



Digital technology and data collection

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How people interact with one another, objects, and digital environments, is increasingly multimodal. This raises significant challenges for collecting research data, in part because many features of interaction in digital environments cannot be captured adequately using traditional methods or tools (e.g. audio recording, field notes, or still-cameras).

Furthermore, the expanding range of online tools for collection and analysis of social media are primarily focused on collecting text-based data and are limited in terms of accessing multimodal data. Here we briefly introduce some alternative devices and applications being explored at MODE, an NCRM node on methods that extend visual and multimodal data sets.

Video has become a primary data collection tool for those researching multimodal environments¹. In addition to the 'standard' third person researcher generated video, digital video data can be collected via cameras embedded in professional contexts and tools (e.g. surgical light-handles or laparoscopic cameras); wearable sub-cam glasses; body worn cameras; head mounted cameras; and micro cameras embedded in objects. Each of these generates data from different perspectives, shapes the representation of interaction - what is included, excluded or foregrounded - and tends to be embedded in different theoretical concepts and processes.

MODE is exploring how these different data collection techniques can contribute to researching embodied learning in digital environments, together with investigating the value of digitally generated data and digital apps as data collection tools. For example, the use of a Geographical Position System (GPS) tracker app (on an iPad) was used to provide a cumulative trace of the routes taken by students during the exploration of WWII history and 'condensed time' to produce a spatial narrative of their trail.

Digital apps have also been useful in generating digital data, for example, in the WWII study students used Evernote to create geo-tagged photographs, record audio narratives, and write captions to produce multimodal 'notes' that constituted a narrative linked to time and space. These were used to support student reflection, provide supplementary data to support the analysis of video data, as well as to enrich data sets for analysis.

Dynamic and static screen capture software is proving to be a useful tool for MODE. A study of infant interaction with finger painting Apps on the iPad has used dynamic screen capture (e.g. Quicktime screen record facility, Camtasia) to capture infants' painting process in real-time alongside video recording of their interaction. Other projects on social media have used screen capture tools (e.g. Zotero, Little snapper) to collect whole websites as PDFs or images that can then be analysed in an offline setting. These can be combined with Computer Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis (CAQDAS) packages (e.g. Nvivo) and web browser extensions (e.g. Ncapture or TubeCatcher) to collect webpages, online PDFs and social media content. It can, for example, collect any Twitter-profile page, tweets by a particular user, and tweets that include a particular word, phrase or hashtag, that can then be imported and analyzed using the Nvivo 10 package. Another key resource MODE uses to support the analysis of websites and blogs is 'The Wayback Machine', an archive of websites, containing snapshots of sites linked to dates, which makes it possible to search and analyze the changes made to sites over time. The British Library provides a similar service for with their UK Webarchive.

This brief article indicates the potential of digital technologies for enriching data collection and analysis: explore these further with us at MODE.ioe.ac.uk.

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Methodological innovations in ageing cohort studies

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Ageing cohort studies face methodological challenges which become increasingly problematic as participants grow older. While these data collection, measurement and analysis challenges are common to all longitudinal studies, ageing cohort studies potentially face more complex issues. For example, how do we account for attrition in ageing studies when older respondents are missing due to unobserved factors?

Missing data in ageing cohort studies can occur for variety of complex reasons, for example respondents may become too ill to complete surveys in person. Using mixed-modes of data collection can help deal with the critical issue of respondent attrition. Combining different ways of collecting data at different stages of a research project can improve response rates, increase the likelihood of achieving a representative population sample and reduce systematic missing data. Despite the potential for measurement error, there are well established criteria for examining mode effects¹. The Innovation Panel from Understanding Society is a good example of mixed-modes data collection in a longitudinal context and could be adopted in other ageing cohort studies. Researchers collecting ageing cohort data should describe the implications and validity of mixed-mode data collection in greater detail in their analyses to encourage debate and innovation.

Recall bias and proxy respondents

Ageing cohort studies usually contain some questions which rely on memory which can be subject to recall bias. This can be compounded when participants are unable to contribute and proxy respondents such as close relatives or carers are asked key questions. The lifegrid approach has been successful in reducing recall bias² and has been adopted numerous ageing cohort studies. Using an event history calendar (EHC), key events are recorded in rows and event times across the top in columns. The EHC method uses a series of semi-structured questions and probes to encourage respondents to report from autobiographical memory using strategies such as sequential retrieval as well as cross-referencing one event with another.

