Immersion in Social Media Research: The Netnographic Path

UBCO-ATLAS.ti-Indiana University - Insights in Qualitative Methodology webinar series

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- "it is difficult to describe yourself doing "anthropological research" if you are sitting at a computer and typing back and forth with invisible people" (Susan Tratner 2016,"efieldnotes", p. 178)

Our Agenda

1. Adapting ethnography
2. The sticking points
3. How this adaptation has been addressed in the literature
4. What netnography is and how it addresses this adaptation differently
5. The concept of immersion
6. The immersion journal
7. A brief, current example
8. Q&A/ Discussion

eth·nog·ra·phy: (ĕth·nŏg'rə·fē)

noun. "...a cocktail of methodologies....that share the assumption that personal engagement with the subject is the key to understanding a particular culture or social setting. Participation-observation is the most common component of this cocktail, but interviews, conversational and discourse analysis, documentary analysis, film and photography all have their place in the ethnographer's repertoire. Description resides at the core of the ethnography and however this description is constructed it is the intense meaning of social life from the everyday perspective of group members that is sought."

-Dick Hobbs in V. Jupp (2006), Sage Dictionary of Social Research Methods, p. 101

th·nog'ra·pher n.,   eth'no·graph'ic (ĕth'nə-grāf'   eth·nog'ra·pher n.,   eth'no·graph'ic (ĕth'nə-grāf'ĭk),   eth·nog'ra·pher n.,   eth'no·graph'ic (ĕth'nə-grāf'ĭk),
th'no·graph'i·cal adj.,   eth'no·graph'i·cal·ly adv.   eth'no·graph'i·cal adj.,   eth'no·graph'i·cal·ly adv.   eth'no·graph'i·cal adj.,   eth'no·graph'i·cal·ly adv.

Karen O'Reilly

Professorial
Research Fellow,
Goldsmiths,
University of London

ethnographic
methods

second edition
karen o'reilly
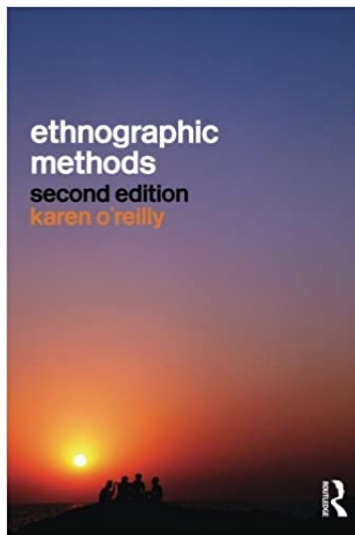
Ethnography: a critical definition for practice

Ethnography is then more a theory about how research should be conducted than a recipe for techniques that can be employed. It draws on a family of methods, usually including participant observation, in-depth interviews and conversations.

It gains its understanding of the social world through involvement in the daily practice of human agents, and it involves immersion in the context, the building of trust and rapport with agents, both phenomenological and hermeneutic interpretations, and recognition of the complexity of the social world. It does not attempt to reduce this complexity to a few statistical or typological representations. It is reflexive about the role of the researcher and the messiness of the research process. Also, if it is faithful to practice theory, then it will ensure that it employs a macro approach to gain knowledge of the wider context of action, as well as maintaining a close eye on the various ways that social structures are taking effect within and through agents in the practice of daily life.

