in qualitative research.
- Describe how presentation software and storyboarding tools might be useful to support the writing process.
- Select and critique appropriate tools for representing research findings.
- Articulate ways in which popularizing research can serve to expand the impact of research findings.
- Have strategies to ensure ethical practices when writing and representing findings.

Introduction

In [Chapters 7](#) and [8](#), we discussed the use of digital tools to support analysis of both textual and multimedia data. In this chapter, we examine how new tools have also changed our ways of writing and representing

findings. We begin with an overview of the ways in which writing and representing findings have been understood in qualitative inquiry. We highlight the shifts that occurred as social scientists began to negotiate a crisis of representation. We then give attention to the ways in which digital tools such as presentation software and storyboarding might support the writing process. Then we turn to how findings might be represented in new, more accessible ways through digital ethnographies, digital storytelling, blogs and websites, online soundscapes and films, documentaries and videos.

Perspectives on Writing and Representing

How you represent your findings is integrally connected to ontological and epistemological assumptions underlying your work. If your goal is to represent an essence or overall structure of an experience, as in some forms of phenomenology, your findings may look different from representing a life history or a theory. Creswell (2013) outlined the ‘overall’ and ‘embedded’ writing structures inherent to five different approaches to qualitative research (see [Table 9.1](#)): narrative, phenomenology, grounded theory, ethnography and case study. He highlighted how a given study's findings may ‘look’ different because of the particular assumptions that undergird the individual approach.

Table 9.1 Representing research across five qualitative research approaches (adapted from Creswell, 2013, pp. 221–2)

Approach	Overall writing structures	Embedded writing structures
Narrative	• Story chronologies • Temporal or episodic ordering of information • Reporting what participants said, how they said it or how they interacted with others	• Epiphanies • Themes, key events or plots • Metaphors and transitions
Phenomenology	• Traditional research report format • Themes; analytic analysis; essence; time, space and other dimensions	• Figures or tables reporting essences • Philosophical discussions • Creative closings
Grounded theory	• Results of open, axial and selective coding • Theory and arguments that support it	• Extent of analysis • Propositions • Visual diagrams
Ethnography	• Types of tale • Description, analysis and interpretation	• Tropes • Thick description

	• Thematic narrative	• Dialogue • Scenes • Literary devices
Case study	• Vignettes • Types of case • Substantive case report format	• Funnel approach • Description

In recent years, many qualitative researchers have embraced the idea that there is not a neutral, objective reality ‘out there’ waiting to be discovered by a researcher and represented to others. Rather, even ‘facts’ require some degree of interpretation, and no interpretation can fully capture lived experience (Richardson, 1990). Historically, however, this understanding has not always been embraced. Beginning in the seventeenth century, a clear divide between literary and scientific writing emerged. Literary writing was associated with fiction and subjectivity, while scientific writing was associated with facts and objectivity (Clifford and Marcus, 1986). Fictional writing was positioned as false, presumably filled with invented realities. In contrast, scientific writing was assumed to be objectively reporting valid findings from scientific research studies. Take a moment to consider your own beliefs about representing research findings by completing [Reflexive Practice 9.1](#).

Reflexive Practice 9.1

As you think about the study you are designing, consider the ways in which you have represented or plan to represent your research findings. How does your approach speak to your own beliefs about representation?

Denzin and Lincoln's (2005) description of the eight historical periods of qualitative research highlights well the shifting perspectives on how research findings should be represented, as well as the very meaning of ‘scientific’ versus ‘fictional’ writing. [Table 9.2](#) presents an overview of the eight periods.

Table 9.2 The historical periods of qualitative research (Denzin and Lincoln, 2005)

Period	Time Period	Orientation to Writing/Representation
Traditional	1900s to World War II	Dominated by ‘valid’ and ‘objective’ accounts of field experiences.
Modernist	Post-war to 1970s	Dominated by post-positivism and a focus on giving ‘voice’ to society.
Blurred Genres	1970 to 1986	Included multiple paradigms, epistemologies and methods.
Crisis of	Mid-1980s to	Mounting struggle between scientific and literary writing.

Representation	current day	
Postmodern Moment	1990 to 1995	Emergence of new forms of ethnography and representation, such as autoethnography.
Post-Experimental Inquiry	1990 to 2000	Growing sense of social consciousness brought to ethnographic texts in particular.
Methodologically Contested Present	2000 to present	Proliferation of methodological approaches.
Fractured Future	Future	Ongoing evolution around reconnecting social science to a social purpose and emphasis upon indigenous methodologies.

Outside the realm of visual anthropology or film, as well as some art-based approaches to research, findings are still represented through the printed word. Peer-reviewed journals, even those with an online presence, are still primarily paper based. With tenure and promotion being based in large part on one's publishing record in established journals, it is not surprising that few researchers have ventured far beyond text-based representations of their findings. Nonetheless, as we have come to recognize the multisensory nature of everyday life (Pink, 2007; 2009), some qualitative researchers have begun to explore how digital tools can expand how we engage in the act of writing and how we represent the findings.

Supporting the Writing Process

From field notes to annotating your data to reporting your findings, qualitative research requires you to spend a significant amount of time writing. Writing shapes our understandings and our understandings shape what we write. Whether you are a graduate student completing your thesis or a senior faculty member working on your hundredth manuscript for journal publication, the recursive and frequent act of writing is simply part of engaging in the research process (Ellis, 2004; Goodall, 2000; Wolcott, 2009).

Your professional community and disciplinary home, as well as the qualitative approach you use, will shape your style. None are neutral, as 'how we are expected to write affects what we can write about' (Richardson, 1990, p. 16). For instance, some research approaches place greater emphasis on reader evaluation (e.g. discourse analysis), while others employ more arts-based experimental forms of writing (e.g. autoethnography). As a reflexive researcher, it is important to write in a way that makes explicit your beliefs and assumptions, the theories that informed your work, and how you came to understand and interpret the data. Take a moment to consider [Reflexive Practice 9.2](#).

Reflexive Practice 9.2

Consider the research study you are designing.

- Who are you writing for?
- Who should be involved in the writing process (e.g. just you, or the participants as well)?
- To what degree do you plan to write yourself into the research findings? Why?

While there have been a multitude of texts (e.g. Wolcott, 2009) and articles (e.g. Colyar, 2009) published about the writing process, there has been far less discussion around the digital tools that can support the writing process. [Case Study 9.1](#) illustrates the use of ATLAS.ti to support the writing process from the very start of a research study to the completion of a journal manuscript.

Case Study 9.1 Using ATLAS.ti to Support the Writing Process

Drawing upon conversation analysis, Andrew was studying the ways in which an autistic identity was made real in parent support group talk. Early on, he decided to use ATLAS.ti 7 throughout the research process. Long before collecting data, he maintained a research journal using the memo tool. Further, he imported his ethics committee documents, research proposal and other notes related to his study into the software for easy referencing and reviewing. After transcribing his data in ATLAS.ti and beginning the analysis process, he used the memo tool to write the major sections of his findings. He also used the network view manager to create visual representations of his findings. Andrew used memos to generate the bulk of his manuscript, and was later able to export these to a word processor for further editing. Andrew felt that one of the benefits of such an approach was that his entire research process, shifting perspectives and even most of the writing process were documented in one location and in a transparent, easy to access way.