The method has been shown to improve the accuracy and quality of retrospective reports for some topic areas³.

Analysis

In cross-sectional and longitudinal analyses, Multiple Imputation (MI) is a standard way of dealing with missing data. MI methods assume that data are missing at random (MAR) but this assumption cannot be supported for the data in many ageing cohort studies where the missingness mechanism cannot be ignored and the data are assumed 'missing not at random' (MNAR). One way of dealing with the problem of non-ignorable missingness is to jointly model the model of interest and the missingness mechanism⁴. Paradata could have an important part to play in this joint modelling process. Their association with response behaviour, and their irrelevance to the model of interest, means that they can be useful instruments that help to identify the joint model and thus improve the robustness of estimates from these models.

Paradata includes variables of substantive interest measured on all responding cases in the first wave of the study; variables from the sampling frame for all sampled cases at the first wave; and variables that are related to aspects of data collection. This can be particularly important when the model of interest includes more explanatory variables as controls. Variables can include the length of the interview at wave one, the reluctance of the adult to attempt cognitive tests, interviewer variables such as gender, ethnic group, age and experience, to name a few.

There are two main strategies for assessing the performance of different missing data analyses methods. The first involves analysing different missing data methods from a dataset with missing data and comparing the results. However, this strategy is flawed as the true results remain unknown, making it impossible to compare methods and to access which is the least biased method⁵. The second involves conducting a simulation study by using complete datasets then deleting values according to the assumed missing data mechanism to simulate the missingness.

The performance of different methods under various missing data mechanisms can be evaluated, using measures of bias, coverage and accuracy⁵.

The rise in availability of data from ageing cohort studies has also been paralleled by the development of methodological tools to cope with these challenges. These include using mixed modes of data collection to deal with respondent burden, using the lifegrid history method to deal with recall bias for proxy respondents, using auxiliary variables to adjust for missing not at random mechanisms, and using a range of missing data analyses methods and simulation studies to assess the performance of a variety of different missing data mechanisms. However, these are not standard methodological tools that most researchers involved in analysing longitudinal studies are familiar with.

Working paper 'Innovative approaches to methodological challenges facing ageing cohort studies' by Tarani Chandola and Susan O'Shea is available in <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3075/>

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Availability and use of ethnicity data for UK health research

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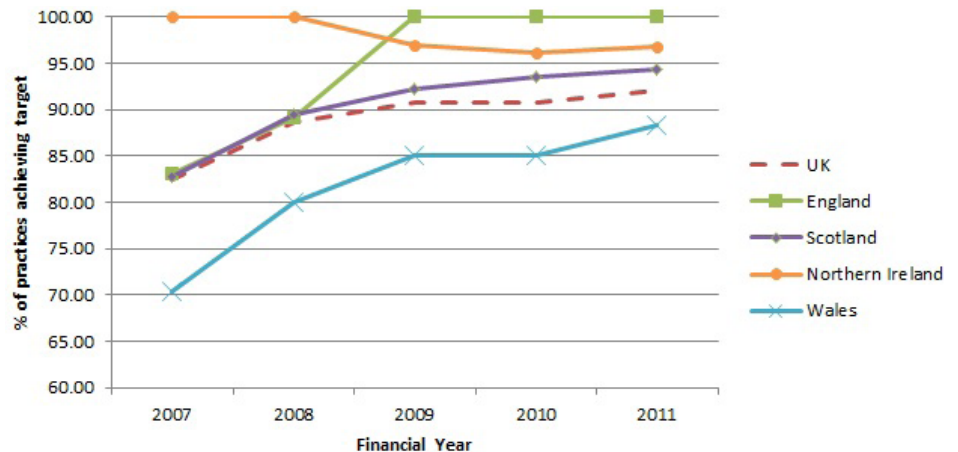
In the UK, minority ethnic groups experience higher rates of disease, with earlier onset and worse outcomes than the 'White British' population. This makes studying ethnic variations in health very important and, as described here, and in our recent working paper¹, improvements in data availability now mean there is much greater potential for doing this than in the past.