Ethnography → ONLINE ETHNOGRAPHY

Ethnographic Method

Adapted Methods

✦ **Naturalistic**

✦ **Immersive**

✦ **Multiple Method**

✦ **Rich/thick Description**

DECENTERING

DIGITIZING

DISEMBODYING

DECONTEXTUALIZING

DEEPENING

Ethnography

Ethnographic Method

+ Naturalistic
+ Immersive
+ Multiple Method
+ Rich/thick Description

ONLINE ETHNOGRAPHY

Adapted Methods
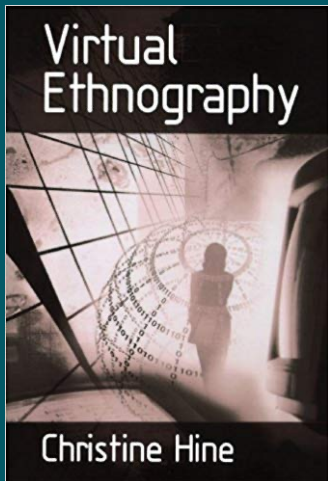
This text "is not, however, straightforwardly a 'how to do it' guide. I how that the book will contain some provocative an useful ideas. . .some intriguing possibilities for taking an ethnographic approach to the Internet. Part of my argument, however, is that ethnography is strengthened by the lack of recipes for doing it. From the first, ethnographers have resisted giving guidelines for how it should be done. Ethnography is a lived craft rather than a protocol which can be separated from the particular study or the person carrying it out."

Christine Hine (2000) Virtual Ethnography, p. 13

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Professor of Sociology

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Digital Ethnography (Pink 2016, 162)

- Our approach has been to focus on 'digital ethnography practice that takes as its starting point the idea that digital media and technologies are part of the everyday and more spectacular worlds that people inhabit'. This has meant taking what we have called ==a non-digital-centric approach to the digital, which also acknowledges the 'digital intangible'==—those elements of digital environments or worlds that we can sense but not necessarily see, as well as those aspects that researchers cannot see or sense until they are made aware of them by research participants. As such, we are interested in 'the relationship between digital, sensory, atmospheric and material elements of our environments'. Therefore, digital ethnography is not a 'tool box' method that can be applied directly in an already existing format to a research problem or question. Instead, it is ==an approach to ethnography that involves being concerned with how the 'digital has become part of the material, sensory and social worlds we inhabit, and what the implications are for ethnographic research practice'== (Pink et al. 2016, p. 7).

"Appnography" Approach (Cousineau, Oakes, and Johnson 2019)

- The uniqueness of GSNAs (geo-social networking applications, like Tinder ands Grindr) requires that we consider carefully the approach that we take in choosing to study them. What follows are considerations that we propose for the queering of digital ethnography to meet the needs of this particular research space, beginning with how we must understand the intertwined nature of digital and "real". This is followed by a discussion of the power and influence of profiles on users and researchers, the importance of space and place when engaged with GSNAs, and, finally, the significance of both context and temporality on research decisions and practices.

Five Key Challenges of Adapting Emplaced Ethnography to Social Media Culture

Field: Where is "The Field" Behind the Screen? What is the "group"? What are the "members"? What even are the cultures and communities we study?

Ethics: How can We Ethically Research while Being a Fly on The wall?

Participation: What is an appropriate form of engagement through which to gain the necessary cultural depth?

Data: How do we handle the change in the type of information, and the massive quantities that may be available?

Procedure: What, exactly, are the proper operations to perform when conducting ethnographic research in these new social spaces?

Netnography Answers the Challenges of Adapting Emplaced Ethnography to Social Media Culture

Field: Our field sites are media and usually platforms, and as contexts must be considered in relation to their affordances, algorithms, and other important elements

Ethics: New ethical rules regarding disclosure, informed consent, and research representation are required

Participation: Methods must account for a range of participative options, from engaged media readership to active interviewing and other interaction

Data: Focus on broad sensemaking cultural scans followed by judicious collection of meaningful "deep" data

