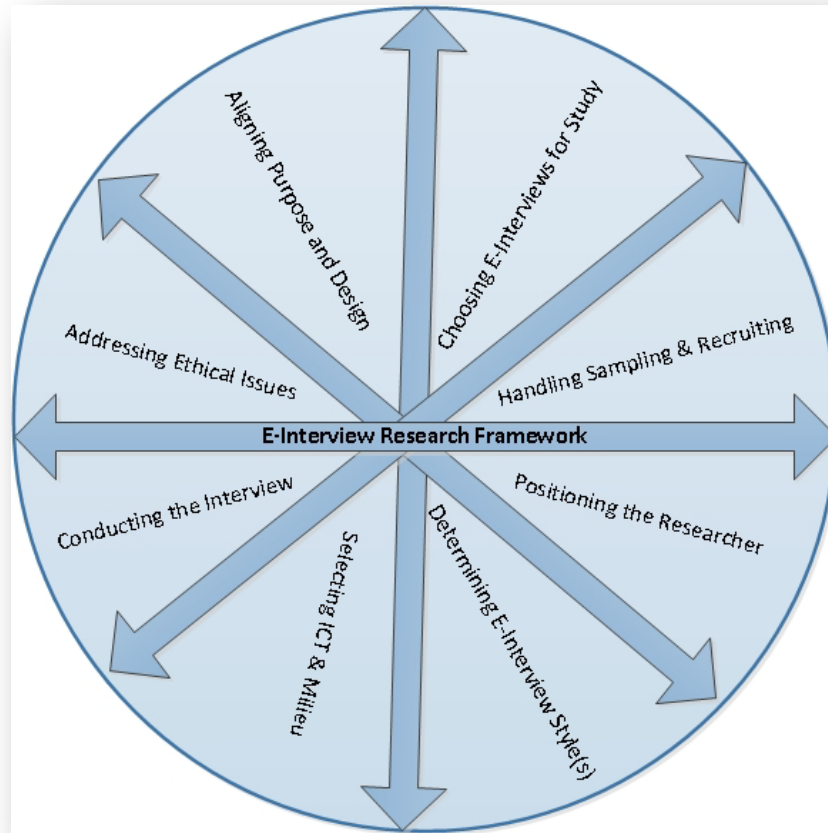# Framework for Understanding E-Interview Research
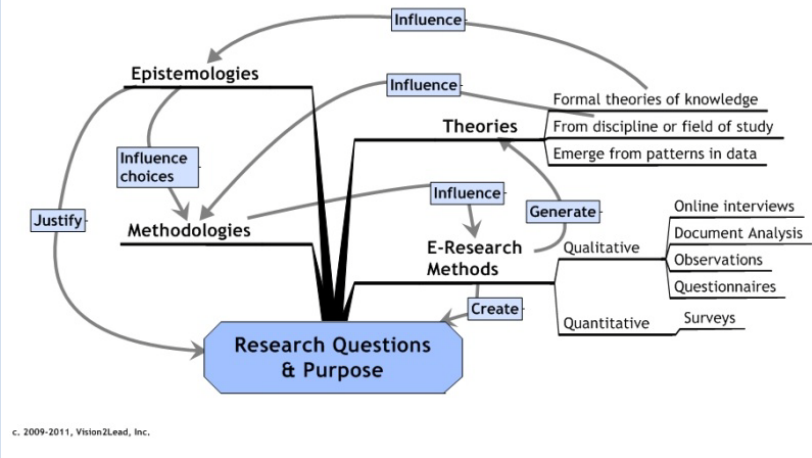Janet Salmons, PhD

The E-Interview Research Framework invites researchers to generate ideas and questions about key features of online interview research and relationships between those features. It is displayed as a circle to convey the sense that one angle alone will not provide the systems-level view we need to really understand the interrelated mechanisms of online interview research. Use the eight categories of models and key questions to think about your own research design, or as an analytic framework to dissect others' research.

