



Virtual Research and Creative Collaborations: Doing Old Things in New Ways



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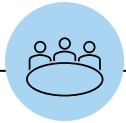


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The end of in - person qualitative research?



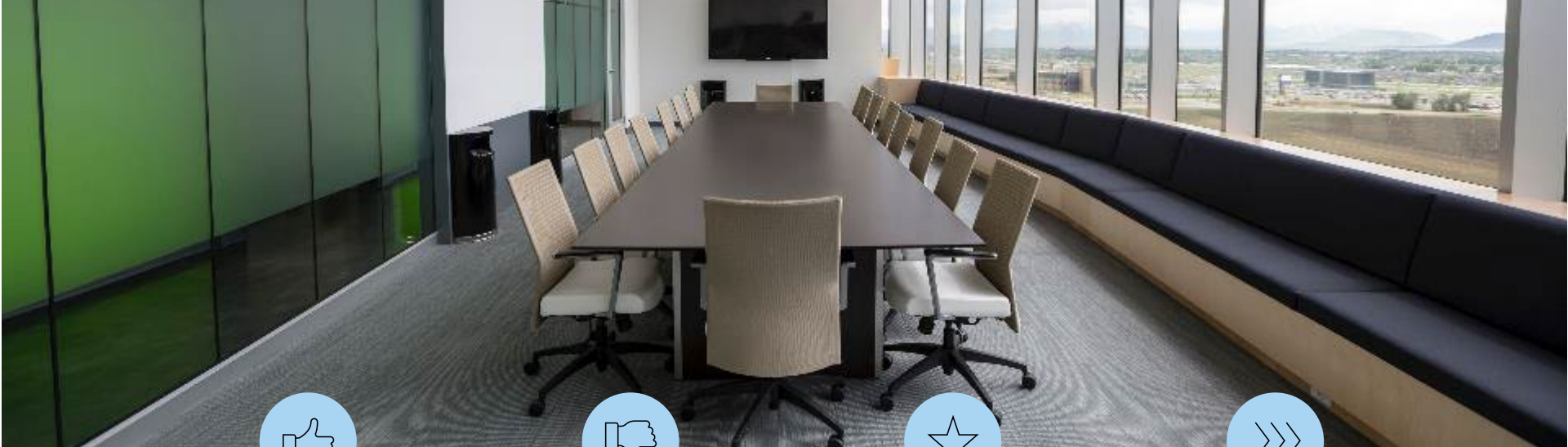


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What we've
gained



What we've
lost



Tips for
success



What's
next?



Peyton Williams, MPH



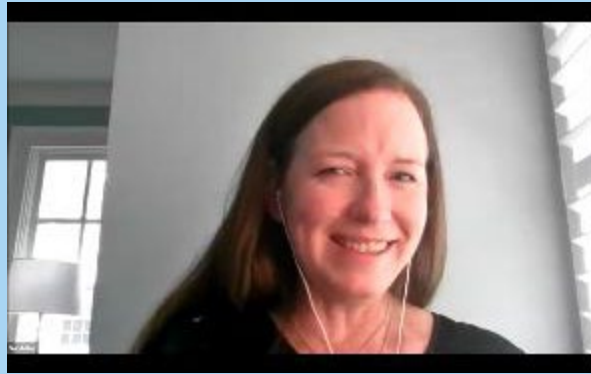
Claudia Squire, MPH



Doug Rupert, MPH



Kate Ferriola Bruckenstein, BA



Sarah Ray, MPH



Stephanie McInnis, MPH



What we've gained

Benefits of virtual data collection

Benefits



- **Accessibility.** For participants who experience challenges traveling to a traditional focus group facility (e.g., geography, mobility or health issues).
- **Cost and time savings** For researchers, clients, and participants (although preparation time can be just as long or longer).
- **Reduced participant and moderator burden** Easier to join with no travel.
- **Participant diversity.** No geographic limitations on recruitment (but clusters around recruitment firms).

Recruiting is actually easier in some ways, because we're not limited to trying to find people in a specific area that are available at this very specific time.

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“

Sarah Ray, MPH

A thin vertical grey line extending downwards from the quote icon to the name.



What we've lost

Pain points of virtual data collection

Pain Points



- **Distractions and noise** No control over participant environment, background noises, cross talk.
- **Facilitation.** Difficult to manage group dynamics and ensure all voices are heard.
- **Privacy.** Unable to discuss sensitive topics without a private location.
- **Show rates.** This year we have experienced higher cancellation and no-show rates.
- **TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES.** Internet connectivity, audio and video delay, screen sharing, etc.

I did interviews with folks who it was their first time using Zoom and we spent the first 15 minutes on technical difficulties, which makes your interview a lot shorter.

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Stephanie McInnis, MPH



Tips for success

Strategies for virtual data collection

Tips

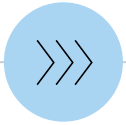


- **No one size fits all** Think creatively about what works best for the population you want to talk to.
- **Anticipate needs** Some participants and populations may have an easier time joining virtually than others (e.g., students, educators, older adults).
- **Think small** Smaller groups (4-6 participants) are better to hear from everyone and alleviate cross talk.
- **Troubleshoot** Ask participants to join early and have a tech savvy person on the call to troubleshoot.
- **Test everything** Set up technology tests to anticipate problems and prepare solutions.

If you're using Zoom, it's better to have people connect from their computer for audio rather than phone, because otherwise there's a delay.

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Peyton Williams, MPH



What's next?

The future of qualitative data collection

The future?



- **Hybrid approach.** A combination of virtual and in-person data collection, with in-person as the preferred method for focus groups and usability testing. Or moderator is virtual, participants are gathered in-person.
- **Platform improvements.** New tools for virtual data collection may resolve some pain points but create new challenges.
- **Opportunities for innovation.** Leverage the virtual "window" to investigate participants' experiences and behaviors.

Right now, we're treating the fact that we're in people's homes or workplaces as a disadvantage. But I don't think we leverage what an opportunity it is to be where [participants] are...

“Pick up your phone,
let's go to where you smoke.”



“

Doug Rupert, MPH



Happy moderating!

Email me: ajordan@rti.org



Credits

- Presentation template by [SlidesCarnival](#)
- Photographs by [Unsplash](#) and [Pexels](#)

Further reading:

Rupert DJ, Poehlman JA, Hayes JJ, Ray SE, Moultrie RR. Virtual Versus In-Person Focus Groups: Comparison of Costs, Recruitment, and Participant Logistics. *J Med Internet Res* 2017 Mar 22;19(3):e80. doi: 10.2196/jmir.6980



Quick definitions



Data collection

The period in which focus groups and/or interviews are conducted to obtain qualitative data (e.g., recordings, transcripts).

Virtual

Participants and/or research staff conduct data collection remotely via digital platforms including Zoom, WebEx, FocusVision, etc.