The concept of ethnicity is completely divorced from that of race. Ethnicity is now understood to be a much broader self-identification, encompassing a range of socially constructed characteristics. Ethnic self-identity can be fluid over time, responding to political and cultural forces.

Just as ethnic identity can be context and time dependent, so too can the relevance of ethnic categories used to define population groups of interest. In the UK, and indeed worldwide, a pragmatic approach has been undertaken to create ethnic categories for research which are simple to interpret, though their meanings may not remain stable over time. Ethnic groups themselves should not be considered to be homogeneous as it is well established that high level groupings can conceal significant heterogeneity. In both the USA and the UK it has been acknowledged that the ethnic categories used in official statistics are, to some extent, arbitrary and have been selected primarily for pragmatic reasons. Provided that researchers recognize the limitations of categories and approach them critically, the study of ethnic differences can provide vital information about the patterns of health and social indicators and provide an essential foundation for tackling inequalities.

Ethnicity data in computerised health records

The computerization of health records across the NHS has generated enormous potential for population based research into the relationship between ethnicity and health in the UK. Though ethnicity data has been collected electronically since 1991, until recently, the usability of ethnicity data coded in electronic health records was low.



Graph: Proportion of UK practices achieving 100% ethnicity recording for all newly registered patients. Graph produced using freely available NHS data from <http://gpcontract.co.uk>

Critically, thanks to a scheme of financial incentivisation under the Quality and Outcomes Framework, self-reported ethnicity data has been available for over 90% of newly registered patients since 2011.

For researchers who wish to conduct population based research into patterns of health care usage and outcomes across the UK, population based databases such as the Clinical Practice Research Datalink (CPRD), The Health Improvement Network Database (THIN) and the QRESEARCH databases provide anonymised routine health records on patients from a representative sample of general practices from across the UK. For research into hospital care and outcomes, the hospital episode statistics for England (HES) supply comparable data for all patients admitted to NHS hospitals, with ethnicity recording reported as being over 90% for all inpatient finished consultant episodes.

Though the quality and completeness of ethnicity data in routine primary and secondary care records has steadily improved over the past decade, they have not been extensively used for research into ethnic inequalities in health. A review in April 2012 of studies using the four databases described above identified only 15 peer-reviewed articles which described the use of patient level self-reported ethnicity in exploring differentials in health care usage, disease prevalence, and disease risk.

Microdata from the Census

A further source of population based ethnicity data for health research is the Census. Two particular census outputs of interest when examining health outcomes and ethnicity are the Samples of Individual Person-Level records (SARs) and the Office for National Statistics (ONS) Longitudinal study of England and Wales (LS). While the SARs data provide large cross-sectional cuts of the Census return, The ONS LS can be linked over time to examine trends and changes in the ethnic profile of the population and related trends in morbidity and mortality.

One emerging area where routine ethnicity data can be used to great benefit is that of chronic disease management. Though research into ethnic disparities is on-going, this has yet to be translated into concrete guidance for managing conditions differentially by ethnic group. A further use of routinely recorded ethnicity data is within pragmatic clinical trials, which use electronic health databases to examine the efficacy of widely prescribed interventions across a vast number of patients, for a lower cost than traditional clinical trials. Finally, linkage of these datasets to additional health and social data, as is currently on-going in the CPRD, will allow us to fully explore the relationship between ethnicity and the wider determinants of health.

References

1 <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3040/>

Household behaviour in response to information on child nutrition

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Studies evaluating health policies and interventions rarely consider how aspects of individual and household behaviour not directly targeted by the policy change so as to comply with it. Determining this lies at the core of understanding why a policy or intervention worked (or didn't) and moreover sheds light on whether a similar policy would be successful in other settings and contexts.

We investigate how households adjust their non-health behaviours so as to comply with behaviours encouraged by an intervention that provided mothers of young infants with information on child nutrition in Mchinji District in rural Malawi¹. In particular, a local volunteer visited mothers of infants aged less than 6 months in their homes and encouraged them to exclusively breastfeed their infants until they were 6 months old, and further provided information and suggestions on nutritious foods for complementary feeding as the child got older. The intervention provided information only; no monetary resources or food were provided.

A cluster randomised control trial, the gold-standard evaluation method, was set up to evaluate the impacts of this intervention. We exploit the randomised control trial design to establish how the intervention influenced non-health and health behaviours and outcomes. As is well known, intervention impacts can be established by comparing average outcomes in clusters that received the intervention with those in clusters that didn't receive the intervention (this is also known as an intention-to-treat effect).

