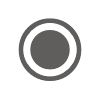
**Transcript**

July 8, 2025, 6:05PM

 **Brian Mills** started transcription

 **Todd Helmus** 0:03  
Questions were interested in asking people.  
Thanks Brian.  
Include so please start like your name.  
Obviously interested in the area, topical areas that you work in and all interested.  
Also interested in the general quiver of research methods and approaches that you apply.  
So Todd Helmis, I do mostly national security work information research, information integrity, disinformation, terrorism.  
A lot of my work focuses on qualitative studies, interviews, literature reviews. I think as a lot of people do, but then also some social media analytics to extent that we have do those anymore and we don't do a lot of social media analytics over these days, so that.  
That's sort of my background, Brian.  
You want to introduce yourself.

 **Brian Mills** 0:54  
I'm a PhD student here and I'm doing social network analysis and AI and coding and social and behavioral science stuff.

 **Todd Helmus** 1:02  
OK, awesome. I'm gonna just. I'm gonna start listing names as I see them on my screen.  
So we'll start with you, John. Hollywood.

 **John Hollywood** 1:08  
Hi, I'm John Hollywood.  
I'm a senior operations researcher working on a number of things over over my career at Rand. Most recently Homeland Security.  
Prevention, protection against mass attacks on the public, as well as a whole bunch of technology assessments. Also a lot of what I call business process engineering.  
Research techniques mix of quantitative modeling.  
Many different kinds of for spreadsheets going up to our programming.  
Into qualitative analysis interviews.  
Literature reviews I'd say for me when I'm doing literature reviews, it's usually for specific purpose, often for the fore mentioned business process engineering.  
So I'm interested in getting the top facts, the top standards, the top practices out.  
I'm not looking to boil the ocean, as one does in a typical literature review.  
We'll talk about that in a little bit probably.

 **Todd Helmus** 2:09  
All right, cool. Yeah. Thanks, John. Tim.

 **Timothy Gulden** 2:12  
Hey Tim golden.  
I'm a senior policy researcher.  
Been here for about 11 years or something.  
I well have worked across, I think all the divisions, but most recently was 100% in Hock on the FEMA, the the ill-fated FEMA COVID project.  
So always looking for things to do right now.

 **Todd Helmus** 2:33  
Yeah.

 **Timothy Gulden** 2:35  
Yeah, I'm. I'm trying to trying to.  
I knew I was in trouble getting haven't gotten completely undiversified.  
And then that that project went away very suddenly.  
Scrambling a little bit, but.  
I've definitely jumped into the AI thing with both feet. I led the first ask Rand effort with Liang Zhang and and.  
Ed Geist.  
And have been recently working with Aaron Brown and Aaron Ryan and Aaron Frank on doing agent based models that are powered by LLM's have been doing some interesting I guess vibe coding project doing like.  
Real software development with with AIA, lot of AI assistance and I'm I'm kinda becoming trying to become a a really a prompt whisper trying to come up with a ways to get AI to really responsibly. Do you know to do to not have a word processor but have.  
An idea processor and and just how much? How far can I push it to make it do things?  
With the spirit of, you know, being scientists, you know, I wanna see whether this works.  
I'm not trying to save myself work, I'm trying to understand it.  
So, but yeah, and I'm really active in the computational Social Sciences Society of the Americas.  
Past president still on the board. And so that's a a conference that I'm I'm a big part of every year.  
So I don't know sampling.

 **Todd Helmus** 4:01  
Awesome. Thanks Tim. Elaine.

 **Elaine Wang** 4:05  
Hi, a senior policy researcher.  
I work primarily in education.  
K12 education and family and child policies.  
I am qualitative researcher by trade, so interviews, focus groups, observations.  
I also don't specialize, but I've leveraged social network techniques, GIS and surveys.

 **Todd Helmus** 4:30  
Awesome. Thank you, Elaine. Hi, Keith.

 **Keith Crane** 4:36  
Keith Crandom, a senior economist here at the third time at Rand I came back about two years ago.  
Previously had been the science Technology Policy Institute for six years after leaving Rand at 2016.  
I work on a pretty broad spectrum of stuff and I came back.  
I Co LED a project from Puerto Rico where we had 150 of you guys out there working with us, looking at health, education, economics, things like that.  
At over the last year worked on critical minerals.  
I used to run the environment energy program when we had. When it ran, do a lot of work on China and Russia, Ukraine and areas like that.  
I lot of the techniques I do a lot of industry studies, so I use small data sets looking at sales profits, look at annual reports.  
And also for.  
Currently do his work on sanctions using trade data, so these are pretty discrete step sets that are easily handled in Excel.  
And then I do find I use AI.  
When I I get in Google to look for information about companies or current developments so.  
So we have that the new Google AI stuff is a little more detailed than the old Google, but that's about it.

 **Todd Helmus** 6:05  
All right.  
Thanks, Keith. Hi, Amy.

 **Amy Shearer** 6:11  
Hi folks.  
Amy scherer.  
I'm a community psychologist by training full behavioral scientist Bennett Rands. Depending on when you start counting about 10 years.  
I primarily work on implementation science and program evaluation related projects, usually in the realm of Community mental health.  
So a lot of what I'm doing is either direct program evaluation, helping organizations to evaluate their.  
Policies or initiatives or doing a lot of technical assistance and training work, often using the Rand, getting to outcomes package to help organizations essentially build their capacity to implement and evaluate their own programs.  
I worked probably across all of the divisions at this point.  
And pertaining specifically to AI methods, I'm currently working with Dmitry Kojakov.  
On expert lens projects where we use AI now to analyze a lot of the the participant feedback that we get from that and generate discussion questions and kind of plug that into the expert lens program as well, I'm really interested in thinking about how we can loop in.  
AI methods to the getting to outcomes package specifically.  
I recently helped design basically the web tool that is now the automatic version of GTO that folks can go in and enter their information.  
But I think it could be dramatically enhanced by AI.  
So go ahead.

