

Dealing with data: using nvivo in the qualitative data analysis process

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Dealing with Data: Using NVivo in the Qualitative Data Analysis Process The decision to use computer software programs for qualitative data analysis is essentially up to the person analyzing the data. There are positives and negatives when using these software programs to analyze data. A researcher in London wanted to find out if using the software package NVivo would be helpful in her data analysis process. The purpose of the study was to consider the difficulties surrounding interrogation of interview transcripts and assess issues of reliability and validity in the data analysis process (Welsh, 2002). The study was conducted in England and based on gender and local politics. It involved thirty-five face-to-face interviews with women councilors who were elected to the local government. These women were county, unitary, and district councilors, which consisted of three of the UK's main political parties. Each interview lasted from one to three hours with results being recorded and transcribed. Of the thirty-five women interviewed, six were used to form a pilot study to test the interview schedule and gain a feel for the issues important to the councilors. Following the pilot study, the data was manually analyzed and at the end of this process it was decided that it would be necessary to use a software package for the full study (Welsh, 2002). This decision was based on the volume of the data collected. According to Welsh (2002), the computer software NVivo was selected over the other packages primarily because it was very new at the time of the study and therefore addressed some of the earlier problems of other packages — particularly the need in programs like NUD. IST to determine minimum text units in advance of the analysis. Upon completion of the study, Welsh (2002) found that using the computer software NVivo was less

useful because of the type of searching the system was capable of doing. The study found that NVivo was unsuccessful in addressing the issues of validity and reliability that emerged during the data analysis process. According to Welsh (2002), it is important that researchers recognize the value of both manual and electronic tools in qualitative data analysis and management and do not reify one over the other, instead remain open to, and make use of the advantages of each. Reference Welsh, Elaine (2002). Dealing with Data: Using NVivo in the Qualitative Data Analysis Process [12 paragraphs]. Forum Qualitative Sozialforschung / Forum: Qualitative Social Research, 3(2), Art. 26, <http://nbn-resolving.de/urn:nbn:de:0114-fqs0202260>.