

NatCen
Social Research that works for society

What's New?

Reflections on current developments
in qualitative social research

SRA Annual Conference

6 December 2011



**We're here because social
research has the power to
make life better**

Core purpose – why we're here

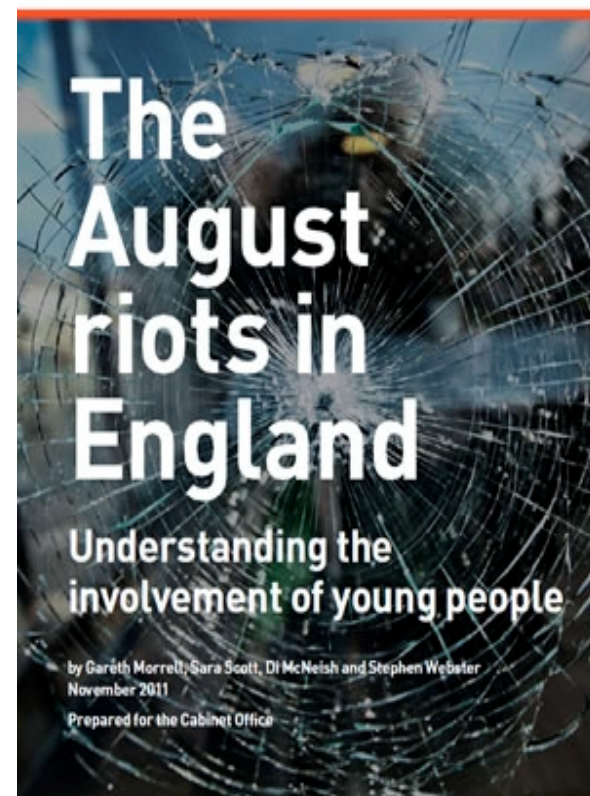
This is a good news story (really!)

- (Qualitative) Research has survived!
- Massive cuts in public expenditure
- Research budgets reduced, some disappeared
- Qual research not disproportionately affected
- Ongoing endorsement of its value



Important to all aspects of social policy

- Strong presence in research programmes
- Important in its own right
- Key component of mixed method & evaluation studies
- A stronger role in the context of localism agenda?



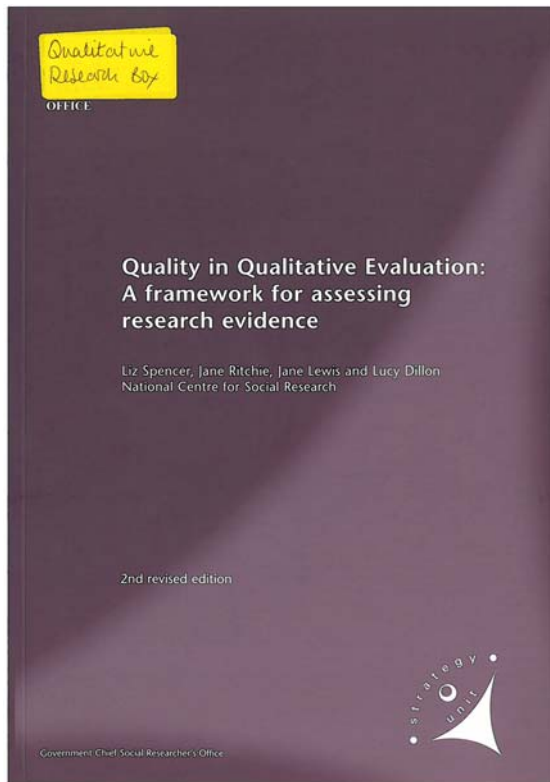
“Qualitative research is an attempt to present (or re-present) the social world, and perspectives on that world, in terms of the concepts, behaviours, perceptions and accounts of the people who inhabit it” (Walker, 1985)

But a lot has changed...

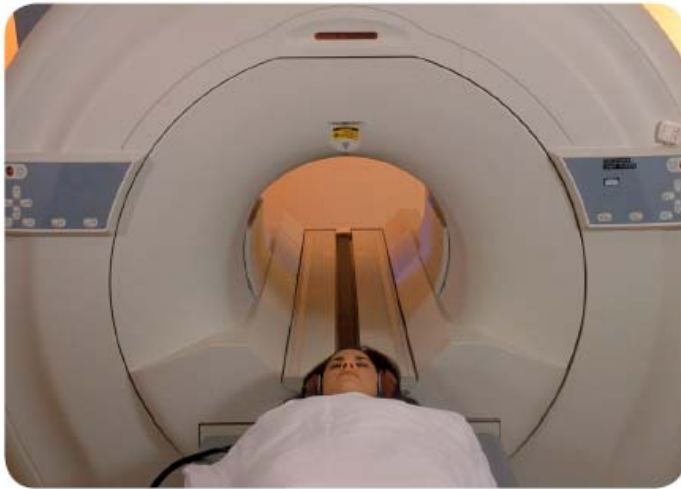
- Technology has transformed our world: how we live our lives and interact
 - Move from an interview society to an 'observation society'? (Gobo, 2011)
 - Do we need a new qualitative research?
 - Are the current tools adequate?
 - What do we discard and what do we adopt?
-



Slow to innovate?