 **Todd Helmus** 7:42  
Interesting.  
Interesting. I I love the GTL work, so that's great.

 **Amy Shearer** 7:48  
Yeah, I think that would be a really cool application of it.  
I mean, it's what we're doing for expert lens now.  
So I think we could do that for G.  
Two other methods I use.  
I'm I'm a mixed methodologist, but primarily qualitative these days.  
Interviews focus groups have done some survey work as well.

 **Todd Helmus** 8:04  
And can you can you?

 **Keith Crane** 8:05  
That's GTU, yeah.

 **Todd Helmus** 8:05  
Go ahead, Keith.

 **Amy Shearer** 8:08  
Oh, sorry.

 **Keith Crane** 8:08  
What is ttu? What is GTO again?

 **Amy Shearer** 8:11  
Yeah, GTO is.  
It's getting to outcomes.  
It's this package that Rand.  
It's a process that Rand owns.  
It's like a ten step process that has specific tools and steps within it that's designed to help organizations like achieve their outcomes better than they would if they planned and implemented a program on their own.  
So it walks an organization through picking an evidence based or, well, doing a needs assessment, picking an evidence based practice, adapting it to fit designing and evaluation plan and looking at CQI and sustainability as well.

 **Todd Helmus** 8:43  
And what is? Can you? Can you get to Eunice in a quick second?  
But you, you, you just, you just you mentioned expert lens. Can you just sort of what is that real quick?

 **Amy Shearer** 8:52  
Yeah, expert lens is an expert solicitation method.  
It's another method that Rand owns. Essentially, Dmitry Kojakov is is the person for expert lens that leads everything there.  
It's depending on how you design it. It's a three round process.  
For these days, online focus groups so you in round one you kind of get everyone to respond to a series of prompts. Then we take the data back, we generate it into.  
A breakdown of how folks responded and rated various items. We show that to participants who get them to react to it.  
See if they change their votes on various things.

 **Todd Helmus** 9:31  
OK.

 **Amy Shearer** 9:33  
Yeah.

 **Todd Helmus** 9:33  
All right. Interesting.  
Delphine method yeah.

 **Amy Shearer** 9:36  
Yeah, it's a Delphi method.  
Thank you.  
Yeah, exactly.

 **Todd Helmus** 9:39  
Hi, Eunice.

 **Eunice Wong** 9:41  
Hello. Hi everyone.  
I'm trained as a clinical psychologist, senior behavioral scientist, and a lot of work in the behavioral health space, both civilian and in the military, in terms of methods. I'm also a mixed methods researcher. So on the quantitative side, randomized control trials, a lot of program evaluations, a pre.  
Post as well as population based studies trying to follow things throughout time.  
Longitudinal studies qualitative everything. Focus groups, individual interviews, observation studies.  
And I've also started to do some evidence synthesis.  
Work as well. And in terms of AI.  
So I've been.  
I've been trying some things.  
The most recent thing is that I have to see how it went, but I used whisper for.  
We recorded these homilies as part of this parish based intervention that were in Spanish.  
So I just had whisper transcribe the homilies in Spanish and I didn't know it could do that.  
So that was super convenient.  
And then just trying to see everywhere where we were looking at using Muse for qualitative interviews.  
But haven't just got oriented to it, but haven't actually used it yet.  
So that's me.

 **Todd Helmus** 11:15  
OK, awesome. Thank you, Yunus.  
Alright, so I'm hearing that.  
Just thinking through the different methods that people talk through RCTs, behavioral health sounds like a lot of folks are doing qualitative interviews.  
I imagine most of you do literature reviews on one level or another, or work that could be construed as a literature review.  
Or at least bringing document reviews together and then as well as quantitative work as well.  
So we'll sort of talk through a lot of those. I wanna. I wanna start by asking a question that probably doesn't have a real answer to it.  
But I'm curious just to how people respond to this.  
You talked about a little bit about what methods you use, but I'm just curious if you think broadly about the RAN landscape and and the various approaches that are used at ran that you use as well other methods that you think of as critically important or are all?  
Methods.  
Equal or some methods, particularly high payoff.

 **Timothy Gulden** 12:24  
I mean, there are some methods are so fundamental to the way research has been done for the last, you know, 50 years that there you don't even think about it anymore.  
You know, linear regression.  
That's you can't. Can't live without linear regression.  
It almost doesn't.  
Almost doesn't count as a method anymore. You know when.  
When my dad was working at his dissertation.  
When I was born, it was super advanced and I, you know, he he's freaked out by how trivial it is now.  
So I think it's more not so much about, it's about how frequently used, how generalizable methods are.  
You know, making sense of a big pile of interviews. I feel like we do that.  
All of us do that all the time and that sense making does have a fair amount of commonality to it.  
That seems generalizable, and there are some efforts to do that.  
Cleaning data.  
Anonymizing data there are some key things that just happen a lot when you get to like anonymizing data that's maybe 510% of projects run wide, which is a lot, but it's not as much as making well synthesizing literature. You know that's every single project, so that.

 **Todd Helmus** 13:45  
Hmm.

 **Timothy Gulden** 13:46  
That seems like the focus the the spectrum seems like what percentage of projects?  
Does this method get used on?

 **Todd Helmus** 13:53  
So you need to make your sense.  
Important is can be construed as as frequency or the prevalence right of those of those of those methods.

 **Timothy Gulden** 14:01  
I think that's the dimension that seems like it's most the most important dimension. I mean, I guess there's also a measure of if you do it well, the project succeeds.  
If you do it badly, the project fails.  
There's kind of a criticality measure.  
You can come up with also.  
That's kind of orthogonal to the frequency measure.