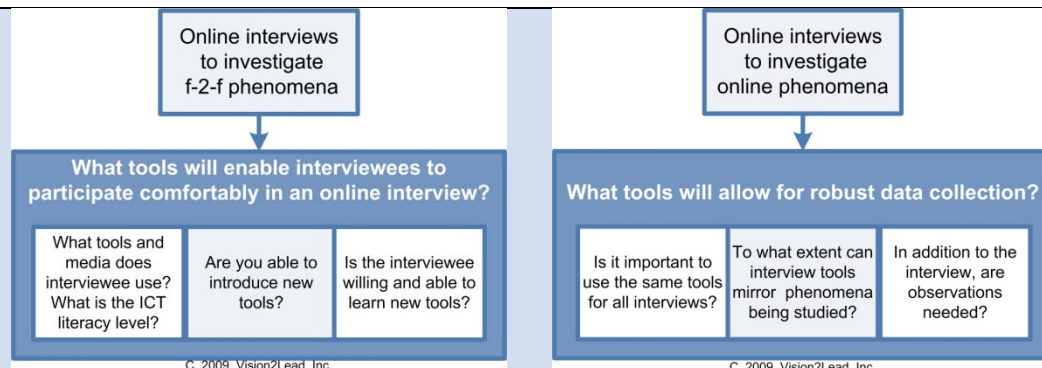If you identify new categories or questions, please share them by writing to me at info[at]vision2lead.com.

For more about online interviewing see *Online Interviews in Real Time* and *Cases in Online Interview Research*

by Janet Salmons, PhD and visit see www.vision2lead.com.

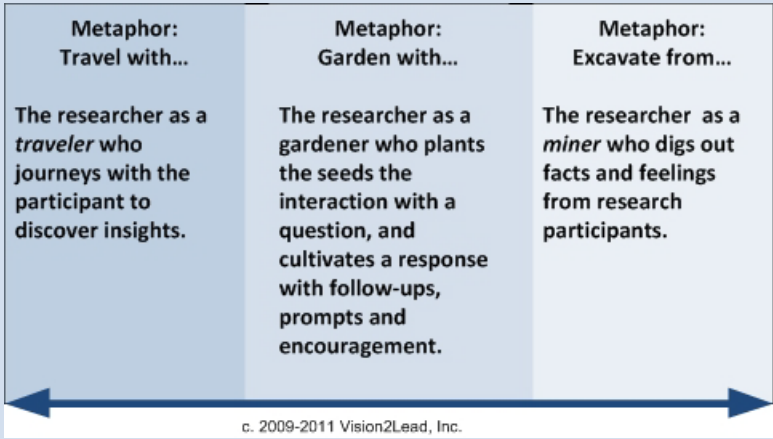| Framework	Key Questions
I. Aligning Purpose and Design	 c. 2009-2011, Vision2Lead, Inc. • Are research purpose, theories and epistemologies, methodologies and methods clearly aligned? • How will the data collected from e-interviews relate to theories? Does the researcher want to explore, prove or generate theory? • Does the researcher offer a compelling rationale for using e-interviews to achieve the research purpose?
II. Choosing E-Interviews for the Study	• Does the researcher provide a compelling reason for using data collected from online interviews? Is the rationale aligned with methodologies, research purpose and questions? • Are online interviews chosen in order to investigate real-world phenomena? • Are online interviews chosen in order to investigate online phenomena?

III. Handling Sampling & Recruiting	• What sampling approaches are appropriate given the purpose of the study and e-interview approach? • How will the researcher assess whether the target population has access to the technology the researchers intends to use, and the capability and willingness to use it as a research participant? • How can the researcher locate credible research participants? How will the researcher verify the identity and age (or other relevant criteria) of research participants recruited online? • How will online recruitment be carried out?
IV. Positioning the Researcher	• Is the researcher positioned as an insider, as one of the actors in the case? Is the researcher looking at *emic* issues, revealed by actors in the case (Stake, 1995)? • Is the researcher positioned as an outsider who brings questions in from outside the case, looking at *etic* issues, (Stake, 1995)? • Can the researcher's role be described as Miner, Traveler (Kvale, 2007; Kvale & Brinkman, 2009) or Gardener (Salmons, 2010)?

Metaphor: Travel with…	Metaphor: Garden with…	Metaphor: Excavate from…
The researcher as a *traveler* who journeys with the participant to discover insights.	The researcher as a gardener who plants the seeds the interaction with a question, and cultivates a response with follow-ups, prompts and encouragement.	The researcher as a *miner* who digs out facts and feelings from research participants.

