

How to Archive Your Qualitative Research Data



Learning Outcomes

Having read this guide, readers should be able to...

- recognize and articulate the benefits of archiving qualitative research data;
- address some of the concerns they might have about archiving their data;
- understand the process of archiving qualitative data; and
- process their qualitative interview data to an archival standard.

Introduction

Research data has a lifespan that goes beyond the original, primary research, and researchers should consider and plan for how their data might be used in the future. One consideration is whether to archive your data. There are many benefits to archiving your research data, including creating new opportunities for reuse, preserving the data for prosperity, and maximizing the value of the data, particularly when collected from hard-to-access populations. Other researchers will be able to recontextualize and reanalyze the original findings, potentially leading to new insights, advancing findings, and stimulating new research ideas. This guide highlights the value of archiving your qualitative research data and how to go about designing and data managing your research project so that it is archive ready.

Archived qualitative data is a rich source of information on a particular topic. Due to time and resource constraints in the original research, many researchers only use their data for one project, examining the data through a single analytical lens. This means that qualitative data is often underused or lost, destroyed or languishing on old servers and storage accounts. Yet if this data was made available to other researchers, there would be the opportunity for the data to be reanalyzed with a new lens, opening up opportunities for collaboration on new projects with other researchers or creating the chance for the data to form the basis of a longitudinal study. Archived research can also form a part of cultural heritage—for example, through the preservation of voices from a particular generation or oral history accounts of a specific period or event. This makes this data valuable not only for contemporary studies but also as a useful resource for historians. These voices are particularly important to preserve.

Section Summary

- Access to archived data allows for a reexamination of the original data and analytical processes.
- Archived data can be reanalyzed or reshaped into a new project or set the basis for a longitudinal study.
- Archived research can preserve cultural heritage, which is useful to historical researchers and contemporary social researchers alike.

How Can Archived Data Be Used?

This section offers real-life examples of how archived data can be used in different

ways, including comparative research, reanalysis of the original findings, advancing methodological approaches, and use as a teaching resource.

Comparative Research

Qualitative research data can be reused in comparative research. In this approach, the archived datasets are the base from which a comparison can be made over time, across location, or between populations. One such innovative project was *Living and Working on Sheppey*, in which the researchers, Dawn Lyon and Graham Crow (and myself as a research assistant), examined 141 essays written in 1978 by sixteen-year-old school leavers about how they imagined their future. Through the UK Data Archive, the research team was able to access the original handwritten essays from a study conducted on the Isle of Sheppey between 1978 and 1986 by a research team led by sociologist Ray Pahl. The essays had only briefly been analyzed by the original research team, resulting in a four-page journalistic article in *New Society* titled “Living Without a Job: How School Leavers See the Future” ([Pahl, 1978](#)). The essays were written from the imagined perspective of the author at the end of their life and then looking back at what might have happened, and they contained interesting insights into the child’s imagined work life, family life, predicted health, and general life goals and ambitions. The research team worked with Ray Pahl directly to understand the primary context of the project and address any gaps in the original research design. By working together with Pahl, they were able to piece together the history of these essays and the conditions under which they were created. The new team then replicated the original study by returning to the schools on the Isle of Sheppey and setting the

same essay instructions to groups of school leavers. This produced a new sample of 110 essays written between 2009 and 2010, which was then comparatively analyzed using a combination of thematic, statistical, and narrative approaches to compare the imagined futures of children in 1978 and in 2010. This resulted in a series of publications including [Lyon et al.'s \(2012\)](#) "Working With Material From the Sheppey Archive," published in the *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*.