Procedure: Provide specific sets of flexibly operations to perform when conducting ethnographic research in these new social spaces, in order to ensure rigor and comparability.
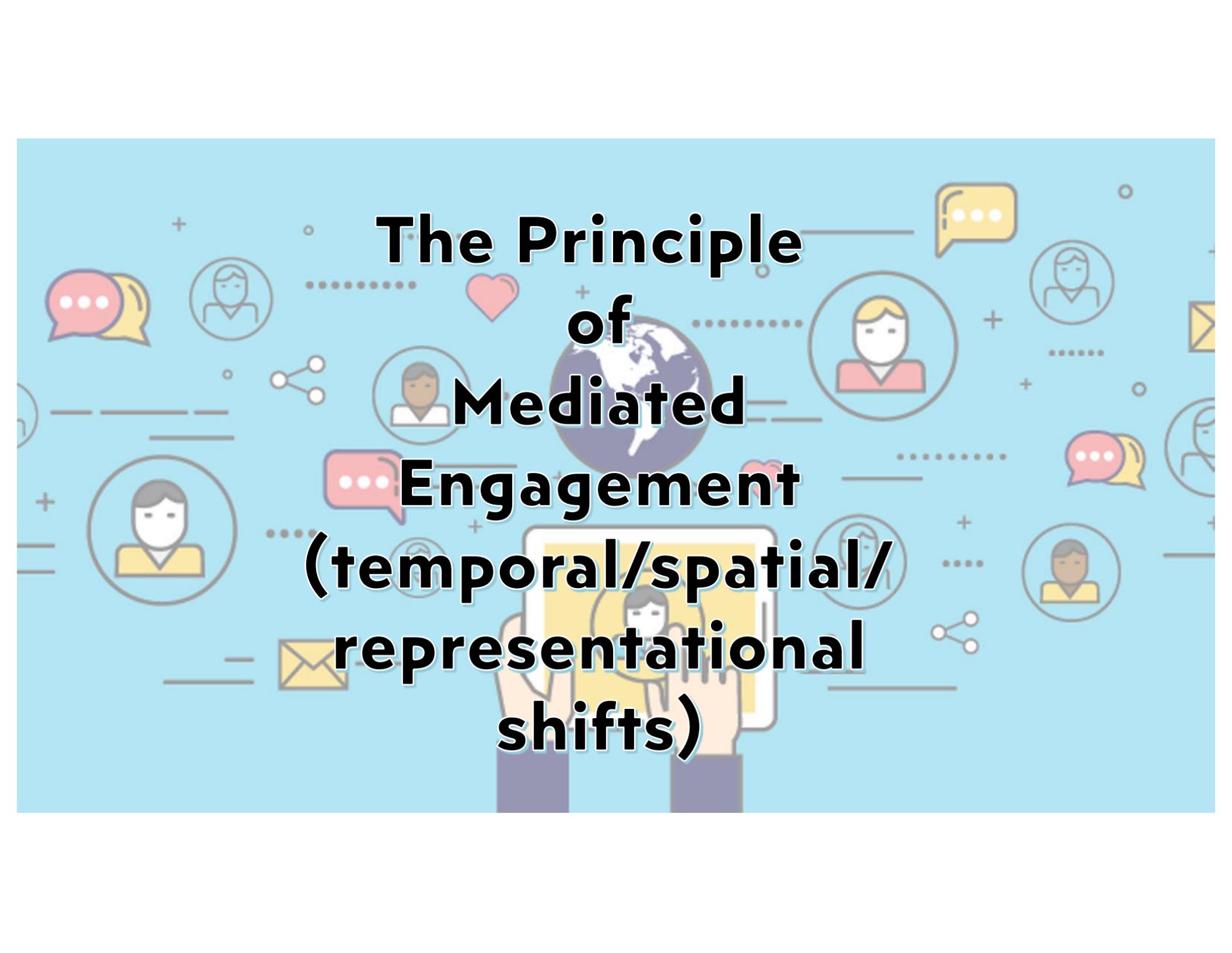
Stage 1: Problem Definition
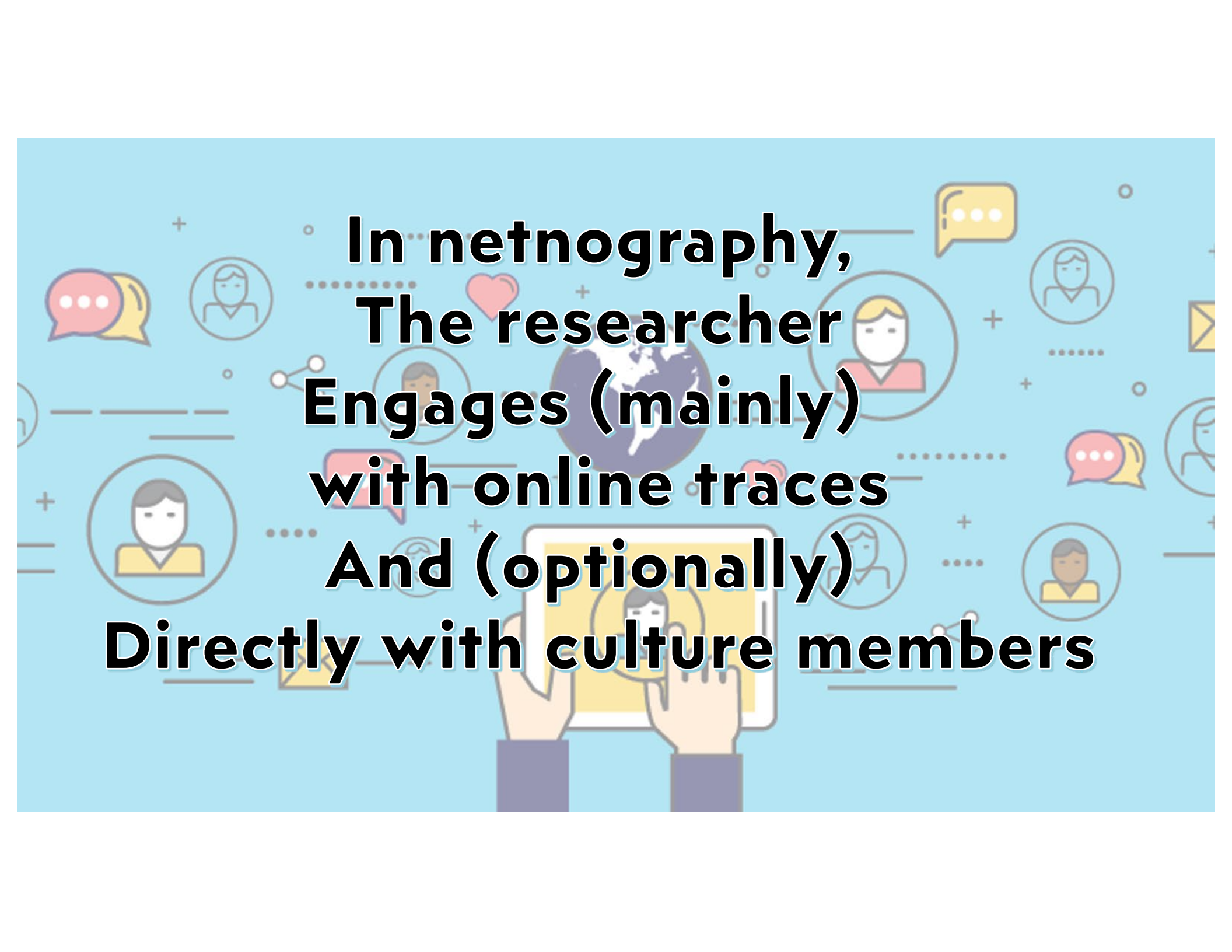
Stage 2: Data Collection