Digital Tools That Support Writing

We first explore how presentation software, such as Microsoft PowerPoint, can be used as a 'creative composition tool' for designing, analysing and creating texts. Then we highlight the possibilities for reading and writing using the storyboarding tool Scrivener.

Writing as Creative Composition: Presentation Software

Presentation software such as Microsoft PowerPoint and Apple's Keynote are often used when making

presentations of research findings to funding organizations and/or at professional conferences. However, fewer researchers consider them to be ‘creative composition tools’ as described by Melanie Hundley and Teri Holbrook in [Vignette 9.1](#) below. They highlight the potential for adapting these tools to meet unique writing needs.

Vignette 9.1 PowerPoint as Creative Composition Tool

Melanie Hundley, Vanderbilt University and Teri Holbrook, Georgia State University

PowerPoint has earned the reputation as the death knell of presentations; however, through our inquiry into its inner workings we realized that it has uses beyond the linear presentation of prepared slides. Re-conceived as a ‘creative composition tool’, PowerPoint becomes a space for designing, analysing and creating texts (Hundley and Holbrook, 2013).

Melanie: PowerPoint as a Reshaper of Data Stories

I was interested in how composing for a digital media format reshaped my writing process and end product. I chose PowerPoint because it is ubiquitous; most computer labs have it. It also offered me a way to link between data stories, theory, interviews, videos and field notes. The hypertext linking feature of PowerPoint allowed me to create a visual document in which I could dig into a specific theme and link across content. I was able to colour code specific types of slides (reflections, theory, participants, etc.), allowing me to know, at a glance, the type of data I was seeing as I followed links through my ‘presentation’; this visual sorting made the gaps in my thinking evident. Data sets that had not been theorized, or theory that had not been linked to participant data, were clearly visible. The program allowed me to embed clips from participant interviews on the slides alongside excerpts from the transcripts. I could hear the pauses, the hesitations or the excitement in their words. I could click on a link to the full transcript or follow a link to a different participant who made a similar or a contradictory statement. The below image is of a slide displaying data with associated hyperlinks.



- ☒ transcript
- ☒ write up
- ☒ emails
- ☐ rewrite
- ☒ comments

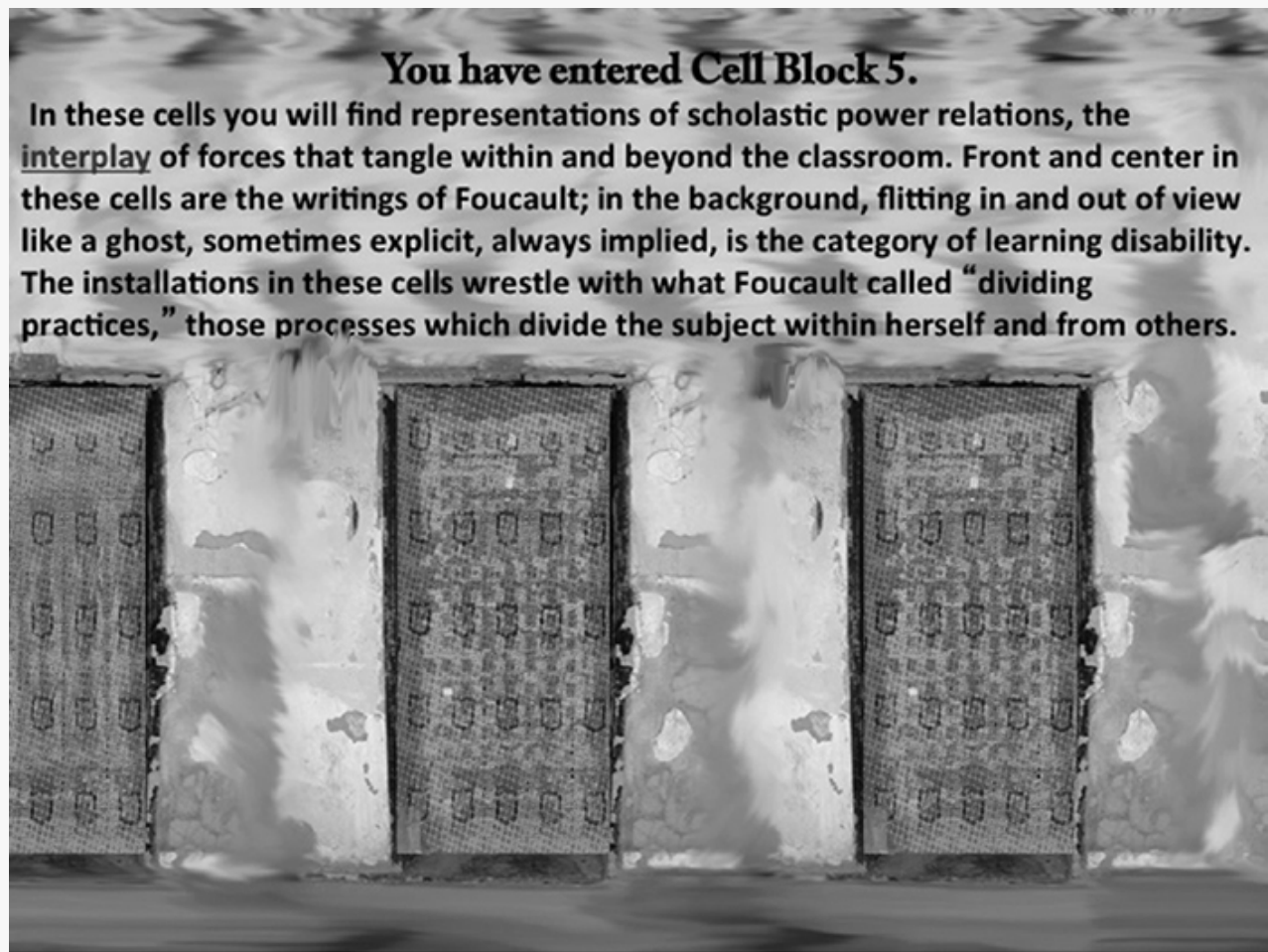
Write Up #1

Felicity's explanation of her composing process focused on her starting point—an image—and moved through her developing the events and emotions of a hypertext fiction piece. In describing the writing of one of her more complex hypertexts, she said, "I had to have the image first. Every lexia, every screen had image and text...I was really surprised to find that I had to have the image first." She focused on her training as a print writer and said, "I am such a word person that I would have thought that my inclination would have been to have the image support the text even though my goal was...to have multimodality in which image and text had relations but one wasn't necessarily in support of the other". A contrast between her expectations as a print writer and her experiences as a hypertext writer occurred several times in her interviews. Like Claire, she spoke with relative sophistication when considering what the "technology could offer, the technological affordances" that could be utilized for the creation of her hypertext pieces.