 **Todd Helmus** 14:17  
Criticality or complexity complexity.

 **Timothy Gulden** 14:18  
Probably come up with a couple more.  
Well, I think criticality.  
I think like I feel like some projects.  
I've done the literature review.  
Happens because there needs to be a literature review, but you know the sponsor knows what they want.  
They know why they want it.  
I understand what they need.  
You know, we just need to do what they need and there kind of needs to be a literature review just because it's research and there always does.  
But it's not really critical to the project succeeding or not.

 **Todd Helmus** 14:48  
And you can do it really badly and and people aren't gonna care.

 **Timothy Gulden** 14:49  
Other things.  
And people just wouldn't care.  
He just wouldn't read that part.  
Whereas if you do your, if you do your regressions badly, or if you if you use AI synthesis in a way that's biased, you know you produce a result that is misleadingly wrong.  
And it would be better if you had done the study at all.

 **Todd Helmus** 15:09  
Interesting. Interesting, Eunice.

 **Elaine Wang** 15:16  
We get mistaken for each other, Elaine.

 **Todd Helmus** 15:16  
That you just.  
Oh, well, I'm sorry, Elaine.

 **Elaine Wang** 15:21  
That's OK.  
I don't even know if this answers your question, but my mind goes to things that we wish we could do that we just don't do as much because it costs so much or it's intensive and and I specifically I'm thinking about observations.  
And I do K to 12 classroom research. And you know, it's prohibitive.  
So I don't know of a is the answer, but I'm just gonna say my mind goes there. And I also think about that because.  
It's the cost and it's the burden. Like we get teachers to self report, we get teachers.  
I mean we we try to do instructional logs which are repeated daily, you know quick surveys over a two week time frame. Nobody wants to do it.  
We have high incentives.  
Nobody wants to do it.  
So how can we get at that kind of information?  
And get the self report out of it.  
Right. Which leads us to observations or things like that.  
Or maybe methods I can't even think of. That's where I I would like AI to be leveraged potentially.  
And then the other thought I had was and I'm not the, I don't know much about it except I hear my colleagues talk about, you know, synthetic comparison groups or synthetic groups or like those things that again, would take time and money and efforts to recruit a comp.  
Group when perhaps there's some AI TOB leverage there.  
I don't know the solutions, but those are just the two things that I'm I would like.

 **Todd Helmus** 16:41  
When you say comparison group, OK, so like for for like RCTs or or like implementation studies. I've I've also heard of using synthetic survey populations.

 **Elaine Wang** 16:46  
Yeah.  
Yeah.  
That too.  
Yeah, yeah, I get.

 **Timothy Gulden** 16:53  
Yep. And the Erin, Erin, and and Ryan and I have been working on basically synthetic focus groups.  
How do you do small groups of people that talk to each other and move each other's opinions around and argue about stuff?  
What you can do, the question is how realistically and we don't know, we've got we've got ways to make it.  
We can pass the basic smell test like that might be about right but.  
We don't really know what to make of it yet.

 **Eunice Wong** 17:26  
Something that I haven't seen AI be applied to, but I think in the in the similar way like things that are time intensive but we need to do with quality. Is the analysis phase right? So so many time we're we're running like gazillion models to get at the.  
Final model that we need and if there was a way to.  
More efficiently, do it like pick the right models and run the models and do them quickly.  
I think that would help.

 **Todd Helmus** 18:01  
OK.  
Amy.

 **Amy Shearer** 18:08  
I definitely agree with with everything everybody said. And then in addition to that one thing that often seems to take a lot of time, that seems like it doesn't need to or shouldn't is when you're designing a survey or your you're trying to figure out which measures to.  
Use. There are all these like various repositories out there that have like trade-offs and pros and cons and like you know if you shorten it this way, it's gonna impact the reliability or validity in that way I think.  
There, there needs to be some way to kind of impress all of that information in and create a searchable, usable.  
Yeah, way to just get at those measures a little bit more easily.  
Thank.

 **Todd Helmus** 18:49  
Tell me a little bit more about that. Like, what measures?

 **Amy Shearer** 18:52  
Yeah. So, so in evaluation, we're often looking at different.  
Sorry, it's telling you to lower my hand.  
OK.  
We're often looking for different evaluation measures to get at a specific outcome, right?  
Like if it's, whether it's a different health outcome or like, you know, psychiatric disorder related outcome.  
And in the literature, there are just. There's a whole bunch of different measures depending on which specific version of the outcome you're trying to get at that have been tested with different populations or have different lengths.  
And we almost always have to do some kind of basically literature review to get at which are the right ones.  
You're, like, nodding in pain, too, like.

 **Todd Helmus** 19:31  
Yes.

 **Eunice Wong** 19:32  
It's like a painstaking it's a painstaking process.

 **Amy Shearer** 19:35  
It's.

 **Eunice Wong** 19:35  
You're literally like a spreadsheet.  
This is how I do it.

 **Amy Shearer** 19:37  
Yeah, yes, yeah.

 **Eunice Wong** 19:38  
And you have like a zillion columns like length and the validity, the reliability, the population, and you're like, calling all of this information to try to figure out what is the right measure for your particular question that you need.

 **Amy Shearer** 19:43  
Yeah, cost.

 **Todd Helmus** 19:46  
And how often it's used.

 **Amy Shearer** 19:48  
Yeah.

 **Eunice Wong** 19:52  
It's a very time intensive.

 **Amy Shearer** 19:53  
Yes.  
And it's horrible for researchers, but also I do a lot of technical assistance where we're helping folks try to design their own evaluation plan. And this step is just complete. Like, it's completely beyond unless you literally are a researcher.  
It's so hard to do well.

 **Timothy Gulden** 20:10  
And it it is kind of systematic, though it does seem kind of automatable with some, if you can throw some common sense in which is what the new tools can do.

