Skype interviewing: reflections of two PhD researchers

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Abstract
When conducting qualitative research, the modern-day researcher has a variety of options available in order to collect data from participants. Although traditional face-to-face interviews remain prominent, innovative communication technologies, such as Skype, have facilitated new modes of communication. While potential research populations have become increasingly geographically dispersed, technological advancements and software have made communicating over large distances more feasible. Because of this, research is no longer limited to face-to-face accessible participants, as online methods have facilitated access to global research participants. This article presents the experiences of two PhD researchers using Skype to interview participants. While findings show that there are benefits and drawbacks to the utility of Skype, this article argues that synchronous online interviewing is a useful supplement or replacement to face-to-face interviews. Concluding comments acknowledge that more research is required to more comprehensively understand how technologies challenge the basic assumptions of the traditional face-to-face interview.

Keywords
interviews, online interviews, PhD research, qualitative methodology, Skype

Introduction

Researchers face many challenges in developing an interview-based or mixed-methods framework best suited to their particular aims and objectives. Over the last few decades, this challenge has become increasingly problematised with the introduction of varying modes of interviewing. While interviewing may be considered to be the most commonly used qualitative technique in social science research, with semi-structured being the

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most widely used type of interview (see, for example, Kitchin and Tate, 2000; Owens, 2006), face-to-face interviews can be problematic due to time and financial constraints as well as other logistical considerations. Conducting in-person interviews can be particularly difficult for researchers whose participants are geographically dispersed (Sedgwick and Spiers, 2009). The face-to-face interview has featured prominently within many disciplines and has been the subject of much discussion within research methodology. Key texts such as Bryman (2008) consider the interview at length. As such, the face-to-face interview has become somewhat of a 'gold standard' in terms of validity and rigour (McCoyd and Kerson, 2006: 390). After many decades of the use of interviews within qualitative research, such discussions surrounding the face-to-face interview can often feel uncontested, and online interviews are presented as a second choice or alternative when this 'gold standard' of interviewing is not possible. However, there are growing numbers of options for researchers conducting interviews, and multiple methods of interviewing are increasingly required to access the ideal research sample (see, for example, Opdenakker, 2006). While just one interview method can be used in isolation, it is increasingly likely that one or more types of interview are employed.

While there is a substantial body of literature examining the traditional face-to-face interview (e.g. Bryman, 2008; Dunn, 2010; Limb and Dwyer, 2001; Longhurst, 2010) and a growing body of literature surrounding email interviews (Bampton and Cowton, 2002; Burns, 2010; Meho, 2006), there is little discussion around the use of online synchronous interviews, particularly using multiple interview techniques in a single research project. In particular, there is a dearth of research on the differences between different interview techniques utilised in the same research project (Opdenakker, 2006). Technological advancements have allowed many of the problems associated with face-to-face interviews to be overcome as new modes of interviewing have been facilitated by the rise of Internet-mediated research (IMR). Asynchronous interviews conducted via email, which represent a major departure from the synchronous, face-to-face conversations of traditional interview methods, are now increasingly feasible. Increased bandwidth and the availability of inexpensive, relatively easy-to-use technologies, for example, have made the potential to conduct online audio and video interviews more viable in recent years (Saumure and Given, n.d.). Skype is one software option available to facilitate such communications.

This article aims to contribute towards filling gaps in the existing literature by arguing that a greater engagement with the online interview, as equal to the face-to-face interview, needs to be considered. The online interview should be treated as a viable option to the researcher rather than as an alternative or secondary choice when face-to-face interviews cannot be achieved. By questioning the assumptions we make about traditional interviewing through the lens of technology, this article asserts that online interviews can produce data as reliable and in-depth as produced during face-to-face encounters.

Online interviews

The body of literature focussing on asynchronous online interviews has grown substantially in recent years, with an emerging body of literature that considers the interview within email correspondence, sometimes called the e-interview (see, for example,

Bampton and Cowton, 2002; Curasi, 2001). Despite this, a focus on synchronous online interviewing has been slower to develop. In particular, there has been relatively little exploration of the reflexive experiences of researchers who engage in Internet-based interviewing (O'Connor et al., 2008). Online interviews represent one form of IMR that has been heralded as a new 'methodological frontier' holding great potential for collecting data in an innovative manner (Madge, 2010). Online research methods provide great methodological potential and versatility for research (O'Connor et al., 2008). However, there is still a growing literature on Information Communication Technologies (ICT) as a medium of research, and the uptake of such methods has been limited (Madge and O'Connor, 2004).