PowerPoint as a compositional tool

Teri: PowerPoint as Visual Architecture

PowerPoint is often associated with word-heavy screens and linear, point-and-click movement. However, the program also provides a simple hypertext linking function that, when coupled with its visual applications, provides alternative textual constructions. Instead of words on a flat page, screens can be re-imagined as image-filled spaces, allowing for hyperlinked materials that permit readers to move through a virtual landscape. One of my first hypermedia architectures was a virtual prison that housed fragments of philosophical texts used to theorize memoirs. In this architecture, each screen represented either a threshold or a space. An organizing screen featured a drawn schematic of the prison; by clicking on embedded hyperlinks, readers selected a cell block. At the entry screen to each cell block, readers found a series of photographed doors. Clicking through each door linked readers to a cell that contained texts and/or images (see Figure below). These visual architectures disrupted the notion of a linear text and suggested alternative ways of navigating, constructing and considering academic writing.



PowerPoint as a representational tool

This vignette illustrates how digital tools not typically associated with writing might support the writing process in new and helpful ways. We next turn to consider the uses of a toryboarding tool in the writing process.

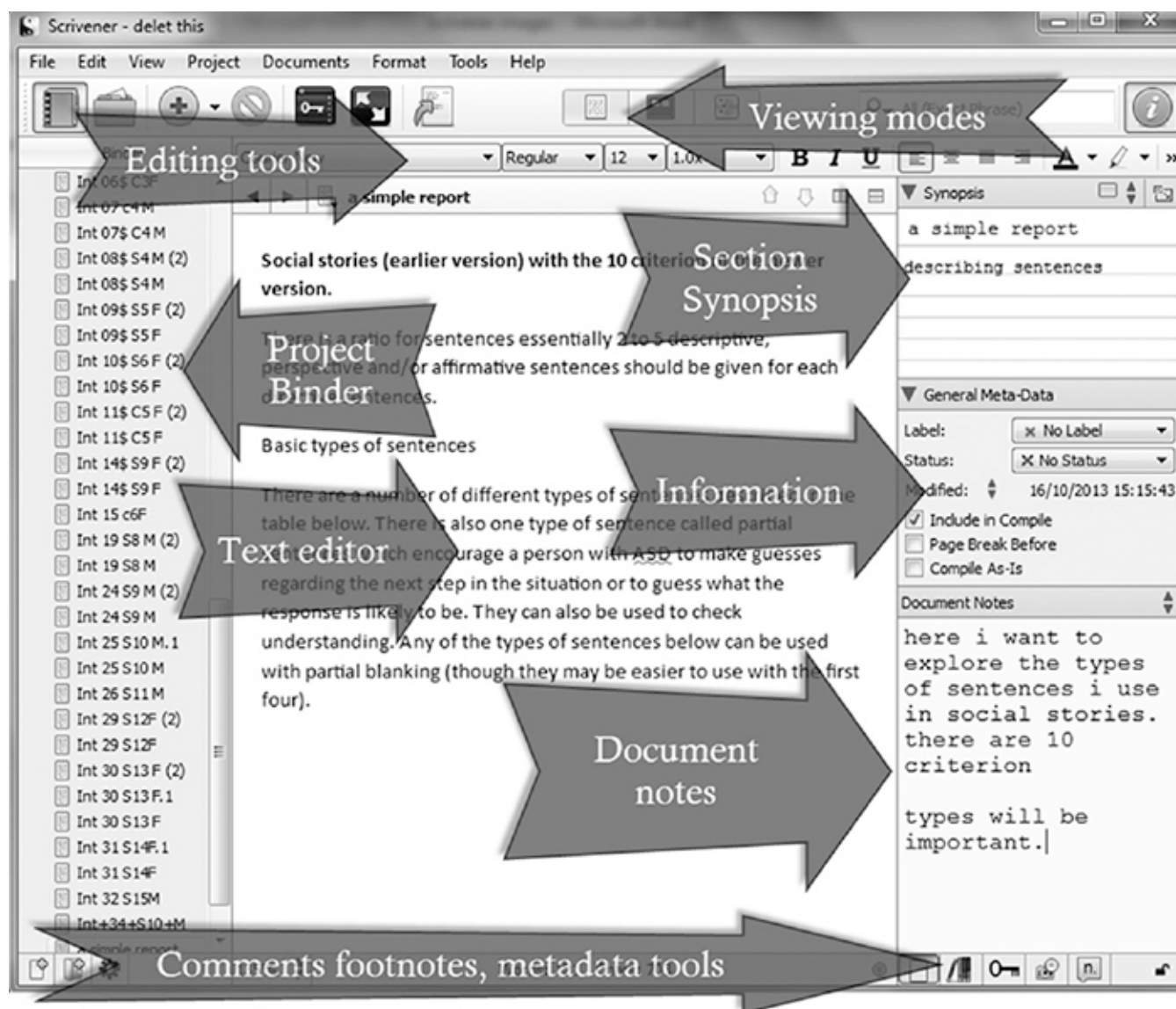
Writing as Storyboarding: Scrivener

While word processors make writing, revising and editing much easier than in the days of the typewriter, it can still be hard to navigate through a manuscript as it grows in length. Scrivener is a project management tool for organizing and writing long documents. It works on both Windows and Apple operating systems and offers a free trial version. Using a system of virtual index cards and outlines, Scrivener gives you the ability to easily 'shuffle' sections of your paper as you draft and organize your arguments and ideas. In lieu of having to work across multiple files and/or have papers scattered across your desk, Scrivener allows you to store everything in one place, making your process more efficient and systematic.

Visit Web Resource 9.1 for more information about Scrivener.

The left pane of the Scrivener interface (Figure 9.1) is the 'binder' that has navigational tools to hierarchically organize all aspects of your project. 'Collections' (appearing as tabs) group related documents together. The editor includes tools for annotating, writing and formatting. The 'inspector' includes metadata, index cards, keywords and reference links.

Figure 9.1 Main interface of Scrivener



Scrivener also allows you to block out your screen, editing your text on a black background, as displayed in Figure 9.2. This offers you a less distracting environment in which to write, while allowing quick access to all files and documents you might need.



things I needed to do for my initial literature review and research workflow. I was addicted to it within days. Scrivener allows me to organize my manuscript, research, notes and media files easily and organically. I have a virtual 'binder' where I can see my chapters (which I can subdivide to any granularity I need), my research, my notes and even my 'corkboard' (a visual way of viewing and arranging the documents in my binder), and I was able to arrange these any way I pleased as my project progressed.

My favourite feature of Scrivener is being able to import research files, websites and other media so everything is together in one place. The ability to link these all together makes it easy for me to create a network of cross references that helps me to navigate my information quickly (no more lost notes!).

I also like the flexibility that Scrivener gives me in compiling my writing. I can use traditional formats (print, RTF, Word, OpenOffice, PDF), as well as compile my project to be reviewed on most e-readers (including iBooks), as a web page or even as a LaTeX file.

Figure 9.2 Scrivener corkboard view



Visit Web Resource 9.2 to review several articles related to using Scrivener for your dissertation/thesis work.

Digital tools can not only support non-linear writing processes but also provide opportunities for more engaging and accessible ways to represent our work to the public. Take time to consider [Reflexive Practice 9.3](#).

Reflexive Practice 9.3

What are some challenges you face during your writing process? How might Scrivener or other tools help you overcome those challenges?