 **Amy Shearer** 20:14  
Yeah.  
Exactly right. Because we put it into a spreadsheet.  
So by definition, there's different things we're looking for.  
Yeah, that would we. We have versions of repositories that Rand has created that are now in various levels of disrepair because they're they're not kept up because they have to be updated, as you know, as more information becomes available.

 **Eunice Wong** 20:27  
Yeah, yeah.

 **Amy Shearer** 20:40  
But yeah.

 **Eunice Wong** 20:40  
I think that that's similar for the beginning and the bookend for like the where we don't have a sponsor, but we're trying to get independent funding like you're looking in the literature like where are the gaps?  
So then you're like looking at every study to see like, OK, there hasn't been a longitudinal or they haven't done this this outcome and and then you're like constantly having to go through the whole literature.  
It's really like a comprehensive literature to find the gaps and it's the same kind of spreadsheet you're like figuring out. Where are the gaps? And it takes a lot of time.

 **Amy Shearer** 21:11  
Yeah.

 **Todd Helmus** 21:12  
Interesting. Fascinating. OK.  
So this is really interesting. What I wanted to do is walk through a couple different types of methodologies.  
I'll try to think of something a few that that folks have been curiously working on in this and maybe talk through the steps of those methods and approaches and.  
Hear from you, sort of.  
What the pain points are of that.  
And maybe we'll start with.  
Let's let's maybe, hopefully we'll start with literature reviews at this point.  
So which I think is maybe you were just describing almost a type of literature review that you have to do at the start of projects to establish your your methods. And so the literature review could be one like that.  
It could be a systematic review.  
That's a core method, or it could be a method literature review.  
That you just have to get done.  
To to understand the the basic literature on the on the topic area that you're looking at with various degrees of rigor. So and I'm just curious if we can just do that, we'll try and maybe get do two other methods as we go through this, but walk me.  
Through those efforts.  
What are the sort of? Maybe we'll have to go step by step on what you have to do to achieve that.  
But what are the pain points in that that are involved in that?  
And you know, maybe leveraging what Eunice just sort of described?  
You know, for identifying literature on, on research, on measures.

 **Timothy Gulden** 23:03  
You know, I guess I can start things a little bit.  
I I mean, I don't do that kind of formal literature review.  
My my literature reviews tend to be more kind of social science.  
You know the the second section of a of a paper where you say.  
Here's where other people have done.  
Here's how it kind of all fits together.  
Here's here's where what I'm doing fits into that.  
And.  
Well, what?  
What? What?  
Something we learned from the \*\*\*. The first to ask Randa.  
Was that if you ask an AI of a retrieval augmented generation system?  
To get papers or get statements from papers that.  
Are close to what you the question you asked? You'll get that.  
And it'll give you an interesting summary of places where, for instance, Rand.  
Has said things that are relevant to your question.  
But you get a lot more if you unpack it.  
And say here are some questions here are questions you'd need to answer to be able to answer that question and then search each one of those and you actually get a much more comprehensive scaffolding for.  
Where what you were asking fits.  
And this even though I wasn't really involved with Askran 2O that's in beta now.  
I was able to contribute that as like a core like guys. One of the things we learned is you got to do that.  
You can't just run the main question.  
And so there's a lot of.  
Subtlety really.  
To what?  
What are you trying to accomplish with this literature review?  
Who's your audience?  
What are you trying to get at?  
What do you think is important?  
Their their values involved with choosing the framing and what sub questions do you ask and how do you set this whole thing up so that the literature review isn't just checking a box, but helps your intended reader understand things the way that you think they need to underst.  
Them.  
That is, you know, more art than science.  
I think it's an art that not a lot of people aren't all that great at and that.  
That some thinking about best practices for doing that kind of literature review and actually capturing them abstractly and using them in an AI process might be a way to.  
Suggest.  
An approach for literature review that could be an improvement over you know, Once Upon a time.

 **Todd Helmus** 25:27  
Mm-hmm.

 **Timothy Gulden** 25:33  
Fields were small.  
You sat in your leather chair with your pipe and you, you know the the the Butler bought brought the the this month's journal. And you read it cover to cover. And you know, there were a couple dozen.

 **Todd Helmus** 25:45  
Yes, I remember those days.

 **Timothy Gulden** 25:46  
Yes, there were a couple dozen people, you know, and and you know, your wife did things in the background because the wife wasn't the researcher.  
And I mean, it was really a very small world of elite gentlemen that did this stuff.  
Where an expert could know everything.  
And it it's not life that anymore.  
The idea that anybody knows enough to just do a beautiful lit review off the top of their head is is kind of not right anymore.  
And so that that thinking about this kind of free form values based trying to frame your paper, I think there is a lot of improvement to be made there. I I never feel like I'm doing a very good job of literature review when I do it the old.  
Fashioned way anymore.

 **Todd Helmus** 26:28  
Anybody else?

 **Timothy Gulden** 26:28  
It's not quite the question you ask, but it's answer.

 **Todd Helmus** 26:30  
No, that's OK that that's helpful.

 **Eunice Wong** 26:33  
I mean, I guess I think of literature review at the very, very beginning like trying to secure funding.  
And so from an for proposal writing. So for someone who does a lot of intervention work, it's usually what's the problem, right?

 **Todd Helmus** 26:39  
For proposal writing.  
Interesting.

 **Eunice Wong** 26:48  
So what's the mental health condition or issue? And then trying to figure out all the interventions that have been developed for that problem? And then what are all the weaknesses and limitations and figure out in the field?  
Where is the significant contribution going to be? Like really trying to find that gap and where you can be innovative and that takes a lot of work so.

 **Todd Helmus** 27:16  
And especially when you don't know like a you don't, you don't have a lot of coverage to do it right.  
It it's, but you're at the same time. You're sort of judged for your whole, you know how holistic you are and whether or not you're citing all the things that need to be cited.

 **Eunice Wong** 27:32  
Yeah. And to be innovative, you have to kind of go into territories that you're not familiar with too.  
So it's right, the innovation is you're doing this cross disciplinary work.