Stage 3: Data Integration

Stage 4: Research Communication

initiation

investigation

interaction

immersion

integration

incarnation
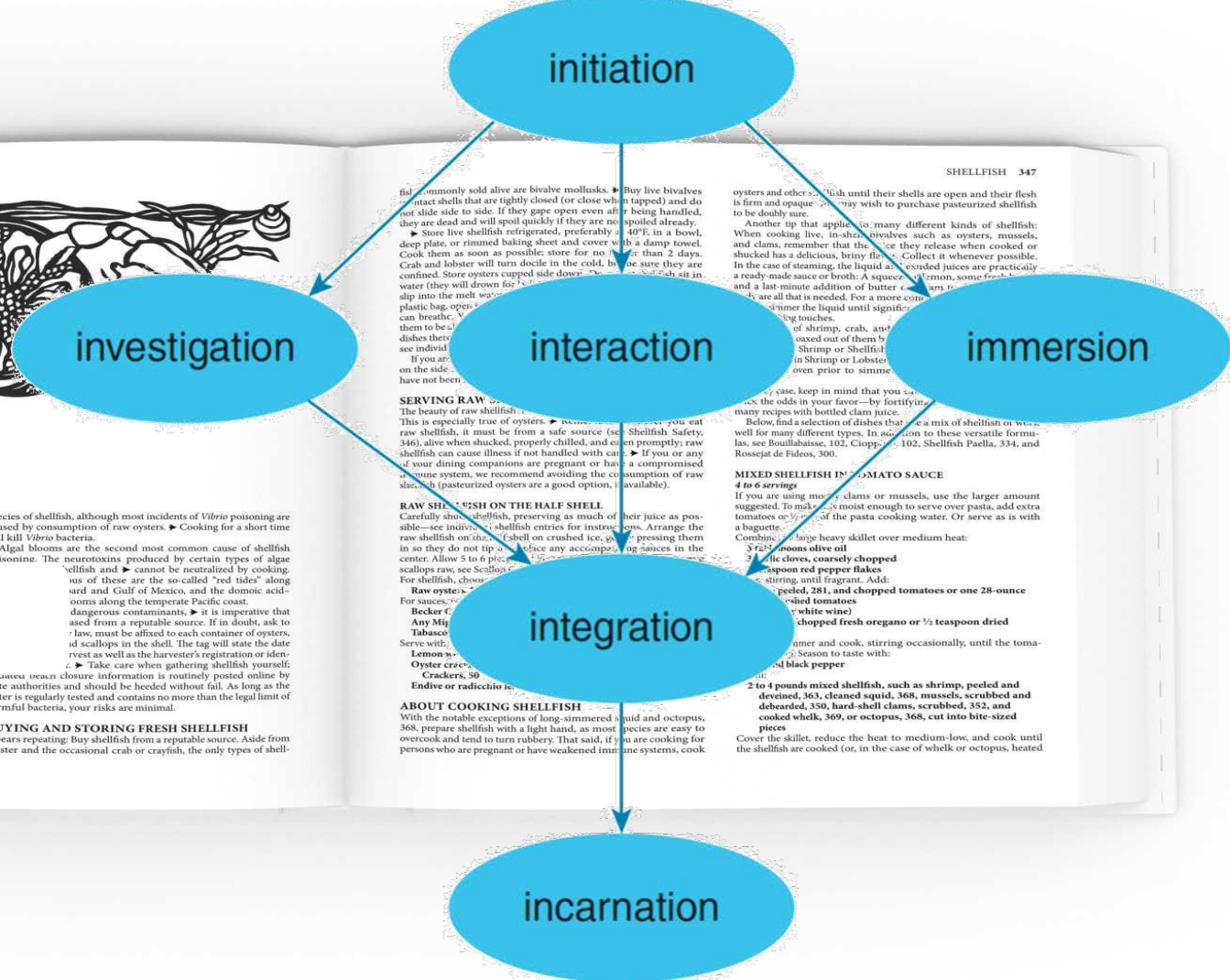
The Principle
of
Mediated
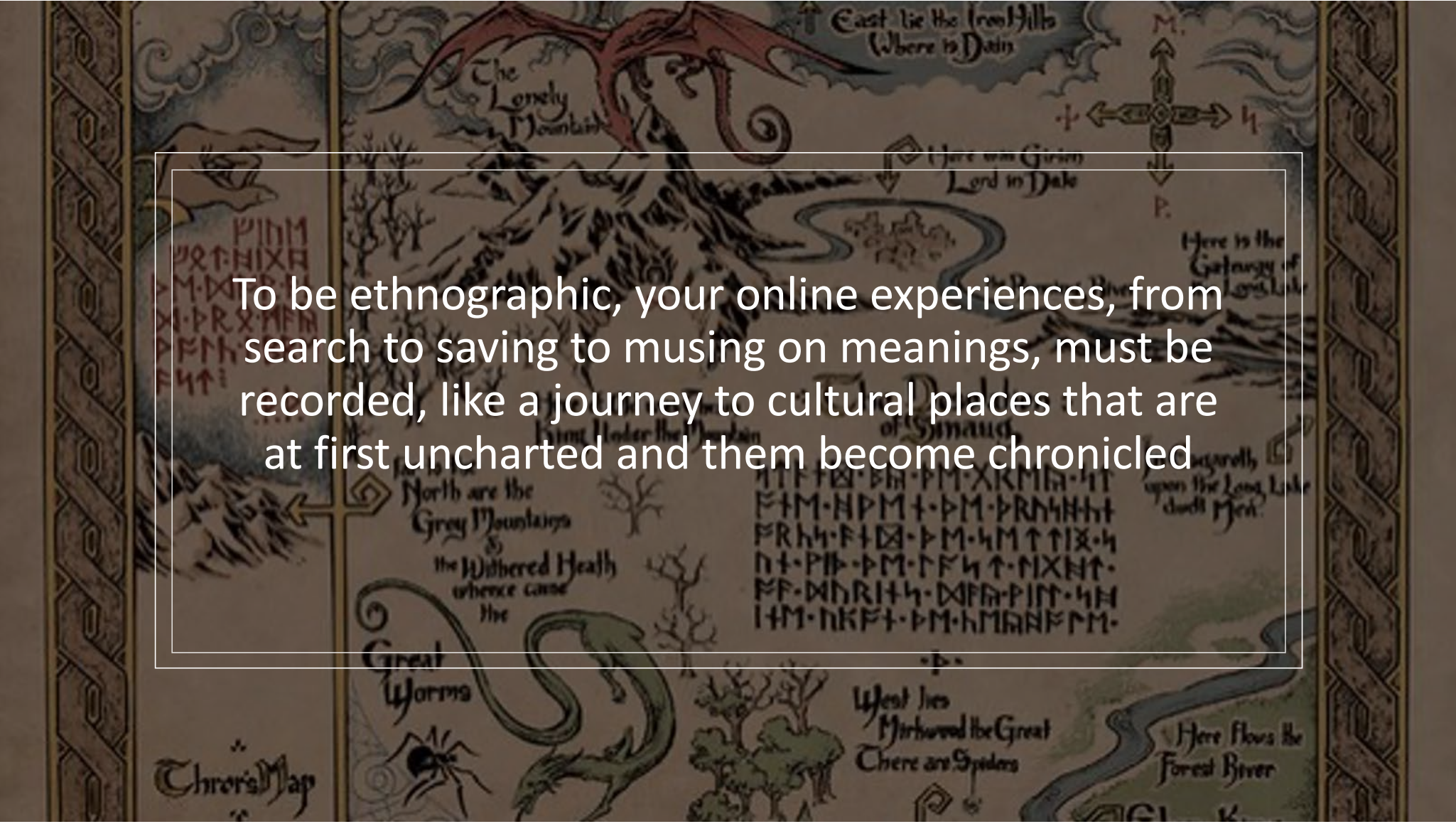Engagement
(temporal/spatial/
representational
shifts)