Representing Findings in New Ways

Relatively few researchers move beyond journal articles, technical reports or books when disseminating their research findings. Even as the number of published qualitative studies increases, the implications of their work remain mostly on shelves or etched within rarely opened journals (Finfgeld, 2003; Troman, 2001). With academic promotion and professional expectations often dependent upon publishing in traditional venues, few qualitative researchers have ventured into alternative and/or more public forms of research. Thus, research findings remain relatively inaccessible to the majority of people. Others may resist the idea of 'popularizing research' out of a 'fear of being popular', which could result in being misquoted and/or feeling that a complicated research study was 'dumbed down' (Vannini, 2012, p. 4). Yet, if we only speak or write to like-minded researchers, we are unlikely to reach the populace whom the research might actually be intended to impact.

Visit Web Resource 9.3 to read how Christopher Brkich and Tim Barko challenged the research status quo in their study of memes during the 2012 American presidential election.

Pursuing a more public form of research is not a new idea, as many anthropologists (e.g. Margaret Mead and Bronislaw Malinowski) found ways to share their work with a broader audience. Today, scholars like Howley (2012), after producing an oral history of the life of Russell Compton (a professor of philosophy at DePauw University in the United States), worked with a radio station to share the audio documentary with a broader audience.

Visit Web Resource 9.4 for a link to the companion website for *Popularizing Research* (Vannini, 2012).

Arts-based approaches, which have been taken up particularly in educational research, are those that use art to generate, interpret and/or represent data (Cole and Knowles, 2001; Knowles and Coles, 2008). Arts-based research often embraces new forms of representation by crossing (presumed) disciplinary bounds. For instance, some have partnered with artists to generate performative texts and public performances of their research findings (Lester and Gabriel, 2012). Others have expanded how they share their text-based

research reports, working to incorporate images and other sensory-rich representations. In [Vignette 9.3](#), Teri Holbrook and Melanie Hundley offer one example of how qualitative researchers might learn from young adult literature to expand how their research is represented.

Vignette 9.3 Young Adult Literature Novels as Predictors of Academic Texts to Come

Teri Holbrook, Georgia State University and Melanie Hundley, Vanderbilt University

Academic texts look much the same as they have for 100 years – words on paper, linearly displayed, broken only by an occasional supporting chart or illustration. We offer that the conventional construction of academic texts is poised to shift, and we look to an unconventional source for our argument – young adult literature (YAL). Responsive to their Internet-raised adolescent readers, YAL authors are experimenting with literary formats that may point to the future of academic texts. Rather than crafting stories designed to be read word by word, page by page, some YAL authors are taking up the affordances of digital technology to create works that are multi-modal, interactive and hyperlinked.

- *Making Up Megaboy* (Walter, 2007) is a multi-modal novel that juxtaposes character voices to depict the multiple perspectives surrounding a 13-year-old murderer. Images and graphic design are used to construct the story while discomforting the reader. The author uses the ease of digital technology to create a mixed media narrative that challenges notions of truth and storytelling.
- *Skeleton Creek* (Carman, 2009), a series that employs two media formats, print novels and online websites, revolves around two teen characters – a writer and a videographer. Readers begin in the novel, which is formatted as a personal journal, and at key points are directed to videos posted on the videographer's webpage. Both formats are necessary to access the entire story.
- *Inanimate Alice* (Pullinger and Joseph, 2005) is an interactive, online multi-modal narrative constructed from the first person view of a young girl who aspires to be an online game developer. The story unfolds over a series of narratives set in the different places the child inhabits; as she grows older and her digital composing practices mature, so do the elements of the episodes. Readers control the pace of the story. Tension and atmosphere are developed through the creators' design that utilizes words, images, sound and animations.

Many academic journals have online components and/or make their articles available through online databases. Fewer are moving toward rethinking what an article or even a journal can be. YAL authors are experimenting with both the form and function of storytelling as they engage with the affordances of digital media. Some academic journals, also experimenting with the form and function of academic texts, are beginning to respond to the question: *What new and different forms and functions of academic writing and representing will digital technology make possible?*

Visit Web Resource 9.5 for links to journals that incorporate multimedia representations in their online venues.

Take a moment to consider [Reflexive Practice 9.4](#).

Reflexive Practice 9.4

After considering [Vignette 9.3](#), what are some ways that you might represent your own findings in innovative ways? How might such representations serve to expand the ways in which others engage with your work?

In a comprehensive literature review of qualitative research studies where the findings were disseminated beyond a journal article and/or conference presentation, Keen and Todres (2007) identified ten modes for doing so:

1. Research-based ethnodrama, often including a video performance (e.g. Gray, 2000);
2. Ethnopoetics or poetic texts (e.g. Richardson, 1992);
3. Unperformed performative texts (e.g. Pifer, 1999);
4. Evocative storytelling (e.g. Gray, 2004);
5. Multimedia presentation (e.g. Cole and McIntyre, 2004);
6. Patchwork quilts, with audio and photographs (e.g. Brackenbury, 2004);
7. Documentary films (e.g. Woo, 2008);
8. Websites and DVDs (e.g. Rozmovits and Ziebland, 2004);
9. Workshops (e.g. Smith et al., 2000); and
10. Brochures (e.g. Hunt, Emslie and Watt, 2001).

Drawing upon performance studies, representational arts, folk and popular culture, these new forms of scholarship act to popularize research through 'genreblurring, collaboration, and application to multiple social problems and issues' (Vannini, 2012, p. 7). With increasing access to multimedia sources and the Internet, as well as a commitment to expanding the impact of research findings, more and more researchers are

experimenting with sharing their findings in new ways.

Digital Tools to Represent Findings

We discuss next various digital tools that can support you in representing your research to a broader audience through: digital ethnographies; digital storytelling; blogs and websites; online soundscapes and films; and documentaries and videos.

Representing as Digital Ethnographies

Ethnographers have experimented with representing their work through what Dicks and Mason (2008) refer to as 'hypermedia environments' (p. 572) that use clickable multimedia, often located on the Internet, to represent their research process and findings. Rather than simply representing findings in textual forms, field experiences are chronicled on the Internet. In the 1990s, prior to the days of prevalent high-speed Internet access, many of these hypermedia-based representations were distributed in the form of CD-ROMs or DVDs. For example, Peter Biella's fieldwork among the Iparakuyo Maasai of Tanzania resulted in an interactive DVD. Now, however, it is possible to develop interactive websites that provide opportunities for others to engage with research findings in ways that introduce them to sensory-rich aspects of fieldwork.

Visit Web Resource 9.6 to view Peter Biella's ongoing work in visual anthropology.

An excellent example of the potential of a digital ethnography is Michael Wesch's <http://Nekalimin.net>. His study explored how people in Papua New Guinea navigated new forms of development in society. Wesch shared his findings *only* on the Internet. On his website, he included field notes, videos, images and historical documents, both scholarly based expositions and actual voices (e.g. interviews) from his fieldwork. To protect the participants, interested viewers must first contact Wesch for access to the site.

View Web Resource 9.7 to see the Nekalimin digital ethnography project.

View Web Resource 9.8 to watch Michael Wesch's lecture on digital ethnography.

