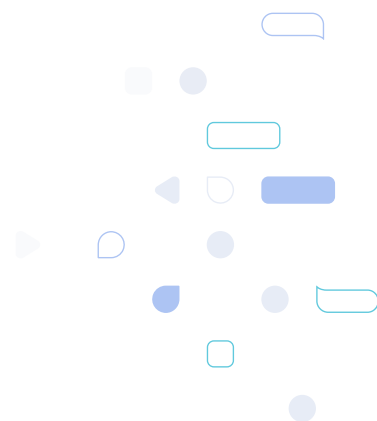




# Online Qualitative Research Myths

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There are many great reasons to switch to online qualitative research. In this article, Recollective debunks the most common myths and misconceptions.





# Debunking The Myths!

*Qualitative research is in a state of flux. Traditional in-person methodologies continue to see increasing cost pressure and declining efficiency but remain popular. Whereas new online software tools are becoming mainstream and offer expanding opportunities to deliver research in new ways, at a faster pace.*

Despite the benefits of switching to online, there is still a reluctance due to the unknown and uncertainty that comes along with adapting to a new methodology. Those hesitations are often fueled by a lack of understanding of the capabilities and practical uses for digital.

In this article, we'll tackle the most common concerns we hear in conversations with customers surrounding a move to online qualitative research. Those include:

1. It's hard to know who people are and understand them online
2. Clients aren't as involved and engaged
3. In person is much more captivating for participants
4. Online doesn't go as **deep** as in-person



## Myth 1: It's hard to know who people are and understand them online

This first concern arises given the sheer nature of the online world and the ability for people to say and sometimes be different than who they genuinely are. It highlights the importance of the recruitment stage to an online research project.

Approach recruitment and screening as a buffer or filtration process that delivers quality respondents to meet the required demographic and psychographic specifications:

- Use traditional recruiting methods and best practices
- Make sure to have a good screener (especially with panel providers)
- Spend time to ensure prospective participants are who you're looking for and are fully informed on what will be expected
- Putting recruitment aside, researchers also sometimes prefer in-person techniques for the insight that can be gathered from nonverbal aspects of people's responses. How can these aspects be achieved online?
- People have always found ways to communicate complex thoughts and feelings beyond words and compensate for limited means of communication - emoji are a perfect

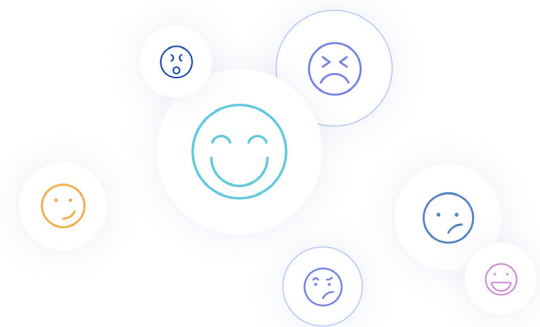
example

- With mobile photo and video upload capability, expression online can be even more nuanced and true to context since the environment is real and not contrived
- Our experience across thousands of studies indicates overwhelming evidence of people's willingness to express themselves with authenticity and efficiency online

## Myth 2: Clients aren't as involved and engaged

Researchers aren't the only people that like familiarity and intimacy. Most clients really enjoy the experience of being in the backroom as it allows them to see participant reactions first hand and soak up the experience.

This same experience is still possible with an online qualitative approach. For example, Recollective backroom tools



keep your team and client engaged while the research is completed. Whether it's to give insightful input or for more logistical elements, the research team and clients can liaise through the platform. In turn, that yields several advantages:

- Reduces the need for update meetings
- Communication is more responsively and all in one place
- Topline results and video testimonials are immediately available
- Iterative and multi-market projects are more easily managed with agility

### **Myth 3: In person is much more captivating for participants**

In-person qualitative techniques are often used to go beyond a simple question and answer format and deeply engage participants. However, moving these interactions into an online platform doesn't diminish the engagement - it actually enhances it.

- More nuanced and creative project designs can be taken on
- Asynchronous approaches create longer lasting dialogue resulting in more depth
- Synchronous approaches (video or live chat) can still be used when real-time engagement is the best approach

- The option of anonymity means more sensitive subjects can be explored via individual or group conversation.

### **Myth 4: Online doesn't go as deep as in-person**

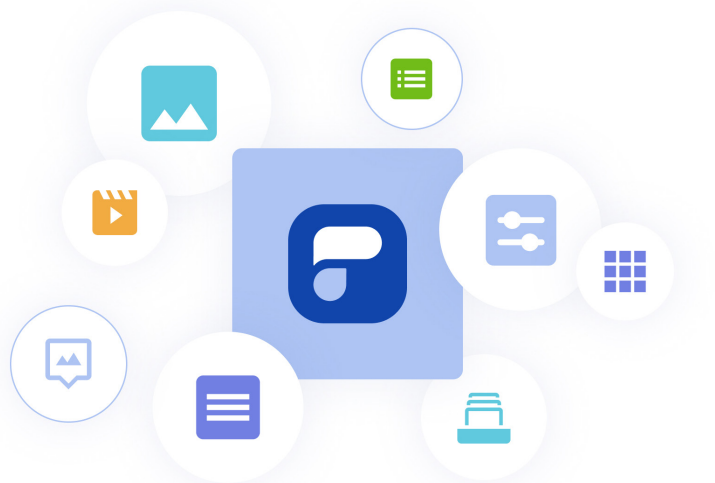
Online allows you to get at immersive and experiential data without needing to create situations that people hypothetically answer or recall from. How deep your participants go often depends on things surrounding:

- Offering a fair incentive for the amount of work expected
- Recruiting people for more conversation and exercise laden research experiences
- Adding interesting visual stimuli to your questions and catering to the online medium
- Using humour and everyday language (if appropriate) or persona based verbiage
- Gamifying your community by allocating points to desired contributions or turning things into a story or adventure that is embarked on

Moderation once again plays a key role in participant engagement and depth of responses. Private versus public moderation allows you to go deeper with follow up questions to hone in on what you are looking for or drive group discussion around an insightful thought.

## So, in summary...

Following the reciprocity principle, the more empathetic and creative your requests and follow-ups with participants are, the more likely you are to receive interesting results. Thinking of your research as more of an ongoing insightful conversation, will help to keep the engagement and insights flowing!





# Contact Us

*North America: +1 (888) 932 2299 x237*

*International: +1 613 230 3808 x237*

*Email: [sales@recollective.com](mailto:sales@recollective.com)*

## **Or swing by for a coffee at:**

283 Boulevard Alexandre-Taché, Suite F3050

Gatineau, QC, J9A 1L8

Canada.

## **About Us**

Recollective is an award-winning software developer focused on marketing research and online communities. For over 20 years, we've worked with some of the world's largest and most ambitious organizations, continuously innovating our software and services as their requirements evolve. The result is a proven software platform that businesses depend on to meet their most critical needs—quickly, easily, securely and affordably.