

# Integrating Online Platforms into Survey Methodological Research

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# The Research Process

Study Design

Recruitment

Data Collection

Data Analysis

# Study Design

## In-Lab Testing

- Small sample sizes
- Qualitative  
(and Quantitative)
- Fixed one-hour session

## Online Testing

- Large sample sizes
- Quantitative  
(and Qualitative)
- Variable task length
- Paradata available

# Recruitment

## In-Lab Testing

- One-on-one outreach
- A lot of staff time
- Manual process is hard to do without bias
- Limited population

## Online Testing

- Posting an ad once or handing the process over to a company
- Quick to do
- Less/Different bias
- Broad reach

# Data Collection

## In-Lab Testing

- Clear your calendar
- Set up room and materials for every participant
- Spend many hours with participants
- Interviewer role

## Online Testing

- Download
- Clean the data

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# Advantages of Online Testing

- Different types of research questions
- Fast(er)
- Collect data from more participants
- Geographic dispersion
- Can target specific groups
  
- Cheap(er)
- Pre-fund research whenever funding is available





# Disadvantages of Online Testing

- Potential frame bias
  - There may also be a bias, though in a different direction, for lab work
- Mode differences
  - May not be possible to test some questions, issues
- Lack of flexibility
  - Shorter tasks, limited attention span
- Fixed protocols and probes
  - Design follow-up probes in advance
  - Limited use of exploratory open-ends

# Takeaways

- Does not replace lab testing but is a useful tool
- Anyone and everyone can use online platforms
- Changes the way we do research



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