Representing as Digital Stories

Situated within narrative theory and community-based participatory research methods, digital storytelling is another way to represent and share life narratives. In this method, individuals, along with a researcher (or a researcher alone), generate a brief (3–5 minute) visual narrative that synthesizes images, video, voice and music to create a compelling story (Lambert, 2006). In many ways, this approach blurs the boundary between data collection and representation of findings, with the data collection process itself involving decisions and attention to how everyday experiences are represented. Some researchers have used digital storytelling to foster community-building and collaboration, with community members co-constructing digital stories that

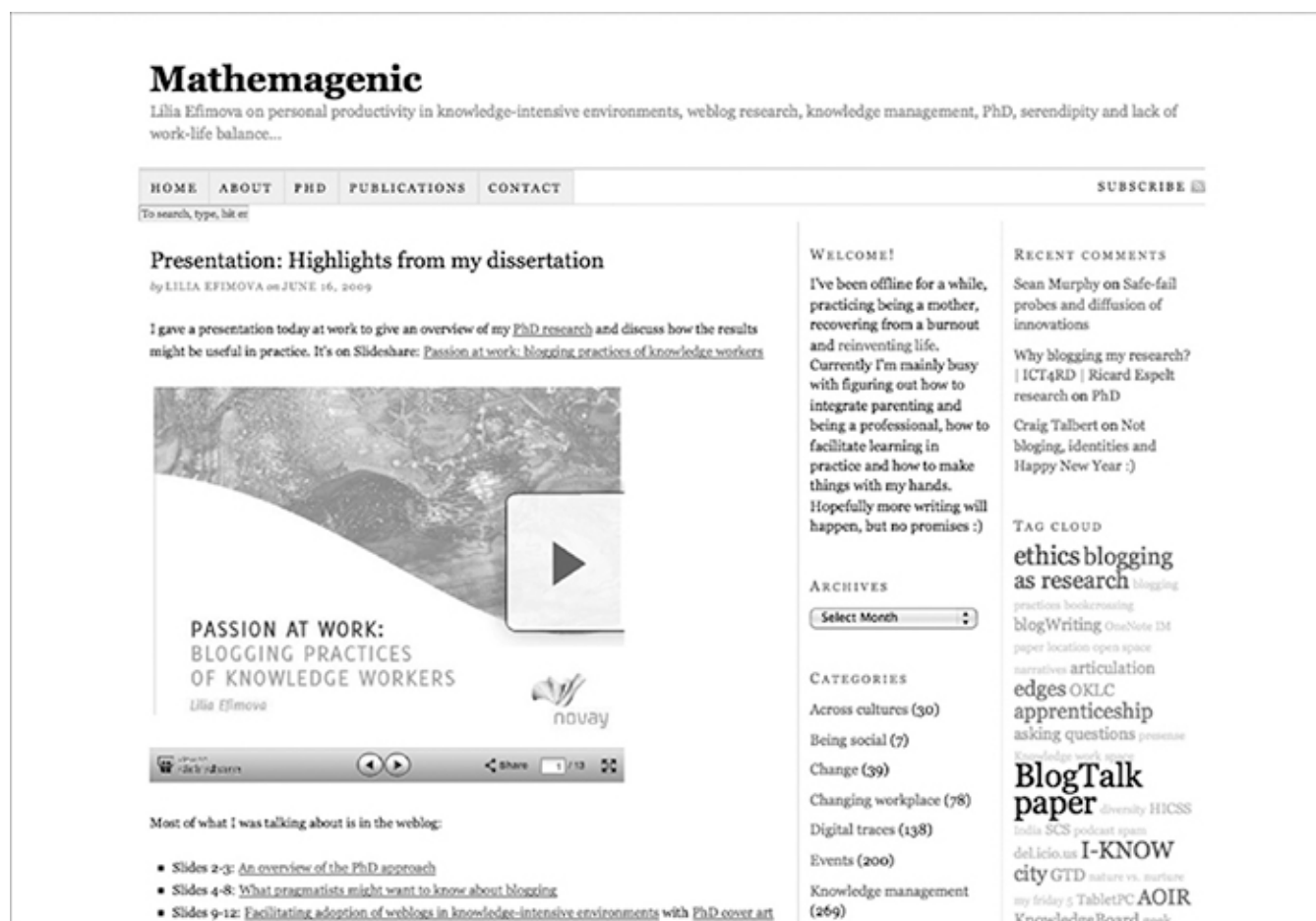
display their community concerns and/or generate dialogue around central social issues (Gubrium and Turner, 2011).

Visit **Web Resource 9.9** to visit the Center for Digital Storytelling.

Representing as Blogs and Websites

Blogs, introduced in [Chapter 2](#), can be used to share your research methods, findings and conclusions in a transparent way to reach a larger audience (Powell, Jacob and Chapman, 2012). They can be used as a way to encourage non-academic audiences to respond to findings, potentially strengthening relations with stakeholders and improving rigour. For instance, while working on her PhD research, Lilia Efimova (2009) used a blog, incorporating video, to share major findings from her research (see [Figure 9.4](#)).

Figure 9.4 Lilia Efimova's PhD blog



Visit **Web Resource 9.10** to see Lilia Efimova's Mathemagenic blog.

As another example, Noah Wardrip-Fruin, a computer science professor, created a group-authors blog, Grand Text Auto, to generate reviews for a book manuscript. He used both the comments on his blog and peer reviews received from his publisher to refine his work.

Visit Web Resource 9.11 to explore Grand Text Auto.

Deciding whether to limit access to and/or allow comments on your blog posts should be done with the goal of protecting your participants. Copyright is another issue to consider. Quite often, researchers who share their research findings on a blog use tailored copyright licences through organizations such as Creative Commons. Creative Commons offers free copyright licences that allow you to regulate the degree to which the public can use and share your work. Some blogging platforms, such as WordPress, have settings which can limit a reader's ability to copy the text and paste it elsewhere for their own use.

Visit Web Resource 9.12 to learn about the tailored copyright licences at Creative Commons.

