

Building Your Methods Toolkit: Research Design for Information Professionals

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Overview

- Introduction to the Institute for Research Design in Librarianship (IRDL)
- Our IRDL Research Projects
- Research Methodologies and Tools
 - Surveys
 - Interviews
 - Focus Groups
 - Document Analysis
 - Data Analysis
- Disseminating Research

Institute for Research Design in Librarianship (IRDL)

“This Institute is designed to bring together a diverse group of academic and research librarians who are motivated and enthusiastic about conducting research but need additional training and/or other support to perform the steps successfully.

During the nine-day workshop held annually in the summer, participants receive expert instruction in social science research methods and design...

In the following year, participants will receive ongoing peer support in conducting their research and preparing the results for dissemination” (IRDL, 2016).

Our IRDL Projects

Brandon: Exploring the Collaborative Efforts Between Academic Librarians and Instructional Designers

Eamon: Critical Information Literacy in Practice

Elizabeth: Sharing Notes: Current Music Description Practice in the Context of DACS

Frans: Foreign-born Students in Libraries a Mixed-Method Study

Lee Ann: Mobile Devices and Scholarly Practices of Faculty and Graduate Students

Setting up your research

What broad problem, issue, or area are you addressing with your research? Why will your study matter? This is the overarching purpose of your study.

- Research area
- Research problem/objective
- Research questions
- Hypothesis (if your study is experimental, not descriptive)

Literature Review

- Your literature search will inform your choice of methodology
- Make sure your literature review addresses each of your study variables
- Bound your literature review by tracking back to your research question(s) as the parameter(s) for inclusion

Research Methodologies and Tools

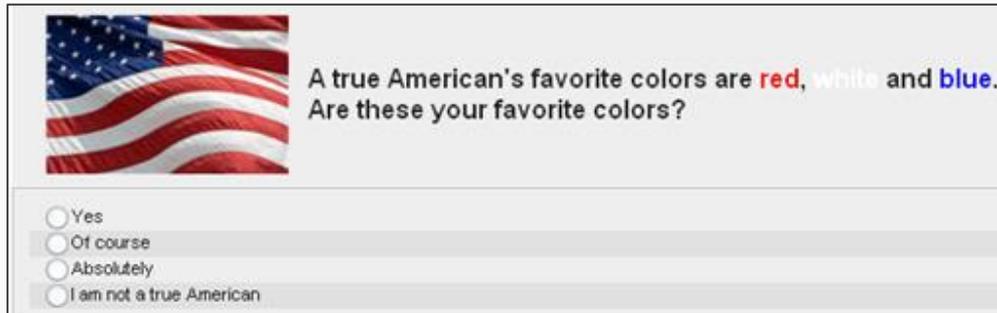
Decide which methodology suits your research question best based on your literature search, resources, time, etc.

Methods include:

- Surveys
- Interviews
- Focus Groups
- Document Analysis

Surveys

- Most maligned of LIS research methods
- Great for gathering lots of information from lots of people
- Inflexible and difficult to explore topics in depth



A survey question displayed in a light gray box. On the left is a small image of the American flag. To the right of the flag, the text reads: "A true American's favorite colors are red, white and blue. Are these your favorite colors?". Below the text are four radio button options: "Yes", "Of course", "Absolutely", and "I am not a true American".

 A true American's favorite colors are red, white and blue.
Are these your favorite colors?

Yes
 Of course
 Absolutely
 I am not a true American

Surveys

Steps in creating your survey:

1. Determine research question & operational definitions to focus your survey
2. Study population: who will be included? How will it be distributed to them?
3. Design the questionnaire: open vs. closed-ended questions, multiple choice, rating scales

Surveys

Considerations:

- How do your views and values determine the survey's scope & questions?
(have the option for "write-in," "other," and "choose not to respond")
- What level of detail is required? (keep it short!)
- **Pilot test your questions**

Interviews

- More in-depth than surveys
- A conversation designed to explore the HOW and the WHY of your research topic
- Structured vs. Semi-structured Interviews
- Types of questions: descriptive, structural, comparison

(Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013)

Interviews

Considerations:

- How will you identify who to interview?
- How you will interview? In-person or online?
- How will you record the interview?
- Who will transcribe the interview?



Image: "Interview" by Eelco via Flickr.com, CC BY-NC 2.0

Interviews

Practical Advice

- Pilot test your questions with both colleagues and people from your desired demographic
- Be flexible when interviewing
- Set realistic goals regarding number of interviewees
- You may experience burnout if you conduct too many interviews in one day

Focus Groups

Focus groups are just like interviews with some additional considerations:

- Power of “group interactions”
- how big should they be?
- saturation
- more time intensive

(Guest, Namey, & Mitchell, 2013)



Image: “Library Renovation Student Group Meeting” by SBU Libraries via Google Images, CC BY-NC 4.0 International License

Focus Groups

Practical Advice

- conducting a focus group works best with a moderator and a notetaker
- establish rules for speaking
- place shy people in front of the moderator, more talkative people on the sides
- overbook your focus groups
- recording video in addition to audio (depending on the size of the group)
- see Krueger and Casey's 5th edition book on focus groups (2014)

Document Analysis

What is document analysis?