A concern that often arises in randomised control trials is that the policy could spill-over to those in the control group, thus contaminating them and biasing the estimated intervention impact. This is particularly relevant in our case, since the policy being evaluated is an information intervention that can easily spread from treated to control clusters.

In order to minimise the possibility of such spill-overs, the intervention was assigned to clusters of villages, with buffer areas between adjacent clusters. Specifically, the rural parts of Mchinji District in Central Malawi were divided into 48 clusters, based on population density and geo-political borders. Within each of these clusters, the 3,000 individuals living closest to the geographical centre of the cluster were chosen to take part in the study. The remainder were in the buffer areas. 12 of the clusters were randomised to receive this infant feeding intervention, and 12 remained as controls².

Though this design reduces the possibility of contamination of the control clusters, it reduces the number of clusters in the study. This influences the choice of method we use to determine the precision of our estimates (see M. Brewer, *Methods News*, Summer 2012). When the number of clusters is small, many standard methods for assessing the precision of estimates are too lax, leading to false rejections of the null hypothesis of no effect. To overcome this, we use a bootstrap method^{3,4}, which has been shown to work well in such situations.

In order to focus on the most relevant non-health behaviours to consider, we build a simple economic model in which parents choose their own consumption and labour supply and their child's consumption. The model predicts that child and household consumption should increase in response to the intervention, and that adults should work more in order to pay for the additional consumption.

Our findings show that the intervention improved children's diets – in particular, they ate more proteins – and consequently their height (which is sensitive to nutrition) increased. Proteins are relatively expensive in this setting and are not generally grown by households themselves. Fathers increased their labour supply in order to fund the increased consumption: those in treated clusters were more likely to take on a second job and worked more hours relative to those in the control clusters. Moreover, the intervention benefitted the diets of children not directly targeted by the intervention.

These results shed light on why this intervention succeeded and on whether it is likely to succeed in other contexts and settings. Adults had spare capacity to work more, and had available employment opportunities that allowed them to work more and thereby fund better diets for their children.

This is a summary of the paper "Household Responses to Child Nutrition: Experimental Evidence from Malawi" (IFS WP 12/07), which is joint work with Emla Fitzsimons, Alice Mesnard and Marcos Vera-Hernandez.



Photo: Bansi Malde

References

- 1 The intervention was set up by Mai Mwana, a research and development project established by researchers from the Institute of Child Health at UCL and Malawian paediatricians.
- 2 The remaining 24 clusters received a women's group intervention, which focused on improving reproductive health.
- 3 This is a statistical procedure which constructs a distribution for the test statistic by repeatedly drawing samples from the sample data.
- 4 Cameron, C., Gelbach, J., and Miller, D. (2008) Bootstrap-Based Improvements for Inference with Clustered Errors. *Review of Economics and Statistics*, 90: 414-427.

New social media, new social science?

Kandy Woodfield and Gareth Morrell, NatCen Social Research

Should social science researchers embrace social media and, if we do, what are the implications for our methods and practice? How do new social media change our perceptions of ethical practice?

The growth of social media is one of the striking developments in internet usage in the last ten years. Researchers in all social science disciplines are exploring the potential for social media platforms to provide tools, platforms and topics for social science research. A rapidly changing world of social media demands methodological adaptability and the use of these platforms for social science research (whether as a data collection tool or as the subject of substantive research) requires reflection on existing research paradigms, methodological approaches and ethical issues.

The 'Blurring the Boundaries - New Social Media, New Social Science?' network for methodological innovation was funded by the NCRM for 12 months and has provided on and offline space for researchers to discuss common concerns and explore best practices. Nearly 500 members worldwide have joined the debate bringing insights from all fields of social research. Over the course of the last 12 months we have been engaged in a lively programme of on and offline activities catalysing debate on the impact of social media on social science research methods and forging new links between research practitioners across different sectors of the research community.

