



Qualitative E-Interview Tips

Building a Web Presence for Building Interviewer Credibility

Online researchers are often concerned about how to verify the identities of participants recruited online. At the same time, participants may be similarly concerned about the credibility of the researcher. Why should someone take the time to participate in your interview? Can they trust you to protect their identities and the information they might share? If potential participants search for you online, will they find a digital identity that supports your role as a respectable and trustworthy researcher? What steps can you take to create boundaries between your online identities for private and professional/research lives?

All research needs to demonstrate the trustworthiness of the researcher (Bulpitt & Martin, 2010).

Cassell suggests that the interviewer and interviewee are doing 'identity work' as part of the interview process. We use identity as a tool to present ourselves in a way that is appropriate to the interview process, managing impressions of those factors we have some control over – for example, our attitude and responses to the interviewee – and accommodating those we have no control over – for example, our age, gender or ethnicity (Cassell, 2005).

- Researchers can create an online space dedicated to the research, where the identity as researcher can be communicated. Depending on the nature of the research and likely interest of research population, this could be a blog or page(s) on social networking sites, or series of media clips.
- Links to findings, publications and related resources provide value. Links to the researcher's academic institution or other publications can convey integrity and

authenticity of the researcher.

- Provide a means for contact distinct from personal communications, ideally an .edu e-mail address. If not a part of an institution, free e-mail services are ideal for this purpose.
- Another way is by using the networking possibilities of the digital milieu: the researcher can offer a webinar or host an online event or discussion on issues related to the study. By doing so the researcher creates an online identity associated with the study. Events offer an opportunity to interact with individuals who are interested in the subject of inquiry and may be potential participants or people who can nominate participants.



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For more about online interviewing see [Qualitative Online Interviews](#) and [Cases in Online Interview Research](#) by Janet Salmons, PhD and visit see www.vision2lead.com.

Bulpitt, H., & Martin, P. J. (2010). Who am I and what am I doing? Becoming a qualitative research interviewer. *Nurse Researcher*, 17(3).

Cassell, C. (2005). Creating the interviewer: Identity work in the management research process. *Qualitative Research*, 5(2), 167-179.



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