- Analysis of existing qualitative data
- Text or image-based
- Identify codes and themes in the content
- Can be exploratory, confirmatory, or both
- Good for any type of document or image: newspaper articles, blog posts, photographs, websites, correspondence

Detailed Description/Container List

This section provides descriptions of the materials found within each series. Each series description is followed by a container list, which gives the titles of the folders and their locations in the numbered boxes that comprise this collection.

Series 1: Music Manuscripts, Parts and Scores, and Lead Sheets, circa 1939-1941, 1958, 1961-1969, 1979 and undated

SERIES DESCRIPTION

SUB-SERIES 1A: MUSIC MANUSCRIPTS, PARTS AND SCORES, CIRCA 1939-1941, 1958, 1961-1969, 1979 AND UNDATED

Sub-series 1A is arranged alphabetically by song title. They were prepared by Howard McGhee and others for McGhee's orchestra from the mid-1960s.

SUB-SERIES 1B: LEAD SHEETS

Sub-series 1B is arranged alphabetically by song title and noting copyright information. Titles show the heaviest concentration between the 1950s through the late 1970s, although some date from earlier decades.

SUB-SERIES 1C: STRAY PARTS, UNDATED

Sub-series 1C is arranged by song title according to the instrument for which the part is scored.

Sub-series 1A: Music Manuscripts, Parts and Scores, circa 1939-1941, 1958, 1961-1969, 1979 and undated

Box

Folder

1	1	A?, 2 Alto; 2 Tenor; 1 Bar.; 4 Tpt.; Pno.; Bass; Drums; Lead Sheet. 1st Alto Sax doubles Flute. Tenor part says "Frank Williams" in pencil, undated
	2	A. P.P. IV, 2 Alto; 2 Tenor; 1 Bar.; 4 Tpt.; 4 Tbn.; Drums. Some parts water damaged, undated
	3	The 'Awakening' (Howard McGhee) 2 Alto; 2 Tenor; 1 Bar.; 4 Tpt.; 4 Tbn.; Male Voice; Female Voice, undated
	4	Banzai Pipeline, 2 Alto; 2 Tenor; 1 Bar.; 4 Tpt.; 3 Tbn.; Bass; Drums. 1st Alto, 1st Tenor double Flute; 2nd Tenor doubles Eb and Bb Clarinet; Bar. doubles Bass Cl., undated
	5	Bedroom Eyes, Matthew Gee, comp., Nat Pierce, arr., 2 Alto; 2 Tenor; 1 Bar.; 4 Tpt.; 3 Tbn.; Pno.; Bass; Drums, undated
	6	Big and Sassy, Gene Roland, comp. 2 Alto; 2 Tenor; 1 Bar.; 4 Tpt.; 4 Tbn., undated
	7	Big 'P', Jimmy Heath, comp. 2 Alto; 2 Tenor; 1 Bar.; 4 Tpt.; 4 Tbn.; Pno.; Bass; Lead Sheet, undated
	8	Black & Blue, Gene Roland, comp. 2 Alto; 2 Tenor; 1 Bar.; 4 Tpt.; 4 Tbn.; Pno.; Bass; Drums; Lead Sheet, undated

Document Analysis

- Sample size
- Coding unit
- Exploratory-->Confirmatory
- NVivo

Pros: no need for human subjects

Cons: can be time consuming

Data Analysis

- Data Analysis Plan For Qualitative see Guest, MacQueen, & Namey (2012)
- Tools that help you analyze qualitative data (coding themes)
 - old school (reporting notes / using colored pencils for transcribed data)
 - “Excel as a Qualitative Data Analysis Tool” by Meyer and Avery in Field Methods, 2009
 - Software programs like NVivo
- Tools that help you analyze quantitative data (statistics)
- Excel, SPSS, (YouTube, Google Video search to find online tutorials, for example SPSS ([videos by the London School of Economics](#)))

Disseminating Research

- Make a ranked list of publications that publish research similar to yours.
- Identify the audience for these publications (e.g., who is the editor, reader demographics). What is the “hook”?
- Titling your paper is important!
- Follow submission guidelines and deadlines. (owl.english.purdue.edu)
- Incorporate suggested revisions.
- If you don't succeed at first, keep trying.

References and Resources

- Guest, G., Namey, E., & Mitchell, M. (2013). *Collecting qualitative data: A field manual for applied research*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
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