Capturing the offline

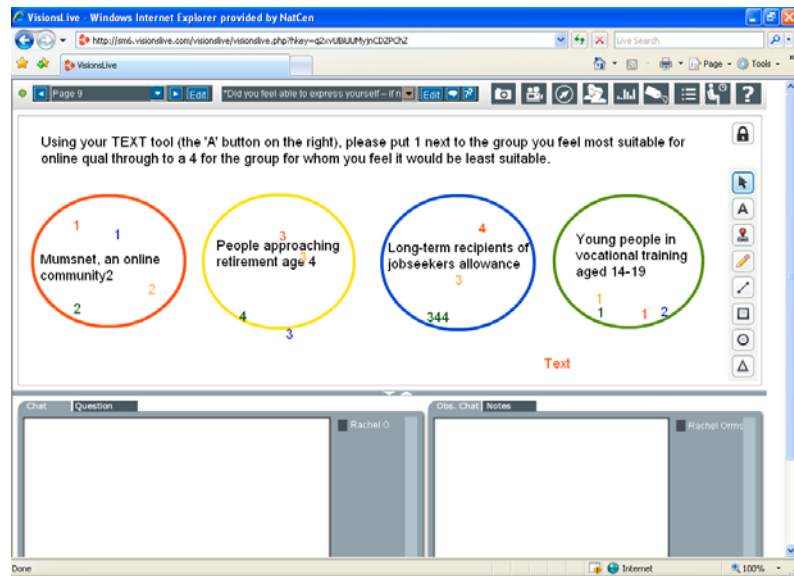
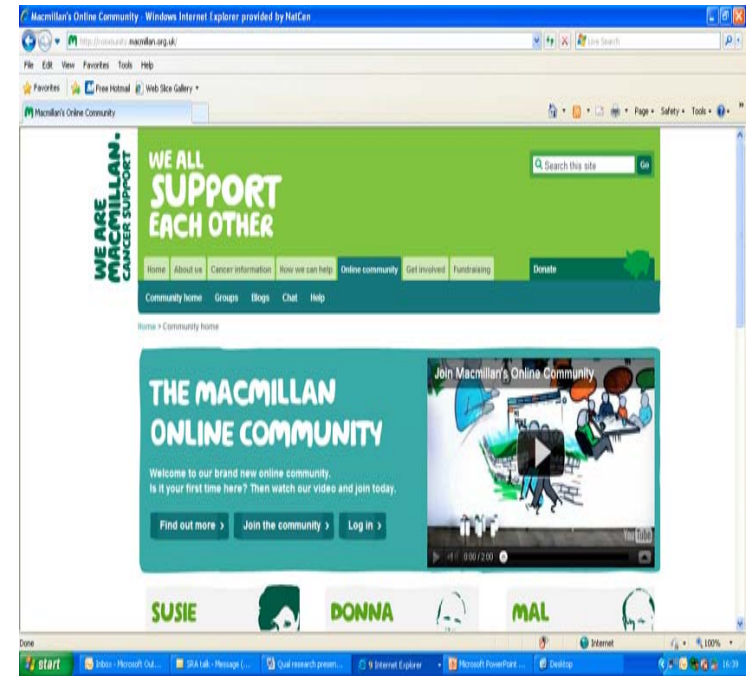
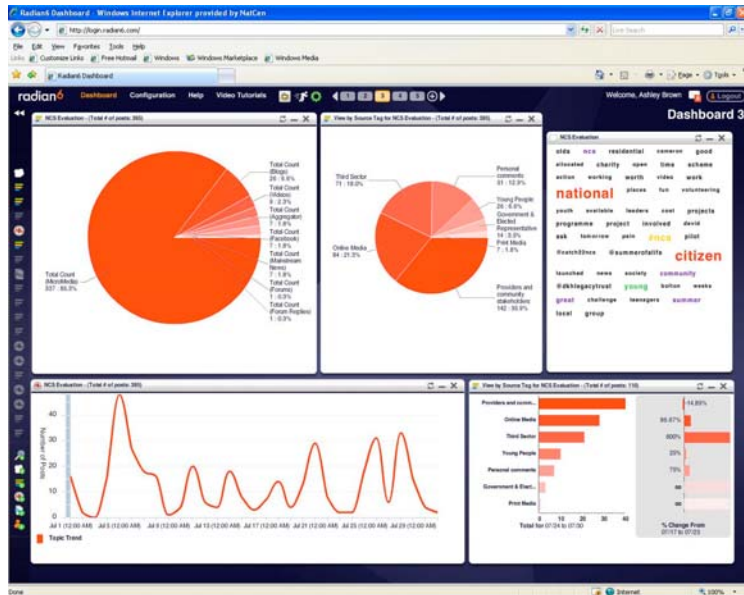