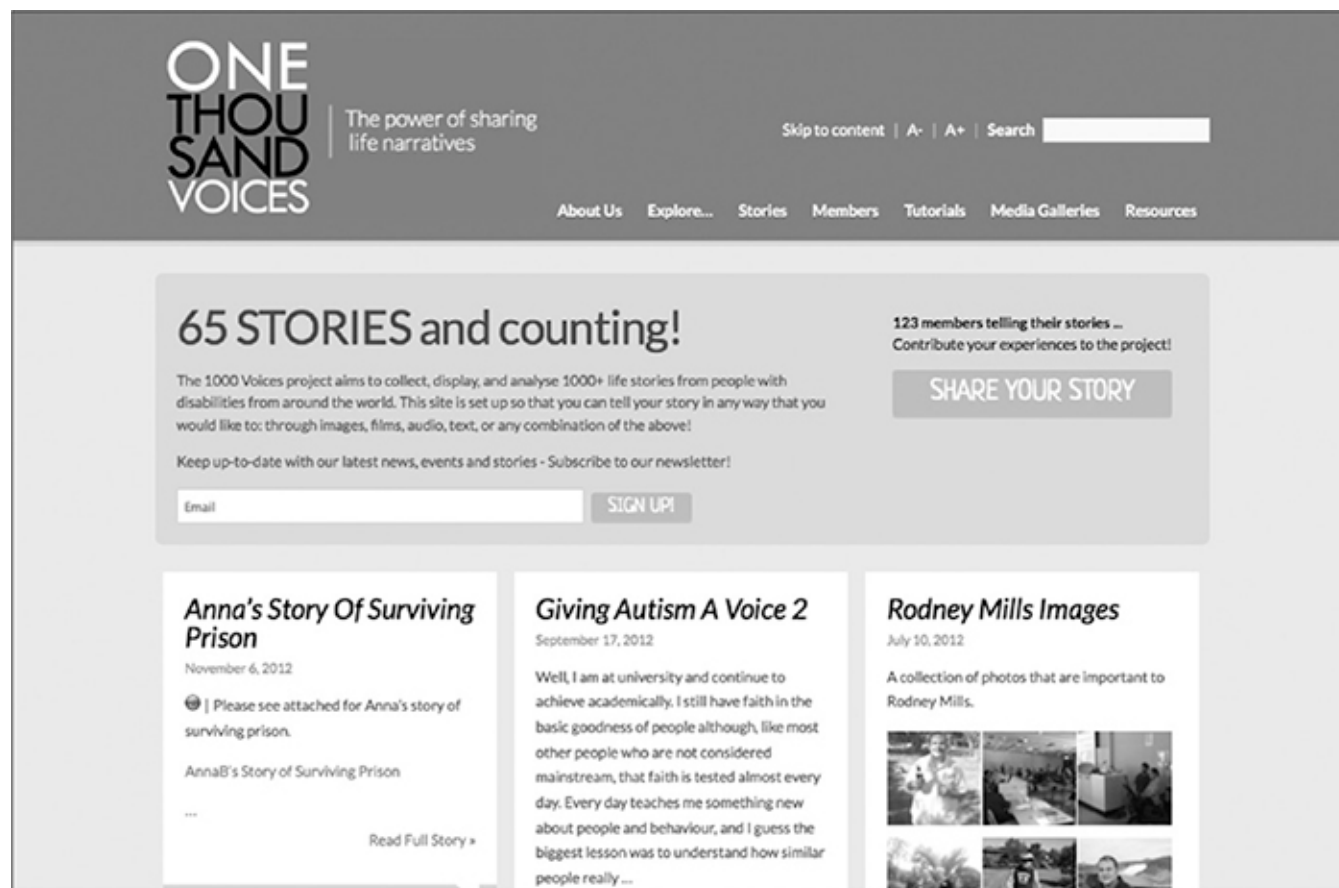
Indeed, there are ethical concerns whenever you choose to make your work more public. Take a moment to consider [Reflexive Practice 9.5](#).

Reflexive Practice 9.5

When using a blog to report research findings, a larger audience has access to your research process and conclusions. What might be some of the risks and ethical dilemmas of sharing your research findings within such a public venue?

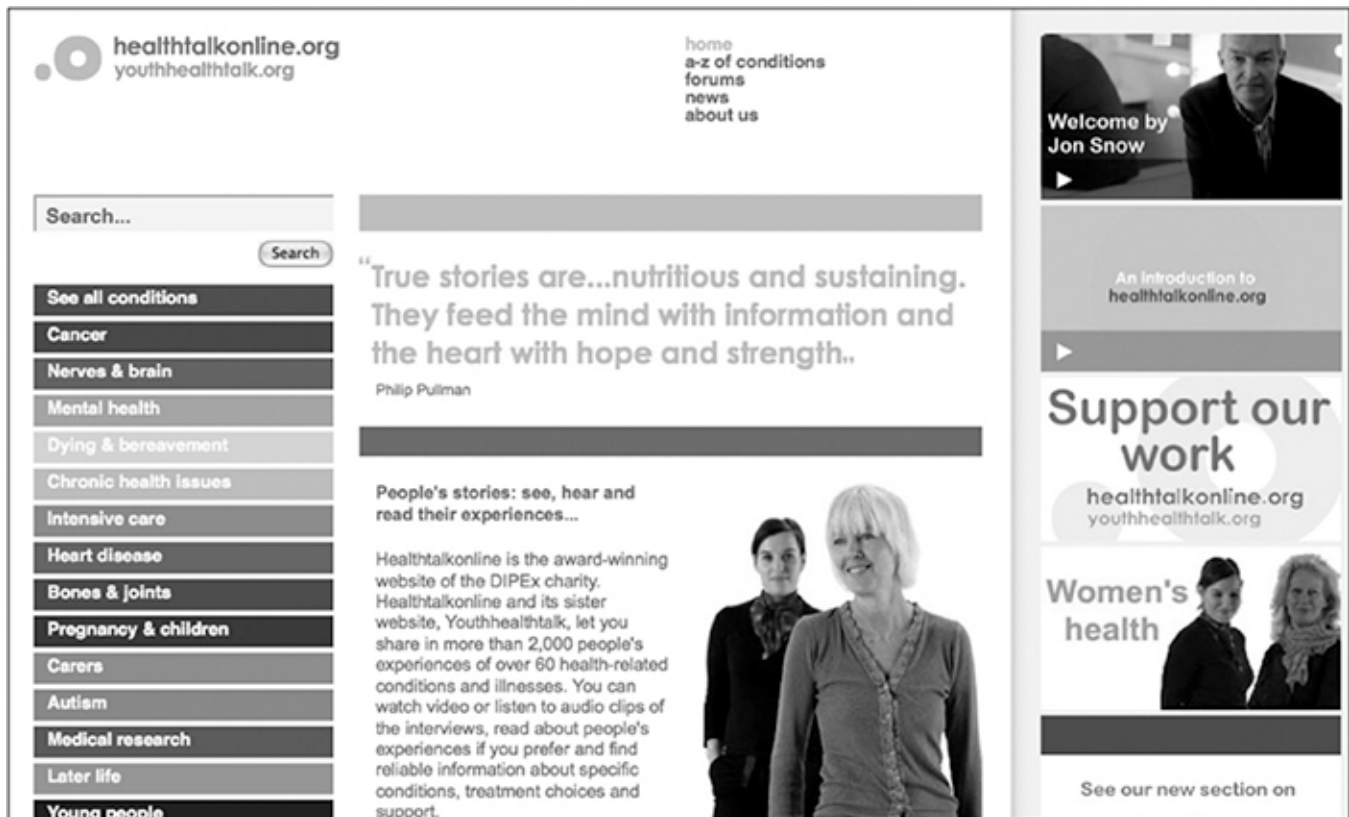
Other kinds of websites can be created to display the life stories of everyday people. For example, the 1000 Voices project (see [Figure 9.5](#)) is a narrative-focused website that seeks to collect, share and analyse life stories of people with disabilities. Stories can be created and shared using images, film, audio, or text. This is an excellent example of using the Internet as the medium by which to not only collect and display data but also make findings accessible to the public. It also provides a way for researchers to collaborate with stakeholders in relation to how a given story is represented and shared.

Figure 9.5 1000 Voices project website



Visit **Web Resource 9.13** to see the 1000 Voices project.

Similar to the 1000 Voices project, <http://Healthtalkonline.org> (see [Figure 9.6](#)) is an award-winning website that stores the health-related experiences of more than 2,000 people. The site is arranged by medical condition (e.g. cancer), allowing individuals to enter the site and view videos and/or listen to audio clips from interviews with people experiencing the condition. The collected interviews are analysed by a research team and then shared within a platform that has allowed for dissemination to a larger audience, including the medical community.

