Using Qualitative Data Software: An introduction to NVivo

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Overview

- Introduction to NVivo
- Critique
- Possibilities
- Practical, the only way is doing

NVivo

- Three generations of CAQDAS:
  - Text retrieval: lets users recover data where keywords appear in the data
  - Code-and-Retrieve: supports the division of text into segments, attaching codes to the segments, and retrieving segments by code (or combination of codes).
  - Theory-Building: emphasizes relationships between the categories. Helps to develop higher-order classifications and categories, formulate propositions which fit the data and test their applicability, or visualise connections between categories as an aid to conceptualization.

What can it do?

- Organisational tool: Manage data/ideas
- Facilitates accurate and transparent data analysis process and accountability.
- The ability to handle concepts as things, thus to manage ideas, and explore their relations.
- Code-and-Retrieve
- Theory Building with the use of memo tools, queries, coding on live nodes
- Visualisation
- Potential for integration of quantitative/qualitative

What can't it do?

- The software is a tool not a proxy for a valid method of analysis.

- It cannot interpret the data for you? Similar to quantitative research.

- The question that needs to be asked is how much it impacts on the direction of data collection & analysis?

- Neutrality of tools: analogy of a loom

- Inappropriate for certain methods: Discourse, Narrative and Conversation Analysis

Criticism

- Quantification/mechanisation of qualitative data
- Fragmentation of data/ loss of narrative flow
- Distancing from data
- Decontextualistion
- Fetishisation of coding
- Bias towards Grounded Theory

Creeping Quantification

- Can add transparency to the research process but with the danger of empathising statistical criteria of validity and reliability that may be inappropriate to your research.

- Degeneration into searching for patterns

- Offers simple quantitative tools, word, text frequency count. Matrices allow for a qualitative version of cross-tabulations

- Mechanisation of data analysis

Fetishisation of coding

- Dominance of code-and-retrieve to exclusion of other methods

- Increased reliance on coding and validation of patterns

- Coding becomes an end to itself instead of gaining a higher level of interpretation

- Abstracting or adding complexity?

- Mapping the woods or cutting down trees? (Silverman: 2007)

Fragmentation/Decontextualistion

- Rapid coding allows us to identify repeated patterns, themes, concepts, categories etc.

- But does it allow us to understand how meaning is constructed in conversations between individuals or narrative structure.

- Early code-and-retrieve software were heavily criticised for taking data out of context. However this is also a problem for conventional manual methods.

Distance or closeness

- Tactile/digital divide

- Qualitative analysis involves both closeness and distance.

- Too much closeness: 'coding trap' shuts down abstraction and analysis

- Allows cognitive distance from the process of analysis: audit trail.

Grounded Theory

- NVivo seen to have an elective affinity with grounded theory.

- The central goal is categorization –the discovery, construction and development of concepts.

- Ease of coding/linking to memos & annotations/ hierarchial node trees/coding-on

- Facilitates but does not guarantee theory development or coherence with particular method.

Code-and-Retrieve

- Allows rapid coding of large amounts of data- can use queries to detect patterns and rapidly code

- Coding system in which researcher's evolving knowledge about the data is stored in **nodes** which retain the link to the source data

- Iterative process of recoding through coding on live nodes: 'Coding-on'.

Queries

- Allows code-based theory-building
- Expands ways of asking questions about coding and sources
- Saves and reuses the product of queries
- Results can be coded: System closure
- Allows searches that drives rather than ends enquiry
- Coding that provides data for more analysis.

Cantle report

Shared Futures

about activity also areas' authors been being between both building change citizenship clearly cohesive community councils culture' develops differing diversity' equally ethnic faith from funds future governments groups having housing important including integration issues level locally making many migrants more nations need opportunity organisations other part particular people places police policy programmes promote provide publicly recommending reports responsive rights schools services sharing should socially some support them those were what where which works' would young

Importation of demographic data

- Classification tables allow for importation of demographic data
- Matrix queries allow the researcher to systematically look at differences amongst participants, how participants construct meaning differently according to various attributes, demographics but also sequences.
- Can compare coded text by attributes of cases

