

Allen Bevans' Remote Research Recommendations Read

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Tips for effective remote UX research

What research methods can be done remotely (i.e. without in-person human contact)?

Easy

Interviews (via video, voice, chat)
Surveys (online, e.g. Survey Monkey, Typeform, Google Forms)
Usability (e.g. think-aloud with online prototypes; consider tools like usertesting.com, userzoom.com)
Expert reviews (e.g. heuristic analysis, cognitive walkthrough)
Diary studies (e.g. sending participants activity reminders and question prompts)

Tricky, but possible

Focus groups / group discussions (possible with some online discussion tools, but usually requires professional [\$\$\$] research systems)
Home visits (possible with some online diary tools that allow participants to take photos and videos)
Group playtests (possible with more sophisticated player groups, and well-designed protocols)

Hard

In-field observation / ethnography
Participatory workshops
Co-creation exercises
Physical prototype evaluation
Spatial prototype evaluation (e.g. AR)
Wizard of Oz prototypes
Couch co-op playtests

Research planning

- For interviews and usability sessions, practice running them remotely with a partner before running them with your participants. This will help you tighten your timing, rehearse prototype usage, and get used to using your video / voice chat software.
- Remotely pilot your surveys with a partner or friends. Have your pilot participant think-aloud as they complete the survey, to understand how they're interpreting your survey questions. Time other pilot participants filling it out on their own to confirm how long the survey will take your respondents to fill out.
- When in doubt, over-prepare. Make sure scripts and protocols are detailed, specific, and refined.

Conducting research

- Record online video and voice conversations for later review and analysis, but make sure you ask your participant's permission to record.
- Give remote participants a chance to practice using any remote prototypes, handing over mouse/keyboard control, thinking aloud, etc. before beginning the main body of tasks in the session - especially for tasks where timing or think-aloud details are important.
- If partnering with another researcher in a remote interview or usability session, have them take notes with their camera and mic off, after introducing themselves to the participant.

Research analysis

- Video of a session is much easier to record than analyse. Typical video analysis takes 2x - 10x as long as the length of the video you're analysing (e.g. 6 min recording could take 12 to 60 minutes to

analyse). Use a well-prepared session protocol, and a note taker observing the session if possible, to record task success, attempts, failures, and usage patterns during the session, which will accelerate your analysis.

- Plan your survey analysis (whether quantitative, qualitative, or both) as you design your survey. Otherwise you can end up with lots of survey responses, but a harder time understanding what your survey data actually means for the research question / decision you're informing.
- Use collaborative docs, spreadsheets, presentations etc. to work with partners and teammates, take structured notes together during sessions, analyse data after multiple sessions or survey responses, and summarize expert reviews.

Sharing research outcomes

- Practice presenting your research readouts remotely, so you're familiar with how screen-sharing, note views, etc. work as you present.
- Don't read your report word for word during the presentation - practice speaking to the essence of each point in the presentation, and let your audience review the presentation materials in more detail on their own.
- For maximum stakeholder / audience engagement, prepare a presentation version of your research findings that is optimized for speaking to the more important results and discussing the consequences of your research, and share a more detailed reader-oriented version of your report for your stakeholders / audience to read through on their own before or after your presentation.