Reanalysis

Archived data can be reanalyzed with a new analytical lens, meaning that the new researcher can consider the questions that were raised but not fully examined in the initial study. The researcher can ask new questions of the data, or it could be used to repeat the same study. An excellent example of this is the *Last Refuge* Study. From 1958 to 1959, pioneering researcher Peter Townsend collected interview data, photographs, diaries, and fieldnotes and visual diagrams of residential care homes for older people. This was a rich and important dataset that led to the 1962 publication of *The Last Refuge: A Survey of Residential Institutions and Homes for the Aged in England and Wales* ([Townsend, 1964](#)). The original data from this study were originally deposited in the National Social Policy and Social Change Archive at the University of Essex. In 2007, Julia Johnson, Sheena Rolph, and Randall Smith used Townsend's study as the basis from which to conduct a repeat study, revisiting as many of the original residential care homes for older people as they could, and found that many were still operating as care homes

even 50 years after the original study. The aim of the study was to document and analyze the changes in residential care provision and the experiences of staff and residents between 1959 and 2005. They published their findings in *Residential Care Transformed: Revisiting “The Last Refuge”* ([2010](#)).

My own recent research project *Thriving in Residential Care* ([Morgan Brett et al., 2024](#)) took inspiration from these two previous studies, and from November 2023 to January 2024, we interviewed 125 people (older people who were living in a residential care home, family members, and care team members) across 16 care homes in England, Scotland, and Wales in one of the largest qualitative studies of its kind. The study aimed to understand what life was like living in a residential care home and what mattered to those who lived, visited, and worked there. We recognized and acknowledged some of the challenges of living in care, but we found that older people reported proportionally more benefits to living in care and are really able to thrive in their new living environment if the conditions are right. This is in stark contrast to the way in which older people were housed in institutional settings in Townsend’s original study. When collecting the data for the *Thriving in Residential Care* project, I ensured that we gained consent for archiving the anonymized transcripts, and it is hoped that in the near future this rich and important data collection will be held alongside these earlier influential studies, which will enable future researchers to make comparisons about residential care across time.

Methodological Advancement

When qualitative data is archived, it usually accompanied by documentation and metadata (data about the data). This can include a note about the methodological approach of the research, which can reveal the trajectory of the research process. What was planned for the original research, and how did that work out? An account of a methodological process written in 1995 that I found particularly interesting is in the study *Gender Difference, Anxiety and the Fear of Crime* by Wendy Hollway and Tony Jefferson. In this study, [Hollway and Jefferson \(2003\)](#) recognized the challenge of gathering stories from participants when participants were unconsciously defending against speaking about topics of a sensitive nature. Early in the study, the researchers recognized their dilemma and developed a new, innovative way of conducting qualitative interviews, which they called the free association narrative interview (FANI) method. This approach involved the incorporation of psychoanalysis into social research methods, requiring a specific interview technique and new ways of analyzing the information gathered. The FANI method involves conducting two interviews with each interviewee. First is a free association narrative interview (FANI) technique, keeping the questioning style as open as possible and letting the interviewee's ideas, views, and story emerge as much as possible in their own words. This is then followed by a second interview, which is an opportunity to ask some more semi-structured questions in order to make some comparisons between interviewees. It involved asking "tailor made" questions based on issues, which seemed to cause the conflicts in the narrative ([Morgan Brett, 2018](#)). They published the first edition of their book *Doing Qualitative Research Differently* in 2000, which details the method [Hollway & Jefferson \(2000\)](#). I was fascinated by Hollway and Jefferson's research trajectory and how

the archived data reflected this. I used this data and its accompanying documentation to help design my own doctoral and postdoctoral research, culminating in the book *The Child-Parent Caregiving Relationship in Later Life* in which I include a chapter about how I had used this original methodological approach. Being able to access the original research notes, reflections, and process of methodological decision-making is immensely valuable for future researchers to be able to learn from and develop.

Teaching

Research-led teaching is an area that is gaining increasing attention and prominence within higher education, especially because using archived data is an accessible and interesting route for teaching students about real-life social research. Data collections provide rich case study material for learning and teaching across the disciplines. Using archived data in teaching can help students explore a range of social research methods, including focus groups, visual methods, diaries, online data collection, and observation as well as a variety of interviewing styles. It offers the opportunity to develop or enhance analytical skills as well as better understanding of the research process from conception to publication. In 2010, along with Professor Jackie Turton from the University of Essex, I developed an assignment template that allowed students to apply research methods knowledge in a data reuse project. The assignment, designed for students on a second-year module on *Crime and Social Control*, was to allow students [to] follow a piece of academic research right through the data life cycle, from conception to publica-