Figure 9.6 <http://Healthtalkonline.org>

View Web Resource 9.14 to see the award-winning website Healthtalkonline.

Representing as Online Soundscapes

Soundscapes (see [Chapter 8](#)) can also be represented and shared in an online format. Researchers can produce a compilation of the sounds generated at a given site, often alongside narration of some kind. Neumann (2012) produced a sound portrait of the site of Jim Morrison's (an American songwriter and leader of the band The Doors) grave in Paris, France. His interest in this particular research site emerged as he found that it was full of people who were singing and playing Morrison's music. Neumann eventually created a sound portrait that layered the collected interviews and naturally occurring sounds, while also creating a website to store and disseminate the sound portrait.

View Web Resource 9.15 to listen to Mark Neumann's sound portrait of the site of Jim Morrison's grave.

Another example of an online soundscape is the Soundscapes and Cultural Sustainability ethnographic project funded by the Academy of Finland. The research team posts sounds on their blog, as shown in [Figure 9.7](#). In this way, their unfolding findings are made publicly available, not only textually, but in an auditory manner as well.

Figure 9.7 Soundscapes and Cultural Sustainability project blog site

23 APRIL 2012

Countryside frogs

It was a warm summer evening in May. I'm standing on a porch of a friend of mine. She's having a picnic party at her country house north of Istanbul. Behind me is the house and behind that a crowd of 50 people singing *türküs*, playing *baglamas*, eating salads, pies and *köftes* and skipping rope. On this side of the house you can only hear the frogs. It's strange. As if I was in a different place altogether.

There must be some other creatures sounding out with the frogs. I spot the obvious dog. Somekind of insects maybe? Too bad I'm lousy with birds so I can't recognize the ones on this recording. An owl? I try to count the frogs when they stop for awhile and then start again, there is at least four. But there must be more hidden in the undergrowth...

Listen to the croaking:

◀▶



Visit **Web Resource 9.16** to hear the Soundscapes and Cultural Sustainability project.

Representing as Films, Documentaries or Videos

Visual anthropologists have long produced films and documentaries to illustrate their findings. These can have both a pedagogical capacity and the ability to engage broad audiences, thereby potentially increasing the impact of research. The process of translating research findings into a feature film can seem daunting, particularly if you are not trained as a filmmaker. Woo (2008), who translated her research findings into a 105-minute narrative film, *Singapore Dreaming*, suggested that aspiring filmmakers create representations that spark conversation between the researcher, participants and broader audience members; encourage the audience to examine broader social issues; result in the audience identifying with the storyline and/or see themselves in the film; and keep the audience engaged with the storyline.

With these considerations in mind, Woo herself constructed a screenplay by compiling vignettes from her study which examined 'young people's sense of legitimate and illegitimate ways of spending their time ... and

their sense of undesirable life paths' (p. 322). She provided an excellent example of how one might represent qualitative findings through film.

Visit Web Resource 9.17 for more information about *Singapore Dreaming*.

Visit Web Resource 9.18 to watch a video about visual ethnographies.

In [Vignette 9.4](#), Art Herbig and Aaron Hess provide another example of moving from a data set to a documentary film, highlighting the ways in which they had to carefully consider the ethical implications of this particular medium. As noted in [Chapters 2](#) and [5](#), Herbig and Hess studied people's memories of 9/11 in New York City during the tenth anniversary of the tragedy.

Vignette 9.4 Documentary Process as Qualitative Research

Art Herbig, Indiana University–Purdue University Fort Wayne and Aaron Hess, Arizona State University

As part of our study of how memories of the events of 9/11 have been shaped in the past decade, we made an active decision to incorporate different forms of information gathering and dissemination into our work. We began with the idea of making a feature-length documentary.

We have found that there is a different type of responsibility when using a participant's image as part of the research findings. The decisions about how to do this begin in the field with the camera. Where we chose to conduct our interviews, how we chose to frame a person and what we include in the frame with the person are all decisions that will impact how we present our findings. Working with the camera is a skill, and its role needs to be carefully considered while still in the field. While editing, decisions need to be made about how to best represent both your participants and your findings. Those decisions will not always be in sync. Because the use of audio/visual materials changes the relationship between the researcher and the participant in terms of anonymity, each edit requires the researcher to decide how to blend the participant's voice.

We made a number of calculated decisions while in New York about how we would represent our findings before data collection was complete. One specific decision was to not release interview footage as part of our video logging (vlogging) so as not to violate our relationship with our participants by rushing to judgement on what we had found. Instead, we treated those interviews as part of our longer written and documentary projects. By

posting our work-in-progress to our Facebook page, we invited commentary and critique before we had something fully formulated in our own mind. This helped us to see things in new and different ways.

Visit Web Resource 9.19 to see how Dr Kip Jones' three-year research study of ageing and gay life in rural South West England and Wales was turned into a film.

Take a moment to consider [Reflexive Practice 9.6](#).

Reflexive Practice 9.6

What are some ethical dilemmas that might arise by sharing video footage from a study on a social networking site and eliciting feedback from a broader audience?

While you might not produce an extensive film or professional-grade documentary as Woo or Herbig and Hess have, it is possible to generate shorter videos to represent and share your work. There are a number of tools that you may want to consider for this. Most simply, you might create a short video of your work with a built-in computer web camera and a movie-making program (e.g. iMovie). Probably one of the best tools, with a range of flexible features, is Camtasia by TechSmith. You can make videos, create screencasts and add elements such as audio, subtitles, images and graphics. This is particularly useful if you want to provide commentary or explanations about your research.

These videos can then be shared on YouTube or Vimeo (introduced in [Chapter 5](#)) with broader audiences. For instance, Margaret Wetherell, Emeritus Professor of Psychology at the Open University, shared findings from her research around racism and issues of social structure and power (Wetherell and Potter, 1993) on YouTube. YouTube's comment feature can be used to invite an audience response.

View Web Resource 9.20 to see Margaret Wetherell's YouTube video discussion of her discourse analysis study of racism.

Take a moment to respond to [Reflexive Practice 9.7](#).

Reflexive Practice 9.7

As you consider how you might use online video sharing sites to engage a broader audience, what challenges might arise when inviting 'unknown' others to respond to your work?

[Vignette 9.5](#) highlights how Rebecca Williams went about using Camtasia (see [Chapter 5](#)) to create YouTube videos, as well as a Prezi presentation to disseminate her research findings.