In netnography,
The researcher
Engages (mainly)
with online traces
And (optionally)
Directly with culture members

Types of Engagement

- Platform engagement
- Historical engagement
- Cultural engagement
- Intellectual engagement
- Emotional engagement
- Social engagement

To be ethnographic, your online experiences, from search to saving to musing on meanings, must be recorded, like a journey to cultural places that are at first uncharted and them become chronicled

And that means becoming immersed over time, in real time, on human time, in these communications

Instead, the key to immersion is your immersion journal

In netnography, I recommend keeping the journal as a PowerPoint (or other presentation) file

Immersion journal

Initially, it should chronicle your attempts at cultural wayfinding, mapmaking, or reconnoitering

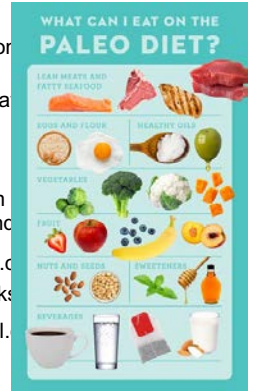Recording the process of mapping out the social media territory of the study

Mapmaking of Food and Cooking On Social Media

Economical and Fast

forums.web...

...dhelp.org

Health and Wellness

...com

simplelivingforum.net

beprepared...

...com

survivalistb...

...hclinic.com

drmcdougall.com

...s.net

diabeticconnect.com

teambeachbody.com

Fitness

preparedsociety.c...

americanpreppers...

forum.bodybuilding.com

www.homesteadingtoday.com

community.stretcher.com

ask.metafilter.com

answers.ask.com

Forum.earlyretirementextreme.com

clippings.gardenweb.com

askville.amazon.com

www.englishforum.ch

Home

backwoodshome.com

thesurvivalpodcast.com

www.city-da...

General

answerbag.com

forums.gardenweb.com

forums.whirlpool.net.au

forums.moneysavingexpert.com

Dooyoo.co.uk

answers.yahoo.com

http://www.disboards.com/

boards.straightdope.com

lowcarber.org

dadamo.com

lowcarbfriend...

...com

renewedreflections.com

www.cookingclub.com

sparkpeople.com

caloriecount.about.c...

www.roadfood.com

allrecipes.com

weightwatchers.com

Diet

3fatchicks...

chocolateandzucchini.com

caloriesperhour.com

myfitnesspal...

Cooking & Recipes

food.com

www.visajourney.com

www.peruanosenusa.net

elanaspantry.com

forums.miamibeach411.com

beinglatino.us/

hispanickitchen.com

...recipes.com

cooking.stackexchange.com

www.mequieroir.com

mamaslatinas.com

orgullosa.com/

querricavida.com/

www....

www.dcurbanmom.com

foro.forosmexico.c...

...com

cafemom.com

www.mothering.com

Mukbang

forums.vogue.com.au

rawfoodsupport.com

...renting

imamother.com

...malenetwork.com

hispanic.co...

Food Porn

www.jamieoliver.com

...b...

...com

...vivemejor.com/

foro.univision.c...

www.deliaonline.com

N...

espanol.answers.yahoo.com

www.marksdailyapple.com

...ntialbal...

...randblade.com

TikTok Videos

com...