tion. Students explored and analyzed the research process from the development of the proposal, the decision-making process around the choice of methods, the successes and challenges faced in the pilot phase of the study, what questions were asked of the participants or phenomena under research, how interpretations were made, and finally how this all resulted in an academic publication. The aim was to incorporate the use of research methods with the practice of accessing, analyzing, and critiquing archived qualitative data and then applying the findings to a set criminological question. Students were tasked with exploring several data collections; writing original, applicable research questions; choosing an appropriate dataset to reanalyze; and writing up their findings. The template that was created guided students through the search, selection, and reanalysis of a dataset related to the topic of crime and control. Through this process students were able to see how other academic researchers had conducted their research and were encouraged to critique the process to find ways in which the research could have been done differently.

Section Summary

- Archived data can be used in many different ways, including in comparative research, through reanalysis, in methodological advancement, and in teaching.
- Comparative research that uses archived data can look at change over time, across locations, or between populations.
- Archived data can be used in reanalysis, which means looking at the origi-

nal data again with a new analytical frame.

- Archived collections should also include metadata and methodological notes, which can be used for methodological advancement.
- Teaching using archived data is a novel way of supporting students to understand the research process from conception to publication as well as providing data on which they can practice their own research and analytical skills.

Why Archive Qualitative Data?

In the previous section, we explored how qualitative data that has been archived by other social researchers can be used in contemporary research and teaching, but you may be wondering why you should archive your data and whether it is even worthy of being archived along with such pioneering studies. Here I will help you to recognize that all research data has a lifespan that has the potential to go beyond its original and intended use.

Common Concerns About Archiving Qualitative Data

Having previously worked for a national data archive for almost a decade, I recognize the concerns researchers often have about archiving their qualitative data. One common concern reported by researchers was that other researchers might steal their data, steal their ideas, and somehow do a more impressive piece of work with their data. However, as the researcher who is archiving data, you are the primary creator of the data, and you will already have a head start on under-

standing the material. You also usually do not need to make your data accessible to others until you feel that you have maximized your own use of your dataset.

The second most common concern was regarding data confidentiality and how participants can be sufficiently protected when sharing their data. When collecting your primary data, you should gather fully informed consent from your participants to be able to archive their data. It should be an explicit option on the information sheet and consent forms. The resulting data is also usually de-identified, further protecting participants. Finally, should a re-user of your data be able to recognize, by chance, any participant's identities, they too should abide by the conditions of reuse, which might mean that they cannot track or recontact an original participant. For instance, in the *Living and Working on Sheppey* study, we were able to identify participants in the original essays as children often left their names on their piece of writing or mentioned a friend or a teacher in their description. Although the research team ideally wanted to find some of the children (who were now adults) and find out about the trajectory of their lives, we abided by the conditions of reuse and did not try to track down the participants. Instead, the team put out a general call in local groups on social media to find out if anyone remembered taking part. This was not hugely successful, but it was a more ethical approach than trying to track down individual participants.

When archiving your data, if there was a transcript of a participant who did not give consent to archive their words, you may be able to exclude that piece of data. If there are concerns about confidentiality and who can access the data, then there can be different levels of access. (These vary across archives and repositories, so

please check the conditions for where you would like to deposit your data.)

- Embargoed data is data that is held under strict conditions and cannot be accessed for a set period of time. This embargo can allow the original researchers to maximize their own use of the data before releasing it more widely.
- Controlled data is data that may contain disclosive information. Access to this type of data is only made available to those who have been trained in using the data, and their access may have to be approved by an access committee.
- Restricted or safeguarded access means that data can be made available but under particular conditions. This type of data does not usually contain personal information, but there are some potential risks of disclosure that might arise from its use. For this type of data, you may have to register, sign a user license, state how you will use the data, and agree to the conditions of usage.
- Open access means that the data is released under an open license to use and download. Users do not usually have to register to use the data. Open data usually does not contain any personal data or data that could disclose an identity.