 **Todd Helmus** 27:42  
Yeah.

 **Eunice Wong** 27:43  
And so it's like quite a stretch and like finding that sweet spot is like takes time.

 **Todd Helmus** 27:51  
I mean, it's interesting thinking of, I mean it's probably 1 methodology that we all have in common is, is this proposal writing, whether it be an NIJ grant or NIH grant or whatever?  
But we're all sort of working.  
We all have to work through that process, at least most of us, to to be able to get our paychecks.  
That's interesting.  
Other other thoughts?

 **Amy Shearer** 28:15  
So another use that I'm thinking I would agree with.  
Unice that's probably like the primary use for me as well, but another use is often drafting like an evaluation report or an evaluation plan.  
We do a long review.  
You know, if it's a policy analysis that we're doing, we do a long review of the history of the policy and the impacts and things like that and that often that's included in the report as well or it goes into how we think about the methods that we.  
Using or that like evaluation questions we're asking.  
And so that's kind of another area where we often end up either summarizing the history for the report or using that to inform our evaluation questions too.

 **Todd Helmus** 28:55  
Hmm, interesting.  
I'm I'm hearing that that that a lot of these reviews there are very discrete topics that have to be evaluated in that literature, be it in your case the policies or in the proposal case the the listing of what is the problem, what are the interventions, what are.  
The weaknesses of those papers.  
And and you know and what?  
What's new?  
What? Where's the value?  
Add in the field.

 **Amy Shearer** 29:30  
And I did a landscape review a while ago, before AI was really a thing.  
For a funder who wanted to understand all of the different funding sources that were available to help foster youth who were transitioning out of foster care, and we were, we were asked to create like a searchable web tool for them, with the results of our lit review and.  
Like that's just another usage where with AI would have been so much easier to kind of put that in a usable format.  
For them.  
But when there's specific things they're looking for, like how the funding's been used, and we're also not using traditional lit review sources, we were having to like deep dive into weird websites and like financial documents and and things like that to get at that information so that.  
Be the sort of more useful in terms of creating a tool that's usable, but also looking into non traditional sources.

 **Todd Helmus** 30:22  
I know that there's a lot of tools out there to use AI to help with literature reviews.  
I'm just curious people's exposure with any of those tools.  
Just thoughts on what that market looks like and and any strengths or weaknesses that you've seen?

 **Elaine Wang** 30:44  
I have not, so I'm not answering your question.  
I haven't explored those tools.

 **Todd Helmus** 30:48  
That's OK.

 **Elaine Wang** 30:50  
I just want to say like, I guess I'm caught between.  
Like where to use AI?  
Because I can see it in the search and then finding and synthesizing, you know individual articles or maybe some compendium.  
And then the thinking part of identifying the gap or you know, making the argument that I wanna make saying a proposal, I don't.  
Maybe it's maybe I, maybe because I haven't explored the toys yet.  
I don't know if it's capable or I'm not trusting of it.  
I'm not sure.  
I guess to some extent it'd be awesome if AI could be used for some sort of idea generation in that respect, but I guess I'm just not.  
I'm still a novice and so like I would use it for synthesizing, but like to then bring two parts together and find the interse.

 **Todd Helmus** 31:28  
Yes.

 **Elaine Wang** 31:33  
Or have this literature talk to this I I would love. I think AI to help me with that or to be generating ideas, but I'm not.

 **Todd Helmus** 31:42  
At least ideas you could think through and and and and Mull through.

 **Elaine Wang** 31:43  
I haven't used it as such.  
Yeah, 'cause, I've done a scoping literature review, for example.

 **Timothy Gulden** 31:46  
And I.

 **Todd Helmus** 31:47  
Right.

 **Elaine Wang** 31:51  
Longstreet, like I've. I've written one like an actual literature review report.  
But I made the argument.  
I mean, I had an RA, you know, be through that. But point being like I made the argument after looking at the gaps, we were arguing why coherence is or isn't happening in school, how it is ill defined, blah blah blah.

 **Timothy Gulden** 32:03  
Mm-hmm.

 **Elaine Wang** 32:06  
But those things we surfaced as people.  
Could the AI have done that?  
Maybe would it have been reliable? I don't know.  
But that that would be neat I guess.

 **Todd Helmus** 32:15  
Yeah.

 **Timothy Gulden** 32:15  
And it might have needed guidance from you as to what what are you really trying to do?  
Who's? Yeah. Who's your audience?  
What do you care about?  
You know, I think maybe I see this.  
Do you see this? And and underscoring the thing you said earlier, Elaine is gaps.  
I I always feel like I'm doing a bad job when I'm asked to say the things that I don't know.  
And what?  
What? What is it that you're leaving out?  
Well, Gee, if I knew that maybe I wouldn't leave it out like I I, you know, it's it's hard to talk about what you what the gaps are, yeah.  
What is the field not doing well?  
I I know what the field is doing.  
It's hard to know which dogs aren't barking out there.  
But I mean, I'm working on a tool right now for looking over all of like the papers in archive and visualizing them and being able to, like, characterize what's going on, where what's the US doing.  
What's China doing?  
What's what other places doing so you can kind of see who's working on what, who's not working on what. And I think that AI's because the AI can read everything.  
And I can't.  
It potentially maybe can do a better job of saying what I'm not thinking of.

 **Todd Helmus** 33:27  
At least it can put out ideas out that you could like. See if they're worth investigating further, or put a sniff test to maybe.  
Go.

 **Eunice Wong** 33:38  
Oh, I was just gonna respond to your question, Todd, about literature reviews and tools like I recently used covetence to do a scoping review.  
And so I know they're trying to build in these AI aspects to the synthesis, but it it's a very time consuming if you have multiple review like raters on these evidence, synthesis reviews and getting everybody to.  
Like converge can be take a take a lot of time.