Virtual Relationships

Virtual Cooking

CULTURE   PLAYSTATION   PC

2 🗨

The Sims 4 players are making shrines for Baby Yoda, and now I want one too

This is the way

By **Nicole Carpenter** | **@sweetpotatoes** | Dec 30, 2019, 2:24pm EST

f   🐦   ↗ SHARE

Image: Maxis/Electronic Arts via Polygon

Most Read

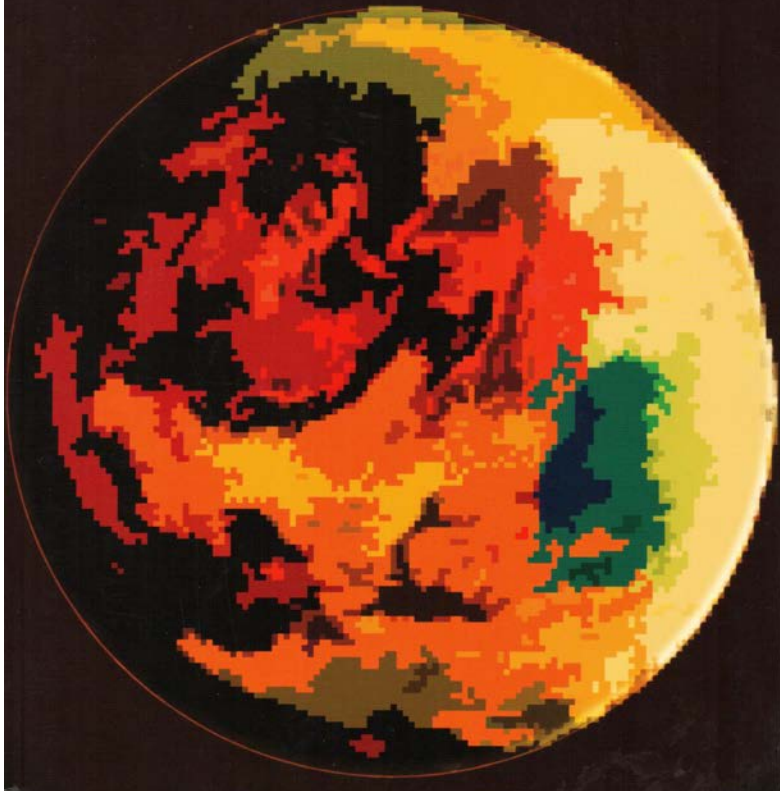16 great movies leaving Netflix, Hulu, and

The key is in Recording

- The chronicling of the questioner's quest for answers, emphasizing the quest for and discovery of "deep data"; this means judicious data collection, selective and precise.

Susan Tratner (2016)

- "The major portion of my fieldnotes is what could be called extended scratchnotes: my short descriptions and response recorded while following online message board postings, with a direct URL to a message thread" (p. 182)
- "many complete thread posts are included in my fieldnotes" (p. 184)
- "I create a new, more complete Microsoft Word document for each theme or topic, combining scratchnotes, links, and accompanying descriptions, and reflections from headnotes" (p. 184)
- "All of this results in four different sets of extended scratchnotes entered on four different devices"(p. 186)

Immersion = Engaged Data Collection Operations

Reconnoitering: scouting out and mapping the relevant social media territory

Recording: chronicling the quest for answers

Researching: capturing the play of ideas and data, observation and conceptual frames

Reflecting: capturing the researcher's personal experiences of social media

- Write as yourself
- First person
- The "researcher-as-instrument"
- Capture everything you find interesting
- Thoughts, emotion, connections, intuition, what surprised you, what scared you, what made you laugh
- The immersion journal is also human story
- It is (part of) your story

рахмат danke 謝謝 spas ngiyabonga teşekkür ederim

Баярлалаа спасибо faafetai lava mersi kia ora barka welalin tack misaotra matondo tapadh leat mahalo

kiitos dankie maururu vinaka спасибі blagodaram dank je paldies grazzi хвала

enkosi bedankt nanni nandri dhanyavad hvala köszönöm thank you akun dankon ačiū gracias asante manana

gràcie bayarlalaa dziękuję chnorakaloutioun gratias ago gràcies sulpáy go raibh maith agat djiere dieuf ʈau mochchakkeram murakoze tenki obrigada

sobodi dĕkuji sagolun sukriya kop khun krap ţaïku дякую mamnun

obrigado mèsi najis tuke ありがとう tanemirt grazie arigatô takk dakujem trugarez

didi madloba kam sah hamnida rahmat terima kasih rahmet diolch dhanyavadagalu shukriya merce мерси

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