For more information about regulating access to data collections, you might want to look at the advice from the UK Data Service (<https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/learning-hub/research-data-management/data-protection/access-control/>). However, each archive will have its own data access regulations.

Another concern about archiving qualitative data is that re-users will scrutinize your data and findings in order to find fault. However, having the aim of archiving your data right from the start and knowing it will be made accessible at the end of the project will develop your own internal critic and help you produce the highest-quality data that you can. Also, in reality most academics will be supportive and encouraging when reading your work, looking for synergies and ways to work together.

The final concern about archiving is that it is resource intensive, and this can be true. Qualitative data already involves significant resources—time, money, and intellectual investment—to design, collect, process, analyze, and disseminate the findings. It could be argued that *not* enabling reuse can represent a greater collective loss and waste of these valuable resources that have already been invested in data production. It can take additional resources if archiving is not planned for from the start, in that data would need to be anonymized and file named correctly, metadata would need to be accurate, and transcripts (as an example) would need to be in the correct template format that is suitable for your intended archive.

In 2015, I was awarded a small funding pot from my university to archive my PhD data, and I employed a research assistant to help me shape this dataset into one which was archive ready. *Negotiating Midlife: Exploring the Subjective Experience of Ageing, 2006–2008* was published in 2016. However, if you are planning a project now, my advice is to build archiving into your data management from the very start. Ensuring that you are gathering consent for archiving, following a template for your transcriptions, developing an anonymization strategy, and storing data se-

curely and neatly are all good data management practices but are also critical in creating a dataset that is archive ready.

10 Good Reasons to Archive Your Qualitative Data

I hope that so far any myths about archiving might have been dispelled. In this section, instead of simply addressing the concerns, I will focus on 10 good reasons on why you should archive your data and the benefits it can bring you.

1. Archiving your data keeps your data secure for future use and prosperity. Many research projects destroy their data (or are commanded to by research ethics committees), but this is really not necessary. According to General Data Protection Regulation 2018 (GDPR), data should be kept for “the shortest time possible” ([The European Commission, 2018](#)), but personal data can be kept for a longer period in scientific or historical research if there is “appropriate technical and organization measures put in place” ([The European Commission, 2018](#)). So, in other words, there should be a plan for how you securely manage the personal data that has been collected. You should think carefully about your future plans for your data and whether that personal data may be required. Other projects may not have considered the plan for the long-term use of their data, and so valuable research data is lost to old hard drives, old USB flash drives, or forgotten cloud storage. Archiving means that your data is kept safe long term and is held on a secure server.
2. Academic career trajectories often consist of research projects that build upon one another. It may be that you would like to access your own data for a

reanalysis with a new project. Having your original project archived means that the data will be easily accessible not only to other researchers but also to yourself if you wanted to reanalyze it in the future.

3. Data held in an archive can create a baseline to which new data can be added—for instance, in a longitudinal or reanalysis study (such as the ones mentioned previously in this guide).
4. Applying for large funding grants often requires a community effort from a team of academics who each bring with them their own set of skills. Having an archived collection of data can increase the opportunity for collaborative research opportunities. For instance, another researcher who has accessed your data may ask you to join them in a future research bid.
5. Archived data can increase the visibility and reputation of the research and research team. It is a way to get yourself known in the competitive academic field and can increase the citations to your work.
6. Opening up your data for scrutiny creates a transparency in the research process, which in turn increases credibility and offers validity to your data and findings.
7. Archived data may be checked for quality assurance before being accepted, so this will guide your data management processes, ensuring that the data is of a high standard.
8. New Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC)–funded projects have to ensure that research has not already been conducted in your area of interest. If your project is held by the UK Data Service, newly funded ESRC researchers would need to consider reusing your work or collaborate with you. Other funders may have similar rules. There are specific funding calls that ask you to work with archived data, so if the dataset is there, this opens

up that opportunity. And finally, some funders (such as the ESRC) may require that you archive your data.