By bringing together researchers from different disciplines and different sectors of the research world we have tried to break down barriers between different disciplines and to provide a space where researchers can share their knowledge and practice, moving methodological understanding forward. We have had many lively debates but what has been striking is an underlying uncertainty about the validity of online methods and a lack of confidence amongst the research community about whether they are 'getting it right'. This concern with 'getting it right' has often focused on how to do research using social media, and social media data ethically. Whether or not we really understand the context of the world of social media has also been a persistent theme during our discussions. Do we really know what the users of social media platforms expect from researchers accessing their data for research?



We have yet to uncover any research which has been conducted with the users of platforms to explore what expectations and concerns, if any, they have about privacy, confidentiality and the use of their personal data. As a result, researchers can feel like they are working in a vacuum and making assumptions about what is ethical based on what they think social media users would want or expect.

Discussions about 'getting it right' have been equally lively around the issue of quality. How can researchers conduct social media research which is robust enough to stand up to scrutiny and add to the research evidence base? There are many differing views about what constitutes quality in social media research and as a result researchers feel tentative about what claims they can make from their data.

There is a definite sense that the boundaries are being blurred between 'real' life and 'virtual' worlds, conventional research methods and new approaches, researchers and participants, and, between researchers working in a range of disciplines from Computational Science to Anthropology. The methodology of social media research is still in its infancy, despite research on these platforms for over a decade. A coherent set of epistemological or ethical frameworks for online research hasn't been agreed. In fact, some of our participants argue this is positive, leaving them free to be fluid in the methods and approaches they adopt and react to what is a fast-changing research environment.

What is clear is the guidelines, epistemologies and methods of conventional research cannot simply be transplanted to the world of social media without scrutiny and adaptation.

The network has produced a number of outputs including a lively blog which provides a useful review of the issues that have been raised, video resources and helpful links. One major output of the network will be a report on the current ethical guidelines in use around the world. Researchers are finding it difficult to find a framework for ethics which is appropriate for social media research and the topic of ethics has been a persistent concern for our network members. We have conducted an online survey of our members about their current ethical practice and concerns. In order to catalyse further thinking, network members are now reviewing the ethical guidelines offered by professional associations and disciplinary bodies. We will publish an online paper reviewing existing guidance in September 2013 identifying gaps and overlaps and are currently working with the Social Research Association on a series of follow-on activities including the development of ethical case studies.

The network - led by NatCen, SAGE and the Oxford Internet Institute - will continue into 2013/14. Follow the activities in <http://nsmnss.blogspot.co.uk/> and Twitter @NSMNSS, or contact Kandy Woodfield, Head of Learning and Development at NatCen Social Research kandy.woodfield@natcen.ac.uk

Parenting identities and practices

Heather Elliott, Julia Brannen and Ann Phoenix, NOVELLA node, Institute of Education, University of London

How are apparently unique family practices embedded in culture and history? This question is at the heart of Novella's Parenting Identities and Practices (PIP) project, which brings together two narrative studies concerned with migration, ethnicity, identity and parenting.

Transforming Experiences, led by Ann Phoenix is a psychosocial study of adults looking back on their 'non-normative' childhoods, the parenting they received from parents who were mostly migrants and its impact on their own parenting. *Fatherhood over the Generations*, led by Julia Brannen, is a sociological study of fatherhood across three family generations, which includes migrant and UK born sub-samples. In attempting to reuse data collected for other purposes, the PIP project team had to consider how to select from the original datasets in order to construct a meaningful and manageable sample. Both studies collected narratives of men looking back on their experiences of migration as young adults and children. We are analysing these to consider how family practices are disrupted and made visible by migration and the experience of constituting or reconstituting families in the host country. As well as our substantive aims, we are developing methodologies for qualitative secondary analyses and for bringing together data from different sources.

Why link studies?

Analysing these two studies together helps to elucidate both what is specific about accounts given by men who migrate from a particular place at a particular time and commonalities across experiences of migration. Our comparative work highlights, for example, the importance of understanding the socio-economic and cultural resources migrants bring with them and can access in the country to which they have migrated; the ease with which connections with their country of origin can be maintained and the subtle and shifting social contexts, including discrimination, that they negotiate.

African Caribbean boys in the 1960s UK education system and Irish men seeking accommodation for themselves and their families in the 1950s experienced discrimination, but the implications for their life chances, for the family lives they were able to forge and the narratives they constructed, were different.