Visualation

- Increases accessibility of ideas
- Excellent exploratory tool to rapidly identify key concepts
- Can be combined with coding to rapidly code large amounts of data
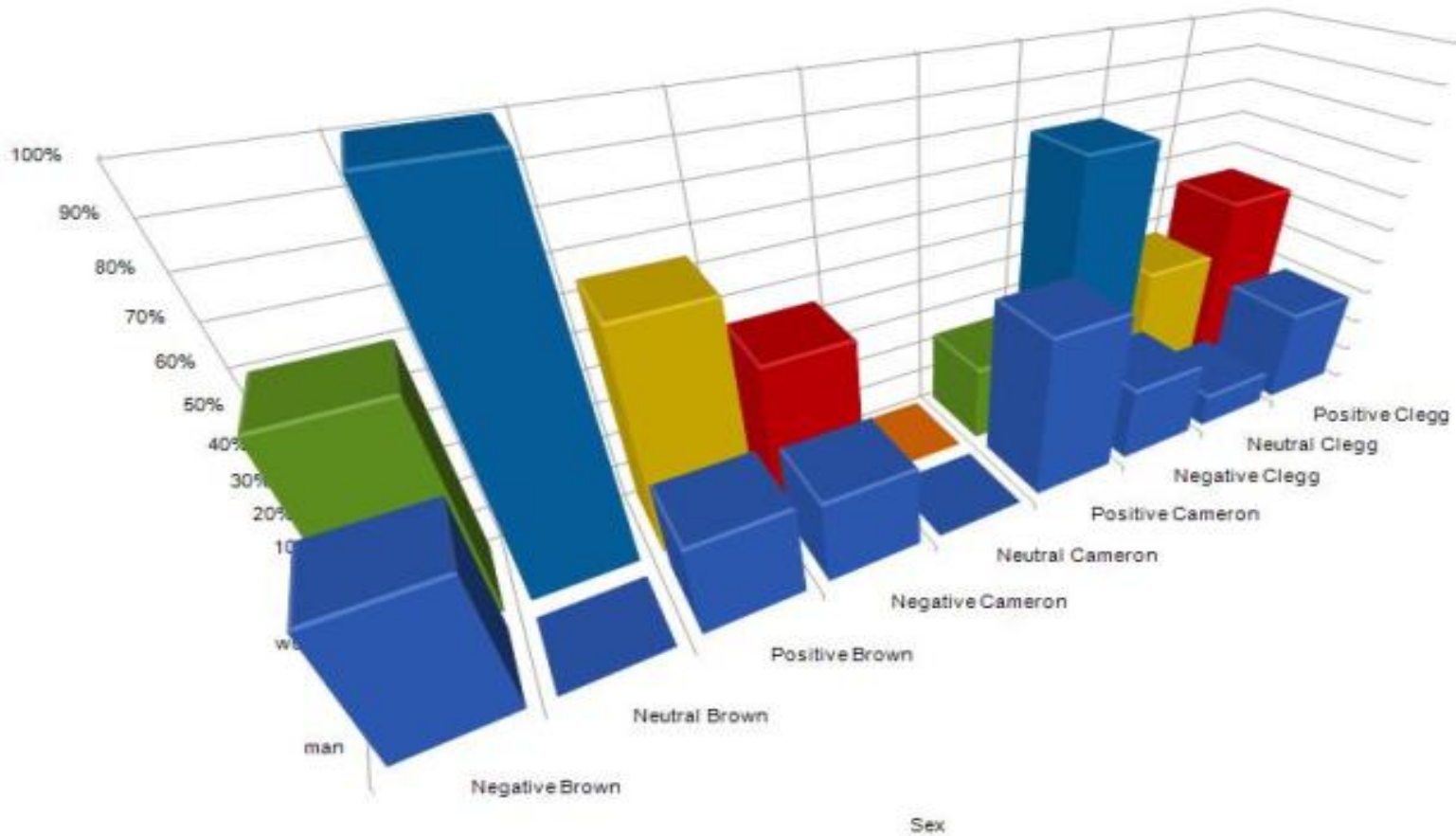- Understanding of relationships and model building

Tree maps

Nodes compared by number of coding references

Clegg		Brown		Cameron	
Positive	Neutral	Negative		Negative	
	Negative	Positive	Neutral	Positive	

Charts but quantification?

Nodes - Coding by Alias:Sex

Beyond coding

- **7 types of analysis which NVivo can facilitate:**
  - Constant Comparison
  - Classical Content
  - Keyword in context
  - Word count
  - Domain analysis: Symbols, the cover term, the included term
  - Taxonomic analysis
  - Componential analysis (Leech,N: 2001)

Overview

- ❑ Nvivo Workspace
- ❑ Importing sources
- ❑ Downloading word documents from wintersresearch.wordpress.com
- ❑ Importing .doc into NVivo
- ❑ Open coding reading of transcripts
- ❑ Queries

Resources/Methodological

- http://www.restore.ac.uk/lboro/research/software/caqdas_primer.php Very Critical

- Special Issue: *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, 2002, Vol. 5, (3)

- Bringer, J: Using Computer-Assisted Qualitative Data Analysis Software (CAQDAS) to Develop a Grounded Theory Project. *Qualitative Research*, 2004, Vol 4, (2)

- Online QDA at http://onlineqda.hud.ac.uk/

Practical

- See Nvivo 9 Getting Started + free 30 day trial! at http://www.qsrinternational.com/#tab_you

- Bazely, P (2007) Qualitative Data Analysis with Nvivo (Sage)

- CAQDAS Network at http://www.surrey.ac.uk/sociology/research/researchcentres/caqdas/