9. Archiving data is a way to maximize the voices of the research participants, and this is particularly important when collecting data from hard-to-reach, at-risk, or marginalized populations and communities.
10. Finally, having an archived collection of data can be used as a recognized contribution to the Research Excellence Framework (REF) in the United Kingdom. (The REF is a system for assessing the quality of research in UK higher education institutions and informs the allocation of public funding to universities. Researchers submit their work to be evaluated by expert panels for eligibility to the REF. Archived data can be counted in this assessment.)

Section Summary

- Researchers are often hesitant about archiving their data.
- Research data has a lifespan that can go beyond its original intended use.
- There are many benefits to archiving your qualitative research data.
- Archived data can offer new opportunities for collaborative work, reanalysis, and a consideration of questions that were not fully examined in the initial study.

Preparing Your Qualitative Data for Archiving

By this point, you are hopefully now convinced that archiving is something that you could consider for your own qualitative data, but you are perhaps now wondering

how? The overarching piece of advice is to implement good data management right from the very start so that your study is archive ready. Here I will take you through these data management elements.

Gaining Consent to Archive

When conducting ethical qualitative research, you will be required to gather informed consent from your participants for taking part in the study, informing them about the nature of the research, what is involved in taking part, and the mechanisms for withdrawal. You would also let participants know how long you plan to store the data and what purposes it may be used for. However, it is also important that consent forms ask participants for permission to share their data beyond the use of the original research project. You may need to use their words in many different and often unexpected ways, perhaps in teaching, journalistic pieces of writing, academic publications, blogs, animations, and, of course, archiving. You might include a general phrase on consent forms such as *“Your data will be used in this research project and may be used in future research publications and activities.”* But for archiving, it is recommended that you are quite explicit about that usage. You might phrase the statement as *“I agree to my anonymized data being held in long-term storage or an archive in order to inform future research by (add your institution) and other researchers.”* Your own ethics board may have a template of similar phrasing, but if it is not included in an ethics consent form template, ask for it to be added and justify the reasoning.

If you are currently partway through your project and are now thinking that you would like to archive your data in the future but have not asked for consent to

archive, then you will need to recontact your research participants, as soon as possible, to gain their consent retrospectively.

File Naming

Other critical elements of good data management are secure storage and file naming. Whether you have already collected data or you are about to embark upon data collection, it is extremely important to ensure that you keep your data files organized and structured. This includes consistent and appropriate file-naming conventions. You might want to check with the archives where you want to deposit your data to see if they have a specific file and folder structure and names that you will need to use. An example of a good file name might be

2024.04.16_FG1_CH4_Thriving

In this file name, I have first included the date in reverse order. Next is the shorthand for a focus group (FG), and *1* indicates that this is the first focus group. Next is *CH4*, which in this instance refers to “Care Home Four” of my sample. Finally, *Thriving* refers in shorthand to the project title. Each part of the file name is connected with an underscore.

Another variation might be

2024.04.16_Rel_Int3_CH4_Thriving

This again has the date in reverse; then it says *Rel*, which indicates a shorthand for “Relative” from my sample. *Int3* indicates the third interview in the overall sam-

ple. *CH4* is the fourth care home in the sample, and *Thriving* is the project shorthand.

You will need to look at what works for you in your project based upon your sample's characteristics and methodology.

Transcription

It is usual to transcribe your qualitative data so that they are ready for archiving (unless you are considering a sound archive). There are a number of options for how you go about transcribing your data. You may consider doing this yourself, but it can be a tedious and extensive process. You might want to work with an external transcription agency to create your transcripts. This can be quite expensive, and you would need to ensure that you are working with a reliable and trustworthy supplier. Your university may have a list of trusted transcribers to recommend. It is also a good idea to ask transcribers to sign a confidentiality agreement, as they are listening to recordings of your un-anonymized data. In the confidentiality agreement for transcribers, it is important to ask them to not share what they hear in the recordings, keep recordings secure, and delete any local copies of the data once it has been passed back to the research team. The final option is to use artificial intelligence (AI) software to generate your transcripts. This is an emerging field, with potential and, at this moment in time, under-explored ethical consequences, but programs such as MAXQDA, NVivo, MS Word, Otter.ai, MS Teams, Zoom, and many others all have AI transcription functionality of varying quality. The key message when sending your transcripts to an external source (agency or

AI) is to double-check the quality and accuracy upon its return and check whether your institution requires you to gather consent from your participants to use AI transcription services.