In linking the studies we have paid particular attention to

- The original projects aims and what kind of accounts informants were invited to give. For example the *Transforming Experiences* study was psychosocial and explicitly collected migration stories, whereas the *Fathering over the Generations* study was sociological and had a predominant focus on fatherhood
- Life stage (when interviews were conducted)
- Life course
- Historical and cultural contexts of migration

Methodologically, the composition of the team and choice of datasets means that we are working comparatively and as a group always comprise one researcher who has already conducted primary analyses on each of the interviews and two who come to the data as secondary analysts. This helps with the process of developing new, open and nuanced interpretations.

Processes of linking data

The main researcher on the project (Heather Elliott) is always a secondary analyst in that she has come new to both datasets. She read selected transcripts across the subsamples of both studies and with the rest of the team developed research questions and selected the new sample for the Parenting Identities and Practices study. We decided to focus on the experience of men exclusively, as the *Fatherhood over the Generations* study included only men and within the *Transforming Experience* study, the gendered nature of experiences of migration was an enduring theme. Within the *Transforming Experiences* study we focussed on a group of men who were serial migrants, that is, who had migrated to the UK as children separately from the parents and, within *Fatherhood over the Generations* on men who had migrated to the UK as young adults in the 1950s and 1960s.

Despite generational differences, both samples had in common that they had migrated mainly from rural to urban settings and from island nations with complicated and fraught colonial relationships with the UK.

Primary and secondary analyses

As we work, we have noted the different resources and knowledge each team member brings to the analysis. Only the original researchers on the *Transforming Experiences* and *Fatherhood over the Generations* studies have access to audio and fieldnote data. They also, of course, have access to the understandings and memories of what they have seen, heard and felt during fieldwork, analysis and project discussions.

In particular, the original researchers have reflected on working as a secondary analyst on one study and a primary analyst on the other and on revisiting one's own data with different research questions. The secondary analyst on both studies, Heather, has considered how having in-depth knowledge of particular aspects of studies, but not having been involved in their development and delivery, has impacted on her analyses. We have found, however, that distinctions between primary and secondary analysts can be overstated. Members of an original research team are likely to be more familiar with some data than others. Further, the tacit knowledge gained from being involved in original studies fades over time and analysts' readings of their data are likely to develop and change. A capacity for freshness or new ways of seeing does not always rely on a secondary analyst.

Emergent findings: narratives of success and survival

One of our emergent research interests relates to how ideas of 'success' are constructed. As one of our interviewees, Anthony, suggests, in contexts of poverty, discrimination and rupture, surviving to build a 'liveable' life is a significant achievement.

"When I asked my boss if you put yourself in my place ... would you think you'd survive to raise a family, buy houses and, you know, live a life? He said, no way he could he do it ... No way could he do it you know. And I said that's what I done."

Eleven new Methodological Innovation Projects

As a complement to the research programme being undertaken by the National Centre for Research Methods through its Hub and Nodes, we have commissioned eleven short-term methodological research and development projects to run between 1 April 2013 and 30 September 2014.

The focus of these projects is on topic areas that have been identified as representing important gaps in existing national coverage.

The new Methodological Innovation Projects are:

- Estimating matching variable error rates and match probabilities for linkage of large administrative data sources (Professor R Gilbert, University College London)
- Border-crossing digital arts and social science: New methodological approaches to embodiment (Professor C Jewitt, Institute of Education, University of London)
- Integrating emerging smartphone and genetic initiatives to produce cost-effective, innovative methodology (Dr Aleksandr Kogan, University of Cambridge)
- Item nonresponse and measurement error in cross-national surveys: Methods of data collection and analysis (Dr J Kuha, London School of Economics and Political Science)
- Understanding nonresponse on Understanding Society (Professor P Lynn, University of Essex)
- Linking cohort study data to administrative records: the challenges of consent and coverage (Dr T Mostafa, Institute of Education, University of London)
- Communicating chronic pain: Interdisciplinary methods for non-textual data (Dr J Tarr, London School of Economics and Political Science)
- Face 2 Face: tracing the real and the mediated in children's cultural worlds (Professor R Thomson, University of Sussex)
- Towards a social media science: Tools and methodologies (Dr D Weir, University of Sussex)
- The potential of video telephony in qualitative longitudinal research: A participatory and interactionist approach to assessing remoteness and rapport (Dr S Weller, London South Bank University)
- Social media and prediction: Crime sensing, data integration and statistical modelling (Dr M Williams, Cardiff University)

