

THINGStoCONSIDER

Limitations on the Type of Question You Can Answer

How does my context influence the type of question I can answer?



It is common for your context to limit the type of question you can ask when conducting an evaluation. It is important to think about those limitations before crafting a research question to make sure your evaluation is based on a question you can actually answer.

LIMITATIONS

CONTEXT

QUESTION

There are no limitations; depending on how you provide access, you can answer any of these questions.

No one is currently using the technology, and we plan to give access to a subset of potential users.

Is using this technology better than not using any technology?

You won't be able to compare different ways of using the technology if people are already using the technology in the same way.

Some people are using the technology, but others are not.

Is using Technology A better than using Technology B?

If everyone is using the technology, you can't determine the effect relative to using no technology or using a different technology; that requires a comparison group of nonusers.

Everyone has access to the technology, but we plan to implement it in two different ways

Is one way of using a technology better than another way of using a technology?

If everyone is using the technology, you can't determine the effect relative to using no technology or using a different technology; that requires a comparison group of nonusers. You can only ask if using the technology more frequently is better than using it less frequently.

Everyone has access to the technology, but we know there are some who use it more (high users) and some who use it less (low users).