Researchers have reported many differences between online and face-to-face interviews, including issues relating to interview design, the building of rapport and ethical problems (O'Connor et al., 2008). For example, in the disembodied interview, all the subtle visual, non-verbal cues that can help to contextualise the interviewee in a face-to-face scenario are lost (O'Connor et al., 2008). Chen and Hinton (1999) and Hay-Gibson (2009) also acknowledge that the lack of non-verbal cues can prove challenging in some cases for both the interviewer and interviewee when using online tools for conducting interviews. Similarly, during face-to-face conversations, the interviewer has the opportunity to create a positive interview ambience (Opdenakker, 2006). Additional challenges for online interviewing, such as the possibility that participants may feel embarrassed or uncomfortable being filmed and the requirement of participants to obtain the correct software and Internet connection, are also present (Hay-Gibson, 2009). Online interviews may therefore mean that some participants are excluded due to the need to have technological competence required to participate, obtain software and to maintain Internet connection for the duration of the discussion. In this sense, access to certain groups may be a problem and may lead to issues of representativeness (O'Connor et al., 2008). Identity verification can also be more difficult when conducting interviews online (Chen and Hinton, 1999), and various methods are beginning to be developed in order to address the issues faced when using online interviews. For example, photograph exchanges to build a relationship before the interview can often facilitate the development of rapport (Madge and O'Connor, 2001; O'Connor and Madge, 2001).

Online methods mitigate the distance of space, which enables research to be easily internationalised without the usual associated travel costs (O'Connor et al., 2008). In this sense, online interviews can be valuable for researchers who wish to contact participants who may otherwise be difficult to reach, such as the less physically mobile, socially isolated or people living in dangerous areas. For online interviews that do not use video, the lack of visual clues such as age, gender and ethnicity are suggested to be a benefit as this can decrease interviewer effect during interviews (O'Connor et al., 2008). It is also suggested that online interviews may allow for more reflective responses and can be a useful forum for asking sensitive or embarrassing questions (Madge and O'Connor, 2004). Looking at online interaction highlights how communication can reduce these personal influences, in effect becoming 'hyperpersonal' (Walther, 1996). In other words, communication that is perhaps more socially desirable than one would experience in face-to-face interaction.

Although the literature discussed here has grown in recent years, online research practice is in its infancy, which means researchers are confronted by quandaries at almost every stage in the research process (Mann and Stewart, 2005). Debates surrounding online research ethics are 'work in progress', and the ethical challenges are not simple (Madge, 2010). Despite increasing debates surrounding the benefits and drawbacks of online interviews, there is growing support for the use of online software to conduct interviews for research. It has been argued that the quality of responses gained through online research is much the same as responses produced by more traditional methods (Denscombe, 2003). The occurrence of pauses, repetitions and recasts under conditions of face-to-face and online interviews do not differ significantly (Cabaroglu et al., 2010). There should, however, be 'guarded optimism' about the validity of these new methods (Madge and O'Connor, 2004: 9). Online interviewing cannot be seen as a simple solution to the problems associated with face-to-face interviews. Although data collected online can be valuable, the potential of online research should not be exaggerated (O'Connor et al., 2008). IMR has great potential, but technologies and procedures need further researching (Hewson et al., 2003). In fact, caution is warranted in the application of online methods as Internet-based research is no different from other forms, and we must learn to craft appropriate forms of online interviewing (Hine, 2004). James and Busher (2009) suggest that the online interview presents both methodological and ethical potential and versatility in research but stress that they should not be perceived as an 'easy option' (p. 6). For some, caution is required as online interviewing is not as simple as 'point and click' (Cooper, 2009).