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The Researcher's Position

Etic — The researcher is outside looking in.

The researcher aims to remove self and biases from data and its collection.

The researcher shares characteristics/ experiences of research phenomena but does not contribute data.

Emic — The researcher is one of the actors in the case.

The researcher aims to immerse self in study and contributes data.

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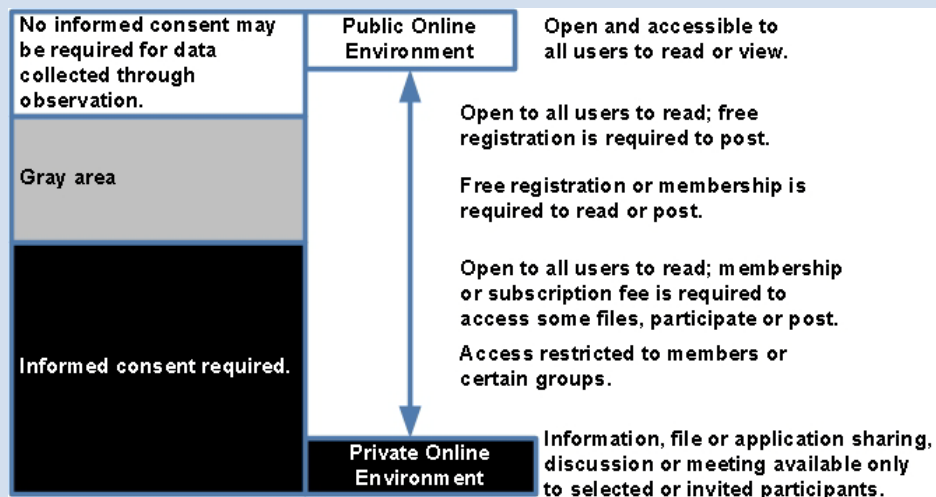|	
V. Determining E-Interview Style(s)	• Does the researcher plan to use structured, semi-structured or unstructured or a combination of styles for the interviews? • How does the researcher align ICT functions, features and/or limitations with the selected e-interview style(s)? **Structured** — Questions with limited choice answers Open-ended questions asked to all participants in the same sequence Same open-ended questions asked in same sequence, with similar follow-up questions and probes **Semi-Structured** — Same open-ended questions asked in same sequence, but with varied follow-up questions and probes Same open-ended questions asked in varied sequence based on responses Interviewer has guide or plan; precise wording or sequence not pre-determined Questions, sequence and topics determined by both interviewer and participant Interviewer suggests broad themes; sequence and topics determined by participant **Unstructured** — Conversation c. 2009-2011 Vision2Lead, Inc.
VI. Selecting ICT & Milieu	• Will the interview use text-based, audio and/or visual communication options? • Where will the interaction fall on the Time-Response Continuum? • Will the interview setting be in a public or private online milieu? • Is the choice of ICT aligned with research purpose, interview style and access/preference of the research participants? No informed consent may be required for data collected through observation. **Public Online Environment** — Open and accessible to all users to read or view. Open to all users to read; free registration is required to post. Gray area Free registration or membership is required to read or post. Open to all users to read; membership or subscription fee is required to access some files, participate or post. Access restricted to members or certain groups. Informed consent required. **Private Online Environment** — Information, file or application sharing, discussion or meeting available only to selected or invited participants. c. 2009-2011 Vision2Lead, Inc.

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	If using visually-oriented ICTs: • If the interview technology has capacity for visual exchange, has the research acknowledged visual nature of interview in the research design and planned for collection and analysis of visual data? • Does the interview entail visual communication, elicitation, and/or collaboration? Will researcher and/or participant provide or generate visual images? • Have permissions for use of visual data been included in the consent agreement?
VII. Conducting the Interview	• Does the researcher have a plan for conducting the interview-- either prepared questions or an interview guide? • Does the researcher have a plan for the 4 interview stages: Opening, Questioning and Guiding, Closing and Following Up? • Does the researcher have a contingency plan in case there are technical difficulties?
VIII. Key Questions: Addressing Ethical Issues	• Has the researcher taken appropriate steps to protect human subjects, and where appropriate, their avatars or online representations? • Has the researcher obtained proper informed consent?

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