CRIM 3600: Criminal Justice Research Methods
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Summer 2, 2020
Introduction to Qualitative Coding with NVivo

Sample Interview Transcription

"I used to go to Rebecca's every day for breakfasts and dinners. My favorite breakfast were the omelettes with cheese. The lines were always really long, though, and it was so expensive. I struggled a lot with making sure I was eating healthy, too, because it was really easy to choose a cheeseburger over veggies. Rebecca's food is also not that great, but I guess most university food probably isn't great. I do like their coffee, though, and I made friends with one of the cashiers. I'm happy I live off campus now, though, and have a full kitchen where I can make my own food."

What is NVivo?

NVivo is a computer software package for qualitative data analysis. NVivo is designed to assist researchers in organizing and analyzing non-numerical and unstructured data. It is useful for coding surveys, interviews, audio recordings, text documents, and other data formats. The software supports a large variety of file formats and data sources including Qualtrics, Zotero, OneNote, EverNote, SurveyMonkey, Excel, Word, and .pdfs, among many others. NVivo can be used for literature reviews, research management, and analysis.

Your Data

The data you will be analyzing and qualitatively coding using NVivo is the interview transcripts you have brought to class. Using NVivo, we will practice qualitatively coding your interviews and then visualizing your codes.

Version and Platform Compatibility

1. Northeastern University students have access to NVivo versions 11 and 12 for both Mac and Windows operating systems, but there are compatibility issues moving projects between the two.
2. You **cannot** go backward in versions, but can convert a NVivo 11 project to NVivo 12.
3. Only the Windows version can convert projects between operating systems.
   a. To convert a project: click on 'File,' in the top toolbar then 'Copy Project.'

Key Terminology

- **Qualitative Coding**: Categorizing textual information by highlighting or marking up moments that relate to particular themes/broader ideas according to a self-created

schema, or a set of predefined set of themes or ideas that appear in your text and relate to your research question.

- **Data**: The organized information used in research. In NVivo, the data includes the files you have imported or created in the software. This can also include metadata, or information about data.
- **Codes:** The themes, concepts, or sentiments in your research material and data. Codes in NVivo are separated into two broad categories: nodes and relationships.
  - **Nodes:** Nodes are the themes, concepts, ideas, opinions, or experiences evident and reflected in your data. Nodes can also be tiered and have sub-nodes, or 'children' nodes underneath 'parent' nodes.
  - **Relationships:** Relationships in NVivo are a special type of code that is a connection between two data items. Relationships can be one-way (for example, someone employing someone else), associative (two people knowing each other), or symmetrical (two people working together).
- **Cases:** In NVivo, cases are your unit of analysis for your research. For example, if you are studying a group population, your cases would be the individuals in that group. You can assign different variables and attributes to your cases
- **Maps:** Maps in NVivo are a useful visualization tool for seeing connections between the cases and nodes in your data.
- **Query:** Queries in the context of NVivo are a flexible way to explore and analyze your data and codes. With a query you can count word frequency, assign new codes based on a search, and perform searches based upon case attributes.