Skype interviews

Theoretical debates among academic users of online audio communication can be traced back to the 1990s (see, for example, Dubrovsky et al., 1991), with online exchanges considered to be both liberating and limiting (Walther, 1996). Recently, some researchers have focussed more specifically on one particular online communication software, Skype (see, for example, Hanna, 2012; Weinmann et al., 2012). Skype software is available to download for free and provides a variety of communication options, including audio and video calling with other Skype users, telephoning landlines or mobile phones as well as providing messaging and file transfer capabilities. Skype often stands out within the literature as it has greater national and international recognition than other online software applications that are available. Although telephone interviewing also has the ability to communicate over a long distance (see, for example, Holt, 2010), Skype facilitates a further connection between researcher and interview participant with the option of using video. Video calling provides the researcher with an opportunity to not just talk to their respondent but to see them in real time. Various methods of videoconferencing have been increasingly utilised in interview methods, especially where the research population is geographically dispersed (see, for example, Sedgwick and Spiers, 2009).

Skype has appeared much more over the last decade within the literature as a viable research method, much more globally accessible due to increasing availability of broadband Internet. The use of video in social science research has become much more

commonplace (Haw and Hadfield, 2011), and so discussions have moved from the utility of online communication to the use of video in online communication and how the screen changes our perceptions and behaviour. Hanna's (2012) insightful article focussing on Skype as a research medium draws upon current rhetoric on non-traditional research techniques, such as that by Holt (2010), and highlights the current interest in the Internet as a method of qualitative data collection. Holt (2010) argues for serious consideration of the use of telephone interviews as an alternative to the face-to-face interviews. Despite much support for Skype interviews, telephone interviews are still considered to be a feasible technique (Weinmann et al., 2012).

In considering the place of Skype within the interviewers' 'methodological toolkit', we pose the question 'how might online interviewing change the very sense of the interview as we traditionally know it?' The use of Skype in our PhD research was not an attempt by either of the researchers to replicate the face-to-face interview, it was more to provide an opportunity to talk to otherwise inaccessible participants. Just as the telephone has been considered as a preferred alternative to face-to-face interviewing (Holt, 2010), we suggest that Skype should also be seriously considered as a favoured choice in interviewing methodology. From our perspective as PhD researchers, our initial expectations of using Skype were no different from the face-to-face discussions. In answer to the question posed earlier, online interviewing technologies can change the sense of the interview, particularly if the participants have specific requirements, which make face-to-face interviews difficult or require a novel approach. However, for the types of participants who were interviewed by the two PhD researchers within this article, the only differentiation between Skype interviewees and face-to-face interviewees was geographical proximity. Although such discussions contribute to our understanding of online research, it is also important to be aware of circumstances where Skype may not be the most appropriate research method. Focussing on Skype for interviewing has allowed the authors to reflect upon the interview process as a whole. Also, writing about our personal interests in interviewing participants over Skype has highlighted two factors. The first is that financial costs were minimised using Skype, and second, many participants took the opportunity of the option of an online interview over the face-to-face, in effect normalising the Skype interview.

Experiences of PhD researchers

Both studies invoked the use of both online and face-to-face interviews in order to facilitate access to geographically dispersed research populations. As both of the PhD researchers (negotiating restricted funds) required interviews with geographically dispersed participants, the use of online interviews (both audio only and video) alongside face-to-face interviews was instrumental (Table 1). Without online interviewing opportunities, the scope and reach of both PhD studies would have been limited to UK-based interviewees within travelling distance.

Although both the PhD researchers interviewed a lesser numbers of participants (therefore, the numbers are small within the sample), there are nevertheless pertinent findings to be taken from the experiences. A greater number of interviews were conducted over Skype than face-to-face for both the researchers (Table 2).

Table 1. PhD details.

PhD student	Research topic	Methodology	Participants	Details
A	Academic networking for learning and teaching	Mixed-methods approach	HE academics	UK and non-UK based
B	Student work placement mobility in Europe	Qualitative methodology	UK undergraduate students	UK and non-UK based

HE: higher education.

Table 2. Interviews – face-to-face and Skype.

	PhD researcher A				PhD researcher B				Total	
	Interview type				Interview type					
	Face-to-face		Skype		Face-to-face		Skype		Face-to-face	Skype
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	%	%
Participants	15	37	25	63	20	50	20	50	44	56

Recruitment

Recruitment of interview participants was conducted in the same way for both the online and face-to-face interviews. Across both the two PhD studies, potential participants were approached in numerous ways including face-to-face, email and social networking sites. If participants were willing to participate in the study, they were then given the choice of Skype if the face-to-face interview was not possible for logistical reasons. It must be noted that in order for participants to be interviewed via Skype, they needed to have access to the Internet as well as the technological expertise to use Skype. Even though the recruitment of all the participants was the same for both PhD researchers, some potential participants were not able to volunteer for an online discussion if they had little or no access to the Internet and/or they did not feel comfortable using Skype. These participants (where available) were, however, able to choose to be interviewed face-to-face, which meant that those with little technological expertise of access to the software were not excluded.