 **Todd Helmus** 34:07  
Mm-hmm.

 **Eunice Wong** 34:09  
Time. So I don't know if AI can help with that and then piggybacking on Amy's comments about grey literature, I think that that is time intensive because you have like these, like Google kind of Gray searches and these like non academic sources, if you really to me.  
That's like an area of innovation and where there's a separation between academics and like, what's happening in the real world.  
And if we can have some sort of way of.  
Gathering these non traditional sources of information that would be super helpful.

 **Todd Helmus** 34:46  
Interesting. So way of like doing the like doing the, doing the search.

 **Eunice Wong** 34:51  
Right. So like right now I'm on a veterans project.  
We're trying to identify faith-based approaches to moral injury, so we're like scraping social media.  
Like and every randomly like, we'll find out about this organization and it's not very. It's as systematic as we can be, but we're nowhere.  
We're missing things on the ground that people that are doing, but they're not publishing.  
An academic journals these fake based.

 **Todd Helmus** 35:19  
No.

 **Eunice Wong** 35:20  
Organizations you know, so yeah.

 **Todd Helmus** 35:24  
Huh, that's interesting.  
OK.  
So this is great.  
Really helpful stuff here.  
Any other thoughts on on literature reviews, on pain points involved in that process, areas, aspects of doing it that are difficult and challenging, or areas where you think you know that AI could be useful?  
Any of those, anything else along those lines for at least on pulling document reviews, literature reviews.  
Synthesis.  
Of literature.

 **John Hollywood** 35:56  
So I would say, and I think this is different from the comprehensive literature review.  
But I think times I've often will need to do the I need to get up speed up to speed on something, or I need to pull like what are the top best known common references that people who are involved in that field would know about but isn't obvious?  
To me or other people on the team, well, like everybody who's involved in this field has heard of, you know, the Q, XC standards for whatever.  
But you know we haven't.  
So I would say.  
Gemini and perplexity.  
Have done a fairly decent job. If I say you know.  
Explain this and provide links to the top references.  
You know, kind of what?  
People knows that seems to work.  
OK.  
At least you know what it produces is at least highly relevant.  
The general descriptions are OK, I would say, at least with the current state-of-the-art.  
What it says, So what?  
What the returns say that the linked documents actually say.  
They say no, this document makes this point.  
Kind of.  
Sort of.  
That may or may not be accurate.  
You know, so it's like, so it's great for general conceptual, like initial tutorials. It's good for getting top relevant documents, which are indeed tend to be you know, some of the more popular, better known ones.  
But it's like, you know, you've got it at least right now, you've really got to check any summaries that it's producing at least with respect to the general searches.  
I know those.  
Who are you know taking?  
Papers and telling Chatbt summarize them.  
That's that's kind of a different problem than.  
Go to the open web and you know find top resources on the open web and some and summarize what they say.

 **Todd Helmus** 37:40  
Mm-hmm.  
OK.  
Awesome. Thanks. Thanks John.  
Let's talk through if we can for 5 minutes. The call on the qualitative methods elicitation interviews, focus groups.  
I think a lot of folks are doing things along those lines.  
Any any thoughts there about sort of unique pain points challenges in doing that work?  
Keith.

 **Keith Crane** 38:05  
Oh yeah, highlight a project on space domain awareness, you know.  
Junk in space and there is a request for information that came out of commerce. And so we actually do two, we use an AI approach and we use kind of a more traditional reading stuff.  
And so I was fairly happy with you know, we went through and AI was better than this, more kind of structured.  
Way of.  
Somebody doing it. The problem I had I did read all the advice.  
There weren't that many.  
There's a hundred or something, but once or twice a I got it wrong.  
So one of the concerns I have with.  
AI.  
Think it's a good starting point, but I don't trust it yet, and I maybe maybe I'm wrong that way, but I.  
Have I?  
I wouldn't take anything I get from it without kind of validating myself. So then.  
The efficiencies kind of go down if I'm redoing it.

 **Todd Helmus** 39:10  
Yeah.

 **Timothy Gulden** 39:11  
I mean the thing to remember, of course, is that I don't trust.  
Not only do I not trust, you know, an RA, but I don't trust myself.  
People make mistakes too.  
And I'm not sure where that crossover point is.  
I mean, the AI makes different mistakes.  
I I do a lot of thinking about this.  
How do I?  
What's the right comparison?  
How do I, you know if a if a human and an AI both look at it and they both think it's good, there's a pretty decent chance it's gonna be good.  
It is good making different mistakes.

 **Todd Helmus** 39:43  
Yeah, Amy.

 **Amy Shearer** 39:47  
So I think 1 issue we've had when we're using AI to analyze participant comments for expertlends.  
It will hallucinate things that nobody ever said.  
And so that's basically that's the human work is we're having to go through and rescan every comment just to make sure that like we have the general gist of it and cross check that with what AI is saying.  
And so we've had to like review and revise and revise all of the prompts that we give AI to, like, make sure that it is sticking only to what participants say and.  
You know, it'll it has to tell us back if it didn't use which specific participant comments it didn't use so that we're doing it a cross check on all of it.  
So like, I think there's ways to build in more reliability, but it takes a lot of like trial and error to get there.

 **Todd Helmus** 40:40  
Any while I get you on the on the on on my big screen. Amy on on that expert elicitation.  
I mean, you mentioned using the program.  
I've known what lens expert lens, but I I'm just curious if you can sort of walk through the expert elicitation process.

 **Amy Shearer** 40:51  
Yeah.

 **Todd Helmus** 40:57  
A little bit about what?  
What what is involved in that process and the challenges of that?

 **Amy Shearer** 41:02  
Yeah. And it's been a number of years since I've actually run an expert lens study.  
At this point I'm just helping with some of the analysis.

 **Todd Helmus** 41:09  
Well, Melissa, I guess.  
Less interested expert lens per SE, but just the process like the methodology of elicitation and how you approach that sort of qualitative work.