For details about the Methodological Innovation Projects please see <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk/research/MIP/>

New methodological reviews, working papers and reports

NCRM nodes and affiliated projects have produced new methodological reviews, working papers and reports that are freely available on NCRM website:

- Back, L., Lury, C. and Zimmer, R. Doing Real Time Research: Opportunities and Challenges. <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3157/>
- Thomas, M., Stillwell, J. and Gould, M. Modelling residential mobility behaviour using a commercial data set: An analysis of mover/stayer characteristics across the life-course. <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3155/>
- Burn, A. The kineikonic mode: Towards a multimodal approach to moving image media. <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3085/>
- Chandola, T. and O'Shea, S. Innovative approaches to methodological challenges facing ageing cohort studies. <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3075/>
- Roberts, S., Hine, C., Morey, Y., Snee, H. and Watson, H. Digital Methods as Mainstream Methodology: Building capacity in the research community to address the challenges and opportunities presented by digitally inspired methods. <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3156/>
- Hardill, I., Bannister, J. and Martin, S. Developing novel research methods to establish and monitor impacts of user engagement in times of austerity: Report on a series of agenda-setting workshops. <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/3052/>

More presentations, papers and publications from NCRM in <http://eprints.ncrm.ac.uk/>



Annual lecture by Professor Paul Atkinson: Why do fieldwork? 23 October 2013, London

In this NCRM Annual Lecture 'Why do fieldwork?', Professor Paul Atkinson will reflect on research from across his career, arguing for the continuing relevance of rigorous field research, in contrast to more vaguely-specified 'qualitative' research. He will emphasise the multi-modality of social life and the necessity for forms of 'thick description' that is faithful to the multiple modes of social and cultural organisation.

Paul Atkinson is Distinguished Research Professor of Sociology at Cardiff University. He is an Academician of the Academy of Social Sciences. He and Sara Delamont are the founding editors of the Sage journal *Qualitative Research*. He is currently conducting fieldwork and writing about skills and expertise among potters, printers, glassblowers and others. His methodological publications include: *The Ethnographic Imagination*, *Understanding Ethnographic Texts*, *Ethnography: Principles in Practice* with Martyn Hammersley, *Contours of Culture* with Sara Delamont and William Housley, and *Making Sense of Qualitative Data* with Amanda Coffey.



Photo: Professor Paul Atkinson, Cardiff University

NCRM annual lecture 'Why do fieldwork?' by Professor Paul Atkinson, Wednesday 23 October 2013, RIBA, 66 Portland Place, London (W1B 1AD). This evening event (6-8pm) is free, but registration is required. Please email info@ncrm.ac.uk to book your place.

New podcasts with Fiona Steele, Rosalind Edwards and George Ploubidis

What are the links between losing a job and a person's mental health? How many interviews is enough when conducting a piece of qualitative research? And what are the biosocial pathways to health?

NCRM podcast series covers a wide range of research methodologies used by social scientists. The newest podcasts in the series are:

- Relationship between employment transitions and mental health among British men, by Fiona Steele from LEMMA3 node of the NCRM

- How many interviews is enough? by Rosalind Edwards from the NCRM Hub
- Biosocial pathways to health, by George Ploubidis from the Pathways node of the NCRM

Download and listen research methods podcasts on NCRM website in <http://bit.ly/TDAcsF> or iTunes in <http://bit.ly/WeDuni>

ABOUT NCRM

The ESRC National Centre for Research Methods (NCRM) is a network of research groups, each conducting research and training in an area of social science research methods. NCRM is coordinated by the Hub at the University of Southampton.

NCRM brings together researchers from across the UK with a wide range of research methods expertise, at the frontiers of developments in research methodology.

NCRM disseminates innovations and developments in research methods through training courses and events and through other direct engagement with researchers, but also by cooperating with other organisations and initiatives with an interest in social science research methods.

NCRM was established in 2004 as part of the Economic and Social Research Council's (ESRC) strategy to improve the standards of research methods across the UK social science community. NCRM acts as a strategic focal point for developments in research, training and capacity building related to research methods, both at the national level and cutting across social science disciplines.

For more information about the NCRM and its activities please see our website <http://www.ncrm.ac.uk>

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