Logistical considerations

Skype interviews allowed for greater flexibility of both the interviewer and respondent in the PhD research. For example, online interviews took place during the evening, and this was often found to be more convenient with interviewees who were in full-time employment. For students in their final year at university, Skype allowed them to

participate when they had free time rather than taking up important study time to arrange and attend a face-to-face interview. Smith-Stoner and Weber (2000) found in their work that participants were grateful to be able to tell their story online. Using Skype encouraged those students who may have possibly been reluctant to attend a face-to-face interview to participate online. Similarly, interviewees often stated they did not have time to be interviewed face-to-face; however, when Skype was offered, they were willing to participate. It is therefore recommended that when researchers struggle to reach their sample size, if possible, offering the option to be interviewed via Skype may increase participation. Associated health and safety risks of traditional interviewing at night, for example, were also reduced when using Skype, making the health and safety process easier for both the interviewer and the interviewee. Interviewees also need to provide the interviewer with only their Skype contact details rather than any other personal details. For those interviewees who feel more comfortable giving the researcher their Skype name (not necessarily their real name), the interviewee and interviewer can easily erase the Skype contact following the interview.

Place is increasingly an important factor in wider debates in mixed-interview methodology. New mobile technologies such as smart phones and tablets that are facilitated by increasingly available Wi-Fi Internet access problematise the traditional face-to-face interviews. Skype software can be downloaded to mobile technologies such as smart phones and tablets, and as such, the place of the interview becomes much more fluid and temporary. There is an emerging body of literature that explores the growing economies of developing countries based on new technologies such as the mobile phone (see, for example, Botha et al., 2010; Ekine, 2010). A major difference between face-to-face and online interviews is, therefore, being able to determine the location and environment of the interviewee during the interview. For example, within the PhD studies' interviews, Skype interviews were often conducted when the participant was at work or at home, which could be distracting. In these situations, both work and home can be disruptive environments at that particular point in time, and so finding the ideal time and space to conduct the interview relies upon the interviewee choosing a suitable location. These forms of distraction can interfere with the flow of an interview and may affect interviewee concentration, and subsequently, the data gathered may be affected; therefore, the location of the participant is thus an important logistical factor to consider when conducting online interviews. Ensuring interviewees are in a location free from controllable distractions is an important element of preparation for online interviews.

Ethical considerations

Over a decade ago, online ethical considerations and practical guidelines were discussed as comparable to face-to-face ethical considerations (Mann and Stewart, 2005). Yet within the last decade, studies have begun to look at ethical considerations of the Internet differently, as the emergence of online research methods have become more accessible and prominent. Online research is relatively new, and so researchers still have to work out for themselves the constantly changing challenges (see, for example, Madge, 2010; Mann and Stewart, 2005). Data security and consent online are just two examples that cross over with more traditionally considered ethics. However, recently, there is much

more discussion about ethics that are characteristic solely of online research with one example being online identity. A first challenge for online research concerns identifying differences between the corporeal identity and the virtual identity and the harm that the researcher may cause by confusing or reporting the two as similar. A second challenge is what to include in one's research as once information is available on the Internet, it may be deemed public knowledge and free to be used by anyone (see, for example, Capurro and Pingel, 2012; Hoser and Nitschke, 2010).

The PhD studies were guided by using ethical considerations from both face-to-face and online techniques. In order to gain full informed consent, which would be achieved through a signature in face-to-face meetings, the online research often had a short, scripted passage in order to gain verbal consent. This was necessary in order to conform to ethical guidelines; however, it did not always produce the best environment to build rapport prior to the interview. All interviewees were also made aware that the interview would be recorded. In face-to-face interviews, this would be clear as the interviewee could see the Dictaphone; however, in the online environment, interviewers must ensure participants are aware of this. In the case of Skype interviews, it could be argued that withdrawal is in fact easier than in face-to-face interviews, where the interviewee may feel unable to end the interview when the interviewer is in the room. Ethical concerns are therefore different in face-to-face and online environments, and researchers must be sensitive to such differences before embarking on research utilising Skype.