Vignette 9.5 Presenting Data Analysis Interactively to Elicit Emotional Response

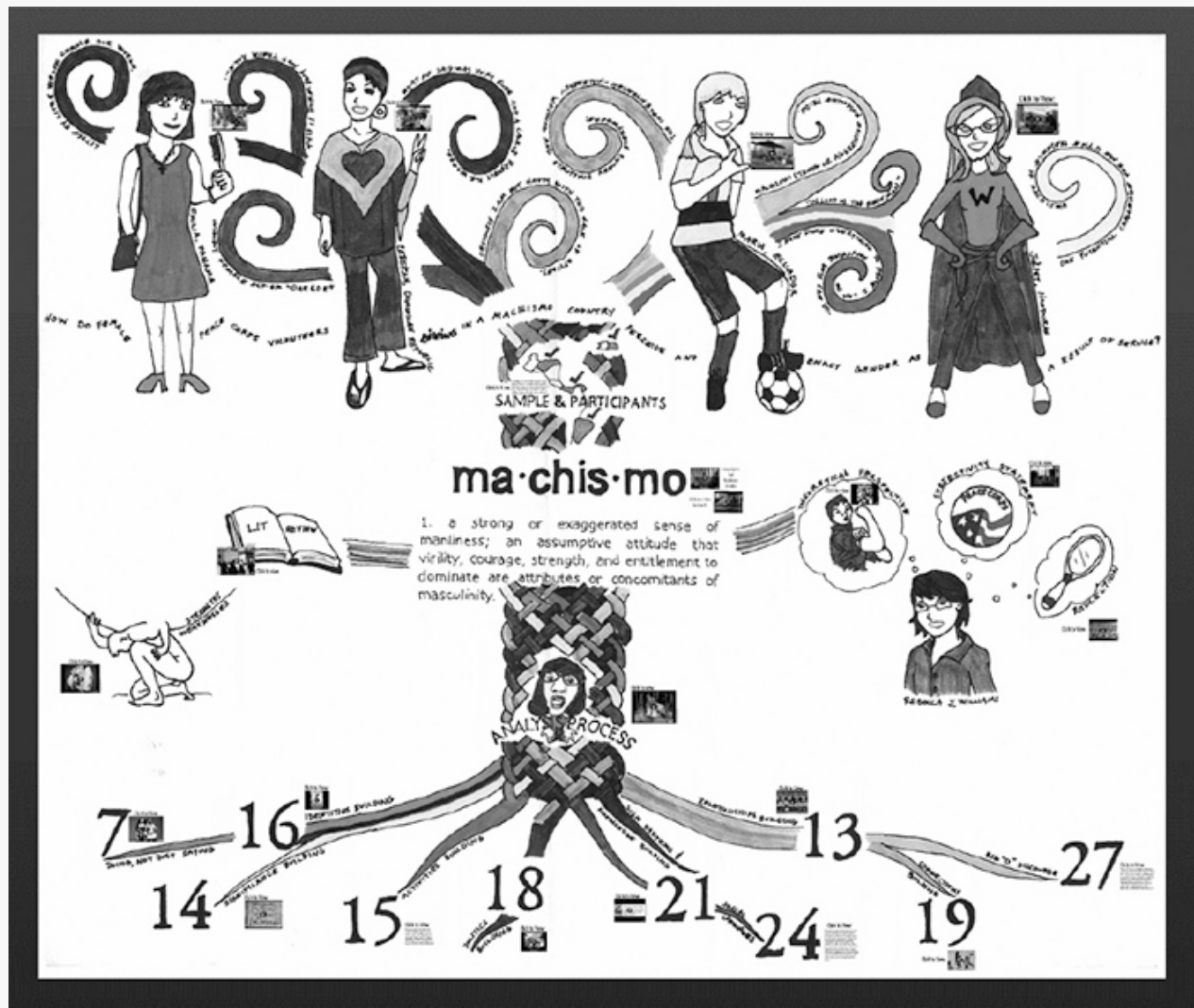
Rebecca J. Williams, University of Florida

From 2009–2011, I served as a Peace Corps volunteer in Honduras. During the course of my service, I noticed that all the volunteers, including myself, changed gender behaviors based on the culture of the place. These experiences led me to an interest in studying the relationship between gender roles and natural resources management as part of my PhD studies in Interdisciplinary Ecology. During my time in the doctoral program, I conducted a small qualitative study on how female Peace Corps volunteers serving in a machismo country perceive and enact gender as a result of their service.

My theoretical stance as a researcher is largely based in critical and feminist epistemologies that drive me to explore ways in which I can analyse and present my research to elicit emotional responses from readers and viewers. The purpose of this is to elucidate the issues facing my participants, their resulting actions, and how this has changed their behaviours in a manner that would represent their struggle and resonate with viewers. For this data analysis project I used Prezi, a web-based presentation tool, in conjunction with original artwork and YouTube videos, which combined images, narration and traditional folk music.

Prezi is a web-based tool that supports the embedding of images, videos and audio allowing for an interactive multimedia experience. I used Camtasia Studio to create YouTube videos that were embedded into an original drawing that was intended to depict the process and results as a tree. The roots represented the tools of discourse analysis; branches signified subjectivity, theoretical perspective, and literature review; the trunk represented the research question and participants; and the crown represented the results. See [Figure 9.8](#).

Figure 9.8 Rebecca William's representation of the research process



The use of multimedia tools was intended to allow the viewer to engage in the research process and connect with its participants. Although the presentation has all of the elements of a traditional research paper, the multimedia version allowed the viewer to progress through the process experientially. My aim was to have the viewer experience the concept of machismo, gain an understanding of my subjectivity as a researcher, experience the challenges of discourse analysis, and ultimately experience the consequences of how my participants changed their gender behaviour during their Peace Corps service.

When working on this project and disseminating it to others, I learned that this manner of data presentation is a powerful tool that can elicit different types of emotional response. When deciding to present data in an interactive manner, it is important to know that this

process is more time intensive than writing a traditional paper, and issues of copyright when choosing music and images must be considered if a project is to be submitted for publication.

Visit Web Resource 9.21 for more information on Prezi and to view Rebecca William's presentation.

Take a moment to consider Reflexive 9.8.

Reflexive Practice 9.8

Choose one of the tools presented in this chapter and explore its use in the context of the study you are designing. Reflect on your experiences with these tools.

Final Thoughts

As Woo noted, it is important not to ‘fall back on modes of representation that are familiar to us, especially if we know that those modes will not reach the audiences for whom the findings are truly intended’ (2008, p. 325). Digital tools are one means by which to expand your research audience, opening up your work to new levels of critique and application. Because paper-based journals are rarely read outside of academia, there is a need to re-examine how we might invite the larger populace to make sense of and engage with our research findings. There are a variety of digital tools that can afford you opportunities to represent your findings in new, alternative ways – many of which move away from a sole reliance on text. Many tools also provide ways in which you can make your research more public, which could result in others both consuming and critiquing your work. As we move to expand how we represent our findings, it is critical to remain cognizant of how and who we choose to represent, acknowledging that whatever we share is always partial and positional.

Chapter Discussion Questions

1. How has the crisis of representation challenged what it means to report results of research studies?
2. How can new digital tools support a non-linear writing process?
3. In what situations might it be particularly important for your research findings to reach the public? How might this be accomplished?
4. How can you balance the desire to popularize your research with the need to protect your participants?
5. How can you ensure ethical practices as you write and represent your findings?

Suggestions for Further Reading

Richardson (1990) is a classic text on representing findings in qualitative research, and is worth reading. Wolcott (2009) offers practical advice for developing effective writing approaches. Dicks and Mason (2008) focus on the ways in which multimedia methods can be used to represent findings, focusing specifically on hypermedia environments. Powell et al. (2012) highlight how blogs can be used to rapidly share research methods and findings. Woo (2008) provides an excellent example of the ways in which art-based methods can be employed to expand the ways in which qualitative research is represented and disseminated.

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