Archives will likely have a transcription template that they will require you to use, so it is a good idea to send this to an external transcription agency in advance rather than adapting your data to fit at the end of the project. The most important message here is ensuring that there is consistency across your transcripts, with things such as a font type and size, space, and use of speaker tags.

Metadata

Archived data should be able to “stand alone,” and the accompanying metadata and supporting documentation should provide enough detail to any other researcher who wants to work with your data in the future. Metadata is data about data. It provides a summary of what the data is, describing where it came from, and how it was produced. Metadata is important in archiving because it makes finding and using the data easier. Archived data can be kept for many decades, by which point the original research team cannot be contacted to ask questions about any gaps in understanding about the original study. In the *Living and Working on Sheppey* project, we as a research team were able to contact the then retired Ray Pahl to ask him about the processes used to collect the school leavers’ essays. Sadly, Ray died not long afterward, but we were grateful for him being able to contribute that knowledge to the project. Ideally each research project should meticulously record the processes and decision-making trail and add this to the

documentation that accompanies the archived dataset. The key thing with creating metadata is to think, “In 10 years’ time, could someone read through my data collection and understand it?” “What else might they need to know about it?”

Alongside methodological notes, reflective diaries, or process descriptions, each transcript should include some metadata. For instance, at the top of each transcript I write the following:

Date

Location of data collection

Interviewer name

Participant pseudonym or code

Length of interview

You may want to include other important summarizing characteristics about the participant too (being mindful of confidentiality). For instance, I have previously written a metadata profile like this:

Pseudonym: Angela

Number of interviews in transcript: 2

Date of interview(s): 18.10.07 and 26.10.07

Location: At her house

Gender: Female

Age: 49

Marital Status: Married

Children: Two daughters aged 24 and 16

Parents: Parents both still alive

Grandchildren: None

Anonymization

Anonymization is an important step in data management and will be important to get right in an archived dataset. If research data is to be shared, then you may need to alter key identifying details in that data so that the participant (and those people and places that they talk about) cannot be identified. In some instances, the participant will give you permission to share their data in an un-anonymized form, but if this is the case, then you might want to remind them about the consequences of doing so and what this will mean if their data is archive and shared.

When archiving your dataset, you will need to consider whether to

- change names to pseudonyms (or when collecting the data, asking participants what pseudonym they would like you to use to represent them);
- change place names;
- disguise an ethnicity or religion if the outlying nature of this characteristic might identify them;
- change company/organization names;
- change ages or keep them the same; and
- change the name of a participant's occupation

Place names might be changed to a generic descriptor such as {Northern Town} or {Local high school}. Similarly, company names could simply become {Company name}. Another issue might be an outlying age—for instance, 82 might be too spe-

cific and identify a participant, so you might write this as {in her 80s}. These are all very context- and project-specific decisions, but they do require consideration. I tend reserve curly brackets {...} for anonymization changes, round brackets to indicate extraneous sounds in the interview (coughs), and square brackets to indicate additional words in the transcript [end of interview] or [Inaudible 2:48].

Identity can be disclosed through direct identifiers, which include the name, addresses, zip code, or picture of the participant. This is not always essential research data and instead can be classed as administrative data, which can be collected and stored separately from the research data. Identities can also be unwittingly revealed through a combination of indirect identifiers such as occupation, geography, or outliers. When making decisions about how to anonymize the data, it is important to retain as much meaningful information as possible without revealing identities. The key here is to ensure that you protect identities while also maintaining maximum meaningful information. Over-anonymization can lead to a loss in data quality and authenticity.

When transcribing, you might keep a separate record of anonymization that indicates the first page number of where the change has been made. For instance, the first time Harry is changed to {Jack} would be recorded and the page number of that first change but not further recorded. I might write it like this:

P2. Harry Jack

You would not be required to submit your anonymization log as part of your archived dataset, but it is important that you submit your data with the confidence

that identities cannot be disclosed once shared.