 **Amy Shearer** 41:18  
Yeah. So like Elaine mentioned, it's it's the Delphi method. And so often an organization will come with a specific set of questions.  
They want to know the answers to and they, you know, for example, in the healthcare sector, they want to know what would be the ethical issues of using AI to make recommendations for like healthcare.  
Basically, that's literally one of the studies we're working on right now.  
And so we have to do a lit review in the beginning to figure out what are the right questions to ask.  
Will have a round one where everyone gets the same set of questions.  
Or will present an issue to them and will say like rate the importance or the feasibility or the whatever it is on on a one to nine scale and then we ask them to explain their comment and that's the first round and then so AI is used to.  
Analyze by tertile what the general theme was for the the highest rating, the middle rating, and the low rating. We present the results back.  
To the participants, we say people who thought this was a great idea, said this. People who didn't like it said this. Have you changed your your thoughts at all?  
And they can provide that back and it's all online. So they're all doing it asynchronously whenever they log in.  
We also use AI to generate discussion questions for like the chat room feature based on the participant comments too.  
So that's like another useful feature.

 **Todd Helmus** 42:42  
Interesting.

 **Amy Shearer** 42:45  
And.  
And then at the the end you can rank, you know the feed's ability or whatever it is, whatever. The question was that you asked at the end and and provide that back to the client in terms of what most experts or what a particular category of expert.  
Would think you know practitioner versus.  
You know what a client for each topic?

 **Todd Helmus** 43:07  
OK, interesting. Any other other qualitative work that folks do anything that comes to mind as particularly challenging aspects of that long poles in the tent areas where AI could be helpful?

 **Eunice Wong** 43:22  
Just one issue that has come up is just when we think about publishing it in a scientific journal.  
So that's the thing that came up with me is when we're thinking of using it to analyze the qualitative interviews, whether we could justify the validity of the the method.

 **Todd Helmus** 43:34  
Hmm.  
Ah.

 **Eunice Wong** 43:42  
So that that's like we wouldn't use it if we can't publish it in a article in a site. Yeah, yeah.

 **Todd Helmus** 43:47  
You need to be able to have a citation established. Yeah. Yeah. I talked to Prateek today and he's working on that.  
You mentioned.

 **Eunice Wong** 43:56  
I know 'cause. I talked to him about it.  
He's like, oh, we're working on it and we're like, OK.  
Tell us when you that article is out, and then maybe we'll consider it because we can't publish it in a scientific journal without that validity check.

 **Todd Helmus** 44:11  
Yeah, especially if the AI is making the decisions as to what's coding versus the humans making decisions where you can at least establish a method for an iterator reliability.  
On the human side, Tim, thanks.

 **Timothy Gulden** 44:24  
Yeah, I mean, you can still do things like interrater reliability, but I did a study on cybersecurity integration years ago that involved, you know, 5050 hour long interviews that, you know, Sean Mann and I went through them all and coded them according to this crazy matrix that.  
I had cooked up and put everything into one note and then I went through and boiled things down and it was it.  
It really took IQ points off of both of us it.  
Incredibly painful and and and cognitively stressful.  
And it came out pretty good, but it was horrible.  
It was really hard and it's the kind of thing that an AI could do.  
Yeah, because as a matter of summarizing with respect to this, you know, tag things that are about this.  
Now summarize those all into a summary.  
That kind of systematic slicing and dicing of interviews to produce a fully anonymized framework of analysis of what was in the interviews is, I think there are.  
There are a couple of projects that I think working on doing that, but I really felt like we developed a machine.  
We we turned ourselves into artificial intelligence.  
And and reduced our humanity substantially by spending, you know, 100 hours doing this.  
But it was.  
It was effective. It worked.  
But I I did feel like I became the machine.  
I would love to see that automated.

 **Todd Helmus** 45:52  
No, that's really interesting.  
All right.  
Thank you. That was helpful.  
Others. Let's see.  
I want to hit through a couple of the different approaches that I heard in this and just get any thoughts on on it program evaluation.  
I know that was raised and I'm guessing a couple of you do program evaluation on on some level or another, and I'm wondering if you could sort of talk through that process, like what's involved in program evaluation.  
I I think this I think program evaluation depending on whatever mix of methods are employed in that is probably commonly used.  
I think we often get asked at Rand to look at a program and make an assessment of it, although we don't always call it program evaluation.  
So anyway.  
I'd be curious to hear folks thoughts about what's that involved.

 **Elaine Wang** 46:48  
I'm gonna go through the whole thing.  
I'll just talk about the one part that's on my mind, which is probably at the beginning end of program evaluation and that's a logic model or kind of like theory of change development or articulation, I've been asked.  
I've I've done or LED people through.  
Their theory of change development, and I mean I think it's a human activity, but I can envision AI being a part of it, maybe supporting digesting our conversation information again, generating output in something which we then.  
Iteratively react to. I'm not sure, but I just know that you know. I'm sure we've all experienced that we think people come to us with their program fully developed, but then it's not truly articulated. The parts of the components we're gonna evaluate and we end up having to.  
Help them articulate their theory of change.  
So I wonder if there's an AI component to that.

 **Todd Helmus** 47:35  
Hmm.  
That's I've done very little program evaluation, but the one I did the the the the program they thought they were running wasn't the program they were running.  
Eunice, I see you smiling on that.  
You gonna say on that?

