

# Methodological Special Interest Group (MSIG) on Video Interviewing



## Overview of group and summary of video interviewing experiences and research priorities

### Introduction

A video interviewing special interest group was established following the European Survey Research Association (ESRA) Conference in 2021. The conference included two sessions on video interviewing, featuring papers sharing early experiences of the method. This reflected the emergence of video interviewing as a possible method for quantitative surveys in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Following the conference, it was agreed to establish a group that can share experiences and best practice in video interviewing to support the continued development of this new method. It has a specific interest in the use of video interviewing methods for quantitative social surveys. The video interviewing special interest group is hosted by the [National Centre for Research Methods \(NCRM\)](#), including shared leadership, and has close links with the ESRC-funded Survey Data Collection Network (SDC-Net). It also continues under the '[Survey Futures](#)' project.

As of March 2023, the special interest group includes 30 members. They cover 17 organisations in 5 countries (UK, US, Germany, Iceland and Australia). The group includes researchers working in academia and government departments, with survey agencies also represented. A first group meeting was held virtually on 9 June 2022.

Further meetings of the group are planned for 2024. In addition, leaders of the group will co-edit a journal special issue on video interviewing in *methods, data and analyses*. A call for paper abstracts were published in 2023 with first paper submissions in 2024. The special issue is expected to be published in early 2025. Papers that focus on practical experiences of video interviewing (including as part of exploratory studies) will be encouraged.

## Experiences of video interviewing

An initial task for the special interest group was to gather experiences of video interviewing across the group membership.

Despite being a new method to quantitative surveys, video interviewing has already been used for quite extensive data collection activities in some cases. This partly reflects the experience of the pandemic, where it was necessary to quickly develop and offer alternatives to in-person interviewing during periods of lockdown.

The table below summarises the experience of video interviewing across the organisations involved in the special interest group.

Organisation	Experience
ONS (UK)	<p>Limited experience with video interviewing to date. Have conducted some video interviews with respondents with limited hearing (using signers). Also used video for qualitative research, for question/material testing and for a small-scale feasibility study. ONS are currently reviewing whether/how to move forward with video interviewing.</p>
Centre for Longitudinal Studies (CLS), University of London (UK)	<p>Video interviewing has been used for two longitudinal studies (BCS70 and NCDS) following testing and piloting. While COVID restrictions were in place it was used as the main interviewing method and since then it has been used alongside in-person interviewing. Appointments for video interviews were arranged by email/telephone contact. The questionnaires included a self-completion module which was administered via a short web survey within the video interview.</p> <p>Response rates of 49-50% were achieved with the video-only approach, lower than the usual in-person response rates (73-79%). However, it still needs to be seen what combined video/in-person response rates will be. Feedback from respondents on the video approach was very positive.</p> <p>Based on experience to date, the importance of interviewer training cannot be overstated. But in general video interviewing is seen as a feasible and effective approach for longitudinal studies where home visits are not possible. CLS is planning a large-scale randomised field test on video interviewing in late 2022.</p>

Organisation	Experience
<p>European Social Survey (ESS) Headquarters, City, University of London (UK)</p>	<p>Data collection for ESS has been carried out every two years via face-to-face interviewing since 2002. For the 10<sup>th</sup> round of the survey, due to start in 2020, more than 30 countries were expected to participate. The COVID pandemic clearly presented challenges to the usual in-person approach. Fieldwork was delayed and some countries switched to a self-completion approach for this round.</p> <p>Countries that carried out in-person interviewing were given the option to use video interviewing as a supplementary approach. This was intended to allow more flexibility, so that respondents who were uncomfortable or unable to be interviewed at home could still take part.</p> <p>Initially the request to be interviewed by video should only have been offered after a refusal to the in-person interview. This requirement was relaxed over the data collection period and by the later stages video interviews could be offered as an equal alternative to in-person interviewing.</p> <p>Around 15 countries allowed video interviews (most of those using a face-to-face approach). The number of video interviews achieved varied widely between countries. In a couple of countries (Iceland and Norway), more than 1 in 3 of all interviews were by video. In Italy, Netherlands, Finland and Estonia around 1 in 6 interviews were by video. In other countries a much smaller number of video interviews were carried out (in some cases none). The early signs are that countries with high level of internet use</p>

Organisation	Experience
	<p>and/or with individual named person samples (including some where first contact can be made by telephone) were more successful with video interviewing.</p> <p>Views on the experience of video interviewing varied between countries, closely linked to how many video interviews had been achieved. But several countries viewed the approach positively and will continue to offer video interviews alongside in-person interviewing at the next ESS round.</p> <p>Further analysis is being carried out on the experiences of vide interviewing for ESS and will be presented at the 2023 ESRA conference.</p>
Ipsos (UK)	<p>Ipsos have offered video interviewing as an option alongside other modes for various surveys due to the pandemic. They have had quite low take up so far (c. 4%). When other options are available, interviewers tend to prefer 'easier' options. But video interviewing has been quite popular among some interviewers and when used it has worked well. Getting interviewers on board with the method is seen as an important challenge. No analysis has so far been carried out to confirm results from video interviews versus other modes. Some technical difficulties have been experienced, which can impact on interviewers' confidence in this method.</p>

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Experience</b>
Kantar (UK)	Video has so far mainly been used for qualitative purposes – depth interviews and cognitive/usability testing. There are plans to use video interviewing as a complementary tool to in-person interviewing in future.
University of Michigan Survey Research Center (US)	A mode experiment has been carried out comparing data quality and respondent experiences in live and recorded video interviews with traditional web surveys. This has included looking recruitment and participation, interviewer effects, and different data quality metrics. Work has been published on design considerations for video interviewing and interviewer effect analyses. There is also a proposal to include video interviews in a large production survey.
Westat (US)	Have so far implemented video interviewing for two large projects – the American National Election Survey (ANES) and the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey (MEPS). ANES used video as the first mode in a mixed-mode approach (with web and telephone following). Some issues were experienced with setting up video appointments. MEPS was usually carried out face-to-face but switched to telephone due to the pandemic. Video was then introduced following successful testing. Video interviewing is now used where in-person interviewing is not possible and in preference to telephone. The results from video interviews are currently being assessed.

<b>Organisation</b>	<b>Experience</b>
US Department of Agriculture (US)	A pilot study on video interviewing has been carried out in 12 regional offices, with an assessment of pros and cons of the method then being carried out. Recently video interviewing has been implemented across regional field offices.
GESIS (Germany)	Video interviewing has so far been used for cognitive pretesting. The future possible use of video is being considered for the Programme for International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC). Video interviews were also conducted using the GESIS panel to learn about the use of social networks during the pandemic.
Social Research Center, Australian National University (Australia)	Activities to date have included literature reviews and knowledge gathering, development of a calendar scheduling module, and assessing qualitative experiences of video interviewing.
Australian Bureau of Statistics	Video interviewing was recently introduced as a back-up mode for the Survey of Health and Wellbeing. This is a 90-minute survey with quite sensitive topics (usually carried out in-person). The introduction of video followed some positive quantitative and qualitative testing, including sentiment tests and debriefing. Video interviews are carried out using MS Teams. So far data quality indicators have been quite similar to face-to-face but there is more work planned to examine mode effects more rigorously. One finding has been the need to collect more contact details than are needed for other methods, meaning a heightened need for privacy assessments.

Other members of the special interest group not included in the above table are: National Centre for Research Methods, University of Southampton (UK); University of Essex (UK); University of Iceland; US Energy Information Administration (US); University of Duisburg-Essen (Germany); NatCen Social Research (UK); NORC, University of Chicago (US); and RTI (US).