

## Book Review

*Doing Qualitative Research Online*, by Janet Salmons. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publication, 2016, ISBN: 978-1446295410, 181 pp. \$46.00, paperback.

### **Reviewed by Donna Busarow**

Walden University

Salmons's (2016) book, *Doing Qualitative Research Online*, examines the background and the process of conducting qualitative research online. The book is divided into four sections: (1) "Designing Online Qualitative Studies," (2) "Becoming an Ethical Online Researcher," (3) "Collecting Qualitative Data Online," and (4) "Analyzing Data and Reporting Findings." At the end of each chapter, readers are guided to additional resources on the companion website and provided with discussion questions and exercises to delve deeper into the content.

Salmons supervises students' dissertations and understands the struggles many students have with research methods and designs. Salmon proposes that there is a methodological distinction between virtual and digital when discussing the qualitative approach to research: Virtual approaches import data, while digital approaches are interactive, taking advantage of the capabilities offered by the Internet such as email, WebEx, videoconferencing, video calls, and virtual worlds. The author also introduces the concept of the qualitative e-research framework and discusses collecting and studying extant and enacted data and how data is elicited. Online extant data collection is when data are analyzed and information is obtained through unobtrusive observation. Extant data sources include historical materials, contemporary materials, and emergent materials. Unobtrusive observations include downloading or copying materials from online sources for further analysis. Enacted data collection includes the use of arts-based research, games, and simulations and is highly interactive. Eliciting data involves in-depth, personal contact with participations and includes verbal interviews, written exchanges, and visual exchanges.

The book is written for students and for faculty. Each chapter has a summary, a referral to the companion website, and discussion questions and exercises for the reader. For lecturers/instructors, the companion website provides a sample syllabus, assignments, worksheets, and class activities. The author highlights understanding what qualitative research is and how to use online communications for data collection. The importance of ethical research is emphasized, as online research is often conducted through personal computers, and it is up to the researcher to continually assess if high ethical standards are met through each stage of the research process.

The second half of the book discusses collecting qualitative data using the qualitative e-research framework and discusses reviewing the role of the researcher and understanding the importance of the researcher's credibility online. In addition, the author reviews the ways extant, elicit, and enacted data might be used to achieve the study's purpose.

The book's strength is the author's ability to relate the information to the reader in a concise and understandable way. Concepts are provided in layman's terms. Second, the book is a good resource for educators, as it provides resources for teaching students about conducting qualitative research online.

As an educator, I appreciated the multiple resources available to supplement a course on qualitative research. In regard to conducting ethical studies, the author does well to mention the Association of Internet Researchers, the British Psychological Society, and the European Society for Opinion and Marketing Research. However, it would be beneficial to discuss different American governing bodies such as the American Psychological Association and the American Counseling Association to broaden the usability of the information. I would recommend this book as a supplement for educators and a must-read for students and those conducting qualitative research online.

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