Data Storage

Finally, in order to archive your data, you need to ensure that you keep your data secure and accessible for future use. If stored on nonproprietary software or on a particular media such as a cassette or USB, data can become useless if that technology then becomes obsolete. It is important to review how your data is stored and consider if its storage conditions need to change with the changes in technology. Even across my own research career over the past 25 years, I have seen shifts from floppy disks to cassettes to USBs to cloud storage, and much of my very old data is no longer accessible.

Section Summary

- It is important to build future archiving plans into any research design.
- Strong data management practices are a critical part of ensuring your qualitative research is archive ready.
- It is important to check the data management criteria specific to the archive you would like to host your data.

Conclusion

There is great value in depositing and working with qualitative archived data. Qualitative collections can be used in a number of different ways: as a historical re-

source to demonstrate how lifestyles and attitudes used to be within a particular period of time or in comparative research, facilitating a comparison over time or location or between social groups. It can be used in the development of a new study or methodology. It can be used in reanalysis and used to ask new questions about the data that were not examined in the initial study. And finally, it can be used as rich case study material for innovative teaching purposes.

Research funders and journal publishers are increasingly expecting research data to be open, transparent, and shared. In order to share data, researchers must develop increasingly robust skills in order to process and store their research data. Some of the key elements of data management include documenting your data and providing contextual information for future users, formatting data in a consistent manner, storing your data securely, ensuring that you have the legal and ethical rights to share the research data, and finally ensuring that there are strategies to manage the confidentiality of the data you collect. Research data management should be an integral part of the research process, considered and planned from the start, and reviewed throughout the life cycle of the project. If research data is shared, then re-users can offer fresh insights about the archived data, and this can lead to exciting collaborative research partnerships. Finally, as researchers we have a responsibility toward our participants to amplify their voices and to maximize the use of the data that we have collected and that they have so generously created with us. I hope that this guide will provide confidence to researchers who are thinking of sharing and archiving their data.



Multiple Choice Quiz Questions

1. What are the main benefits of archiving your qualitative data?

☐ **a.** Maximizing the voices of research participants, ensuring long-term data security of your data, and facilitating opportunities for re-search visibility and collaboration

☐ **b.** An opportunity to reveal your participants' identities and to tell other researchers everything about your participants

☐ **c.** The change to show off your research skills and how perfect your research is

2. Archiving your data can result in

☐ **a.** other researchers copying your work and passing it off as their own.

☐ **b.** no one ever reading your work.

☐ **c.** collaboration opportunities with other researchers.

3. Why is it important to gain consent from participants to archive their data?

☐ a. So that you have their explicit permission to hold their data in an archive and so that they know the possible future uses of their data

☐ b. Because it is important to show participants how important you are by giving them additional forms to complete

☐ c. So that participants can always expect to take part in future research by re-users of the data

SUBMIT

CLEAR

START OVER

Further Reading

Carter, J., Brown, M., & Morgan Brett, B. (2015). Creative teaching in health and

social care using the UK Data Service. *Health and Social Care Education*, 3(1), 16–22.

Haaker, M., & Morgan Brett, B. (2017). Developing research-led teaching: Two cases of practical data re-use in the classroom. *SAGE Open*, 7(2). <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244017701800>

Lyon, D., Morgan Brett, B., & Crow, G. (2012). Working with material from the Sheppey archive: Exploring formal and contextual data. *International Journal for Social Research Methods: Perspectives on Working with Archived Textual and Visual Material*, 15(4).

Morgan Brett, B. (2013). Reusing qualitative archived materials in creative research and innovative teaching contexts. *ALISS Quarterly*, 8(3).

Weddell, E., Lyon, D., Crow, G., & Morgan Brett, B. (2012). Imagining the future: What can the aspirations of school-leavers in 1978 and 2010 tell us about the changing nature of society? *Sociology Review* 22 (1), 2–5.

Web Resources

Living and Working on Sheppey Case Study: <https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/case-study/living-and-working-on-sheppey/>

The Last Refuge Teaching Resource: <https://ukdataservice.ac.uk/app/uploads/teachingresourcethelastrefuge.pdf>

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