Research taking place using the fMRI scanner

 mind

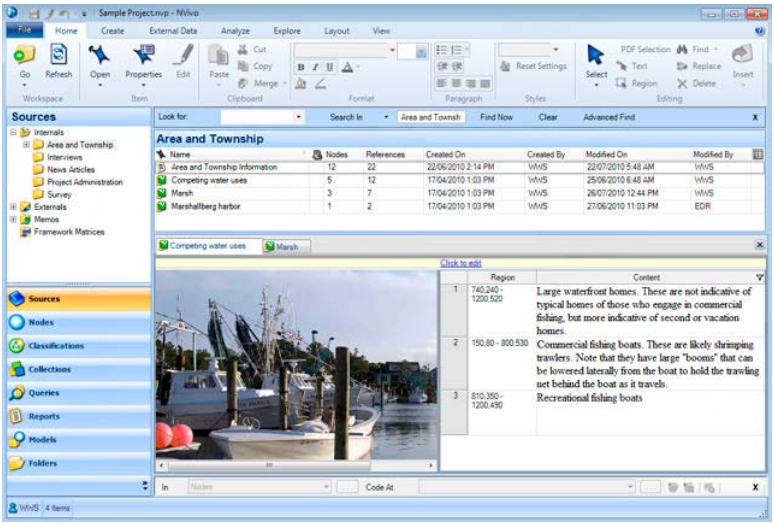
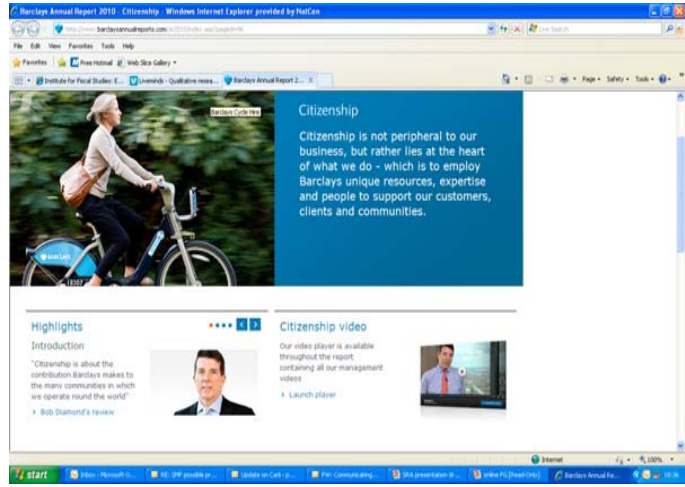


Capturing the online

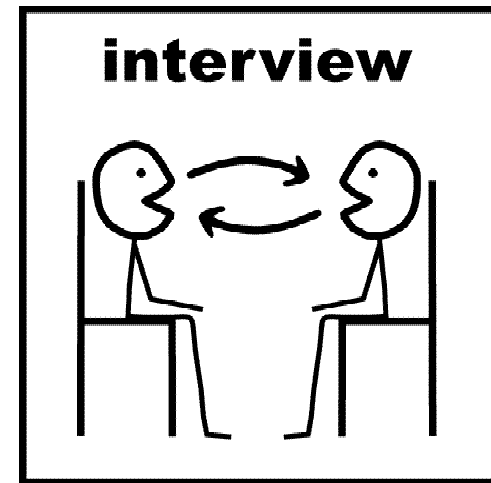


Other parts of process too...

Item	Changes to	Impact of	Internal	External	Other	Other	Other	Other	Other
2	Changes to	Impact of	Internal	External	Other	Other	Other	Other	Other
494
545
545
545



Out with the old?



Same question, different answers

Exciting developments

Not a question of old V new

But of picking the right tools for the job

An enduring role for the classics

– and technology can enhance

A need for constant renewal



Thank you

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