Rapport

As with ethical considerations, building rapport online is different from building a relationship face-to-face. Previous research has suggested that building rapport can be problematic during online interviews due to a lack of visual cues (see, for example, Chen and Hinton, 1999; Hay-Gibson, 2009). It has also been argued that the possibilities of time lags in Skype interviews can disadvantage the researcher in terms of building rapport (Saumure and Given, n.d.). In the two PhD research studies, although in some instances differences were identified in terms of rapport between online and face-to-face interviews, this was not deemed to affect the quality of the conversations. Thus, supporting the assertion that the quality of responses gained through online research is much the same as responses produced by more traditional methods (Denscombe, 2003). It is also important to note that personality can be an influencing factor as in some of the PhD cases, Skype interviewees were more responsive and rapport was built quicker than in a number of face-to-face interviews. Online rapport is therefore only an issue when interviewing an individual who is more reserved or less responsive. In order to overcome issues associated with building rapport with interviewees via Skype, a number of emails were exchanged between the interviewer and interviewee prior to the interview. This allowed information to be exchanged and a connection to be developed prior to the interview. Telecommunications such as Skype, therefore, reframe the notion of rapport and subsequent interactions between interviewer and participant as the actions taken by the PhD researchers described here would not have been taken had all of the interviews been face-to-face. Mann and Stewart (2000: 126) ask whether it is possible to 'connect' on an emotional and mental level when communicating online; furthermore, is it possible to

Table 3. Absentee interviewees.

	PhD researcher A				PhD researcher B				Total no-shows	
	Interview type				Interview type					
	Face-to-face		Skype		Face-to-face		Skype		Face-to-face	Skype
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	%	%
Absentees	0	0	2	5	0	0	6	40	0	18

develop rapport with participants whom you may never have seen or heard? Over a decade ago, online communication was said by some to have a narrow or lean bandwidth, in contrast to the rich bandwidth of face-to-face interaction (Sala, 1998). However, we argue that the narrowness of online communication has been broadened by the use of synchronous communication alongside the accessibility of video as an option.

Audio or video

Within both PhD studies, there were occasions when Skype was used with video and without video. Video was used whenever possible; however, audio alone was used to improve the quality of the interviews. Interviewees were asked prior to the interview whether they would like to use video or just voice. A small number of interviewees requested no video, and therefore, these interviews more closely resembled a traditional telephone interview. Seeing oneself on screen can often be a source of unease and anxiety. Recently, there has been media attention on how people interact on Skype, and in this example, how different it is to be interviewed over Skype than face-to-face (Briggs, 2013). Similar to the experiences discussed within Briggs' (2013) article, this article questions the frequency of interviews over Skype within research when emerging telecommunications are available.

In interviews using video, both the interviewer and participant can see and hear each other. However, despite the synchronous visual and audio presence, the interviews are not conducted in a traditional face-to-face environment, and therefore, the customs of shaking hands and perhaps having a coffee prior to the start of the interview are bypassed. Possibilities that conversations are stilted by constraints of technology were evident more often when the video was being used. 'Drop outs' where the conversation would have to stop because the video froze or where the other person was unable to hear occurred. Where Skype was unable to facilitate the call, even with just audio, the text option at the bottom of the screen was used in order to ask and answer questions; this text was then copied and pasted into an interview transcription alongside the spoken text.

Absentees

In both of the researchers' experiences of using Skype to interview online, there were absentees (Table 3). Absentees can undermine a developing sense of rapport (Mann and

Stewart, 2005). For PhD researcher A, 5 percent (n = 2) of scheduled interviews over Skype did not show at the agreed time. In both cases, no further correspondence was received from the participant despite successive emails from the researcher to agree on another time. PhD researcher B experienced a 40 percent (n = 6) rate of absentees; however, in all but one case, interviews were rescheduled. On the contrary, 100 percent of the face-to-face interviews that were prearranged did show for both researchers. Emotions such as guilt or regret after being 'stood up' are reconciled with doubts about whether one had 'offended' the interviewee in some way prior to the scheduled meeting, perhaps the calculation of time zones had been awry or that emails had not provided interview details clearly. Regret was often felt at the loss of an interview that was potentially interesting and fundamental and the time spent organising a meeting and sitting in front of the computer with Skype open, waiting to see that the person one was waiting for had logged in. There is perhaps a feeling of disconnect when one arranges a meeting over the Internet to give an interview; if one does not log in and does not then talk to the interviewer, there is no eye contact, no risk of being seen and definitely little loss on the interviewees part. If the meeting for an interview, for example, was arranged in a public place, possibly in the respondents own university or place of work, the avoidance of such a meeting is much more difficult to achieve.