 **Eunice Wong** 47:55  
Yeah, I mean I I think.  
It's it varies from client to client but for sure I think from start to finish.  
Like just being able to like, I think Amy articulated the process very well.  
Like you have to kind of do the whole lit review like have help them ground their program and some of the science. Usually they have it.  
And then educate them about the literature, right, so that they can help know what this thing that they're doing actually has a label in the literature.  
And then help them figure out like.  
What are the intervention points?  
What are the outcome?  
What are?  
What are the processes so like?  
There's just all those steps in program evaluation, and then at the end too, right?  
I think the the end part though, if I were to think about program evaluation that takes time, but we often don't have money is a dissemination piece.  
So like being able to disseminate the scientific findings in lay terms like to different audiences.  
Takes time, and it's often simpler.  
It's often lots of graphics.  
It's a whole nother production piece after you have to disseminate the findings.  
So if AI can do nice dissemination layouts, that would be great.

 **Todd Helmus** 49:23  
You mean like the publication layouts or the graphics, or what aspect or tweet everything for you.

 **Eunice Wong** 49:26  
All of it, and it's simpler.  
It's it's everything.  
It's simpler language.  
I mean, we don't use the same language we use in articles or reports. When we disseminate out to community audiences.  
It's it's different.  
You can't just copy and paste what you did in your reports or your articles for for community audiences.

 **Todd Helmus** 49:47  
Hmm.  
Interesting.  
OK.  
That's great.  
We have 5 minutes left.  
I'm just curious, like any sort of last alibis, like thoughts like things that you do that you're working on, where you think automation could be helpful or that maybe it may or may not be helpful. But this aspect of what I do is really hard.  
John, I'll. I'll ping you on this.

 **John Hollywood** 50:25  
Sorry, that was not totally processing.  
Can you say that again?

 **Todd Helmus** 50:28  
What other other things we haven't talked about?  
That you feel that there's room, there's value for automation or other things that you do commonly do that is really difficult and challenging that.

 **John Hollywood** 50:41  
OK.  
You know, I'm thinking about this.  
Editing.  
So like if I ask is still the case. If I go into ranch at and I will take text.

 **Todd Helmus** 50:54  
We all right.

 **John Hollywood** 51:01  
That I want.  
You know that I I know.  
It's contains redundancies. It's awkward.  
Rewriting to make it clearer, more precise.  
It will do stuff and sometimes it will give me better, clearer language. A lot of time it'll give me better, clearer language.  
But again, I've gotta go through every single sentence to say this sentence is good versus this sentence. Change the whole meaning.  
And for my sort of dream is take my annotated PowerPoint presentation from all the notes and then come up and then use a PowerPoint presentation, say from an IPR, and take chunks of it easy to start writing report text out of it. Especially I get something that's got.  
A lot of notes and a lot of you know, bullet points. It'd be a straightforward thing to go from the presentation oftentimes to to report text.

 **Todd Helmus** 51:56  
Huh.

 **John Hollywood** 52:04  
Or vice versa for that matter, if you come up with a presentation fast based on.  
Report.  
It just still, it just chokes down.  
I mean it will.  
It gives you a return, but it may not have anything to do with it. I mean, at least it's not as bad as it used to be.  
Where it would take whatever you gave it and it would spit out for you a classic 5 paragraph essay.  
You know, with an introductory sentence, 33 body paragraphs and a conclusion like no, that's not what I wanted.  
So.

 **Todd Helmus** 52:35  
Amy, I saw your hand was up.

 **Amy Shearer** 52:38  
Yeah, HSPC.  
If if.

 **Todd Helmus** 52:42  
Right.

 **Amy Shearer** 52:44  
AI could make the HSBC process easier if we could just feed it our documents. Whatever we have in there, it could pull out.  
Maybe flag any ethical issues for us?  
Tell us how to correct it.  
Generate like the consent forms and the things we already know we need, and we probably use templates of that. We have old versions anyway and we just manually update it like I think.  
I think there's a lot of uses for AI for the HSBC process.

 **Todd Helmus** 53:08  
Right. And like how many times have you gone?  
Have you like had to reread your old consent forms to figure out what language you want to put for your new consent form?

 **Amy Shearer** 53:15  
Exactly.

 **Todd Helmus** 53:17  
And that seems like a tailor made task for a large language model.

 **Amy Shearer** 53:19  
Yeah, it's all standard information. So yeah.

 **Todd Helmus** 53:22  
Yeah, especially if you could have a a feed a large language model 100 different consent forms that are used at Rand.  
I bet the solution set would be almost 99%.

 **Amy Shearer** 53:33  
Or it should be because there's specific requirements that are supposed to be in there, yeah.

 **Todd Helmus** 53:35  
Right. It's a limited, it's limited domain.  
Maybe even have an AI model like tell you whether or not you pass.  
HSBC.

 **Timothy Gulden** 53:46  
Yeah. And we also need to make sure that HSPC is keeping up with times and standards.  
I've I've I've not run into this, but I've heard people complain that HSBC is saying, oh, it's unreliable. Therefore there is no benefit.  
Therefore, you can't use it in circumstances which are not where.  
That's not where the state-of-the-art probably is.  
And so we need to make sure that HSI mean HSBC should be stopping us from doing things that you know.  
Pose dangers to people, that there is a reason it's there. We shouldn't.  
We don't need to shut it down.  
We do need to make sure that it's not.  
Being unnecessarily draggy based on outdated information about what's going on.  
And that probably means making sure that there are people who are versed, who are kind of part of the HSBC process.

 **Todd Helmus** 54:34  
Yeah, no, this is.  
This has been really helpful everyone.  
I just put in the comments the time to that you should charge for your hour with us.  
Thank you. If you have any other comments or observations, please feel to to send a note.  
This has been really helpful so.  
I'll stay in line if there's any alibis or other questions, but otherwise, thank you.

 **Amy Shearer** 54:59  
Thank you.

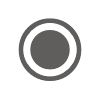
 **Elaine Wang** 54:59  
Thanks for facilitating.

 **Todd Helmus** 55:01  
Thank you.

 **Timothy Gulden** 55:02  
Bye.

 **Eunice Wong** 55:02  
Bye.

 **Brian Mills** 55:02  
Thanks everyone.

 **Brian Mills** stopped transcription