The aspect of familiarity is also important. Overall, 46 percent of the interviewees were previously known to researcher A, and of those, 100 percent attended the interview. Of the other 54 percent who had been previously unknown to the researcher, 15 percent of the interviewees failed to log into Skype for the interview. This suggests that the familiarity of the interviewer to the respondent helped in maintaining the appointment for the interview. The unfamiliarity with 15 percent of the other interviewees may have contributed to the no-show and the inability of the interviewee to provide a reason for failing to show. The probability of absenteeism was discovered early in the PhD research process, and the researchers were therefore conscientious about emailing more frequently and for a longer duration of time when communicating with interviewees who showed signs of wavering. This was successful as the increased communication with the interviewees provided a greater familiarity, albeit an online familiarity, but one that was built up more than for interviewees who came across as more reliable. Again, although the numbers within the sample presented in this article are small, the findings from both PhD research show that those engaging in a Skype interview were more likely to not show than those arranged to meet face-to-face.

Conclusion

This article was written as a result of the interesting conversations between the PhD researchers that took place after the interviews were completed. What began as discussions surrounding the experiences of using Skype to complete interviews, quickly developed into written narratives of shared practices and an evaluation of the place of Skype within research methodology. Having compared the benefits and drawbacks of using Skype, our attention was drawn to the bigger question of 'how technologies change the assumptions we have about the traditional face-to-face interview?' Although not the original focus of the article, this inquiry can be drawn from the themes drawn out of our experiences within this article. While the literature has often discussed the logistics of

Table 4. PhD researchers' experiences of conducting Skype interviews.

	Benefits	Drawbacks
Recruitment	Allows interviewees and interviewer flexibility in terms of organising the interview time	Potential interviewees may be put off participating if they do not know how to use Skype
Logistical and technological considerations	Health and safety concerns reduced when interviewing at night Cost effective Time effective Greater flexibility of researcher and interviewee in terms of interview time In the vast majority of cases, no technological problems were encountered as researchers were appropriately trained in the use of Skype	In some cases, recording material will need to be purchased and interviews conducted in specific locations where Skype is available The distance between researcher and interviewee can make it easier for participants to drop out as they feel less commitment to the process than with face-to-face interviews Technological problems in some cases lead to issues in sound quality making recording difficult Technological or signal problems can make the building of rapport difficult
Ethics	There is no need to obtain phone numbers from participants	Gaining informed consent verbally can make the beginning of the interview feel very formal and may not set the right tone for an interview
	Interviewees can withdraw with the click of a button	Ethical issues may arise in taking video or audio recordings of the interview. Participants need to be made fully aware of this
	Anonymity can be easily ensured	Participants may feel uncomfortable being filmed in their own home
Rapport	In the majority of cases, building rapport can be established just as well as in face-to-face interviews. Exchanging emails, messages or reports can facilitate this process	When interviewing a reserved interviewee, building rapport can be difficult
Audio or video	Audio and video allow interviewees to choose the level of contact they wish to engage in	Video is not possible in some cases as it can reduce sound quality
Absentees	Time and money have not been spent if the interviewee does not log on to complete the interview	Participants appear to be more likely to 'drop out' of the interview last minute or without notice

online communication and interviewing, there is a lack of discussion around how tele-communication such as Skype fits within the paradigm of interviewing in a global age. While we have aimed to show how the experiences of Skype interviewing can be reflected upon within two different PhD research methodologies, still much discussion is

warranted surrounding the use of Skype as an equal choice of interviewing method, rather than a secondary option. This article has raised questions about the utility of Skype, given the findings such as how absenteeism is more likely among Skype interviewees. In addition, while ethical issues and rapport have in the past been considered to be similar, more recent thinking has shown that such considerations *are* different in the online environment compared to face-to-face interviewing. Questions regarding how technologies change our assumptions about interviewing should be taken further, and such conversations will help improve our understanding of the place that Skype has not only within PhD research but within all qualitative methodology research.

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